

# AFRICA LEAD II PROGRAM REVIEW

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO – KEY FINDINGS

### Introduction and Methodology

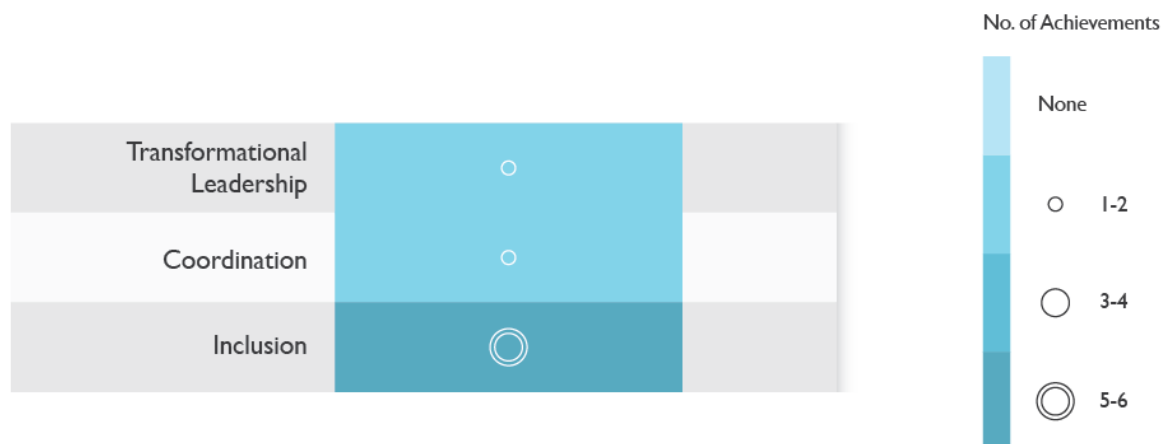
Africa Lead's program review presents important findings and recommendations from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) program and its partners. Fieldwork for the program review was carried out from 3 – 5 May 2017 in Kinshasa, DRC. Key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) were carried out with the following beneficiary institutions:

- Champions for Change (C4C)'s Champion's Network
- Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)
- Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)
- Office National du Café (ONC)

### Examples of Significant Achievements Influenced by Africa Lead

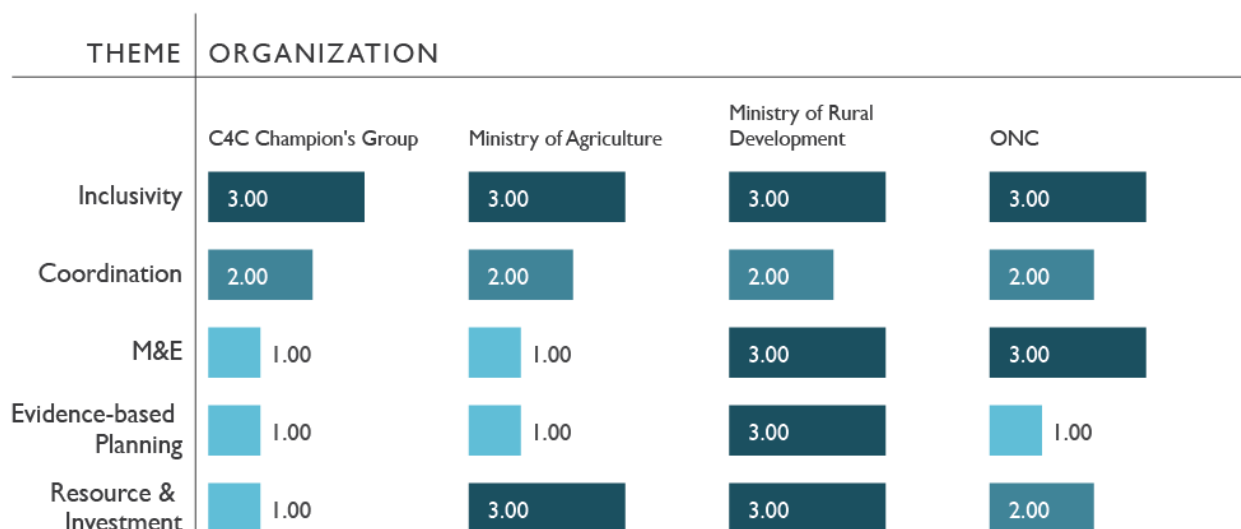
The DRC program beneficiaries detailed seven significant achievements influenced by Africa Lead. The graphic below characterizes these achievements into thematic areas of focus, counting the frequency with which each of the six themes of agricultural transformation are cited within the achievement examples. Detailed definitions as well as findings and recommendations for each of the six themes can be found in the accompanying summary booklet.

#### DRC



## Benchmarking Performance for Agricultural Transformation (BPAT)

Africa Lead’s key partners in the DRC program carried out a self-assessment, and mapped their performance against five of the six agricultural transformation themes in the BPAT tool. The BPAT tool allows organizations to rate themselves a score out of 5. A score of “1” is given to an organization that is performing insufficiently in a certain area. In contrast, a score of “5” is given to organizations whose performance is in accordance with best practices at the top international level. The BPAT tool also asks partners to provide evidence and examples of change to substantiate their scores. The following sections present a summary of the most significant changes presented by each partner.



