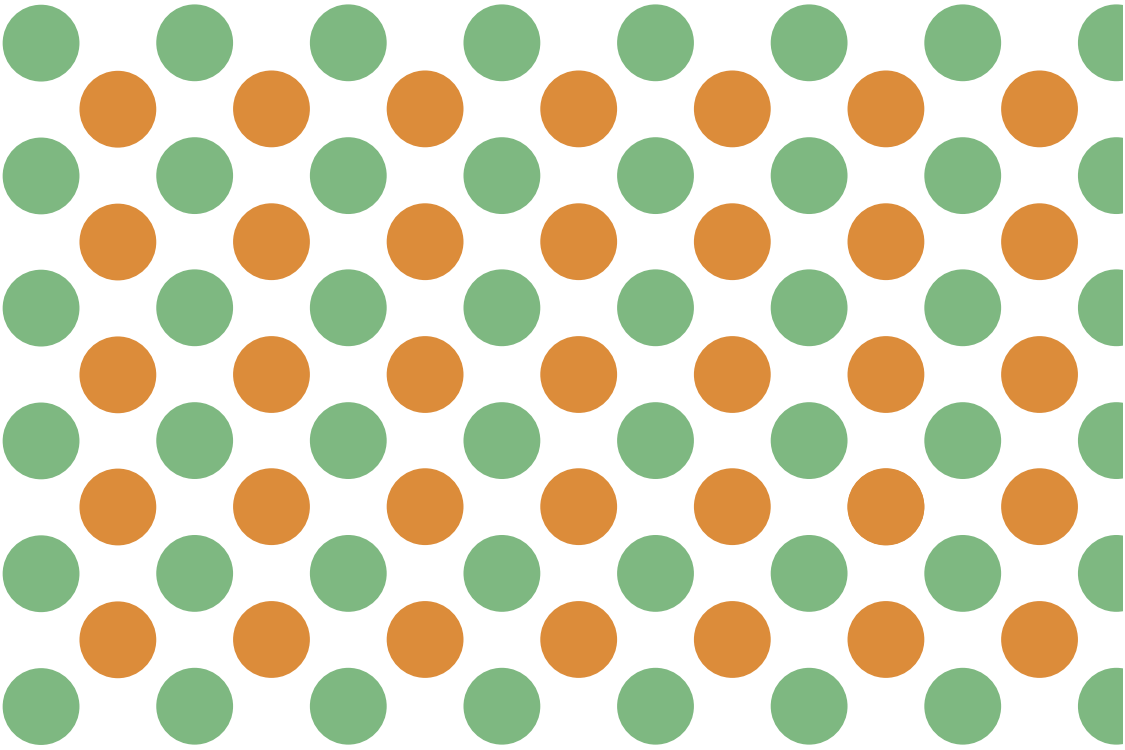
AIRTEA

Strengthening Agricultural Knowledge & Innovation Ecosystem for Inclusive Rural Transformation & Livelihoods in Eastern Africa

Report of the Third-Party Kick-Off Meeting, Nairobi, Kenya (2022)

Inclusive Rural Transformation & Livelihoods in Eastern Africa



28th March – 1st April 2022

REPORT OF THE THIRD-PARTY KICK-OFF MEETING HELD IN NAIROBI

28TH MARCH – 1ST APRIL 2022



Table of Contents

Executive Summary 7

Background 10

Objectives of the Kick-Off Meeting 12

Day 1 of the Kick-off Meeting of the AIRTEA Third-Party Projects 13

Highlights of the opening remarks by Elizabeth Nsimadala, President of EAFF and the Director for women in the Pan-Africa Farmers Organization (PAFO) 13

Highlights of FARA ED's Speech- Dr. Yemi Akinbamijo 14

ASARECA ED – Dr. ENOCK WARINDA 15

Overview of KCB Foundation - Mrs. Caroline Wanjeri 17

Presentation of the purpose, objectives, and modalities of the Kick-Off Meeting- Dr. Kwaku Antwi 17

Briefing on the AIRTEA 3rd Party Projects 21

Day 2 of the Kick-off Meeting of the AIRTEA Third-Party Projects 33

The AIRTEA M&E Framework – Anselme Vodounhessi - M&E Specialist @ FARA; and Gerard den Ouden - 33

Day 3 of the Kick-off Meeting of the AIRTEA Third-Party Projects 36

Contractual procedures and regulations (Finance, audit, procurement, and reporting) – Led by AIRTEA Fiduciary team Mrs Vesta Nunoo and Mr Johsnon Ukpong 36

Introducing Agri-Business Learning Alliances (ABLA)- Karen Munoko Musikoyo-Nguru 40

The AIRTEA Information and Communications Strategy – Benjamin Abugri 42

LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
ABI ZARDI-NARO	Abi Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute
ABLA	Agricultural Business Learning Alliance
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
AFAAS	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AGRENES	Agriculture Environment and Ecosystems
AIRTEA	Strengthening Agricultural Knowledge & Innovation Ecosystem for Inclusive Rural Transformation & Livelihoods in Eastern Africa
AIS	Agricultural Innovation Systems
ARD	Agricultural Research and Development
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
AUC	African Union Commission
AUDA	African Union Development Agency
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CFS	Contract Farming Schemes
CoA	Co-operative Alliance
CSA	Climate-Smart Agriculture

Acronym	Definition
EAFF	Eastern Africa Farmers Federation
ED	Executive Director
EDF	European Development Fund
EU	European Union
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
FLPs	Farmer-led Learning Platforms
GFAR	Global Forum on Agricultural Research
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPs	Innovation Platforms
KALRO	Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization
KBS	Koppert Biological Systems
KCB	Kenyan Commercial Bank
KM	Knowledge Management
KOM	Kick-off Meeting
LKPLS	Lake Kivu Pilot Learning Site
LSB	Local Seed Business
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MSPs	Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

Acronym	Definition
NAIPS	National Agricultural Investment Plans
NARS	National Agricultural Research Systems
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OACPS	Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States
PAEPARD	Platform for African-European Partnership in Agricultural Research for Development
PAFO	Pan-African Farmers Organization
PARI	Programme for Accompanying Research and Agricultural Innovation
PIRS	Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
RAB	Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board
RUFORUM	Regional Universities Forum for Capacity in Agriculture
S3A	Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa
SPF	Seed Potato Fund Joint Ventures
SROs	Sub-Regional Organizations
SSA CP	Sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Programme
TAAT	Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation
TAU	Technical Assistance Unit
ToC	Theory of Change

Acronym	Definition
TPP	Third-Party Projects
UCU	Uganda Christian University
UniBRAIN	University Business and Research in Agricultural Innovation
UoN	University of Nairobi
WPs	Work packages
YEAN	Youth Engagement in Agriculture Network
YPARD	Young Professionals for Agricultural Development

Executive Summary

A consortium consisting of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) and the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) is implementing the Strengthening Agricultural Knowledge & Innovation Ecosystem for Inclusive Rural Transformation & Livelihoods in Eastern Africa (AIRTEA) Project funded by the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) through the ACP-Innovation Fund which itself is funded by the European Union (EU) through the 11th European Development Fund (EDF). The OACPS is supported by a Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) which is responsible for the implementation of the OACPS Research and Innovation Programme. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to achieving sustainable agrarian livelihoods and rural transformation by fostering an inclusive innovation environment.

The implementation of the AIRTEA is expected to comply with guidelines and principles ascribed by the European Commission. These principles are clearly defined in the EU funds requirements, processes, procedures, and regulations, and include the principles of partnerships with clearly defined roles and responsibilities of partners. Although FARA, ASARECA and EAFF have been working together in different initiatives, including those funded by the EU, the same cannot be said about the third-party projects that have been selected for funding. These guidelines and principles need to be clearly understood by all third-party projects and their partners. Hence, the need for a kick-off meeting (KOM) with the participation of all the third-party project partners. The kick-off meeting was further to provide an opportunity for the selected third-party projects to take advantage of engagement with the KCB Foundation to understand the opportunities and conditions that are available for such support.

The main objective of the kick-off of the third-party projects, which took place in Nairobi from 28th March to 1st April 2022, was to build a shared understanding of the vision of the AIRTEA project to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the project, particularly the third-party project activities. The specific objectives of the meeting were:

1. To review the EC/OACPS requirements and procedures in the implementation of the projects and reporting (technical and financial) according to the contract agreement.
2. To improve the result or logical frameworks (RFs) of the third-party projects and the overall M&E framework of the AIRTEA project for effective supervision of third-party projects.
3. To revise workplans and budgets for year 1 for third-party projects.
4. To aid the third party projects to understand communication and visibility strategies and their application.
5. To offer the third-party projects the opportunity to seek clarity in grey areas of the implementation strategy of the AIRTEA Project; and

6. To provide a platform for the KCB Foundation to present to third-party projects the opportunities and conditions that are available to access additional financial support for their respective projects.

