



Country Programme Annual Report

March 2009

Country: Malawi

Reporting Organizations: Malawi Research Into Use

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Section A – Current Progress

1. Background Information

The MRIU strategic objective is to identify, facilitate and provide support to key stakeholders seeking to ensure that research outputs are put into use. MRIU strategy and implementation plan are consistent with the aims of Malawi's ADP as well as the wider CAADP. As such the M-RIUP is adding value to the ADP, CAADP and SADC initiatives.

MRIU implementation is focussing on the following 4 strategic priority areas:

- Facilitating the establishment of the Malawi Innovation Coalition based around existing institutions and individuals that will support the development of innovation systems approaches.
- Facilitating farmers' empowerment to participate in innovation systems.
- Facilitating a knowledge, information and communication support and learning group which would also provide input to innovation platforms.
- Facilitating development of innovation platforms at national, district and area levels.

In the course of implementation, there has been no change in the strategic orientation of MRIU.

2. Summary of Outputs in Current Year

i. Getting new knowledge and technologies into use.

The primary engagement in this first year was to put the systems in place that can enhance demand for research outputs. In this regard, five commodity platforms have been established and are functional. The innovation platforms currently in operation in Malawi include: Legumes platform, Fish farming platform, Livestock platform, Horticulture platform and Cotton platform. Through facilitation by MRIU, the platforms were oriented on the innovation systems approach and analyzed

and prioritized systemic challenges that each platform would work on. So far, the platforms have developed project proposals in response to the prioritized challenges where various RNRRS and other research outputs will be put into use towards unblocking the challenges. This is emerging as a demand-pull scenario in the adoption of RNRRS. The identified research outputs incorporated in the proposals that when put into use shall address the identified bottlenecks are as follows:

1. Fisheries platform: The priority challenge for the platform is that of lack of quality fingerlings of improved species for access by farmers. The platform will therefore be engaged in increasing fingerlings production of improved fish strain of *Oreochromis shiranus* (NARS research output). The RNRRS outputs adopted by the platform on the project proposal are: *CPH12 – partnership based innovation helps break bad habits; and AFGP01 – Household hatcheries are a major breakthrough in small-scale fish farming*. There will be 400 fish farmers who will benefit from this programme.
2. Legume platform: The main challenge is seed availability for beans, soybeans and groundnuts. The platform proposes to multiply seed of new improved varieties of beans, soybeans and groundnuts bred by NARS and CGIAR institutions (CIAT, ICRISAT & IITA). 150 legume farmers will participate in multiplication of certified legume seeds. This programme will eventually lead to more farmers accessing improved certified legume seeds in the following season.
3. Livestock platform: The platform is dealing with piggery and dairy. In piggery, the major challenge is marketing. For instance, before the platform formation, pig meat processors (companies) reported to be importing pig meat from South Africa to fulfill the domestic demand and yet farmers (pig farmer associations) were also complaining of lack of market for their pigs. The platform has hence enhanced information flow between the two players in the industry and has identified satellite areas for formalized decentralized pig markets where processors and farmers will be meeting. The RNRRS put into use include: *CPH10 – Better organization helps farmers to access markets. In the dairy sector, the platform is tackling the issue of nutrition and has adopted: LPP03 – snack bags for cows boost smallholder dairy farmers' milk production & LPP05 – Handy bales save*. 1,220 pig farmers will benefit from the decentralized markets.
4. Cotton Platform: The platform will mount demonstration plots in cotton growing areas in Malawi to expose farmers to the performance of new varieties of cotton bred by NARS which are high yielding and disease resistant. The RNRRS adopted is *CPH46 – Participatory learning has something for everyone through demonstrations and field days*. It is planned that 10500 rural farmers will be targeted in the demonstrations.
5. Horticulture platform: The platform focuses on organizing farmers and strengthening existing farmer organizations for co-ordinated production of seedlings of the recommended improved varieties of horticultural crops. The improved varieties of horticulture crops were bred by NARS. The RNRRS to be used are: *NRSP17 – strengthening local organizations gives farmers more say in local policy*. 500 farmers will benefit from this programme.

Though the commodity platforms are at national level (national-based), the proposed programmes for unblocking the challenges are grassroot and community focused. They are tailored towards improving the livelihoods of the rural poor in the villages. The proposed implementation sites are distributed strategically in the rural areas of Malawi depending on the identified needs and/or opportunities.

ii. Strengthening in the capacity of the national innovation system or sub-system.