## Most Significant Changes

### Champions for Chance (C4C) Champion’s Network

The Champion Network in the DRC is an informal network of agricultural stakeholders involved in Africa Lead’s 2016 C4C leadership training. In addition, Africa Lead engaged the network in its 2015 study of the DRC program mutual accountability process. Members of the network include individuals from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Finance, research centers, the private sector, women and youth organizations, and farmers associations.

#### *Most Significant Changes*

- At an individual level, key informants cited that Africa Lead helped them to expand their understanding of management within the field of agriculture. They reported that NSA members are applying their newfound knowledge to their work, which is leading to better inclusion and coordination in the sector.

- Following Africa Lead's leadership training, agribusiness entrepreneurs reported greater flexibility to make changes, as compared to government staff who reported constraints and limitations as a result of political instability.
- Key informants reported that they now understand that agriculture involves a variety of activities and areas, including funding, investment, strategy, production, transport, employment, partnership, and marketing.
- Both government and NSAs stated that the C4C training exposed them to a new approach to staff management. Key informants reported that they now understand that leadership is not about giving instructions or putting pressure on staff. Instead, good leaders provide a vision, set goals, build a team, and help develop plans for action. According to key informants, inclusion and coordination are key factors in their new management style.
- Several members of the Champion Network are active participants in the Group Thématique 9 (GT9), which is a coordination unit between government and NSA actors in the DRC. Key informants noted that their participation in the Champion Network helps to prepare them for more informed engagement in the GT9, and provides incentive to continue to participate in GT9 dialogue and discussions. For example, several agribusiness entrepreneurs reported that they have become more involved in the GT9 dialogue because they now view this work as critical to the success of their businesses.

### **The Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)**

As part of its mandate, the MoA defines the policies and strategic framework for national agricultural development, conducts diagnostic studies on the agricultural sector, and serves as the main implementing partner for development projects working in agriculture.

Africa Lead has been collaborating with the MoA since 2015 on a variety of support activities, including providing Champions for Change (C4C) leadership training, and facilitating platforms for inclusive dialogue. In 2015, Africa Lead conducted a study in partnership with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)/Regional Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System (ReSAKSS) on the quality of the Joint Sector Review (JSR) process in the DRC. This assessment provided an entry point for Africa Lead to begin working with the MoA and NSA stakeholders to improve platforms for mutual accountability in the DRC. In addition, Africa Lead provided C4C leadership training to key MoA staff in November 2016, which also included elements of Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) sensitization practices.

In 2017, Africa Lead supported the MoA to set up its first multi-stakeholder JSR Steering Committee and secretariat. The steering committee, led by the CAADP focal point within the MoA, includes government representatives as well as relevant members of the private sector and civil society organizations (CSOs). To prepare and orient the members of the steering committee, Africa Lead also provided significant support in the form of meetings, coaching, and overall guidance on the JSR process.

Africa Lead provided facilitation support to the Group Thématique 9 (GT9), which was intended to provide a framework for coordination and information-sharing between the MoA, the Ministry of Rural Development, the Ministry of Planning, and various farmers organizations and private sector actors. In

addition, Africa Lead provided secretariat support to ensure implementing partners are well coordinated with national-level goals and priorities through the DRC's Groupe Inter Bailleurs de l'Agriculture et Développement Rural/ the Multi-Donor Group on Agriculture and Rural Development (GIBADER).

#### *Most Significant Changes*

- Key informants at the MoA reported that Africa Lead helped the ministry participate in several GT9 meetings. While the forum is not meeting regularly, the framework and action planning helped to improve understanding and awareness of the potential for a more inclusive dialogue process in the agricultural sector.
- If functional, the GT9 has potential for contributing to the increased exchange of evidence-based information and knowledge, and the development of joint commitments both externally and within the government. The MoA stands to benefit greatly from this exchange by gaining information and perspective, as well as improved communication and coordination with participating ministries.
- According to MoA key informants, Africa Lead helped to establish the DRC's first multi-stakeholder JSR Steering Committee and functional JSR Secretariat. While the recommendations have not yet been implemented due to political instability and constant turnover in the ministries, Africa Lead is supporting the MoA in prioritizing the recommendations.
- According to respondents, the study conducted in 2015 has provided a useful roadmap for the way forward. The study involved a literature review as well as interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with government staff, NSAs, and development partners. It identified weaknesses in the existing JSR process in the DRC, including lack of representation of NSAs in the development of the National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP), and poor coordination between agricultural stakeholders. It recommended that the MoA establish a JSR process in accordance with African Union requirements, along with specific recommendations for improving the NAIP development process.

#### **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)**

The MoRD develops policies and programs to improve living conditions for rural populations across four areas: 1) socioeconomic infrastructure; 2) rural area restructuring and association strengthening; 3) rural area institutional review; and 4) studies and research. The ministry plays a crucial role in agricultural development by supporting the infrastructure required for agricultural activity (such as roads, bridges, dams, and markets). While not a key partner of Africa Lead, the project provided C4C leadership training to the MoRD staff in April and November 2016. Through the project's facilitation support to GT9, Africa Lead also supported the MoRD to participate as a member.

