

A Research Team led by Prof. Stephen Gichovi Mbogoh of the Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nairobi, wins the First Round of the ASARECA Research Grants Calls under the ASARECA competitive bidding process after the Team's Research Concept Note entitled "Facilitating Implementation of Policies to Enhance Equitable Access to Input and Output Markets in Eastern and Central Africa" was selected for development into a full research proposal for possible financing after a competitive bidding process. The Concept Note is to be developed into a full proposal between 31st May and 8th June, 2014 and will be submitted to ASARECA for possible financing once again under the competitive bidding process after that. The Research Team is Multi-national, Multi-institutional and highly competitive from professional perspectives and is constituted as described hereafter.

The key researchers from Partner Institutions in Kenya are as follows: (i) **from the University of Nairobi, Prof. Stephen G. Mbogoh**, who is an Agricultural Economist and Marketing and Trade Specialist, will be the project Principal Investigator (PI). He will coordinate project activities across the region while maintaining linkages with all partners. He will work closely with a Team of expert from the University of Nairobi, namely **Dr. John Mburu** (Economist/Policy Specialist), **Prof. P. M. Kimani** (Crops Specialist/Agronomist) and **Prof. M. S. Badamana** (Animal Scientist/Dairy Specialist) to inform how policies interface/interact with technical aspects of crops and livestock production and marketing. Prof. Mbogoh and Dr. Mburu will also provide technical backstopping on policies to the other specialists in partner institutions and work closely with the partners in developing annual work plans, implementation of proposed activities, monitoring, evaluation and reporting; (ii) **from the National Potato Council of Kenya (NPCK), Mr. Wachira Kaguongo** will lead and support partners in developing policy adoption and implementation pathways and developing country roadmaps for implementation. His experience in lobby and advocacy, organization and coordination of stakeholders' taskforces and platforms will be useful in developing strategies for enhancing policy implementation and institutionalization.

The collaborating researchers and institutions in Kenya are as follows: (i) **Ms Nancy M Laiboni** of the **Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA)** will provide expertise in policy analysis, marketing and access to relevant agricultural data; (ii) **Dr. Makokha Stella Nabwile** of **Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI)** will facilitate access to information on available technologies, innovations and data in agricultural production and marketing; (iii) **Mr. Stephen Muchiri** of the **Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAF)**, which is a regional farmers association with membership and mandate covering the ECA countries, will be instrumental in lobby, advocacy and farmer training; and (iv) **Dr. Pascal Kaumbutho** of **Kenya Network for Dissemination of Agricultural Technologies (KENDAT)** is a specialist in Agricultural Mechanization & Renewable Energy Systems and will provide expertise in smallholder mechanization.

The key researchers in the Partner and Collaborating Institutions in the Other Participating ECA countries in this project are: (i) **Mr Bararyenya Astere** of the **Institut des Sciences Agronomiques du Burundi (ISABU)** in Burundi who has a wealth of experience in coordination and implementation of national and region projects, including some past ASARECA projects; (ii) **Ir. Jean Marie NDAYISHIMIYE** who is an agronomist engineer and Technical Coordinator of **Confédération des Associations des Producteurs Agricoles pour le**

Développement (CAPAD), which is a partner institution in Burundi with experience in managing multi-actor partnerships through good governance and improved learning processes; (iii) **Ir. MANIRAKIZA Vianney** of **Direction de la Promotion des Semences et Plants (DPSP)** which will also be a collaborator in Burundi. From Uganda we have (i) **Dr Jackline Bonabana-Wabbi** who is an agricultural economist and a senior Lecturer at **Makerere University**, which will be a partner and a lead institution in Uganda; (ii) **Dr Konstantine Okecha ODONGKARA** who is an agricultural economist working with National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), which will also be a partner organization in Uganda and a major source of expertise on agricultural and livestock technologies and knowledge management and information systems. From Rwanda, the Research Team will be supported by **Mr. Gafaraga** of the **IMBARAGA farmers association of Rwanda** which has been involved in implementing many development projects at farm levels and will thus be instrumental in creating awareness on inputs and output markets and policy implementation.

We wish the Research Team success as they embark on the Second and final Round of the ASARECA Research Grants Call competitive bidding process.