

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS: ACCELERATING BEAN SEED PRODUCTION AND DELIVERY WITH AND AMONG AFRICAN FARMERS

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The increasing opportunities in bean crop sub-sector:

1. Beans are saviour crop due to their early maturity, thus shortening farmers' food and cash gaps. Beans are also increasing seen as an Alternative source of foreign currency for most of African government. Ethiopia the export of white pea was valued to USD 60 M in 2006 and supply chain businesses e.g. employment and transport business.
2. Subsequently, several rural service providers (seed companies, NGOs, public extension programmes, farmers' organisations, grain traders are increasingly see the use of beans as a reliable pathway out of poverty and food insecurity for their targeted communities and business opportunities

Background and challenges

1. Research shows that relying on individual farmers to diffuse seed of new varieties can be slow and unequal (i.e. the poor may be excluded). Formal seed channels (government or commercially-based enterprises) also have a weak track record in reaching most potential clients.
- 2 The challenge has been to directly link the main seed suppliers (local systems of farmers, traders and service providers) to an ongoing supply of research products.

New approach : In 2003, Pan Africa Bean Research Alliance (PABRA) initiated a strategy called the Wider Impact Programme (WIP) which aimed to catalyse and coordinate efforts among these multiple seed chain actors and to reach ten million people (or two million households) by 2008. This new strategy is based on shared responsibilities (see Table 1). The WIP decentralises much of the work to the production zones, and builds on the comparative advantages of diverse actors.

Table 1: PABRA partners and some of the agreed upon responsibilities within the WIP

NARS	NGOs/Government Organizations	Commercial seed sector	Grain traders	Farmers/Farmer organizations	PABRA/CIAT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop new varieties •Supply breeder/foundation seeds •Develop information on varieties and other resource manuals •Enhance partners' skills and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Carry out wider & decentralized variety testing •Support decentralized seed production •Mobilize resources (human and materials) •Produce resource manuals •Enhance local skills and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Market certified seeds (popular varieties) •Carry out participatory variety selection (pre&released) •Promote & create demand for new varieties •Support skills and knowledge enhancement of agro-input suppliers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Identify preferred genotypes •Link seed local production and wider seed market (non certified) •Catalyze business opportunities for farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Test and identify of preferred genotypes •Produce and supply seeds (non certified) •Diffuse and market preferred genotypes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Provide potential new germplasm •Enhance NARS and partners' knowledge and skills •Share lessons learned and their documentations •Support and backstop M&E and impact studies

Results-Impacts:

All the 18 PABRA member countries have adopted new improved seed system production & delivery and related information by changing from conventional approach (see Fig. 1) to new one (see Fig. 2). This approach has increased the number of households using improved varieties and improved their bean yield e.g. Ethiopia (see Fig. 3). About **6.5 millions** accessed seeds of improved varieties between 20003-6 in all 18 PABRA member countries. The reach in six PABRA member countries are detailed in Table 2.

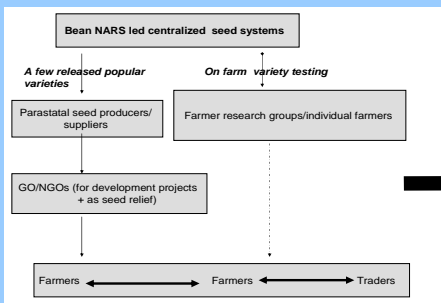


Fig.1 Conventional seed system approach

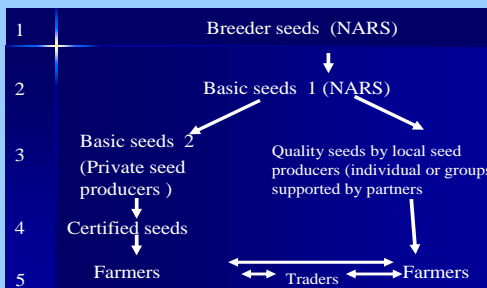


Fig. 2 Newly adopted seed system

Country	No of HHs who used improved varieties
Ethiopia	1,004,400
Malawi	372,000
S. Tanzania	177,500
Uganda	1,718,750
Zambia	337,000
Zimbabwe	216,400
Total	3,826,050

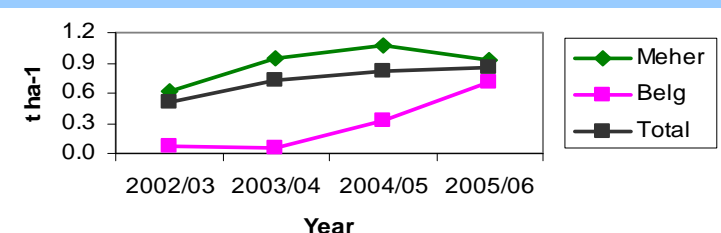


Fig. 3 Bean yield (t/ha) increase in Ethiopia between 2002-6

Tab. 2 Nbr of HHs reached in some PABRA countries between 2003-6

Conclusion: Despite considerable achievements, PABRA and its partners network would like to reach other millions of household farms. However, there needs to undertake action oriented research aiming to carry out cost & benefit of different seeds and information production and delivery Mechanisms.

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