National Innovation Coalition

The Malawi National Innovation Coalition (NIC) was established and comprises 17 members. Following its formation, the NIC has gone through various capacity building initiatives which included: the understanding of the innovation systems approach; development of its own vision; roles and responsibilities and selection of core NIC members to provide quick links with MRIU. This process has culminated into the National Innovation Coalition (NIC) effectively providing guidance and support to MRIU and innovation systems processes in Malawi. Among others, the NIC reviewed commodity platforms as proposed in the MRIU strategy and recommended commodity platforms for implementation in the first phase of MRIU. The NIC managed the launch of the MRIU programme which was officiated by the Principal/Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture on behalf of the Deputy Minister of Agriculture.

The NIC was also instrumental in reviewing proposals for accessing grant money to catalyse activities towards resolving platform bottlenecks based on a set criteria.

NIC also led the process of selecting Platform Facilitators.

Platform Facilitators (PFs)

A group of 24 Malawians selected by NIC are undergoing a capacity building process to facilitate stakeholder platforms and ensure sustainability of the innovation systems approach across institutions. Two capacity building sessions were held covering the following major learning areas in facilitation: managing innovation in a system context; managing change and organizational development; facilitation for change; process management and action research; and personal and team development/ leadership.

Platform Facilitators have formed peer learning groups with affiliation to specific commodity platforms. Currently, the Platform Facilitator's are offering services to platforms by way of facilitating meetings and providing linkages with other stakeholders.

It has been planned to have a joint interactive event for NIC, Platform Champions and Platform Facilitators as a way of enhancing understanding, linkages and flow of information within the systems.

Farmer Empowerment Learning Group

A learning group comprising institutions that are involved in empowering farmers and strengthening farmer organizations was established. There are 20 members in this Learning Group. Two capacity building events were held mainly focusing on reaching a common understanding on the desirable tools and approaches in attaining effective farmer empowerment. The Farmer Empowerment Learning Group has drafted farmer empowerment indicators which are currently under review.

It is envisaged that the Learning Group will provide input into enhancing farmers' capacity to effectively participate in the innovation platforms.

iii. Influences on policy.

The MRIU programme is already influencing the government's attention to the innovation systems approach. For example, the Malawi Government through Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security set up a legumes task force which is similar to the legumes platform. The legumes platform champion is a key member in the task force and it is using values of the legumes platform. The MRIU Patron links platform related initiatives in the Ministry of Agriculture to MRIU for collaboration and consolidation of approaches. For example, the CIMMYT Maize drought tolerant initiative was partnered with MRIU to develop a strategy for stakeholders' participation.

In 2006, the Malawi Government launched the Presidential Initiative for Aquaculture Development (PIAD) in order to boost fish farming in Malawi. The initiative aims at reducing the pressure of fishing in the open waters of Lake Malawi. The formation of the Fisheries Platform is assisting in operationalizing the strategy and plans of the PIAD.

The Cotton Development Partnership (Cotton Platform) has a Policy & Regulation Working Group that is lobbying government to hasten the process of reviewing the Cotton Act and establishment of a Cotton Council.

iv. Partnerships and Linkages

During its first year of implementation, MRIU established a number of partnerships and linkages as follows:

- The McKnight Foundation Collaboration Crop Research Programme: through Bunda College of the University of Malawi is involved in Scaling-up Integrated Soil Fertility Management to increase food security and improve soil fertility in Malawi. The project aims to promote best practices in integrated soil fertility by reaching up to 3 million farmers through among other things scaling up of legumes production.
- Globalhort horticulture project: Horticulture platform concept was submitted to Globalhort to link fruit and vegetable farmers in Malawi to domestic and export markets.
- USAID farmer – to – farmer programme on legumes and horticulture will also support the legumes and horticulture platforms with technical support using Foreign Volunteer staff.
- EU-CABI also studying RIU platform formation processes to establish own coffee platform.
- New partnership with common fund for commodities (Gates Foundation) on soya bean value chain in Malawi and Mozambique using legume platform in Malawi.
- Fairtrade Malawi Project: is piloting how service providers and other support bodies can work together to increase access to market for producers in Malawi. The project is collaborating with MRIU on approach to institutional arrangements.

- Presidential Initiative for Aquaculture Development (PIAD)– the fish platform is operationalising the PIAD

All the above programmes and initiatives are linked to the ADP priorities.

v. Communication outputs

MRIU has shared MRIU related materials for information and feedback with its stakeholders through loading the Malawi page on the RIU grapevine. Such activities include MRIU launch, NIC, Commodity platforms, farmer empowerment and I&C.

