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Workshop Concept Note

Strengthening collaboration of existing regional drought resilience research institutions within IGAD region (Draft)

Submitted

By

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Background

The IGAD region comprises the following eight countries; Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda. The region covers an area of 5.2 million km² and has a population of more than 240 million people. Although the IGAD region is endowed with a considerable range of natural resources that represent a huge potential for wealth creation and economic progress, this potential is constrained by a combination of ecological, structural and social factors.

Seventy percent of the IGAD region comprises arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) that receive less than 600mm in annual rainfall. These ASALs are home to about 30 percent of the total population. The impact of recurrent droughts has been compounded by rapid population growth, climate change, conflict and insecurity, and the vagaries of ecological degradation. Many of the ASALs have also suffered from decades of marginalisation, with limited government interventions and low levels of government or private investment. The consequent conditions of diminished productivity, persistent food insecurity, extreme poverty and chronic vulnerability have severely affected the resilience of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities that inhabit the region, to drought and other environmental shocks.

Following a devastating drought that affected more than 13 million people in the Horn of Africa region, the Heads of State and Government of IGAD and the East African Community held the Joint Nairobi Summit of 2011, and resolved to embark on an IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI). The overall goal of the initiative, which is being implemented in three five-year phases, is *drought disaster resilient communities, institutions and ecosystems in ASALs of the IGAD region achieved by 2027*.

In view of the above, a joint co-created proposal was developed between IGAD/IDDRSI-RAU and USAID to strengthen market systems that will improve resilience to shocks and stresses through increased income, improved production systems, increased food availability and diversity and livelihood diversity. The overall strategic objective of the proposal is to build resilient communities through strengthening market systems in the IGAD region. It contributes directly to the overall strategic goal of IDDRSI which is *“Drought disaster resilient communities, institutions and ecosystems in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) of the IGAD region*

achieved by 2027” and specifically, PIA 5 (Research, Research Training and Knowledge Generation see IDDRSI Strategy 2013 & 2019)

Justification

In order to address the above, IGAD proposed ‘an IGAD led’ Drought Resilience Research Collaboration Network that will strengthen collaboration of existing Member States resilience research institutions within the IGAD region. The Network seeks to bring together key senior researchers of public national universities and national agricultural/livestock research institutions from IGAD member states with significant engagement and experience in the arid lands of the Horn of Africa region. The network intends to serve as a platform to share innovative technologies as well as facilitate new ones through a common regional research and human capital development agenda, this will support evidence based decision making on resilience programming and policy making. Strengthening existing networks of collaborating regional resilience research institutions, in the context of changing nature of work (CNW) that enables sustainable contribution to market-driven innovation and scaling-up of research outputs for improved cross-border agricultural trade and resilience building.

The structure of the proposed network envisages a series of outcomes that will lead to high level human skill capacity within the IGAD Region. It seeks to achieve this by involving local institutional structures, mainly Universities, Research organizations, relevant government departments and local community organizations in a manner that creates an all-round knowledge platform that ensures availability and accessibility of demonstrated research-based solutions for attaining community-centred. This will improve drought resilience and sustainable natural resource management for increased food security and sustainable livelihoods.

Strategically, the envisaged Drought Resilience Research Collaboration Network and pathways will support IDDRSI align existing research and knowledge institutions to the development priorities of the IGAD Member States.

Purpose

In line with the foregoing, a regional meeting will be convened by IGAD-RAU at a venue and date agreed upon with USAID to validate the Drought Resilience Research Collaboration Network framework, identify implementing pathways to strengthen the network of drought resilience research institutions, set a common research agenda that promotes resilience technologies and practices, and appropriate institutional governance structures for effective delivery.

Methods and Approach

Representatives from identified key public national research institutions within Member States shall be convened to, *inter alia*, discuss the collaborative framework and set research agenda. The meeting will run for four-days bringing together a total of thirty-five (35) professionals with two (2) from each IGAD member state public university and national research institution that are involved in drought resilience research. This shall be in addition to IGAD subject matter specialists and other relevant stakeholders. During the meeting, the Drought Resilience Research Collaboration Network Framework will be presented and subsequently workshop participants will develop a consensus and prioritized drought resilience research agenda, among others.

Outputs

- i. A validated Drought Resilience Research Collaboration Network framework report.
- ii. A negotiated institutional governance structure to ensure transparency, accountability, and sustainability.
- iii. A draft Research Regional Resilience research agenda prioritized to meet the needs of IGAD Member States in line with IDDRSI Strategic pillars.
- iv. An agreed upon membership for the Regional drought resilience structure research network as well as the different layers of governance.

