

Improved management practices

- Participants from the Republic of Congo have benefited from a series of training workshops on integrated rice management (IRM), which aim to enrich researchers' and technicians' knowledge of IRM. This will help to bridge gaps that currently exist between actual farmers' yields and attainable yields through better crop management, and to fully exploit the potential of improved varieties.
- AfricaRice's manuals on IRM, based on the participatory learning and action-research (PLAR) approach developed by the Center, were used by the facilitators. Participants were also exposed to AfricaRice's training videos and radio programs.
- As part of a donor-funded project in 2014, AfricaRice procured and delivered to the Republic of Congo two power tillers, two reapers, two rice milling machines, and two threshers for use by stakeholders in the rice sector development hubs.

Policy advice

- The policy of the government is focused on improving domestic rice production to reduce the Republic of Congo's dependence on imports. National partners from Republic of Congo have participated in the training courses of the AfricaRice-coordinated Policy Task Force for research on policy advice and impact assessment.

Africa-wide rice task force activities

- Republic of Congo has been an active member and benefited from the activities and funding of the six Africa-wide Rice Task Forces coordinated by AfricaRice – Breeding, Agronomy, Gender, Mechanization, Policy, and Processing & Value Addition.
- The Task Forces have provided a unique opportunity for the Republic of Congo's researchers to interact and partner with their counterparts from other AfricaRice member countries.
- Funds contributed to Republic of Congo through the Task Forces have complemented government allocations significantly and ensured the continuation of research and the training of scientists and value chain actors.

Rice Hubs and Innovation Platforms

- The Republic of Congo established three rice sector development hubs: Kindamba (Upland ecology), Ewo (Upland/Lowland), and Mossendjo (Rainfed Lowland)
- The rice hubs serve as field laboratories where research outputs and products are being tested, adapted and integrated – with feedback provided to researchers on technology performance.

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Republic of Congo - AfricaRice Partnership

- ▶ Republic of Congo joined AfricaRice (ex-WARDA) in 2007.
- ▶ The Centre de recherche agronomique de Loudima (CRAL) is one of the most important national partners of AfricaRice.
- ▶ As a member country, Republic of Congo takes part in statutory meetings of the AfricaRice Council of Ministers, which is the Center's highest governing body.
- ▶ Republic of Congo is also a member of the AfricaRice National Experts Committee.

“Rice is global and it is big business. Rice is life in Africa.”
 -- Dr Harold Roy-Macauley,
 AfricaRice Director General



Contributions by AfricaRice to Republic of Congo

- ▶ Between 2009 and 2016, Republic of Congo benefited from six donor-funded projects, coordinated by AfricaRice, to the tune of US\$ 682,654.
- ▶ AfricaRice, in partnership with CRAL, has contributed to boosting Republic of Congo's rice sector in terms of policy and technical advice, improved seed, cropping practices and processing technologies, capacity development and support to rice value chain development.

Capacity strengthening

- ▶ Between 2009 and 2016, 3 PhD scholars from Republic of Congo were trained. About 10 researchers and value chain actors from Republic of Congo have participated in group training workshops, strengthening the country's capacity for rice research and development.

IMPORTANCE OF RICE IN REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Although the Republic of Congo is one of the smallest rice-producing countries in the Central African region, it is well placed to produce rice.

Rice is cultivated in the Niari Valley and in the Djambala District. The country harvested 1,983 ha of paddy rice in 2014 and was expected to harvest about 2,000 ha in each of 2015 and 2016.

Rice yields are low (less than 1 t/ha) with a negative annual growth rate. The combination of low yields and small area harvested result in very low paddy production - 1,184 t in 2014 and estimated at 1,206 t in 2016 (723 t of milled rice).

Rice production covers less than 1% of national demand. Rice consumption grew at 8.4% per annum between 2001 and 2010 and led to 2.6% annual increase in rice imports with an average of 62,083 t per annum, costing US\$ 22.11 million. The Republic of Congo imported an estimated 50,448 t of rice during 2011-2016.

Although rice is not the main staple food in the country, as shown by its relatively low level of per capita consumption (16.3 kg/year) and calorie intake (162 kcal/capita/day), a national rice development strategy, which is currently lacking, and appropriate policies are needed to improve domestic rice production.

The Republic of Congo has a clear potential to become self-sufficient in agriculture. Moreover, the government has chosen the agricultural sector as being of high priority for diversifying the national economy in the post-petroleum period. After the Republic of Congo became a member of AfricaRice in 2007, CRAL and AfricaRice have collaborated to develop improved rice varieties and accompanying technologies to increase rice productivity in the country.

Rice Statistics for Selected Indicators						
Source: USDA						
Indicator	2013	2014	2015	2016	Average 2001-2010	Annual growth rate 2001-2010 (%)
Paddy production (t)	1,189	1,184	1,195	1,206	1,281	0.91
Area (ha)	1,974	1,983	2,034	2,086	1,990	2.57
Yield (t/ha)	0.60	0.60	0.59	0.58	0.64	-1.61
Consumption (t)	73,448	79,610	86,289	93,529	59,559	8.4
Import (t)	41,541	42,603	43,691	44,808	62,083	2.6

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Republic of Congo-AfricaRice Partnership: Achievements and Impacts

Improved varieties

- With technical support from AfricaRice, CRAL promoted participatory variety selection (PVS) for upland and lowland NERICA varieties.
- Under the Emergency Rice Initiative project funded by the Government of Japan (2013-2014), Congo produced 31.25 t of certified seed of seven varieties (NERICA-L 19, NERICA 1, NERICA 2, NERICA 14, WAB56-50, WITA9, and Mboumbo) which were distributed to 980 farmers (including 87 women).