The 5-day meeting took the form of a workshop where PowerPoint presentations were made, speeches were delivered, and group work by third-party projects were conducted. During the opening session of the workshop, speeches were made by high profile personalities. Speeches were made by the Executive Director of FARA, the Executive Director of ASARECA, the President of EAFF, who is also a Board Member of FARA, the Technical Assistant to the OACPS, and the Chief Executive of the KCB Foundation. Also, the overview of the project was presented by the Project Lead at FARA. The highlight of the opening session was the Remarks and Declaration of the kick-off of the third-party projects by the Secretary, Research and Innovation of the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives who represented the Principal Secretary and the Chief Administrative Secretary of the Ministry.

The rest of the workshop sessions were devoted to activities of the third-party projects. The third-party projects made presentations of their objectives, outputs and activities that would contribute to the achievement of those outputs. Participants made comments and contributions to the presentations made by all the eleven (11) third-party projects. The major key comment for all the third-party projects was the need to ensure that the objectives and outputs of the third-party projects are feed into the overall AIRTEA objectives and expected outcomes.

The project coordination also took the opportunity to present the logical framework of the entire project to the 11 third-party projects. Further to this, other required guidelines were presented to the third-party projects including format for both financial and technical reports, financial verification procedures, communication strategies, gender and youth mainstreaming, and quarterly monitoring reporting format.
The monitoring and evaluation Team of the AIRTEA Project and the Technical Assistant to the OACPS helped the third-party projects to develop their logical frameworks for their respective projects. This group work resulted in the development of the logical frameworks of the third-party projects. The developed Logical Frameworks were subsequently presented by the third-party projects for participants' inputs.

The action points agreed at the end of the workshop as a way forward include:

1. Third- party projects to submit their revised logical frameworks by 15th April 2022.
2. Third-party projects to submit their work plans and budget for the first year by 15th April 2022.
3. The coordinating team to prepare contracts to be signed by the third parties by 30th April 2022.

4. Third-party projects to sign consortium agreement with their respective project partners.
5. Third-party projects to produce fact sheets about their projects and submit them to the coordinating unit of AIRTEA.

The workshop was successful with the achievement of the outputs listed below:

1. Shared vision and understanding of the AIRTEA project by the project partners.
2. Enhanced and approved work plan for year 1 for the implementation of project activities.
3. An improved logical framework for third-party projects.
4. Improved understanding of the communication and visibility strategies of the AIRTEA Project.
5. Third-party projects are aware of the opportunities conditions necessary for accessing additional support from the KCB Foundation.

Background

A consortium consisting of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) and the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) is implementing the Strengthening Agricultural Knowledge & Innovation Ecosystem for Inclusive Rural Transformation & Livelihoods in Eastern Africa (AIRTEA) Project funded by the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) through the ACP-Innovation Fund which itself is funded by the European Union (EU) through the 11th European Development Fund (EDF). The OACPS is supported by a Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) – which is responsible for the implementation of the OACPS Research and Innovation Programme (https://oacps-ri.eu) to which the ACP Innovation Fund belongs.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to achieving sustainable agrarian livelihoods and rural transformation by fostering an inclusive innovation environment. The three specific objectives are to:

- strengthen the capacities of youth and women in East Africa's multi-stakeholder innovation platforms and link to solutions within national, regional and global food systems;
- facilitate technology transfer and uptake through learning routes and multi-stakeholder engagement; and
- improve profitability and employment opportunities along agricultural commodity value chains by establishing national and regional Agricultural Business Learning Alliance (ABLA) platforms, business development services and mentorship.

The three organizations forming the consortium have experience in working together in several other programmes and initiatives in the past decades in East Africa, including in the mandate area of this project that covers Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. Currently, ASARECA, FARA and other CAADP ex-Pillar 4 institutions are working together to implement a joint project funded by the EC through IFAD: Support Implementation of Science-Led and Climate-Relevant Agricultural Transformation in Africa (CAADP-XP4). Furthermore, FARA and ASARECA worked together (2005-2016) in the implementation of the Sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Programme (SSA CP) in the Lake Kivu Pilot Learning Site (LKPLS) that covered Rwanda, Uganda and Eastern DR Congo. EAFF and FARA were partners in the implementation of the Platform for African-European Partnership in Agricultural Research for Development (PAEPARD). This programme (2009-2018) covered the entire continent.

This project will particularly address the result under priority III of the ACP Innovation Fund which is to "establish or enable synergies in the research and innovation ecosystem, including with the private sector; facilitate conditions for technology transfer; promote R&I uptake". The Specific objective(s) (i.e. outcome(s)) include(s):

1. Increased involvement of women and youth in East Africa in linking multi-stakeholder innovation platforms (IPs) to practical solutions within national, regional and global food systems.
2. Technologies, knowledge, and innovations taken up by the stakeholders involved in the national and regional Agricultural Business Learning Alliance (ABLA) platforms.
3. Improved profitability and employment opportunities along agricultural commodity value chains.

The implementation model of the project involves a competitive grant scheme that is expected to provide grants to third-party projects in the field of academic and research institutions, ministries, departments, and government agencies responsible for ICT or science, technology and innovation, farmer cooperatives, SMEs, and civil society groups in the East Africa region to implement their respective actions towards the objectives of the project.

The implementation of the AIRTEA is expected to comply with guidelines and principles ascribed by the European Commission. These principles are clearly defined in the EU funds requirements, processes, procedures, and regulations. These include the principles of partnerships with clearly defined roles and responsibilities of partners. Although FARA, ASARECA and EAFF have been working together in different initiatives including those funded by the EU, the same cannot be said about the third-party projects that have been selected for funding. These guidelines and principles need to be clearly understood by all third-party projects and their partners. Hence, the need for a kick-off meeting (KOM) with the participation of all the third-party project partners.

Furthermore, the AIRTEA project has initiated a discussion with the Foundation of the Kenyan Commercial Bank (KCB) to support third-party projects with additional funds. The Foundation is currently focusing mainly on job creation among the youth (18-34 years) in Kenya and supporting enterprise development programmes in Uganda and Rwanda to make them more profitable. The Foundation's engagement with the youth is in line with the principles of FARA's promotion of young people in AR4D through the activities of the Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) and thus offers a platform for lessons to be learnt for implementing YPARD's activities. The foundation offers a mix of grants (through capacity building) and financing mainly through loans. These are opportunities the selected third-party projects could take advantage of in the implementation of their activities. This kick-off meeting provided a platform for the third-party projects to engage with KCB Foundation to understand the opportunities and conditions that are available for such support.

Objectives of the Kick-Off Meeting

The main objective of the kick-off meeting was to build a shared understanding of the vision of the AIRTEA project to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the project, particularly the third-party project activities.

The meeting aimed at the following:

1. Reviewing the EC/OACPS requirements and procedures in the implementation of the projects and reporting (technical and financial) according to the contract agreement.
2. Improving the result or logical frameworks (RFs) of the third-party projects and the overall M&E framework of the AIRTEA project for effective supervision of third-party projects.
3. Revising work plans and budgets for year 1 for third-party projects.
4. Aiding third parties to understand communication and visibility strategies and their application.
5. Offering the third-party projects the opportunity to seek clarity in grey areas of the implementation strategy of the AIRTEA Project; and
6. Providing a platform for the KCB Foundation to present to third-party projects the opportunities and conditions that are available to access additional financial support for their respective projects.

And with these objectives, the following were expected as the output:

a) Shared vision and understanding of the AIRTEA project by the project partners.
b) Enhanced and approved work plan for year one (1) for the implementation of project activities.
c) An improved logical framework for third-party projects.
d) Improved understanding of the communication and visibility strategies of the AIRTEA Project.
e) Project is officially launched.
f) Third-Party Projects are aware of the opportunities and understand the conditions for accessing additional support from the KCB Foundation.

The kick-off meeting was held as a physical event spanning five days, from 28th March to 1st April 2022. Below is the account of the various presentations and discussions held at the event.

Day 1 of the Kick-off Meeting of the AIRTEA Third-Party Projects

Highlights of the opening remarks by Elizabeth Nsimadala, President of EAFF and the Director for women in the Pan-Africa Farmers Organization (PAFO)

Introducing EAFF

The Eastern Africa Farmers' Federation, EAFF, is a regional democratic and non-political Farmers' organization whose membership consists of national farmer organizations, apex cooperatives, apex commodity associations and apex women farmer organizations in ten countries in eastern Africa – Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. It was formed in 2001 with a vision of ensuring a "Prosperous and Cohesive Farming Community in Eastern Africa," and with a role to promote the interests of farmers on issues related to markets, productivity, capacity, information and to facilitate regional integration.

EAFF interventions in line with the AIRTEA Project:



EAFF is currently implementing its 3rd strategic plan 2021-2028 which has a primary objective to *transform smallholder agriculture into a rewarding investment opportunity*. It is with this new focus that EAFF has been implementing projects that are aligned to this strategy. EAFF has pushed for policies that support the agenda for agripreneurship through the East African Community (EAC) co-operative societies bill which is awaiting presidential assent and has continued to recruit new members – the Rwanda Youth Agribusiness Forum – a youth-only apex farmer organization and the National Alliance of Agricultural Co-operatives of Uganda.

