

Name of the activity, component or project

PABRA (Pan-Africa Bean Research Alliance) which consists of three regional networks and has technical support from CIAT, Cali (Colombia): <http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/africa/pabra.htm>

Name of the country, and the date of the intervention

Eastern, Central and Southern Africa region (18 countries); 1984 - ongoing

A brief description of the challenge you faced,

Beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) are an important staple all over Eastern Central and Southern Africa providing up to 60% of total protein intake and important micronutrient such as Fe and Zn to the diet of rural populations. Consumed as dry or snap beans and also as leaves, they also provide an important quantity of provitamin A. Production faces constraints due to low soil fertility, pests and drought calling for the introduction of different sustainable technologies considering the variety of the agro-ecological zones where beans are produced. Seed production and dissemination as well as linking farmers to the market are other challenges the program had and still has to cope with.

How you approached it

The program started with three regional research programs that have built up strong partnerships with extension and rural development entities as well as private seed producers (individual and cooperatives) with technical and management support from CIAT. Gradually the three programs merged into one regional program consisting of two networks (ECABREN and SABRN). Regional and national scientists (or NARS) took over the breeding and adaptive research while CIAT with its strengths in strategic research adjusted its agenda to new challenges that cannot be readily addressed by local/national institutions. The Central and Eastern network of ECABREN was integrated into the ASARECA portfolio, the Southern network (SABRN) is working under SADC. USAID, Canadian CIDA and SDC co-fund the program since its inception.

The development impact, and Name and email address of a contact person for further information

In 2004 the program adopted a strategy for wider impact including a participatory Monitoring and Evaluation system. In addition, high emphasis has been put on gender and health & nutrition related issues and the adoption/dissemination of new environmental friendly technologies in pest and disease control as well as in managing drought and improving soil fertility.

In a nutshell, selected impact as of 2006 can be summarized as follows:

- Over 9.7 million households (48.4 million individual men and women farmers) are reportedly growing and/or consuming new bean varieties. (E.g. The new varieties are high yielding and disease resistant and are grown widely. The improved varieties are grown in 72% of all rural household in western Kenya, 79% in northern Tanzania and 53% in Uganda.)
- About 450'000 men and women farmers have been recipients of both new and existing technologies in integrated pest and soil fertility management (adoption rate of up to 85%.)
- Substantial number of track records and success stories at household and local/national level on increased bean production/consumption even during period of scarcity as well as on improved health and income.
- 31 new bean varieties belonging to the major market classes some with multiple stress resistance (biotic and abiotic) have been released by 8 PABRA countries and 5 micronutrient enriched varieties are under field testing
- As of 2006, a total of 343 development and research service providers were involved in the delivery of PABRA funded activities ranging from on-farm variety testing to counseling for exporting snap beans.