



ASARECA Regional Agricultural Information and Learning Systems (RAILS)

Workshop to establish a National RAILS in
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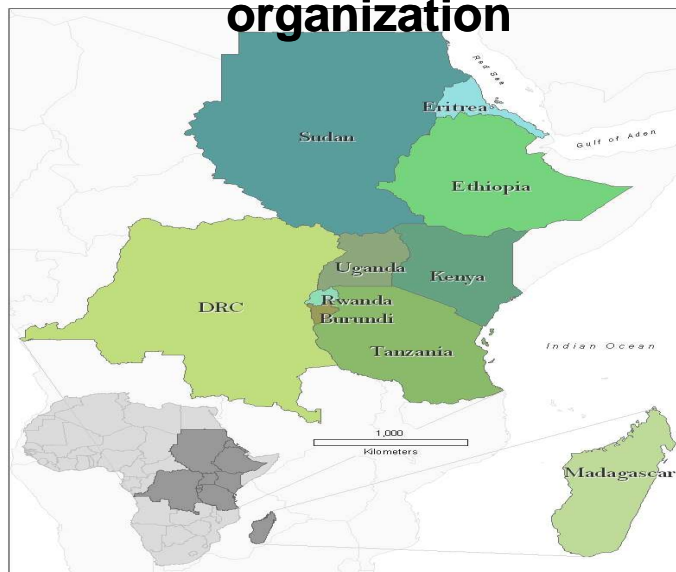
Introduction to ASARECA

Association for Strengthening Agricultural
Research in Eastern and Central Africa

(10 member countries)



ASARECA Sub regional organization



ASARECA Mission

- Enhance **regional collective action** in *agricultural research for development, extension, training and education* to promote economic growth, fight poverty, eradicate hunger and enhance sustainable use of resources in Eastern and Central Africa



“..regional collective action...”

Through ASARECA, **agricultural scientists** in the 10 countries *work together and in partnership* with **farmers, extension, private sector, scientists of regional and international institutions** and **development partners** to come up with innovations that could lead to *agricultural-led* economic growth, poverty eradication and improved livelihoods.



"..regional collective action..."

- calls for
 - strong partnerships that are **multidisciplinary and participatory**
 - incorporating the **needs** a wide range of stakeholders.
 - incorporating **feedback** from a wide range of stakeholders.
 - the **generation and communication** of **timely, quality** agricultural knowledge and information.
 -a RAILS



"..regional collective action..."

- Calls for **Building Learning Teams**

Among Research, Extension, Agricultural line ministries, education & training, Farmer organizations, and civil society organizations, private sector.....

....glued by info professionals



RAILS Objectives

1. Advocacy for increased investment in agricultural information systems by African governments
2. **Improve the access and contribution by African ARD Stakeholders in the global knowledge sharing**
3. Facilitate synergies by linking African information conduits to global providers of agricultural information
4. **Build an African platform for agriculture information and learning system through consolidation of national to subregional to continental and global information systems – www.erails.net**



RAILS Objectives

To achieve these objectives, FARA/RAILS works with the information and communication team of each of sub-regional research organizations (ASARECA) who in turn partners with member national agricultural research systems (NARS).



ASARECA/RAILS

Purpose and objectives

- To implement the RAILS project in the ASARECA region based on the needs and requirements of ASARECA and its members NARS.

Expected outputs

- Establishment of the RAILS learning teams and their national focal points who will coordinate the RAILS activities at the national level.



Expected ASARECA/RAILS outputs

- Learning teams (LTs) established
- National gateways on the Africa-wide Agricultural Info system (AIS) portal set up.
- LTs capacity strengthened to use AIS
- Skills of LTs enhanced to facilitate knowledge sharing and learning among various agricultural research & devt stakeholders
- Priority information for sharing on gateway identified by LTs
- Info exchange within the AIS structures (national-sub-regional- continental) enhanced and made regular



ASARECA Secretariat is expected to:

- Facilitate consultations among national focal points in setting up *an African network for agricultural knowledge exchange*.
- Carry out capacity building and technical advice to national teams as they develop their AIS portals and other ICT integrated tools



National RAILS are expected to:

- Facilitate dissemination of information to support technology transfer (e.g. under DONATA.)
- Manage national inter-disciplinary & cross-sectoral partnerships of individuals, groups and institutions learning teams supported by ICT infrastructure and the AIS established under the RAILS project – www.erails.net .
- Ensure that RAILS contributes to the wider information and communications initiatives of their institutions.
- Organize and host national RAILS learning and training activities.



Opportunities for RAILS

- Greater openness and collaboration among NARS (pressure from government policies, restructuring)
- Great improvement in communication infrastructure – Conducive government interventions in ICT, rural electrification
- Bandwidth costs are coming down in most ECA countries –as optical fibre infrastructure and submarine systems are put in place –SEACOM, EASSY, TEAMS etc these are undersea fibre optic cables that linking the ECA countries to the rest of the world.



Opportunities for RAILS

- Convergence of mobile technology with Internet technology
 - data transfer originally – SMS, Now Internet Access



Soon....

- Bandwidth limitations and lack of ICT infrastructure will no longer be an excuse. We must be *prepared with content*, we must organise *our information products and services*, we must be prepared....and RAILS provides the opportunity



THANK YOU FOR ATTENTION