EAFF has also undertaken a project focusing on youth where it identified opportunities for youth in the public and private sectors and built their capacities through targeted business training, matchmaking with financial partners, mentoring and coaching and as such has also been able to build partnership ecosystems with different actors in the previously mentioned value chains. All these programmes are in line with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) investment plans and are preparing the Federation to benefit from the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) related opportunities.

With the goal of the AIRTEA Project being to contribute to achieving sustainable agrarian livelihoods and rural transformation, EAFF looks to hone its experience in supporting youth programmes, projects and Equal opportunities for youth to take on leadership in the collective collaboration with FARA, ASARECA and the 3rd party consortia in achieving the set objectives.

The President of EAFF made the following calls to action:

1. EAC heads of state to expeditiously assent the EAC co-operative societies bill into law.
2. National Governments to subsidize the cost of inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, petroleum) and to approve zero import duty on agriculture machinery and related technologies whose cost has risen due to the current Russian-Ukraine war that is hurting the agriculture sector significantly.
3. National Governments, in partnership with the EAFF and its members, agriculture private sector actors and researchers to immediately develop and implement an agriculture-imports substitution strategy so that they can in the near future significantly reduce dependence on imports of grains, staples and cereals.
4. All institutions for the streamlining and especially regulation of the digital agriculture space to ensure fairness and equity but most importantly promote competitiveness that will draw in more youth into the sector.
5. National Governments to support more Youth-leaning projects/ programmes.

Highlights of FARA Executive Director's Speech- Dr. Yemi Akinbamijo



The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) is the apex continental organization responsible for facilitating and advocating for continental (Cairo-to-Cape Town) and inter-regional collective actions in agricultural research and innovation in Africa. The organization serves as the technical arm of the African Union Commission and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA)-NEPAD on matters concerning agricultural science, technology, and innovation. FARA serves as the entry point for agricultural research initiatives designed to have a continental or a sub-continental reach spanning more than one sub-region. FARA also plays a key role in galvanizing the agricultural research for development sector and brings a strong African voice to global forums such as the G20 and the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR).

FARA's ED advised that for the continent to move towards feeding itself, one of the fundamentals it must establish and strengthen is its Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Ecosystem. That is why the AIRTEA concept is very important. The AIRTEA project sets out to strengthen the innovation capacity at the grassroots and establish a proof-of-concept that will be scaled out across East Africa and other regions- and that is why FARA is involved, i.e, to bring in knowledge from other regions and to facilitate scaling out to other regions.

The AIRTEA's focus on innovation is based on evidence assembled by FARA, ASARECA, EAFF and other SROs over many years, which unambiguously shows that far bigger individual and societal benefits are obtained by the relevant actors working together in an innovation system context than individually through a linear process. One of the novelties introduced by AIRTEA is the concept of the Agribusiness Learning Alliances which are essentially aimed at supporting the transition of farmers' groups from subsistence to profitable and dynamic businesses marketing competitive products with value added. "This is what we want the future of African agriculture to become, i.e. competitive agribusinesses", he added.

The ED of FARA highlighted that the selection of the 11 third-party projects, out of the total 112 applications submitted, places a huge responsibility on them to make tangible contributions through the AIRTEA project towards leveraging knowledge and innovation ecosystems to sustainably address the unfolding food crisis and prevent future ones. 'To this end 'business as usual', is not an option'. Our success with AIRTEA will open new doors for investment in our work and crucially in the work of our beneficiaries.

ASARECA Executive Director's – Dr. Enock Warinda



The Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) is a not-for-profit sub-regional organization of the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) of 11 member countries, namely: Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. ASARECA brings together scientists from the national agricultural research institutions of the member countries, national agricultural extension service providers and other strategic development-oriented partners to generate, share and promote knowledge and innovations to solve common challenges facing agriculture in the member countries.

Dr. Warinda reiterated the need to improve science and innovation on the African continent and leverage it to promote sustainable food systems. He indicated that with nearly half of the population being food insecure and malnourished, the continent has no option but to improve its science and innovation strategies, particularly in the area of agricultural research for development. He emphasized the opportunity the AIRTEA Project presents in enhancing agricultural research and innovation in the area of operation, i.e. East Africa. Dr. Warinda encouraged the 11 selected projects to work hard to achieve their respective objectives to

contribute to the overall objectives of the AIRTEA project. He emphasized the need to consciously include women, youth, and the vulnerable in their interventions to drive the principles of the project which emphasize the empowerment of youth and women in the society. He assured the management of the AIRTEA Project of the support of ASARECA, as a consortium member, towards the achievement of the goal of the project. He ended by thanking the European Union for providing a chunk of the project funds and the OACPS for the willingness to provide technical assistance to support the project**.**

Remarks from OACPS – Mr. Gerard den Ouden



The Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) is a group of countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific that was created by the Georgetown Agreement in 1975. Formerly known as African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), the organisation's main objectives are sustainable development and poverty reduction within its member states, as well as their greater integration into the world's economy. All of the member states, except Cuba, are signatories to the Cotonou Agreement with the European Union. The Cotonou Agreement (signed in Cotonou, Benin, in June 2000) is the successor to the Lomé Convention. One of the major differences between the Lomé Convention and the Cotonou Agreement is that in the latter the partnership is extended to new actors such as the civil society, the private sector, trade unions and local authorities. These will be involved in consultations and planning of national development strategies, provided with access to financial resources and involved in the implementation of programmes.

M. Gerard den Ouden stressed that the EC decided to fund the selected 11 projects because they aim to promote the ideals of the Commission. He further indicated that the livelihoods of the final beneficiaries of the third-party projects need to improve and hence the decision of the Commission to support these projects. He charged the management of AIRTEA to undertake routine monitoring of these projects to ensure that they deliver their results.

Overview of KCB Foundation - Mrs. Caroline Wanjeri



The KCB FOUNDATION is a charitable trust established by the KCB Group Plc in the Republic of Kenya. The Foundation is dedicated to community development programmes in the jurisdiction of the KCB Group Plc. to transform lives by ending extreme poverty and hardships by supporting programmes in enterprise development, education, environment, health, and humanitarian aid (hereinafter called "KCB Foundation"). Mrs. Wanjeri noted that the Foundation takes a particular interest in women and youth development, and hence the Foundation and the AIRTEA Project share a common interest in terms of the target group. She expressed her gratitude to the AIRTEA Project for considering partnership with the KCB Foundation to promote the welfare of women and the youth in the target countries. She indicated that the Foundation undertakes several activities including training in financial literacy, business management, and training in promoting business alliances among various actors along the agricultural commodity value chain. She indicated the readiness of KCB Foundation to provide these capacity-building services to the third-party projects when the need arises. She pledged the commitment and support of her organization to the successful implementation of the AIRTEA Project.

Presentation of the purpose, objectives, and modalities of the Kick-Off Meeting- Dr. Kwaku Antwi

Overview of the AIRTEA Project



The 4-year AIRTEA project is being carried out in three (3) East African Countries (Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda) with a budget of EUR 4.7 million (85% from the OACPS and 15% from Consortium Members). The EU-funded project is coordinated by FARA in partnership with ASARECA and EAFF.

The overall goal is a sustainable agrarian livelihood and rural transformation in East Africa by applying inclusive research and innovation.

The overall objective of the AIRTEA Project is to contribute to achieving sustainable agrarian livelihoods and rural transformation by fostering an inclusive innovation environment. And the following are the specific objectives:

i. To strengthen the capacities of youth and women in East Africa's multi-stakeholder innovation platforms and link to solutions within national, regional and global food systems.

ii. To facilitate technology transfer and uptake through learning routes and multi-stakeholder engagement.

iii. To improve profitability and employment opportunities along agricultural commodity value chains by establishing national and regional Agricultural Business Learning Alliance (ABLA) platforms, business development services and mentorship.

To achieve these objectives and for an effective implementation, the project is structured into four (4) Work packages (WPs). This comprises three (3) technical work packages – each coordinated by one of the Consortium member organisations, and a fourth WP which looks at Project management, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and learning. The work packages are organized as follows:

- **WP1**: Creating Synergies for Stakeholder Action in National Agricultural Research and Innovation Ecosystem. This work package is led by ASARECA and supported by EAFF and FARA. It entails the following:
  - Establishment of strategic Innovation Platform (IPs) along commodity value chains at the country level to trigger the institutionalization of the IP model as the protocol for national research prioritization in the implementation of country National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPS) in consonance with the Science Agenda (S3A) and the CAADP goals.
  - Establishment of operational IPs along commodity value chains to foster multi-stakeholder interaction and effective utilization of research output for innovations.
  - Creation of country-based virtual research and end-user interaction platforms to enhance technology demand articulation, prioritization of research action and scaling of innovation.
- **WP2**: Support Technology Transfer, Knowledge Management and Information Communication among stakeholders. This is led by EAFF and supported by ASARECA and FARA and entails the following:
  - Establishment of platforms for collective learning and knowledge exchange.
  - Capacity strengthening of women and youth as providers of advisory services on the operational IPs along the commodity value chain.
  - Communication of outputs and outcomes of project activities.

