
Minutes of Nineteenth CARD Steering Committee Meeting (SC19)

Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire

3rd July 2023

The Nineteenth Meeting of Steering Committee members of Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD) was organized by the CARD Secretariat at Sofitel Hotel in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire on 3rd July 2023. Representatives from AfricaRice, African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), African Development Bank (AfDB), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), East African Community EAC), Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Japan International Research Council for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), and World Food Program (WFP) (Alphabetical order) were present. African Union-New Partnerships for African Development (AU-NEPAD), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and World Bank were absent. The meeting was co-chaired by Dr. Baboucarr Manneh (Director General, AfricaRice) and Mr. Shinjiro Amameishi (Deputy Director General, Economic Development Department, JICA).

Objectives

The SC19 was intended to (i) inform the SC members on the various progresses made under CARD's phase-II, (ii) discuss the key expectations from the ensuing Ninth General Meeting (GM9) of CARD stakeholders, and (iii) get updates from the SC members on their rice-related activities in CARD member countries.

Progress under CARD Phase-II

Mr. Ken Fujie, who has recently joined as the General Coordinator of CARD Secretariat, highlighted that the previous General Meeting (GM 8; held during 6-7 October 2021) emphasized the importance of continuing CARD's technical- and financial support for formulating and implementing rice development strategies at country level (NRDS) and regional level (RRDS). It asserted that cross-border investments on rice production, trade and policies will be reinforced through RRDS. The GM8 endorsed CARD's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework for phase-II.

With technical assistance from CARD, 25 of 32 member countries have now completed the formulation of their NRDS, and the remaining 7 countries are expected to finalize their NRDS soon. CARD has assisted the EAC in developing its regional EAC Rice Development Strategy (ERDS) and its implementation plan (ERDSIP), which were recently validated and approved by EAC's Sectoral Council for Agriculture and Food Security (SCAFS). CARD has also helped harmonize performance indicators of ECOWAS's Rice Offensive program which embodies its RRDS, with CARD's regional M&E indicators.

Mr. Fujie informed that implementation of NRDS is presently supported by 76 rice-related projects in 21 CARD member countries. CARD has established a Geo-Portal (an interactive website) to share information on objectives, geographical areas, and expected outcomes of these projects. Despite several progresses however, the total rice production in CARD member countries has stagnated in the past 3 years. The SC members discussed poor technology adoption, climate change and spinoff effects of COVID-19 and Russia-Ukraine war on input costs and food prices, as possible causes of the slowdown.

Mr. Tomokazu Nagai (Technical Coordinator, CARD) illustrated the CARD's M&E framework which embraces the R.I.C.E approach (Resilience, Industrialization, Competitiveness, and Empowerment). Using 2 indicators for each of these 4 strategic elements, and 4 overall indicators (cultivated area, production, yield, and self-sufficiency rate); progress on implementation of the NRDS and RRDS will be assessed against the targets set under the NRDS and RRDS. Since records of these M&E indicators are presently not available in member countries, CARD has undertaken baseline surveys and established monitoring protocols in 7 countries. While this activity is yet to be commenced in 21 other countries, 4 member countries are presently undertaking the survey.

Monitoring of the progress on implementation will be carried out by focal points of NRDS and RRDS through Annual Rice Sector Review Meetings (ARSRM) at country- and regional levels. Under this exercise, the FPs will collect data from stakeholders through ARM and authentic secondary sources and share by updating CARD's website. ARSRM will also provide an opportunity for the stakeholders to apprise the current situation in rice sector development. Mr. Nagai underscored the dire need for technical and financial support from in-country SC member offices for organizing ARSRM and collecting primary- and secondary data by FPs.

The SC members asserted that achieving rice self-sufficiency is a moving target, as both the gaps between local rice production and market demand as both have doubled in the recent past. SC members discussed how to facilitate policy dialogues and improve coordination of public and private stakeholders at country and regional levels. SC members felt that CARD should become a source of rice-related information and encouraged CARD to lead the coordination in the areas of investments, technology, infrastructures, and institutions.

Expectations from GM9

Mr. Fujie informed the SC member that the expected outcomes from GM9 shall include enrichment of stakeholders' awareness on the progress made by CARD on NRDS formulation and implementation, regional integration through RRDS, CARD's M&E framework, and the important roles of industrialization in advancing rice sector development. During the GM9, stakeholders from 33 Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries 32 CARD member countries and Republic of South Sudan as observer) will discuss over 2 days (5-6 July 2023).

