The role of the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) in the attainment of household food security in Kenya: A policy and organizational review

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Abstract

The Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) is a government organization mandated to conduct research into, among others, crop and livestock production and marketing. In 2009, it launched a new strategic plan for the period 2009–2014, together with its implementation framework. This strategic plan aims to position KARI as a facilitator of growth in the agricultural sector in order to enable an average growth rate of 7% per year over the next 5 years, as stipulated in the Kenya Vision 2030 policy. This paper reviews KARI’s new strategic plan within the context of recent policy reforms at national, regional and global levels. It specifically examines the strategy in the context of Vision 2030, the Kenya Agricultural Sector Development Strategy (ASDS), the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), and the Millennium Development Goals. The paper then discusses KARI’s newly adopted Agricultural Product Value Chain (APVC) approach, which is expected to position KARI strategically as a key player within the National Agricultural Research System (NARS). It also highlights progress in the implementation of the new strategic plan and APVC approach with specific emphasis on partnerships, markets and gender as key focus areas and the implications of these on food security in Kenya.