- **WP3**: Support Inclusive Capacity Development Business Incubation along Country Priority Value Chains for Smallholders & Other stakeholders. This is led by FARA and supported by ASARECA and EAFF. It entails the following:
    - Establishment and facilitation of Agribusiness Learning Alliances (ABLAs) in the project countries.
    - Supporting the involvement of women and youth as providers of business support services within the operational IPs along the commodity value chain.
    - Establishment of an agribusiness incubation system for holistic Agripreneurship training for youths.
- **WP4**: Programme coordination, management, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL). Led by FARA and supported by ASARECA and EAFF. It involves the following:
    - Management and Coordination.
    - Development of needed partnerships and strategic alliances towards effective implementation of activities.
    - Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL).

Selection of the 3rd Party Projects

To select the 3rd Party Projects, a call for proposals was launched to receive proposals from prospective multistakeholder partnerships. Among the 112 proposals that were received at the end of the call, 75 were approved for technical evaluation, out of which 11 were approved for funding under the AIRTEA Project. The 11 projects were then presented and approved by OACPS taking into consideration available funds and applying affirmative action. These are well distributed among the three different locations/ countries in East Africa and are also from NARI/Universities; international AR&D organizations; the private sector; as well as Women and Youth-focused organizations. Table 1 provides the list of the 11 selected projects with their lead institutions.

SN	Project Title	Lead Institution
TP01	Upgrading of silver cyprinid	JKUAT
TP02	Promoting technologies and innovations for improving access to quality potato seeds	SPF Joint Ventures
TP03	Technology Transfer through Innovation Systems	Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB)
TP04	Unlocking productivity within smallholder farming systems	Koppert
TP05	Retaining next-generation farmers in agribusiness	AGRENES
TP06	Enhancing inclusive market access	Uganda Christian University (UCU)

TP07	Youth Leading Changes	Youth Engagement in Agriculture Network (YEAN)
TP08	Strengthening the cassava innovation ecosystem	University of Nairobi (UoN)
TP09	Digital Connectors for farming communities	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS)
TP10	Leveraging the Benefits of Multi-Stakeholders Partnerships	Co-operative Alliance
TP11	Harnessing multi-stakeholder innovation platforms for knowledge transfer	Abi Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute (ABI ZARDI)-NARO

Considering that the 11 TPs contribute to the common AIRTEA programme, the kick-off meeting is to facilitate coherent work among the TPs in contributing to the overall success of the programme.

Highlights of the Remarks by Dr. Oscar Magenya, Secretary, Research and Innovation, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives (Representing the Principal Secretary and the Chief Administrative Secretary)



Dr. Magenya noted that innovative thinking is the solution to the bottlenecks (limited access to affordable and high-quality inputs, mechanization, novel technologies) that smallholder farmers (particularly in Kenya and the entire East Africa face. He recognized the importance of agriculture to the socioeconomic development of Kenya and its people. He indicated that most of the population of Kenya, particularly those in the rural areas are engaged in agriculture as their main source of livelihood. Also, he noted the contribution the government of Kenya is making towards the agricultural sector including creating an enabling environment for safeguarding the country's socio-economic transformation capitalizing on a data-driven modern and commercial agriculture sector.

He highlighted the Agriculture Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy, which outlines initiatives to help achieve food security and manufacturing goals in Kenya. The strategy advances the importance of research, innovation, and data within the broad national transformation agenda. These are being carried out in line with the creation of an enabling environment for research and innovation with clear linkages between data, research, and innovation. The Ministry believes that a more targeted approach to research and innovation

will improve data collection, and data analysis and ultimately create more links between research and action on the frontline and informed decision-making.

He further indicated that the ministry has taken bold steps in the establishment of an Animal Identification and Traceability Regulation to facilitate the development of animal identification and traceability system. The launch of the ANITRAC strategy 2019-2029 and regulations sets the stage for the planned implementation of Kenya National Livestock Traceability System, which will be a critical function in the regulation and coordination of livestock production, health, and marketing. It is important to also note the following about Kenya's agricultural System: The vision of the system is to build prosperity through inclusive, innovative, collaborative, and dynamic systems, that are based on data-driven decisions.

At a time when climate change has aggravated the vagaries of weather resulting in extreme events (droughts, floods and increased incidences of pests and diseases) the government is strengthening preparedness to manage these impacts. Because of this, the government of Kenya welcomes AIRTEA since Kenya is currently going through a government-led cultural shift in the agricultural sector- which is expected to move smallholders to a more modernized and commercial-oriented sector. He underscored the importance of the AIRTEA project to the aims and objectives of the Ministry. He stated that the goal and objectives of the AIRTEA project are in sync with the aims and objectives of the Kenyan government as far as the agricultural sector is concerned. He encouraged the selected third-party projects, especially those who have final beneficiaries in Kenya to work hard to ensure the achievement of their respective projects. He thanked FARA, ASARECA, and EAFF for putting up the proposal and for selecting Kenya as one of the beneficiary countries. He further thanked the EC for the financial support to the project. On that note, Dr. Magenya officially launched the third-party projects and wished them success in the implementation of their project activities.

Briefing on the AIRTEA 3rd Party Projects

The various consortia of the third-party projects took turns introducing their initiatives to the participants of the kick-off meeting. This served as a platform to probe further into the approaches envisioned and further refine the outlined components and processes. Below is a record of what ensued.

1. The Silver Cyprinid Consortium. *Led by the Jomo Kenyata University*



The Silver Cyprinid Project focuses on upgrading silver cyprinid to minimize postharvest losses and improve the livelihood of fisherfolk. This project is to address

the challenges in the cyprinid value chain with a geographical focus on the Western parts of Kenya: Kisumu and Busia counties. This includes the use of climate-smart approaches and facilities for storing silver cyprinid. Among the envisioned products are market ready value-added silver cyprinid products, solar dryers, solar coolers, and business and model investment models.

Key activities

- Formation and strengthening of multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs)
- Creation of online & mobile databases; formation of digital marketing platform
- Undertaking capacity development activities
- Adaptive & comparative research on novel solar-biomass drying technologies
- Assessing effects of drying pre-treatments on quality of dried silver cyprinid
- Development of value-added products from silver cyprinid
- Mobilizing partnerships for the commercialization of prototype products
- Development of business models for the adoption of technologies and products
- Deployment of validated novel technologies and value-added products
- Project management
- Monitoring, learning and evaluation

Strategic partners: JKUAT, KMFRI, JKUATES, BMUs, County Governments, and fisherfolk organizations

Expected outcome and impact:

a) Multistakeholder engagement and knowledge dissemination and transfer enhanced
b) Novel climate-smart postharvest value addition technologies demonstrated and adapted
c) Value-added products from silver cyprinid for enhanced product diversity and quality developed
d) Viable cyprinid fish value addition business proposal developed
e) Partnerships for the commercialization of silver cyprinid products mobilized

The impact of the project will be to improve rural livelihood, and food and nutrition security.

Comments from Participants:

- The expected outcomes stated are many. Some should be combined to reduce the number of outcomes. Attention should be paid to the crafting of outcomes, so they do not seem to have been stated as effects.
- In describing the interventions highlighted, the term "co-creation" should be used in place of "innovation".
- The presentation should highlight how women and youth will be engaged as decision-makers, implementers, partners' etc.

The project will focus on the contacts that will be consolidated into groups for capacity development within the work packages.

2. SPF Rwanda. *Led by Seed Potato Fund Joint Ventures (SPF-IKIGEGA)*



The SPF Project seeks to promote technologies and innovations for improving access to quality potato seeds by smallholder farmers through strengthening potato seed systems and multi-stakeholder collaboration in Rwanda.

The envisioned products include technology, innovation, quality seed and Good Agricultural Practices skills.

Key activities:

- The dissemination and promotion of potato technologies.
- Local private seed producers lead EGS production and its business in Rwanda.
- Screen houses owners and seed multipliers equipped with skills and knowledge.
- Strengthening private production of potato seeds.
- Avail enough starter seeds for the most popular and new potato varieties.
- Basic and certified seeds produced and distributed to seed multipliers.
- Rehabilitation of eighteen (18) greenhouses and four (4) aeroponic systems, six (6) sprouting storages capacity increased and one (1) sprouting storage for pre-basic rehabilitated.
- Community-based seed potato production developed.

Strategic partners: SPF, RAB, INES, IGSP-Imbuto & seed multipliers agreed by RICA.

Expected outcomes and impact:

a) Strengthened potato input systems, technology development and supply chain
b) Sustained increase in the availability of potato EGS in Rwanda
c) Sustained increase in the availability of potato quality seed (certified and QDS) in Rwanda

Comments from Participants:

- The outputs and products should be illustrated/spelt out in presenting the project.
- Outcome 2 on partnerships with farmers should be revised to reflect the certification of inputs/ seeds.

