



INVESTING IN HORTICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN RWANDA



HORTINVEST PROJECT

HortInvest's contribution to the agriculture transformation of Rwanda through horticulture sector development

Investing in Horticulture Development in Rwanda project (HortInvest) is working to strengthen the fruit and vegetable value chains from production, consumption and export. The project aimed to benefit 44,000 farmers in six target districts of Rwanda: Karongi, Muhanga, Ngororero, Nyabihu, Rubavu, and Rutsiro. The project supports the mission of the Government to accelerate economic growth and to rapidly reduce poverty and malnutrition in Rwanda.

HortInvest is funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) in Kigali. The project is implemented by Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) led consortium. The other partners are: The Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), Wageningen University & Research (WUR), Agriterra, and Holland Greentech (HGT).

The main impact areas of the project are:

1. Improving market led fruit and vegetable value chains,
2. Enhancing food and nutrition security of households with fruits and vegetables
3. developing supply chain for export of high value fruits and vegetables and
4. creating an enabling environment for commercial horticulture sector development.

HortInvest works with lead farmers, cooperatives and farmer groups, SMEs and GoR institutions to achieve its goal

By July 2022 HortInvest has directly benefited 44,140 farmers in the districts. Of them, 49 percent are women and 17 percent youth. The project directly works with 300 cooperatives and farmers groups. The project has also partnered with 50 SMEs involved in horticulture through its grants and advisory support. To increase availability of fruits and vegetables to the poorer households, the project has successfully established more than 2,977 kitchen gardens in the program districts.

44,140

farmers have directly received services enhancing their productivity and income

2,977

kitchen gardens supported for poorer households

300

horticulture cooperatives and farmer groups supported through which 31,830 members benefitted

4,350

Ha land improved with eco-friendly and modern horticulture production practices

572

demonstration farms developed on fruits and vegetables such as potato, cabbage, cauliflower, tomato, French beans, passion fruits, avocado, pineapple, banana and tree tomato

Below we present 7 sample cases.

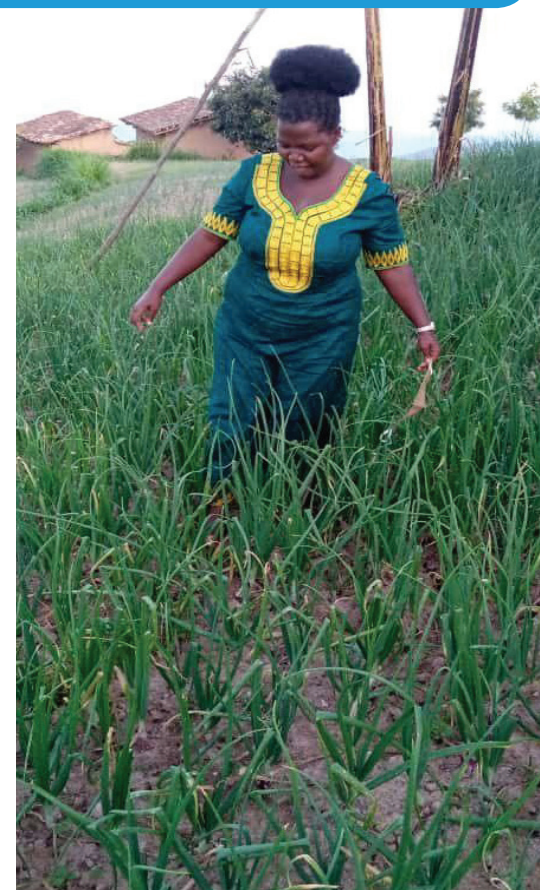
Case 1: story of Faila, a champion lady in onion farming business

MUKAMUNYANA Faila Francine, 38 lives in Kabagari village of Ngororero district. She started farming onions 8 years ago. However, she was lacking farming and marketing knowledge. As a result, productivity and profitability of her farm was low.

In 2019, Faila started working with HortInvest. She learned good agriculture practices for onion and vegetables production. She also received training on financial literacy and record keeping, business plan, accessing finances and nutrition.

After adopting high yielding seeds and improved agronomical practices, productivity of her farm increased from 5 MT to 10 MT per hectare. She increased production of onion from 1 to 3 hectare. Now Faila not only sells her own produce, but also she works with 35 other farmers and collects onion from them. She has bought a truck worth Rwf 15 million, purchased additional land, constructed a new house.

In near future, she aims to increase her business by producing more and sourcing from other farmers. She also plans to buy a larger truck.



