

Action brief

Agricultural transformation programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

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Country: Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**Themes:** Nutrition-specific actions**Sub-themes:** Food security**Date:** 9 September 2022

Overview



People in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are experiencing structural food insecurity and underdeveloped domestic value chains. This food insecurity is the result of a combination of factors, including low agricultural productivity, low access to seeds and other inputs, low access to modern production techniques (production and processing technologies), low market accessibility and, often, low access to sustainable peace. Food insecurity also results from people's limited access to production equipment, due to its high costs, and low-yield traditional production models compared with the average for the Africa region.

The crisis linked to the situation in Ukraine has exacerbated these pre-existing systemic problems.

The Local Development Programme for 145 Regions (*Programme de Développement Local de 145 Territoires*, or PDL-145T) aims to help develop local and rural economies by promoting rural entrepreneurship, boosting agricultural productivity, enhancing agricultural production and improving rural entrepreneurs' access to financial services. Via Component 2, it prioritizes "promoting the development of rural economies and local value chains," supporting the development of production and service activities in rural areas for revitalized and vibrant local and rural economies. This is how, through an Agricultural Transformation Programme whose overarching aim is a paradigm shift in the farming sector's positioning (making agriculture a business, rather than a development programme), a kind of green revolution has been conceived, in the image of Nigeria's agricultural model.



Objectives of the action brief

This document shares an initiative by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to radically reform the country's farming sector in order to improve food security and build resilience to food crises.



Period covered

The interventions planned for the Agricultural Transformation Programme cover the period from 2022 to 2028; the first phase began in February 2022 and will run to December 2023.



What action was taken?



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The activities proposed for implementing Component 2 of the PDL-145T centre on the following aspects:

- the development of agricultural, livestock farming and fisheries value chains in rural areas;
- the development of rural entrepreneurship by creating cooperatives and small- and medium-sized businesses in rural areas and easing access to credit;
- improving the productivity of smallholder farmers by supplying inputs, seeds and agricultural tools and equipment;
- creating and establishing producer and trade cooperatives, with an emphasis on including women and young people; and

- researching innovative solutions that can trigger business or start-up creation by young people in local communities.

It is therefore through this component that the Agricultural Transformation Programme is proposed, with support from the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), focused on developing agricultural value chains in rural areas in order to boost agricultural productivity and, as a result, improve the level of farmers' incomes and the country's food security.

The design of the diagram proposed for agricultural transformation is structured around the following key pillars:

- concentrating on agricultural value chains for which the Democratic Republic of the Congo has a comparative advantage;
- thinking of agriculture as a business and a commercial activity rather than a development programme;
- developing strategic partnerships to stimulate market-oriented investments, involving a review of the agricultural code, based on the model in Kenya and Nigeria;
- ensuring food security, wealth and job creation by placing the focus on women and young people;
- investing more in agricultural research and education by reforming the National Institute for Agricultural Research and Study (*Institut national pour l'Étude et la Recherche Agronomique*, or INERA) into a national agency for agricultural transformation under the remit of the Ministry of Agriculture; and
- creating agricultural inspection units to carry out activity monitoring and evaluation.



To implement this, the areas are divided into four groups according to the availability of financial resources and the potential effectiveness of the action, represented by the number of beneficiaries and market accessibility.

- Group 1 (Tier 1) includes areas with ongoing projects or projects that have been agreed upon and can begin immediately. This group includes 48 areas across 13 provinces.
- Group 2 (Tier 2) refers to areas with more than 100,000 inhabitants and an acceptable level of market accessibility (less than 4 hours of travel time to market) for trading in agricultural inputs and produce. There is no guaranteed funding, but the programme can begin quickly, as soon as resources are available. This group includes 37 areas in 16 provinces.
- Group 3 (Tier 3): This group has a rural population of more than 100,000 inhabitants but poor market accessibility. The priority in these areas would be to invest first in infrastructure and to follow this up with agricultural transformation programmes. This group includes 51 areas in 18 provinces.
- Group 4 (Tier 4) consists of 21 areas in 13 provinces with a population of fewer than 100,000 inhabitants or located in urban areas.



As a preliminary result, cassava and maize flour production plants are being built in South Kivu and on the outskirts of Kinshasa, alongside all the fields that are currently being cultivated.

The system was set up beginning in February 2022, and the longer-term results of these large-scale activities will be monitored and reported on in line with the results framework. The latter will include indicators such as the production value for each line of production, field yield, the number of jobs created, and the return on investment.



Adaptation and applicability

- **Ensure there is political engagement at the highest level (head of state) – a net improvement over the past 20 years.**
- **Ensure there is engagement from technical and financial partners, with strong commitment from the Minister of Agriculture.**
- **Make sure authorities do actually prioritize agriculture by taking practical action to ensure effective policy implementation.**
- **Take action to reduce imports by self-producing commodities consumed domestically. The Democratic Republic of the Congo imports around USD 2 billion per year worth of staple goods.**
- **Create an agribusiness impetus to develop value chains.**



Next steps

In the short term (2022–2023), it is proposed that this action is implemented in two phases corresponding to Group 1 and Group 2, relying on ongoing projects or on projects with agreed-upon funding and that can begin immediately.



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