3. Technology transfer through innovations systems: Enhancing Smallholder farmers' capacity for profitable and sustainable potato production (in Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda). *Led by Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB)/(SDGC/A)*



The project seeks to contribute to 'improved food security and incomes using the gender lens in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda through the adoption of potato technologies and innovations. The geographical focus of this project is the potato-growing zones in Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda. The envisioned products from the project are Potato TIMPS, rapid seed multiplication innovations; CSA innovations including drought-tolerant varieties; early maturing varieties; digital marketing apps, postharvest handling innovations and harmonized seed policy.

Key activities:

- Knowledge and capacity enhancement of smallholder farmers in adapting and using innovative/rapid technologies to boost potato production in partners countries
- Promotion and adoption of technologies, innovations and management practices (TIMPS) in partners countries
- Enhancing farmers' participation and competitiveness in potato markets in partners countries
- Enabling institutional policies and regulatory environment for farming as a business

Expected outcomes:

a) Increased knowledge and capacity of the farmers in adapting and using innovative/rapid technologies to boost potato production in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda
b) Increased adoption and utilization of potato technologies, innovations and management practices through demand-driven approaches in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda
c) Enhanced farmers' participation and competitiveness in potato markets in Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda

And the overall impact is intended as improved productivity, food security and incomes in the EAC region through increased technology transfer and adoption, scalable and equitable agri-business models in seed and ware potato.

Strategic partners: SDGCA, NGO with Diplomatic status; Egerton University (EGU); NARO-KaZARDI Institution; Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB); KARLO Research Institution.

Comments from Participants:

- There is an issue with the availability of markets as there is no mention of partners in this respect. This is what would inform the kind of technologies to be considered in the project.
- The components of work package 2 in this project should be repositioned as work package 1 since they form the basis of the baseline studies. And it will be great to have this project link up with other 3rd party projects that have similar baselines.
- There is a need for harmonized standards with respect to seed policies.

4. Unlocking productivity using geospatial technologies (Kenya). *Led by Koppert Biological Systems*



This project seeks to unlock productivity within smallholder farming systems through the use of geospatial technology (GIS), artificial intelligence and biological technologies in the face of climate change. It recognizes the role that technology can play in the mitigation of climate change as it has negative effects on the farming communities- the majority of whom are smallholders. It focuses on four (4) Kenyan Counties: Machakos, Kitui, Migori and Homabay.

Key activities:

- Develop and validate biological, GIS and AI technologies for detecting and mitigating biotic and abiotic stresses within smallholder farming systems.
- Demonstrate application and use of biological technologies, GIS and AI to smallholder farmers in four (4) counties.
- Train 5000 smallholder farmers on the use of biological technologies, GIS and AI to improve their productivity by 10-20%.
- Upscale biological technologies, GIS and AI technologies for smallholder farmers.
- Improve access to markets for smallholder farmers through linkages to selected off-takers.

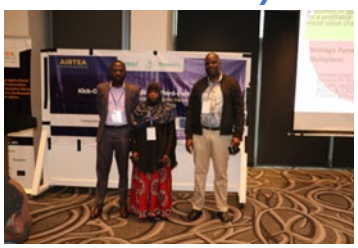
Strategic partners: Kenyatta University; Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Organization; Geo-Spatial International Multipliers; County extension staff, Ministry of Agriculture, Agro-dealers,

aggregators, farmer groups, community-based organizations, non-Governmental organizations

Comments from Participants:

- The 1st expected outcome should rather be captured as an output.
- Considering that this project enlists about five (5) partnerships, it is important to devise an approach to ensure speed.

5. AGRENES. *Led by AGRENES*



The AGRENES' project on Dairy and Maize Value Chain seeks to build the capacity of Ugandan youth & women in agribusiness; for a profitable dairy and maize value chains.

The project seeks to carry out the following:

- Capacity Development – model farms
- Support Local Seed Business (LSB)
- Train farmers in agribusiness skills
- Deploy farmer-led learning platforms (FLPs)
- Develop a digital MSP tool-Agribusiness Mgr.
- Train farmers in pre-and post-harvest handling
- Popularize Contract Farming Schemes (CFS)

The following are among the expected outcomes:

a) 125 present agri-enterprises supported
b) 65 new agribusinesses developed; 45 for women and 20 for youths
c) 2500 youths trained in agribusiness & supported; *Local Seed Business (LSBs), Agro-input dealers, contract farming schemes, processers, traders*
d) Increased productivity of dairy and maize
e) Green jobs for youths & women

Strategic partners include Makerere University, NARO –NaLIRRI, AGRILIV, AGRENES, youth and women groups, and the private sector.

Comments from Participants:

- There is the need to engage an institution/ association of farmers. These institutions help pick up learnings and follow up through reflection-based activities.
- The cause for a focus on more than one value chain should be clarified.
- The project needs to highlight the focus on women and youth in the work packages.
- The project should outline the paths for market linkages.
  The institution of farmers would be important in discussions on capacity development.
- To create a strategy-focused enterprise, cooperatives/ groups/youth networks should be considered in this initiative. However, it would not be necessary to form new cooperatives/ groups just for this project. The project can be worked out through already existing structures such as EAFF and YPARD.
- The project should identify the policies that border on the market, plan on how to lobby accordingly, and include policy regulators at different levels of the project.

6. Market access for Africa Indigenous Vegetables and Value-Added Products. *Led by Uganda Christian University*



This project seeks to develop a vibrant seed system that will enable small-scale farmers to match market expectations of consistent quality and volume demands in Uganda.
The project seeks to achieve the following:

a) A 6% improvement in knowledge in contractual production as a business
b) A digitized management information system
c) A business and quality assurance system for AIVs

And the expected impact is an improved organizational framework as well as improved AIV access to markets.

Strategic partners: Youth and women farmer organizations; Farmgain Africa Ltd; Syova seed (U) Ltd; related vegetable businesses

Comments from Participants:

- The project needs to state the particular vegetables in focus. And there should be a mapping of the vegetables to be consumed. This should be open to one (1) or two (2) vegetables that would make economic sense to the farmers. With this, seed

certifications will be used to vet the farmers on their production levels to facilitate the mobilization of farmer groups who can produce the quantities mentioned.

- The extent of the engagement of the extension services should be outlined. And the end-users should reflect on all work packages.
- It is important to define the term digitalization in the context of this project.

7. Youth Leading Changes in Resilient Private EAS for Job and Wealth Creation. *Led by Youth Engagement in Agriculture Network (YEAN)*



This is a youth-led project which seeks to promote private extension models through the facilitation of access to technology and research. It involves strengthening the capacity of youth in value chain-specific services as well as increasing access to resilient private advisory and extension services for farmers. This focusses on seven (7) Districts in Rwanda: Kayonza, Rwamagana, Kicukiro, Gasabo, Musanze, Rubavu, and Nyabihu.

The strategic partners are Youth Engagement in Agriculture Network- YEAN; Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board; and the University of Lay Adventist of Kigali.

Among the key activities are:

- Curation and customization of Learning Materials
- Agribusiness Enterprise and Research Incubation services
- Development and scaling of youth-led models to promote innovative agriculture practices
- Offering training on private extension and Advisory services
- Peer-to-peer coaching to digital extension agents (70% youth, 50% women)
- Offering Onsite support and coaching services to farmers
- Developing and implementing equity financing models with farmers
- Conducting the project research
- Sharing and disseminating the research results

Expected outcome and impact:

a) 50 Skilled youth transition from unemployment/under-employment to professional farmers

b) 1,550 farmers adopt innovative agriculture practices and have opportunities to improve the management of their businesses to create profits and capture the productivity gain along the value chain
c) 4500 farmers have access to digital technologies and tools for scaling up agricultural technologies along the agricultural commodity value chains
d) Access to youth-led knowledge and resources enhanced (human, technological)
e) Increased use of Climate-Smart Agriculture practices in the communities.

Comments from Participants:

- It would be appropriate to streamline the government's approach to accelerating extension systems.
- Define the scope of having the youth lead the EAS.
- Reconsider the number of youth to be impacted.
- It is important to note that private extension works best when farmers are engaged in a contract. There is usually the question of what gain there is for farmers if they pay for the services of youth in EAS as opposed to the AES provided by the government for free.

8. Cassava Value Chain. *Led by the University of Nairobi*



This project tackles the need to facilitate knowledge production and uptake to drive innovation along the cassava value chain; and to improve value chain actors' skills in the cassava seed system, value addition & marketing. The countries of focus are Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda.

The strategic partners are the University of Nairobi; National Agricultural Research Organizations; University of Rwanda; Divine Organic Food; Kinazi Cassava Plant Ltd; Renman Africa: KEPHIS (Kenya) &Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry & Fisheries (Uganda); TVETs (2 polytechnics in Kenya & Rwanda); KALRO –Kenya & RAB –Rwanda; Public and Private extension; Farmer groups, cooperatives and associations: RUFORUM.