CASE 2: Success story of IABM cooperative



In order to organise the smallholder farmers and benefit them through better services, HortInvest has used cooperative development approach. The approach selection of high potential cooperatives with clear business ambitions and take them through series of learning exercises. IABM is one of them.

IABM is a multipurpose cooperative based in Muhanga. Its initial focus was on growing maize and processing of maize flours. In 2018, IABM started working with HortInvest and received support in vegetables production, market linkage; acquired crates, a facility for collection and storage and a cold room to keep their produce fresh while waiting for buyers. IABM is also working to obtain a Global GAP certificate which will help to expand its export customer base.

With support from HortInvest, IABM established a shade net demo plot where sweet pepper, cauliflower, and broccoli were produced on pilot basis. Following the pilot's success, IABM kept rotating those crops in the shade net. It also started a collective production of various additional vegetables such as peas, carrots, eggplants and French beans.

By 2022, IABM has increased its land under vegetable cultivation from 37.9 Ha in 2019 to 87.5 Ha,

In 2019, IABM signed a contract to supply French beans to Garden Fresh, an exporting company selling to EU. Initially, the produce was limited to 2.5 Ha. By 2022 the area has increased to 10 Ha. This increased its export sell of French beans from 10 MT to 61.3 MT per season, noting that IABM produces French beans for export only in season C (May-August).

As a result, IABM has become one of the leading cooperatives in the Muhanga district. Between 2018 and 2022, the cooperative membership number went up from 764 to 1,564.

CASE 3: Transformation of Banana variety in Muhanga

Muhanga District is known to have large banana plantation acreage for both fruit banana /dessert banana, cooking banana and beer banana.

Current production area of banana in Muhanga is 16,282 ha. Of this, 66 % i.e. (10,756 Ha) is devoted to produce beer. Average yield of banana in Muhanga is 9.1MT/ha against the potential yield of 55MT/ha. Another bottleneck is plantations are dominated by less productive cultivars of beer banana (especially Indaya varieties).

In 2021, Muhanga district requested HortInvest to support its campaign of rehabilitating banana by introducing and promoting high value cooking and fruit bananas and macro propagations of their seedlings. This required extensive rehabilitation of the existing banana plantation, teach farmer's in good agricultural practices and sustainable land management. HortInvest collaborated with Muhanga district in this initiative.



By July this year, 219.4 Ha has been rehabilitated with more productive banana cultivars. 48,844 suckers of high yielding varieties was provided in the twelve sectors of Muhanga district (Rugendabari, Kibangu, Nyabinoni, Kiyumba, Cyeza, Nyarusange, Muhanga, Mushishiro, Rongi, Shyogwe, Kabacuzi and Nyamabuye). 424 farmers (206 women, 218 men and 9 youths) including farmer promoters, farmers facilitators and SEDOs were trained on banana good agricultural practices. Farmers also learned to apply the soil management techniques and community mobilisation for banana rehabilitation.



The support of HortInvest project to our district helped to increase the area covered by profitable banana plantations variety

Director of Agriculture of Muhanga District.

CASE 4: Farmers benefit from HortInvest supported selling points.

HortInvest has completed the construction six selling points, one in each of its working districts and has handed them over to the respective district authorities. These selling points are serving an estimated 10,000 farmers, small traders and consumers of fruits and vegetables. More than 100 permanent jobs are created, mainly for women and youth in these selling points. The infrastructures have helped create markets for locally produced fruits and vegetables. One such example is selling point in Karongi.

The Karongi selling point is constructed in Bwishura sector which is a strategic place for selling fresh products being at the entrance of the Karongi on the highway from Kigali.



The district provided land, designs, and undertook coordination of the construction works including quality check whereas HortInvest supported financially and in operational modality of the market. The selling point provides space for 40 women. The leadership team of the market was elected by the users.

Prior to this selling point, women and smaller traders used to sell and buy food commodities in open spaces without any shelter and sanitation. There was always risk of diarrhoea and other poor hygiene borne diseases in the market. Following COVID outbreak in 2021, a handwashing facility was also added in the selling point.



CASE 5: Garden Fresh Ltd expands its export operations

Founded in 2014, Garden Fresh is a private company specializing in export of fresh fruits and vegetables to the international markets. The company exports French beans, avocado, passion fruits and chilies to Europe.