Locally, the process of developing a communication strategy has been initiated, stakeholder mapping document is ready which will form a basis for stakeholder consultation towards development of a communication strategy and formation of a Learning Group on Information and Communication.

vi. Other outputs

Two baseline surveys conducted in Zomba for the two area based stakeholder panels (Mlumbe and Malemia) and Legumes platform.

3. Self Assessment

Use the following scale to score the achievements of the country programmes and comment on reasons for the score

Scale:

0= completely failed to meet target

1= partially met targets

3 = Met all targets fully

4 = Exceeded targets

Output 1: Institutional arrangements and capabilities that support Innovations Systems approach established at National level
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Indicators:

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|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NIC established and is functional witnessed by the establishment of 5 commodity platforms 2. Identification and training of Platform Facilitators who are supporting innovation platforms |
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	Score = 3	The process of identifying the NIC was well elaborated in the strategy and implementation plan and there was good support from the Patron representing policy makers. The capacity building sessions/workshops for NIC enhanced their capacity to quickly contribute to MRIU processes and activities, including the selection of Platform Facilitators.
Milestones: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NIC is established comprising 17 members 2. 24 Platform Facilitators go through training in innovation systems approach and facilitation. 		

Output 2: Farmer organization and farmer's capacity to participate in IS approaches strengthened		
Indicators: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Farmers actively engaged in innovation platforms 2. Capacity of farmers to plan & manage their affairs is enhanced 3. Farmer representatives actively represent the interests of their constituents 		
	Score = 2	The institutions represented in the learning group are very inactive and not very enthusiastic to the objective of the Learning Group which is to increase the level of farmers who are well organized from

		current 4% to 25% by 2011. This output was underestimated in terms of human and financial resources needed to accomplish the objective
Milestones: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The farmer empowerment learning group has been established. 2. Conducted 2 Farmer Empowerment learning group workshops 3. Developed indicators for assessing farmer empowerment 		

Output 3: Formation and strengthening of commodity platforms as channels for uptake of RNRRS and other research outputs using the IS approach		
Indicators: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 8 contrasting platforms are formed at national, district and local level 2. A significant reduction of poverty as a result of platform activities. 3. Farming practices making a positive contribution to reversing environmental degradation. 		
	Score = 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Currently, there are 5 commodity platforms, 2 Area Stakeholder Panels and 2 learning groups established. The involvement of NIC in platform formation, the clarity of the implementation plan and quick emergence of platform champions for commodity platforms helped to smoothen the process.

		However the operationalization of the Area Stakeholder Panels in Zomba in an innovation systems approach needs further clarification
Milestones: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5 commodity platforms established and are functional 2. Stakeholder mapping for each commodity platform conducted 3. Bottlenecks for each platform identified and analyzed 4. RNRRS identified to be used for addressing some platform challenges 		

Output 4: Establishment of a sustainable info-market in which actors in the agricultural innovation system have effective demand to which suppliers are able to respond		
Indicators:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased use of information services by farmers 2. Farmers use information to increase productivity and demand. 3. Researchers provide information based on farmer demand 		
	Score = 1	The implementation of this output has dragged due to insufficient guidance from RIU technical experts in communication.
Milestones: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of communication strategy instituted 2. Mapping of I&C stakeholders conducted 3. Scoping for media content analysis study 		

conducted		
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4. Lessons Learnt

Please describe significant lessons resulting from country programme activities in the following domains.

<i>Domain</i>	<i>Lessons</i>
<i>i. Getting new knowledge and technologies into use.</i>	It requires putting the right systems first to trigger demand for research outputs. So far, platforms are opting for greater use of other research outputs developed in the country other than RNRRS. There is need to further de-mystify the RNRRS to make them well understood by platforms and other stakeholders.
<i>ii. Strengthening in the capacity of the national innovation system or sub-system.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NIC should not be a closed structure. NIC membership should evolve based on individual's interest and commitment. Those who are not committed should be allowed to drop out. 2. Those elected by platforms as Platform Champions should automatically be NIC members. This provides better linkage between NIC and platforms. 3. Platform champions from the private sector are more active and effective than those from public sector. 4. Platform Facilitators affiliated to specific platforms are more active than those who are not.
<i>iii. Influences on policy.</i>	Innovation Systems (IS) approach takes time to be internalized and appreciated. Influence on policy is therefore expected to be gradual.
<i>iv. Partnerships and Linking into national and regional processes</i>	IS approach creates conducive environment for establishment of partnerships and coalitions. The platform arrangement hinged on the value-chain model improves linkages and information flow among interested parties – there is general appreciation of each institution's potential contribution to the platform.
<i>v. Communication outputs that link to wider audiences.</i>	Communication should be platform tailored to make meaningful contribution to MRIU.
<i>vi. Other(specify)</i>	

