

## PROMOTION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT(PSTAD)

Promotion of Science and Technology for Agricultural Development (PSTAD) is a project which falls under Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) Access to Knowledge and Technologies function. It is implemented by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) in partnership with Sub-regional Organisations (SROs), CORAF, ASARECA and CCARDESA and National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARs) of participating countries.

CCARDESA is responsible for the project in the SADC region where the following countries are taking part; Malawi, Zambia, Lesotho; Angola, Madagascar, and Mozambique. It comprises two sister projects the Dissemination of New Agricultural Technologies in Africa (DONATA) and the Regional Agricultural Information and Learning Systems (RAILS). The broad objectives of the project are to:

- Build research knowledge management capacity within participating national systems of Africa
- Establish pathways for dissemination of improved technologies and good agricultural practices across the continent

DONATA's purpose is to capture relevant lessons and develop effective trans-boundary partnerships and investments for the dissemination of

high-potential technologies. It promotes the adoption of research proven agricultural technologies (varieties and practices) in the region. Activities done under DONATA are:

- Establishing Platforms to promote technology spread and utilisation
- Providing relevant Inputs & Equipment to facilitate learning & adoption at the platforms
- Supporting knowledge & skills acquisition through long & short-term training
- Promoting sharing of lessons & success stories

RAILS objectives are:

- To undertake advocacy to encourage increased investment in agricultural information systems (AIS) by African governments and institutions;
- To improve access to information and the ability of African stakeholders to contribute to global agricultural knowledge;
- To facilitate synergies by linking African information conduits to global providers of agricultural information; and
- To develop an African platform for agricultural information and learning systems.



## **Achievements**

DONATA promotes the adoption of improved Open Pollinated Varieties (OPV) of maize and sorghum. Malawi established four implementation sites, two for sorghum and two for maize. Lesotho established one sorghum site; Mozambique established six sites for both sorghum and maize, Zambia had two sites which focus mainly on sorghum and Madagascar had one site for sorghum. Each site brings together several stakeholders including processors, middlemen and retailers. It is the linkage between these stakeholders which DONATA promotes. The project has the following documented direct beneficiaries: Zambia 980, Malawi, 614 and Lesotho 29. Breweries in Malawi and Zambia are now active stakeholders who are supporting farmers through seed provision and assurance of ready markets at negotiated prizes. One farmer in Zambia has adopted the approach and is voluntarily supporting it beyond the project coverage. So far he has reached about 142 families through cooperatives like Tusembe, Mapango, Mafota, Kansato and Chifubula.

Through the RAILS project, each country received ICT equipment to improve connectivity to the internet and the use of ICT in managing and communicating agricultural information. The equipment included servers, desktops, cameras and lap top computers. A continental platform called the Electronic Regional Agricultural Information and Learning System (eRAILS) for information sharing was also developed. Through the platform stakeholders are creating websites to share their activities especially in the DONATA project. During 2013, CCARDESA conducted training in Malawi, Lesotho, Zambia and Mozambique to build the capacity of stakeholders to use the platform in information sharing. In Malawi 24 key people, including the private sector, were trained. In Zambia 12 people were trained, in Mozambique 29 people drawn from the Agricultural Research Institute of Mozambique (IIM) and from the extension services were also trained. Through the training the quality of content being shared is improving.

## **Current Status in the CCARDESA sub region**

The project is earmarked to be completed by December 2014. Stakeholders are therefore carrying out final activities which include conducting write shops in order to document learning from the implementation of the project. Efforts are being put to ensure that technologies which are being promoted under DONATA are fully adopted for use even beyond the project.