Collaboration with HortInvest started in 2019. Over the years, Garden fresh has expanded both production and export. Currently, it manages a 157 Ha own farm and works with 600 farmers on a contractual basis from selected cooperatives. Two of Garden-Fresh farms are certified GlobalGAP and SMETA and one cooperative supplying Garden Fresh is also GlobalGAP certified through HortInvest support.

Garden Fresh has recently opened Rwanda's first privately owned 600sqm packhouse, which was Co-funded under HortInvest project and is very critical for reducing post-harvest losses from the farm to the markets. This packhouse is located in the Kigali Special Economic Zone and has the capacity to handle 25-30 MT of fresh produce per export cycle.

Garden Fresh also bought a cold truck to boost its cold chain operation while transporting fresh produce from farms to packhouse and to the airport.

The company is developing an avocado farm on 80 Ha in Kayonza district which will serve as a model farm for Hass variety of avocados in Rwanda. The irrigation of the 40 Ha of this farm was co-funded by HortInvest.

Farm mechanization is another aspect HortInvest and Garden Fresh collaborated on and it has improved cost efficiency up to 25% according to Garden fresh report.

Garden Fresh is supporting out-grower farmers grouped into cooperatives to grow vegetables for export. To meet the export standards, the cooperatives are going through process of acquiring Global GAP certificates. Garden Fresh itself is GlobalGAP and SMETA certified.



CASE 6: Hortinvest runs a Urban consumer campaign

urban consumer campaign became beneficial for not only awareness creation but also increased demand for fruits and vegetables.

The campaign materials were developed and validated by the Health Promotion and Communication Center in Rwanda Biomedical Center

(RBC) under the Ministry of Health and the campaign thematic messages drawn from the theme “A meal with fruits and vegetables, my family’s pride”, translated into Kinyarwanda as “Ifunguro ririmo imboga n’imbuto, Ishema ry’umuryango wanjye”).

The campaign focused on promoting five critical thematic messages that include: healthy food choices (prioritizing purchases of fruits and vegetables); the health benefits

of consuming fruits and vegetable; the recommended number of servings for fruits and vegetable per day/ person; best cooking practices of vegetables and preparation for fruits; and kitchen gardening as a solution to seasonal availability of fruits and vegetables.

Media for the campaign included Radio Rwanda, Rwanda Television, community-centered communication strategies including Public Announcement Services, Sono Mobile, use of FM radio stations and taxis parks, social media (Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook) as well as the campaign-themed T-shirts.

The post-campaign survey results showed that 74.8 % of reached consumers reported positive changes on their family menu, by adding more fruits and vegetables. 87.7% of the community members in the area under the campaign demonstrated willingness to prefer eating fruits and vegetables over other less nutritious foods.

HortInvest ran a six-month (September 2021 to Feb 2022) intensive campaign that reached to 1.3 million urban and peri-urban consumers in the six target districts (in Karongi, Rutsiro, Muhanga, Ngororero, Rubavu and Nyabihu), to promote fruits and vegetables, focusing on safety and health benefits of fruits and vegetables consumption.

A combination of mixed communication tools and techniques was utilized. The

CASE 7: HortInvest strengthens horticulture and potato sector platforms

Since September 2019, HortInvest is supporting operationalization of four value chain platforms following a request from MINAGRI. These platforms are the Rwanda Horticulture Working Group (RHWG) and the Rwanda Potato Stakeholders Platform (RPSP) at the national level, and Karongi and Rubavu horticulture platforms at the district level.

The main purpose of these platforms is to bring the private and public sector together to develop a joint sub-sector vision, address specific challenges, ensure a coherent enabling environment, and promote stronger market orientation in the targeted value chains.

RHWG: RHWG has 70 members with private sector as chair and NAEB as co-chair. Its members comprise a wider group

of sectoral stakeholders including private companies, cooperatives, government institutions (national & local level), associations, financial institutions, learning institutions (universities and TVETs), and development partners. Through meetings, focus group discussions and bilateral consultations, members of the platform have identified and prioritized the most pressing issues in their sectors and have proposed activities that would help in resolving pressing issues.

RPSP: It has around 50 members with RAB as its chair and private sector co-chair. In addition, seven value chain clusters have been put in place, namely ware potato producers, seeds producers, Extension services providers, Research, marketing (transporters, storage facilities, retailers), Agro-dealers, and processors.



DISTRICT PLATFORMS: The two district level platforms are playing a significant role in conducting public and private dialogue in Rubavu and Karongi to address the challenges the local stakeholders are facing. Based on this, government is initiating to expand district level platforms to more districts.