Key messages to the stakeholders from the GM9 will include (i) the essentiality of CARD's ambitious goal of doubling rice production, (ii) importance of R.I.C.E approach in sustaining rice sector development, (iii) the key roles of stakeholders in implementing NRDS and RRDS, (iv) the scopes of

industrializing rice sector in SSA. Through GM9, Mr. Fujie reiterated that the CARD Secretariat will affirm its roles in facilitating country-level and regional-level M&E, strengthening partnerships, and promoting public and private investments towards implementation of the NRDS and RRDS. CARD will also assert sharing of information with its stakeholders on results of the M&E, new technologies, and good rice production practices through training and website.

Updates from SC members

AATF

AATF has developed a new strategy (2023-2027) for scaling up its impacts. It focuses on (i) developing hybrid rice technology, (ii) priming markets and partners' capacity, (iii) facilitating farmers' linkage to credit and inputs, and (iv) participating in regional initiatives on rice through Alliance for Hybrid Rice in Africa (AHyRA). The SC members discussed (a) how to facilitate access to credit by creating a sustainable market value chain, (b) ways and means to sustain access to the hybrid rice technologies, (c) the roles of the private sector in hybrid seed production, and (e) farmers' profitability through hybrid rice cultivation.

AfDB

AfDB leads a regional initiative called 'Regional Rice Resilient Value Chains Development Program in West Africa – REWARD.' Involving 15 countries, the initiative intends to break rice import dependency by taking a value chain approach. By promoting the in-grower model, the initiative prompts the stakeholders to synergistically undertake risks and rewards. The initiative also enables a policy environment for creating markets for local rice through private investments.

FARA

FARA is involved in (i) developing a portal for dissemination of proven rice technologies that can be scaled up, (ii) enhancing commercialization of Africa's research products, (iii) providing knowledge management platform for dissemination of rice technologies through webinar series and other social media engagements, and (iv) conducting and publishing rice studies such as 'Innovation opportunities in the rice value chain in Nigeria.'

IFAD

Main IFAD vehicles of financing which are sovereign investment projects in terms of loans and/or grants. According to the IFAD New Grant policy, allocation to regular grants is commensurate with the level of resources available on grant terms. Competitive selection has become the norm in determining grantees. Some prime examples of rice value chain activities through IFAD include Producer-Public-Private Partnership in Nigeria, Climate Resilience and Smart Agricultural Production and Agricultural Market Development in Sierra Leone, Institutional Capacity Building and strengthening environment for stakeholders in Liberia, and Institutional support, and Enhancing productivity and competitiveness, and Developing value chain and access to market in Madagascar.

JICA

JICA provides strong support to CARD through three pillars: (i) ensuring a stable increase in rice production (increased yield, increased production area and identification of cultivation techniques), (ii) ensuring quality and stable supply throughout the value chain (increased competitiveness of domestic rice in the market, and strengthening the network among value chain actors) (iii) building capacities of governments and partnerships (through NRDS/RRDS, concept notes, information sharing, M&E baseline surveys, training and technical advice for ERO). Currently about 40 rice-related projects are supported by JICA in 20 CARD member countries. JICA's financial support since the beginning of Phase 2 of CARD is estimated at nearly US\$ 193 million, of which 54% in the form of technical cooperation, 27% in the form of loans and 19% in the form of grants.

JIRCAS

JIRCAS supports the CARD initiative mainly through research projects. Through a project entitled 'Development of sustainable rice cultivation and food production system in Africa (2021-2026)'; JIRCAS aims to develop sustainable and nutrition-sensitive food production system centered on rice, by integrating water management technologies, breeding materials and cultivation technologies in Madagascar, Tanzania, Guinea for a period of 5 years (April 2021~ March 2026). Technologies developed through previous projects, such as improved varieties and P-dipping tests are being scaled up in Madagascar. More recently, JIRCAS is carrying out promotion of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the rice sector.

WFP

WFP has assisted nearly 160 million through the distribution of nearly 4 million tons of food, of which just under half (2 million tons) comes from the local production. In Gambia, WFP supports smallholder producers in rice production, infrastructure, capacity building, reduction of post-harvest losses and institutional purchasing of locally produced rice. WFP ensures inclusivity of women smallholder producers in the local supply chain. WFP also promotes fortification of rice and its accessibility to its beneficiaries. WFP plans to support the development of local rice markets through interventions in areas such as drying yard, infrastructure, postharvest handling, and biofortification.

SADC

SADC has recently commissioned regional mapping and analysis of the rice value chain, which is scheduled for validation by September 2023. SADC has planned to formulate its regional rice development strategy, soon after the validation. SADC is also currently undertaking some rice sector developmental activities in the region, such as Regional Leadership Center for Rice and Rice Systems in Mozambique; Reference tools for Climate-smart Agriculture, Regional Agricultural Information Management System, and Harmonized System for Seed Regulation in SADC.