#### *Most Significant Changes*

- According to MoRD key informants, Africa Lead's support to the GT9 helped the ministry better understand the benefits of a more inclusive dialogue process on rural development issues.

Informants also reported that this improved awareness is now helping to contribute to better coordination and increased information from NSAs.

- Although it is not active, the GT9 consultation framework demonstrated the value of meeting directly with diverse agriculture stakeholders to discuss rural development issues and improve feedback loops.
- Key informants also reported that as a result of their participation in the GT9, the MoRD initiated a rural mapping activity to inform planning, and improve coordination among their stakeholders.

### **Office National du Café / National Coffee Office (ONC)**

The ONC is a public institution with a mandate to support the DRC's production, commercialization, and export of agriculture products. The ONC issues commercialization and export permits, certifies agricultural product quality, and manages data and statistics related to cocoa and coffee production and commercialization. The institution also plays an important role in increasing food security in the DRC by supporting coffee and cocoa producers to diversify their production, and ensure that farmers have a plan to integrate a variety of food crops.

In July 2016, Africa Lead conducted a Participatory Institutional Capacity Assessment and Learning (PICAL) activity in collaboration with the ONC. The results of the self-assessment revealed poor management practices, and evidence of deteriorating relationships with the institution's partners. In partnership with the ONC, Africa Lead developed an action plan to improve management, enhance confidence between the ONC and its partners, and strengthen ONC's service delivery to the DRC coffee sector. In addition, the PICAL identified four key trainings that Africa Lead could provide as immediate follow-up support to the ONC, including C4C leadership, results-based management (RBM), rapid results approach, and board governance and program design. To date, Africa Lead has delivered two of the four recommended trainings. In March 2017, Africa Lead provided leadership training to 29 ONC staff, and provided M&E and RBM training in May 2017.

#### *Most Significant Changes*

- Key informants at the ONC report that the PICAL findings and C4C training have positively affected ONC's management style, and increased the organization's commitment to providing quality service to agricultural stakeholders.
- Since implementing the PICAL action plan, the ONC has reduced its file processing time from three days to only two-to-three hours. Traditionally, ONC's slow processing of producer and exporter files contributed to its poor reputation. However, key informants reported that ONC's relationship and reputation with producers and exporters is now improving due to the reduction in processing time.
- The PICAL process is now aligned with the capacity building needs of the ONC, enabling the organization to improve its efficiency and service delivery. According to key informants, the ONC was a declining organization that the PICAL process and Africa Lead "saved". As a result of Africa Lead support, ONC staff are now more committed to providing quality services to stakeholders, which in turn is improving its reputation with partners.

## Key Findings

- 1. Political instability can be a serious constraint to the continuity of mutual accountability processes.**

The DRC has experienced ongoing political instability since Africa Lead started implementing activities in 2015. In fact, the Minister of Agriculture has changed three times since Africa Lead began collaborating with the MoA. During changes in leadership, the new management team is required to make necessary adjustments and prioritize specific activities. While the JSR Steering Committee is making incremental progress, the DRC has not yet held a JSR due to changes in leadership, and challenges in political buy-in to the process.

- 2. Africa Lead's activities in the DRC were useful in building awareness on the benefits of inclusive consultation and dialogue among stakeholders. While constraints exist in the system, incremental progress has been made to improve policy dialogue between the government and the NSA.**

All four of Africa Lead's key beneficiaries in the DRC reported performance improvements in the area of inclusion over the past two years, with three of the four beneficiaries indicating Africa Lead's contribution to this positive change.

- 3. During times of political turmoil, a functional JSR Steering Committee can provide a useful entry point to help develop a practice of constructive dialogue and demonstrate the value of purposeful collaboration in preparation for a JSR.**

Due to the political situation in DRC and numerous personnel changes in the Ministries, the GT9 faced challenges to remain active and relevant as a forum for improving communications, feedback, learning, and dialogue between government and NSAs in the agriculture sector. Although the MoA faced challenges in regular organizing GT9 meetings, Africa Lead worked closely with the ministry to facilitate group-based action planning, multi-stakeholder consultation meetings and technical validation workshops through the JSR Steering Committee. These activities helped to develop a practice of purposive collaboration and ownership, while also providing an entry point for emphasizing the importance of the JSR in the future. Similarly, the young C4C Champions Network provides the opportunity for future NSA networks to coalesce, gain practical experience, and grow relationships with their governmental peers.

- 4. Feedback from external stakeholders on performance, when used constructively, can provide a meaningful incentive to drive organizational change.**

In place of a more typical Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA) tool, Africa Lead implemented the PICAL approach with the ONC. By measuring poor customer satisfaction with outputs as one of the four assessment elements, the PICAL made a convincing push for concrete changes. As a result, the ONC reported that they viewed the findings as a call for immediate change, which in turn provided a strong incentive for its leadership to effectively implement the findings.