Expected outcomes and impact:

a) Improved skills sets for cassava value chain actors on cassava propagation, seed system, value addition and marketing
b) Efficient method for producing and delivery of healthy cassava planting materials co-created and used
c) Cassava planting materials certification is in place

d) Agro-processing hub developed in cassava farming communities and priority cassava products promoted
e) Enhanced engagement of cassava value chain actors on digital platforms
f) Enhanced capacity for at least 900 women players in various sections of the cassava value chain
g) Enhanced engagement of Universities/research community and industry for sustainable uptake of technologies and management practices
h) Initiated policy review and institutional framework to improve intellectual property rights

Comments from Participants:

i) The project should consider working with CIDA on short training sessions for students even after the span of the project.
j) As partnership is key to this project, it is important to consider how the other projects will be segregated to avoid replications of similar outputs during reporting.
k) Institutions of farmers should be identified for involvement in the project.
l) The term "digital platform" in the context of the project should be defined.
m) A mechanism for sustainability should be put in place to ensure that the women targeted will continue to be engaged after the span of the project.

9. Digital connectors for farming communities. *Led by the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS)*



This project is set to address Africa's challenges arising from population growth and climate change while harnessing youth's capacity in agriculture. It also considers the potential of digital technology for Africa in agriculture as well as Digitalisation in AEAS. This is geared toward producing knowledge to strengthen the process of digitalisation; digital extension packages; and lessons and products scaled to other AFAAS CFs.

Strategic partners include: AFAAS, UFAAS, KeFAAS, RW–FAAS, Ag Connectors

The project's activities focus on digital business development and the creation of a conducive environment for Digital Connectors.

Comments from Participants:

- There should be a model/ plan for sustainability as running digital platforms is expensive.

- The end-users and how they will be involved should be noted. This should be integrated into the three (3) work packages.

10. Leveraging the benefits of multi-stakeholder partnerships to support rural women and youth in dairy production. *Led by the Co-operative Alliance of Kenya*



This project aims to increase income and improve livelihoods, food and nutrition security and safety of the women and youth dairy farmers in six (6) cooperatives in four (4) counties in Kenya: Embu, Kirinyaga, Nyandarua, Nyeri.

The project will work on the following:

- Increase in value and volume of milk aggregated by dairy cooperatives.
- 2,400 women and youth increasetheir capacities.
- A functional MSP network of dairy value chain actors.
- Effective knowledge management strategy in place
- The number of policies, laws and regulations at different stages of development.

Strategic Partners & Multipliers: Kenya Animal Genetic Resource Centre, Perfometer Agribusiness, New Kenya Co-operative Creameries, Co-op Consultancy & Bancassurance Intermediary, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Co-operatives, national & county level, Kenya Dairy Board and six (6) co-operative Societies

Commentts from Participants:

- Considering that this project is scaling up a previous ACP program aside AIRTEA, it is important to ensure that reporting lines do not get entangled.
- Indicators should be revised taking issues on asset acquisition into consideration.
- A Knowledge Management strategy should be in place to enable the movement of data from the farmer level to the other organizational levels.

11. Harnessing multi-stakeholder IPs for Knowledge transfer and aquaculture value chain development in Uganda. *Led by Abi Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute (ABI ZARDI)-NARO*



This project is set to foster an inclusive innovation environment in the aquaculture value chain for improved livelihood and rural transformation in Uganda. It addresses challenges and skills across producers, processors, marketers, distributors, etc. It is therefore not selective to value chain players in the context of the ecosystem. It rather arranges activities to selectively solve the unique challenges for the various actors. NEPAD has expressed interest in this in connection with the AfCTA.

Expected outcomes and impact:

The outcomes expected include:

a) An increase in youth and women associations empowered to engage in profitable businesses along the aquaculture value chain.
b) Framework for co-creation, learning, technology transfer and financial services established.
c) Increased capacity of the youth and women in agribusiness learning and market access.

And these will yield the following impacts:

• At least a 20% increase in fish productivity and profitability among the aquaculture value-chain actors.
• At least 5% increase in income and nutritional status among rural households engaged in aquaculture.
• At least 2% improvement in policy and innovation capacity for the efficiency of the aquaculture industry.
• At least a 2% increase in income amongst women and youth engaged in the aquaculture value chain.

Comments from Participants

- The project should elaborate on what aquaculture system it seeks to focus on. It should also include specific activities related to value-addition.
- Attention should be paid to the biological input (seed and feed among others) and related knowledge for uptake by the farmers.

Day 2 of the Kick-off Meeting of the AIRTEA Third-Party Projects

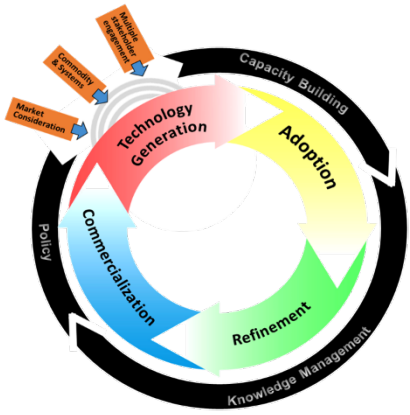


Figure 1: FARA's Innovation to Impact Framework (I-IF)

The AIRTEA M&E Framework – Anselme Vodounhessi, M&E Specialist, FARA; and Gerard den Ouden, OACPs

The general AIRTEA M&E Framework was presented to guide the finetuning of the Result frameworks of third-party projects. The AIRTEA project seeks to improve the health of African farming systems in the different ecological zones along the various value chains. The project is characterized by a marginal improvement of rural livelihoods while paying apt attention to women and youth. This quest for improvement in the farming systems and livelihoods focuses primarily on the following: Persistent rural poverty; Low income; Food security challenges; Lack of job opportunities as well as Marginalized women and youth. It has been established that these challenges persist due to limited access to science and technology by rural farmers.

Therefore, in using FARA's Innovation to Impact Framework (I-IF) for dissemination, while putting women and youth at the centre, the AIRTEA project seeks to bridge the gap between research/technology and the end-users, through large-scale access to science and technology. This will be achieved through the proof of the concepts of IPs and ABLA.

Theory of Change and results pathway

The conviction that drives the design of the AIRTEA project posits that IF the capacities of youth and women are strengthened, and new business services are offered to value chain actors then women and youth will be actively involved in national, regional and global food systems. As such the design promotes the establishment and operationalization of IPs and ABLA platforms. Coupled with the outcome of the active involvement of women and youth is the adoption of technologies, knowledge and innovation by all stakeholders involved in the proven concept of ABLA. This will subsequently lead to Improved profitability and employment opportunities along agricultural commodity value chains. Thus, the impact will be realized as sustainable agrarian livelihoods and rural transformation with growth in household income and the employment rate.

In line with this theory, the interventions under this project are outlined as such:

- Create synergies for stakeholder action in national agricultural research and innovation ecosystems
- Support technology transfer, knowledge management and information communication among stakeholders

- Support inclusive capacity development and business incubation along country priority value chains for smallholders and other value chains stakeholders
- Coordination, Management, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

These interventions are expected to yield the following outputs:

Output 1.1. Multi-stakeholder IPs and linkages along country commodity value chains established and supported

Output 1.2. Capacities of youth and women involved in multi-stakeholder IPs strengthened

Output 2.1. ABLA platforms established and operational

Output 2.2. Practical solutions and related knowledge products developed and availed by ABLA platforms to address constraints amongst commodity value chain actors

Output 2.3. Collaborative partnerships of women and youth with other actors along the value chain, within ABLA platforms, established and strengthened

Output 2.4. Commodity value chain actors are capacitated in scaling up solutions (technologies, innovations and management practices)

Output 3.1. New business services offered by operators along value chains

Subsequently, the three outcomes expected from the interventions are:

I. Increased involvement of women and youth in East Africa in linking multi-stakeholder innovation platforms (IPs) to practical solutions within national, regional and global food systems
II. Technologies, knowledge and innovations taken up by all stakeholders involved in the national and regional Agricultural Business Learning Alliance (ABLA) platforms; and
III. Improved profitability and employment opportunities along agricultural commodity value chains

Ultimately, the AIRTEA will achieve an impact on *sustainable agrarian livelihood and rural transformation in East Africa by applying inclusive research and innovation*. This will invariably benefit the value chain actors: Farmers, traders, processors, wholesalers, retailers and consumers, while addressing their challenges with climate change, technology the general enabling environment (government/ laws and regulations), among others.