5. Emerging Impacts

Within the one year of implementation of MRIU, there are emerging impacts that are showing positive signs towards sustainability of the innovation systems approach in Malawi:

1. Institutional arrangements through commodity platforms operations have created realization on benefits of working together. For example, the linkage created through the livestock platform between pork processors who have been importing pork and local piggery farmers who had no ready market for their products will make both parties realize benefits from improved marketing system and information sharing.
2. The Platform Facilitators programme is enhancing capacity for local institutional support to platform activities which will be sustained even after MRIU programme.

6. Assumptions

The following assumptions are still holding in relation to the programme:

- Participating organizations on innovation platforms continue seeing the benefits and value of collaboration.
- Stakeholders actively participate in innovation platforms.
- There is continued coordination between NIC, Platform Facilitators and Platforms.
- There is still ongoing support from policy makers, especially the Ministry of Agriculture & Food Security.

Section B - Financial Information 2008 - 2009

Reported on separately.

Section C - Projections for Next Year 2009 - 2010

1. Annual Work Plan

For each output in the log frame please list the milestones for each quarter of the coming year (April 2009 to March 2010) (*Replicate the matrix below as many times as necessary*)

Output 1: Institutional arrangements & capacities that support innovation systems approach established at national level	
Indicators:	Milestones:
1. NIC provides guidance and support to platforms	Qtr 1 (April- Jun) : Joint NIC& PFs learning event held
	Qtr 2 (Jul-Sep):
	Qtr 3 (Oct- Dec): NIC review meeting to assess progress of platform activities
	Qtr 4 (Jan- Mar)
2. About 15 PFs are actively involved in platform activities	Qtr 1 (April- Jun): Joint NIC & PFs learning event held
	Qtr 2 (Jul-Sep): 3 rd PFs training course conducted
	Qtr 3 (Oct- Dec)
	Qtr 4 (Jan- Mar): 4 th PFs training conducted

Output 2: Farmer organizations and farmers capacity to participate in Innovation Systems (IS) strengthened	
Indicators:	Milestones:
1. Farmers in platforms are actively engaged in innovation platform processes	Qtr 1 (April- Jun)
	Qtr 2 (Jul-Sep): Farmer Empowerment Learning Group workshop held
	Qtr 3 (Oct- Dec)
	Qtr 4 (Jan- Mar)
2. Farmers capacity to plan, manage their affairs enhanced	Qtr 1 (April- Jun)
	Qtr 2 (Jul-Sep)
	Qtr 3 (Oct- Dec): Developed Farmer Empowerment indicators tested
	Qtr 4 (Jan- Mar)

Output 3: A number of poverty reducing innovations generated through platforms that benefit the poor	
Indicators:	Milestones:
1. At least 8 contrasting platforms are formed at national, district and local level	Qtr 1 (April- Jun): Systems and mechanisms for financial management in platforms developed
	Qtr 2 (Jul-Sep): 3 platform proposals supported through RIU platform grant funds
	Qtr 3 (Oct- Dec):
	Qtr 4 (Jan- Mar): 2 platform proposals for other 2 commodity platforms
2. A significant reduction of poverty as a result of platform activities.	Qtr 1 (April- Jun)
	Qtr 2 (Jul-Sep):
	Qtr 3 (Oct- Dec)
	Qtr 4 (Jan- Mar): At least 2 RNRRS per platform put into use

Output 4:A sustainable info-market in which actors in the agricultural IS have effective demand to which suppliers are able to respond	
Indicators:	Milestones:
1. Increased use of information services by farmers	Qtr 1 (April- Jun): I&C Learning Group established
	Qtr 2 (Jul-Sep): Media content analysis study conducted
	Qtr 3 (Oct- Dec)
	Qtr 4 (Jan- Mar): Internal platform community strategy in place
2. Farmers use information to increase productivity and demand.	Qtr 1 (April- Jun)
	Qtr 2 (Jul-Sep)
	Qtr 3 (Oct- Dec)
	Qtr 4 (Jan- Mar): Communication tools & methodologies developed

2. Forecast Expenditure

Reported on separately.