

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT



Canada helps poor farmers in partner countries gain better access to new technologies and the specialized expertise they need for their farming operations to keep pace with the growing demand for food.

Through DFATD's support, the Pan-Africa Bean Research Alliance (PABRA) surpassed its 2013–2014 target of 10 million households (at least 50 percent of them led by women). PABRA promotes the use of improved and marketable bean varieties; new crop-management techniques; and micronutrient-rich, bean-based products. In 2013–2014, the total number of households reached was 13,045,820, of which 56 percent were led by women. The PABRA focuses on improving bean crop production through strategic research efforts in order to increase the nutrition and food security of rural populations, with a focus on women and children. Through its regional networks, the PABRA helped release 178 improved bean varieties that are resistant to stresses such as drought, disease, and pests; have higher iron and zinc content; and meet market demands in more than 20 countries. This project contributes directly to one of the four components of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, encompassing agricultural research as well as technology dissemination and adoption.

Launched in 2009 with DFATD's and IDRC's support, the Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFSRF) twins Canadian and developing countries' expertise to promote innovative agriculture, especially those that benefit women and smallholder farmers. Since then, the CIFSRF has supported 21 projects that have benefited more than 75,000 farmers through its work to tackle challenges ranging from revitalizing crops such as indigenous vegetables and small millets, developing vaccines for livestock diseases, and using nanotechnology to reduce fruit losses in storage and shipping. Following a successful first phase, Canada announced in April 2013 a \$62.5-million investment for the second phase of the CIFSRF and launched two new calls for research.

A four-year, \$15-million research partnership, the Cultivate Africa's Future program, was formally launched in July 2013 in Ghana between the IDRC and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research. The program focuses on hunger in Africa to enhance long-term food security in ten eastern and southern African countries by supporting innovation by smallholders, most of whom are women.

INNOVATION TO ENHANCE FOOD SECURITY: CANADA'S SUPPORT TO AGRESULTS

In 2013–2014, the Department of Finance Canada provided \$10 million of a total commitment of \$40 million toward AgResults via the World Bank Group. AgResults is an innovative, results-based initiative aiming to enhance smallholder farmer well-being and food security in the developing world. Specifically, AgResults uses pilot projects that incentivize the adoption and/or the development of demand-driven solutions in order to address important agricultural and food security challenges. Through a pay-for-results format, AgResults leverages private sector investment and innovation while stimulating increased food security and sustained economic growth. The World Bank Group manages the financial intermediary fund through which donors make their contributions toward this initiative.

AgResults' financial and administrative structure is now fully functional, and significant progress was made in implementing initial pilot projects focused on enhancing harvest management and nutritional fortification of staple crops in sub-Saharan Africa. This included considerable in-country activities in which local stakeholders demonstrated a strong interest, thus resulting in good take-up for the pilots. Moreover, the evaluation criteria that will determine AgResults' effectiveness over time were refined through continued analysis. Beyond activities relating to existing projects, AgResults partners also worked on developing new pilot ideas focused on innovative solutions to global agricultural and food security challenges while taking into consideration AgResults' four thematic areas: increasing yields, reducing post-harvest losses, improving livestock management and enhancing nutrition.