

R. Buruchara¹, R. Chirwa², M.M. Abang¹, and J.C. Rubyogo³

¹International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) – Pan Africa Bean Research Alliance (PABRA), Kawanda, Uganda

²International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) – Pan Africa Bean Research Alliance (PABRA), Lilongwe, Malawi

³International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) – Pan Africa Bean Research Alliance (PABRA), Arusha, Tanzania

ABSTRACT. The Pan Africa Bean Research Alliance is a consortium of African-owned regional bean networks consisting of National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) from 28 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and a number of donor organizations. PABRA's focus is to improve bean productivity, utilization and commercialization for the benefit of the urban and rural poor. The ultimate goal is to enhance food security, income generation and health of poor communities in a gender equitable manner. The regional bean networks are Eastern and Central Africa Bean Research Network (ECABREN) covering 9 countries, Southern Africa Bean Research Network (SABRN), covering 11 countries and the West and Central Africa Bean Research Network (WECABREN), covering 10 countries. ECABREN, SABRN and WECABREN are semi-autonomous and respond to priorities defined by corresponding sub-regional organizations, which are ASARECA, SADC/FANR and CORAF/WECARD, respectively. All networks implement the same log-frame under PABRA. Activities in the PABRA workplan are developed using a bottom-up approach, and build on the outcome of national program planning followed by planning at the regional network level. PABRA facilitates collaborative research within, among and beyond the regional networks. It also provides a forum for building and maintaining linkages to multiple partners. These collaborative linkages are maintained and strengthened through joint priority-setting, planning, agreed division of responsibilities, joint implementation of activities, and joint reporting. Collaboration is based on national members' interest and on comparative advantage. In this way, research technologies are shared among countries and significantly contribute to scaling up and wider distribution efforts. Through this partnership, PABRA facilitated seed access to 7.5 million farmers between 2003-2008 and about 7 million between 2009-2011.

Offers a faster mechanism to introduce innovations across the alliance e.g. Use of small pack approaches which started in Rwanda, has been adapted in Ethiopia and Kenya, and now to Burundi, Cameroon, DRC-East, Madagascar, Malawi, Uganda and Tanzania.



Less endowed national programs releasing varieties through PABRA networking

- Countries without breeding programs: Angola, Burundi, south DR Congo, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Cameroon and others have released bean varieties through collaborative evaluation and sharing of germplasm.

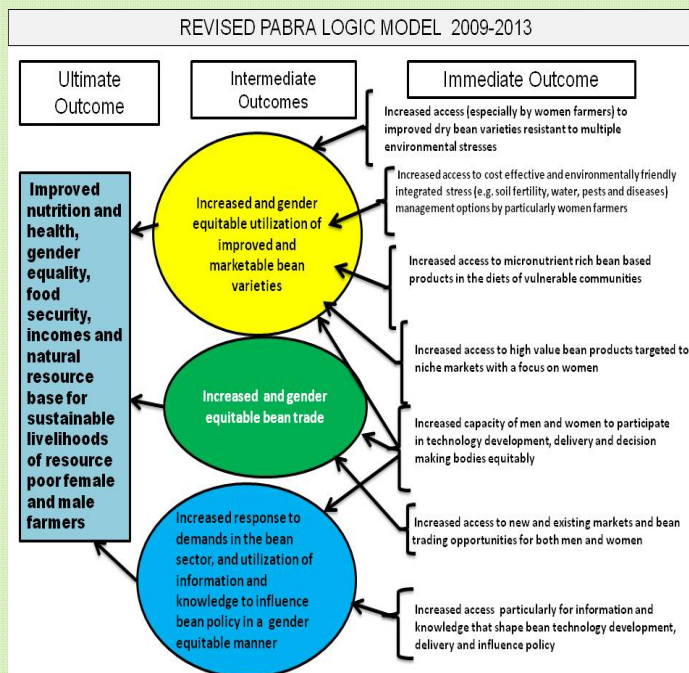
Moving bean technologies and approaches across countries or networks

Through PABRA most countries have adopted Participatory Variety Selection (PVS) approaches - involving various stakeholders in selecting varieties as part of the variety development process.



PABRA – BENEFITS WITHOUT BORDERS

Harmonizing research on beans in Africa: All 29 member countries in PABRA implement the same log frame – see the Logic Model below



Facilitating a platform and a conceptual framework for other players / actors to enhance synergy - other project-specific donor funded activities find space in the PABRA frame work:

SSA-CP – Developing markets, mainstreaming gender, and strengthening the institutional framework for IAR4D

TL-II: Developing drought resistant bean varieties

Dry Grain CRSP: Networking and partnership in global bean R4D

McKnight Foundation: Developing bean seed systems

KT: Enhancing capacity of NARS in marker assisted selection for disease resistance

AGRA: Capacity building, variety development and dissemination

Faster progress by WECABREN - taking advantage of progress already made in ECABREN and SABRN:

- Varieties developed by other networks have moved to west Africa
- Innovations and processes including institutional arrangements developed in other networks are promoted in west Africa

2009 & 2010	Total trained	Women (%)	Men (%)
Regional level	401	32.2	67.8
National level	8333	31.8	68.2

Helping network countries to recover faster after wars: the national bean research programs in Angola, Burundi, D R Congo and Rwanda recovered faster than would have been expected from the effects of wars due to links with PABRA. For example Burundi despite the civil unrest the NARS released 6 varieties in between 2009-10.

Reaching More Beneficiaries Through the Wider Impact Strategy – PABRA is drawing from its previous achievements and this time it is projecting to reach 20 million beneficiaries with diverse bean technologies, including seed of improved varieties.

PABRA Strategy for taking on emerging challenges

Four other major challenges facing agriculture in Africa are gender inequality, malnutrition, environmental degradation and climate change.

These challenges constitute major limitations to attaining desirable livelihoods by rural communities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

PABRA partners have stepped up efforts to address these challenges in a targeted manner using the RBM system and have developed

- an impact monitoring and evaluation strategy
- a gender strategy
- a climate change strategy
- a nutrition strategy
- an environmental management strategy

These strategies are currently being implemented as integral component of the PABRA Framework.

Acknowledgement

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- National Bean Programs and other bean value chain actors;
- All partners (private, public, civil society and farmers) who are putting their effort to increase bean value chain profitability.