Project Brief

Enhancing Adoption of Harmonized Standards for roots and tubers in Eastern and Central Africa

Enhancing livelihoods of small-holder value chain actors through commercialization and increased regional trade in roots and tuber crops in East and Central Africa
Background

Cassava and potato are the two most important root and tuber crops grown by farmers in East and Central Africa. They are an important source of calories for many communities throughout the year. In addition, they are a source of raw material for food, feed and industries and therefore hold great potential to fight rural poverty. However, this potential has not been well exploited in East and Central Africa (ECA).

To boost the exploitation of this untapped potential through processing and regional trade, the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) has supported the development and harmonization of standards for potatoes and cassava and their processed products in the region.

The standards define quality and safety of food and non-food items at farm level production and primary processing; assist manufacturers to improve quality and safety of products; and are used as yardsticks for the assessment of quality and certification of products.

The challenge: Unfortunately, the awareness of these standards and adoption among the value chain actors and other stakeholders in the region is very low. This in turn has resulted in sub-standard and unsafe products in the market. Furthermore, the regulatory authorities in the country members have limited capacity in monitoring the compliance of the standards.
The project

Project duration: 9 months

Project budget: USD 317,298.25

Donor: USAID

Country project: Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Rwanda.


Goal and objectives

Project goal: Enhancing livelihoods of small-holder value chain actors through commercialization and increased regional trade in roots and tuber crops in ECA.

Key Objectives:

- To increase the general awareness of value chain actors on the availability of cassava and potato standards: Facilitate access and availability of the information on the requirements and benefits of implementing the harmonized standards among all stakeholders along the cassava and potato value chain including farmers, processors, traders, policy-makers and the general public.

  The project will map the value chains using gender disaggregated data, and seeks to facilitate information flow across the value chains by promoting the formation of platforms and
linkages among the actors during the implementation of the project activities such as during awareness creation and training workshops.

- To enhance the capacity of the different value chain actors to apply the harmonized standards to improve the quality and safety of marketed products: Develop quality management and food safety manuals and train selected actors along the value chain on the use and implementation of the manuals.

- To improve the technical capability of the regulators to monitor compliance: Develop inspection manuals and checklists to guide regulators in carrying out regulatory activities including self-monitoring by the industry and train them on their usage.

The project has selected four of the 24 standards (EAS 748 on Fresh potato, EAS 738 on Fresh sweet cassava, EAS 745 on Fried potato crisps and EAS 740 on cassava flour) but the lessons learnt will be used in promoting all.

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