The theory of change which is expected to generate the 21 indicators of the success of the project is thus illustrated in the visual presentation below:

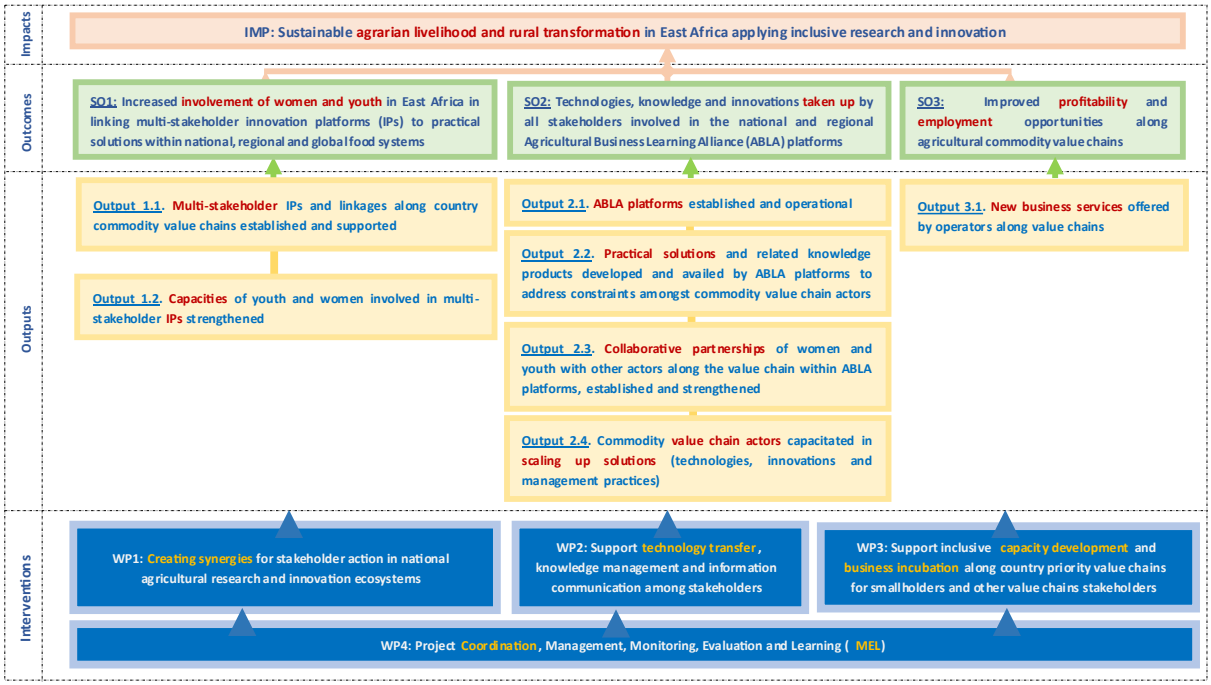


Figure 2: Theory of Change (ToC) & Results Pathway

To facilitate the production of standardized documentation, the 3rd party projects were directed on how to rightly map the contribution of their projects to the results. They were introduced to the 3rd Parties' Indicators Mapping and Matchmaking Template as well as the Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS) for this purpose and trained on how to formulate the results of the 3rd party projects. In the process, all parameters were defined, and participants were educated on how to track their results. The use of the MEL platform with which the AIRTEA M&E progress reporting will be carried out was demonstrated to participants of the session.

Day 3 of the Kick-off Meeting of the AIRTEA Third-Party Projects

Contractual procedures and regulations (Finance, audit, procurement, and Reporting) – Led by AIRTEA Fiduciary Team; Mrs Vesta Nunoo and Mr Johsnon Ukpong

The AIRTEA Fiduciary Team led discussions on the contractual procedures and regulations pertaining to the AIRTEA Project. The discussion encompassed protocols on sub-grant Compliance; Procurement; Financial Procedures; Verification; and Audits and Reporting.

A. Sub grant Compliance:

Highlighting the key compliance requirements in AIRTEA project for third-party grant agreements, the Fiduciary Team spoke about the obligations of the 3rd Parties which include the successful and timely implementation of activities and the delivery of the results envisaged under the project proposal document earlier submitted, reviewed, and competitively selected.

It was explained that FARA and the other consortium partners shall have the powers to take all actions necessary to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the ACP Innovation fund sub-Grant Agreement.

The sub-grant agreement come into force on 1st March 2022 and shall terminate on 31st August 2024. The Lead institution partner shall be mainly accountable for funds allocated to the project and all third-party partners are jointly responsible for the implementation of their project to achieve its aims and objectives under each specific sub-grant Agreement.

The financial records of each sub-grant will be retained for **five (5)** years after the completion date, with the following qualifications:

- Records relating to any audit initiated before the expiration of the five years shall be retained until the audit is concluded and audit findings involving the records have been resolved.

The discussions on funds transfer made it clear that transfers shall be subjected to the general conditions applicable to FARA and the EC/OACPS grant agreements on expenditure eligibility rules and procedures. The general conditions for the grant agreement FED/2020/ 421-369 will be attached to each sub-agreement. The General conditions of the main grant FED/2020/421-369 supersede all conditions and procedures for implementing the sub-grants

Sub-grant Contract Amendments can be made in the case where significant changes in Project design and objectives are effected; when there is an increase or decrease in total sub-grant amount; where there are modifications to provisions of the sub-grant agreement. It should however be noted that when amendments create new rights and obligations on

contracting parties, the new changes become an integral part of the sub-grant while other provisions remain unchanged.

If amendments need to be made, a request should be submitted sufficiently in advance to allow for preparation and proper analysis before the changes are effected.

An amendment enters into force and is binding from the moment both parties sign it.

B. Procurement:

Protocols on the procurement procedure are captured in the Procurement Policy Document. The objectives of the procurement policy are to ensure that the principles and procedures regarding procurement activities of the AIRTEA project are well explained to all partners. The document also outlines the roles of the Procurement Unit and associated committees. It ensures that there is a maximum value for money through orderly, efficient and effective execution of procurement activities. It also ensures transparency and competition throughout the procurement processes.

The Fiduciary Team discussed the core procurement principles mainly (value for money; fairness; integrity; transparency; efficiency and fit-for-purpose) emphasizing that contracts must not be split artificially to circumvent procurement thresholds and avoid strict procurement procedures. They emphasize that any good audit will show if the procedures were circumvented. Third-party projects should therefore work toward full disclosure and good procedures to avoid ineligibility.

Rules of Eligibility were outlined as follows:

a. Rule of Nationality

Participation in tender procedures administered by the beneficiary is open on equal terms to all natural and legal persons of the Member States and the States and territories of regions expressly covered and/or allowed by the Financial Regulation, the basic legislation or other instruments governing the aid programme under which the grant is being financed.

Tenderers must state, in the tender, the country of which they are nationals by presenting the usual proof of nationality under their national legislation – *see Annex A2a of the Practical Guide (Prag*).

b. Rule of Origin

For equipment and vehicles of a unit cost above Euro 5,000, contractors must present proof of origin at the latest when the first invoice is presented (Certificate of Origin). Failure to comply may result in the suspension of payment.

It was explained that goods can be from any origin if their value is below the threshold of the simplified procedure for supply contracts (EUR 100 000).

It must however be noted that the European Commission will carry out ex-post checks on beneficiary/beneficiaries' compliance with the principles as stated in 2.4 of PRAG. Failure to comply with these principles or rules would render the related expenditure **ineligible** for EC/EDF funding.

Participants were encouraged to plan and initiate their activities early so that delivery schedules are acceptable within the project period. Late procurements are ineligible.

Failure to comply with these general principles may lead to the annulment of the award decision by the EU.

C. Financial Reporting Procedures

Discussions on the financial reporting procedures brought to bear the need for semi-annual financial and technical reports (as per Article 9.2a of the sub-grant agreement). Subsequently, response to errors, ineligible expenses should submitted within 15 days after receipt of these queries.

Third parties were advised to guard against the submission of unrelated reports (financial and technical); different report formats from the ones used in planning; and late reporting.

Aside from timeliness, reports are expected to be accurate, sufficient and with relevant financial supporting documents to the reports as the contrary may signal the existence of financial improprieties within the project and consequently call for investigations.

Also, the third-party representatives were informed that without financial reports, donors would find it impossible to assess the usage of funds, and that would unfavourably affect prospects of future funding for the project.

A **practical session** on the financial reporting template was held in which other documents required were pointed out. There were the following:

- Semiannual reporting template
- Transaction listing
- Supporting document cross-reference to the transaction listing
- Bank statements showing proof of payment
- Final Report template showing cumulative reporting

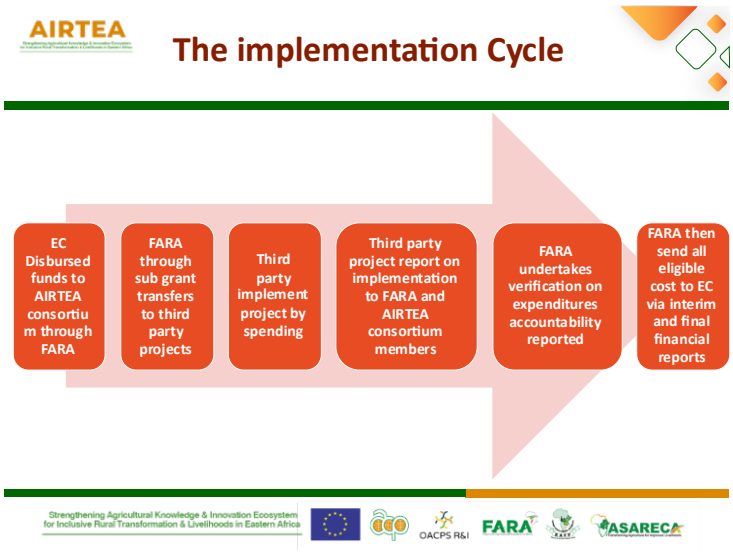


Figure 3: The Implementation Cycle of the AIRTEA 3rd Party Projects

D. Closure – FARA processes in line with EC close up processes were discussed

The following were outlined as the project closure process:

- Sub-grants will be closed upon receipt of the final disbursement information and Final Project Reports, and after determination that any other administrative requirements in the sub-grant have been met.
- In the event a final audit has not been performed prior to the closure of the sub-grant, FARA reserves the right to recover appropriate amounts after fully considering the recommendations on disallowed costs resulting from the final audit.
- FARA and the sub-grantee shall make arrangements to settle all genuine commitments before the completion of the grant period, on completion of the sub-grant period and/or termination of the sub-grant agreement or termination of the FARA grant used to fund the sub-project.
- Sub-grants will be closed upon receipt of the final disbursement information and Final Project Reports, and after determination that any other administrative requirements in the sub-grant have been met.
- In the event a final audit has not been performed prior to the closure of the sub-grant, FARA reserves the right to recover appropriate amounts after fully considering the recommendations on disallowed costs resulting from the final audit.
- FARA and the sub-grantee shall make arrangements to settle all genuine commitments before the completion of the grant period, on completion of the sub-grant period and/or termination of the sub-grant agreement or termination of the FARA grant used to fund the sub-project.

