

Project Information

GRANT	FED/2013/330-228
PROJECT TITLE	Strengthening the capacities for fostering innovation along potato value chains in East Africa
PROJECT ACRONYM	SPIRIT
PROJECT DURATION	36 Months (01/01/2014—31/12/2016)
TOTAL BUDGET	1.148.283,34 €
EC TOTAL CONTRIBUTION	976.040,84 € (85%)
PROJECT WEBSITE	www.spiritacp.com

Lead Partner



C/ Ribera de Axpe, 11
Edificio D-1 Dpto. 208
48950 Erandio (Bizkaia)
Spain

Idoia Unzueta
idoia@inkoa.com
Tel. +34 944180267

Partners



Makerere University
www.mak.ac.ug



Agricultural Research
Institute – Uyolet
www.ariuyole.go.tz



University of Nairobi
www.uonbi.ac.ke



College of Agriculture, Animal
Sciences and Veterinary Medicine
www.isae.ac.rw



NEIKER – TECNALIA, Basque Institute for
Agricultural Research and Development
www.neiker.net

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STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES FOR FOSTERING INNOVATION ALONG POTATO VALUE CHAINS IN EAST AFRICA

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Challenge

The production of **potato** (*Solanum tuberosum*) has more than doubled in sub-Saharan Africa since 1994, with 70% of this growth being concentrated in Eastern Africa. The crop has gained great importance in the region and holds a **critical position in reducing extreme hunger and poverty** because of the reduced price susceptibility to the dynamics of international markets and because, being almost entirely produced by small-scale farmers, it acts as both a food and a cash crop.

One of the main factors hindering the development of the potato value chain in Eastern Africa is the lack of trust and communication between value chain actors, and of opportunities for the different actors to come together to analyse shared constraints and innovations. At the same time, the potato sector in this region is not well organised: producers, transporters, marketers, wholesalers and retailers are fragmented and tend not to co-operate, which leads to price instability and an isolation of the sector from regional and international markets. Furthermore, the current inferior quality of local production makes it difficult to meet the quality standards required by the potato processing industry .



Focus

The project strengthens the capacities in scientific research and innovative technologies and practices to enhance the product quality along the potato value chain in Eastern Africa (Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania).

Given the importance of the potato for socioeconomic development and food security, strengthening the capacities of research and innovative technologies along the potato value chain will foster the contribution of agricultural science, technology and innovation (ASTI) to the eradication of poverty and the promotion of economic growth and inclusiveness.

Method

The action will enhance the scientific and technological knowledge of East African research organizations on innovative technologies and practices for enhancing product quality throughout the potato value chain.

The action will work directly with private and civil society actors, and governmental services relevant to the potato value chain on reinforcing their capacities to generate and adopt innovative technologies and practices for enhancing product quality.

Recommendations on the identification and assessment of benchmark countries with successful policies and regulations will be developed and transferred to governmental policy-makers to promote changes necessary to foster the generation and implementation of innovations along the potato value chain in Eastern Africa.



Expected Results

- An increase in the capacities of at least **120 East African researchers** on innovative technologies and practices so as to enhance product quality along the potato value chain through their involvement in physical and/or virtual knowledge-exchange platforms.
- An increase in the capacities of at least **250 relevant actors** (farmers, technicians from processing companies, etc.) on innovation so as to enhance the product quality of the potato value chain in Eastern Africa through their participation in innovation sessions and virtual knowledge-exchange platforms.
- A **web-based knowledge-sharing platform** for the management of enhanced product quality along the potato value chain in Eastern Africa, which will include at least **400 members from relevant stakeholder organisations** (universities, agricultural research organisations, extension services, governmental authorities, farmers' associations, processors, marketers, etc.).
- An **'East African Potato Research and Knowledge Exchange Forum'**, which will integrate at least **15 research organisations**.
- The creation of at least **four new research groups** that will integrate research organisations from different East African countries, all of them having common research interests related to potato quality.
- At least **four new research project proposals** prepared by the participating research organisations, involving the relevant stakeholders along the value chain (farmers' associations, processors, seed producers, etc.), and these will be submitted to suitable calls for proposals for obtaining research grants.
- A set of **four guidelines** for fostering the implementation of innovative technologies and best practices for the potato value chain in Eastern Africa.
- **Recommendations for policy-makers** (e.g. the East Africa Standards Committee, the national bureaus of standards, the national ministries of agriculture, etc.) to modify existing policies, regulations and standards at the national and East African level so as to foster the adoption of innovations throughout the potato value chain.