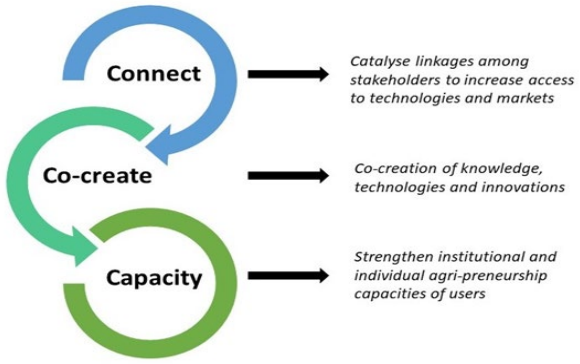
Introducing Agri-Business Learning Alliances (ABLA)- Karen Munoko Musikoyo-Nguru

The concept of Agri-Business Learning Alliances (ABLA) was introduced as an Instrument for Increasing Investments for Innovations and Entrepreneurship. This was against the background that there are:

- Low representation, low acknowledgement, and limited resources for women and youth with regards to their involvement in specific value chains.
- Limited free flow of information on market demands and limited skills on how to convert research and innovations to scalable, profitable businesses.
- Limited understanding of the whole value chain and the significance of strategic linkages (profitability of good policies and regulations).
- Limited pathways for an active role of the private sector in the uptake of technologies and commercialization of research products.
- Production constraints that result in unreliable production, low volumes, and poor quality of local products.

Against the background of the above-listed challenges, FARA draws from the lessons learned through the implementation of the University Business and Research in Agricultural Innovation (UniBRAIN), the Programme for Accompanying Research and Agricultural Innovation (PARI), and the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) to establish Agri-Business Learning Alliances (ABLA).

The aim of ABLA is to analyse what has worked and what has not worked, as well as document learnings from the activities carried out at the regional, sub-regional and national levels for sustained growth.



FARA also utilizes the Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS) concept to connect, build capacity and co-create, together with partners and stakeholders. Under this system, the ABLA enhances the capacity of stakeholders to adapt and respond in order to realise the potential of innovation. This realisation is driven by the capacities to navigate complexities; collaborate; reflect and learn; as well as engage in strategic and political processes.

ABLAs, therefore, thrive on the following key elements of AIS:

- Development of functional capacities

- Co-creation of knowledge
- Facilitating leadership/champions
- Reflection, joint learning & documentation
- Partnership and alliance building

Establishing an ABLA

An Agri-Business Learning Alliance refers to a market-centric learning milieu that enables entrepreneurship capacity-strengthening among its users in an open and inclusive process along specific developmental pathways.

An ABLA aims to facilitate the process of establishing and strengthening strategic linkages between the private sector, farmers, researchers, civil society, legal authorities and extensionists in a specific value chain.

Ultimately, an ABLA should serve as a platform to collate and integrate learning on business development leading to the generation of solutions and capacity development to address business constraints and bringing business ideas to scale.

ABLA Indicators

An ABLA should be able to identify the following indicators at the national, subregional and regional levels:

- The policies and institutions that are facilitating or hindering the process of adoption and utilization of technologies (for the market linkages to work)
- The gender parity within the alliance
- The level of youth involvement within the alliance
- The commodities/products/services for which the alliance is facilitating market access
- The alliance's existing partnerships (private sector, research, policy, extension)
- The membership/governance structure
- The capacity gaps to be considered for further support

In essence, the following are the main considerations when establishing an ABLA:

1. Identify existing policy frameworks and/or organizations that compliment your project to achieve its objectives and determine how best to link with them.
2. Develop a business model based on the capital outlay required for service provision, and to cover operating costs, thereby ensuring continuity of the alliance.
3. Utilize a more co-creative or adaptive approach based on specific needs and BUSINESS knowledge of the ALLIANCE and the venture being supported.

The AIRTEA Information and Communications Strategy – Benjamin Abugri

Considering that the AIRTEA Project is being implemented in collaboration with multiple partners while involving diverse stakeholder groups from different perspectives, it is necessary to have in place a clear knowledge management, communication, and visibility plan. Furthermore, such a plan is crucial for donors (EU & OCAPS) and the consortium members who are interested in the achievement of the results and the consequent visibility.

The KM and Communication Plan for the AIRTEA Project is therefore crafted with the following objectives:

1. Promote and communicate the results of the project and emerging opportunities to a wider audience (beyond the project partners). The audience comprises policymakers, farmers, businesses, journalists, and other stakeholders from different sectors such as agriculture, environment, trade, commerce, health, education, etc.
2. Promote the multi-stakeholder collaboration between the consortium made up of ASARECA, EAFF, FARA and regional/national/local stakeholders to deliver on the project goals.
3. Ensure visibility of OACPS and EU support to the project.

These objectives lead to the following strategic objectives:

- **Internal communication** as a routine dialogue and co-creation between consortium partners for a smooth implementation: OACPS/TAU. Mandatory & Non-Mandatory.
- **External Communication** demonstrating opportunities and value add associated with MSP in ARD, ABLA, funding opportunities, networking & partnership with other ACP-IF projects for lesson learning.

The strategy employs various KM and communication tools and channels to address the needs of diverse target groups: Farmer organizations, the Private Sector, NGOs, Researchers, Donor groups, and Agricultural Business Incubation Facilitators (eg. ABLAs). The use of these tools is guided by the following principles: Multi-stakeholder Partnerships, Collaboration, Coordination, Innovation, Sustainability and Gender Sensitivity.

Outlined below are the planned communication activities with the corresponding target audience:

Communication activities	Target audience
Governance meetings: SC, PTM (project technical meeting), Management meetings	Consortium members, TAU, OACPS

The official launch of the project	Consortium members, TAU, OACPS, ARD stakeholders in Kenya, Rwanda & Uganda
Launch of the call for proposals	Consortium members, TAU, OACPS, ARD stakeholders in Kenya, Rwanda & Uganda and beyond the three (3) countries
Expression of interest for the International Proposals' Evaluation	Experts in African ARD
Official closure of the project with capitalization of experiences	Consortium members, TAU, OACPS, third-party projects and all ARD stakeholders
Share information on funding opportunities	All African ARD with specific focus to East Africa
Share lessons learnt on MSPs along commodity value chains	All African ARD with specific target to East Africa
Participate in ARD events organized by other stakeholders	All African ARD with specific target to East Africa
Share reports of monitoring, evaluation and MTR findings	Eastern Africa ARD stakeholders

Below are the KM & Communication Tools and Channels:

Logo of the project	Webinar/Zoominar
PowerPoint presentation	Website
Leaflets & Posters	D-group and blogs
Booklets and Reports	Social media
Policy briefs	Use of video documentaries
Newsletter	Community radios and televisions
Press release	

Key Action Points

The action points agreed at the end of the workshop as the way forward include:

- Third-party projects to submit their revised logical framework by 15th April 2022.
- Third-party projects to submit their work plans and budget for the first year by 15th April 2022.
- The coordinating team to prepare contracts to be signed by the third parties by 30th April 2022.
- Third-party projects to sign consortium agreement with their respective project partners.
- Third-party projects to produce fact sheets about their projects to the coordinating unit of AIRTEA.

The workshop was successful with the achievement of the outputs listed below:

- Shared vision and understanding of the AIRTEA project by the project partners.
- Enhanced and approved work plan for year 1 for the implementation of project activities.
- An improved logical framework for third-party projects.
- Improved understanding of the communication and visibility strategies of the AIRTEA Project.
- Third-Party Projects are aware of the opportunities and conditions necessary for them to access additional support from the KCB Foundation.

Appendix:

Pictures from the Kick-Off Meeting for Third-Party Projects under AIRTEA






AIRTEA
Strengthening Agricultural Knowledge & Innovation Ecosystem for Inclusive Rural Transformation & Livelihoods in Eastern Africa
Beneficiary Countries






AIRTEA