

## **Burundi – Agriculture**

### **IFDC Burundi and the Belgian Technical Cooperation Partner to Promote Agricultural Intensification**

Through the CATALIST project, IFDC Burundi has partnered with the Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC) since April 2011 to promote agricultural intensification in Burundi's Cibitoke and Kirundo provinces.

The Support to Agricultural Development of the Provinces of Cibitoke and Kirundo (PADAP Cibitoke and PADAP Kirundo) projects are transferring information about agricultural intensification through field training (which has been endorsed by the two provinces' departments of agriculture and animal husbandry) under the direction of Burundi's Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry.

IFDC and BTC are working together to improve the technical knowledge of extension agents through field training because the agents have direct links and influence with farmers. Attending the training sessions were 77 officers and agents from the two provinces and they will disseminate the information to an additional 1,124 local supervisors. If a supervisor transfers the information to at least 10 farmers, 11,240 farmers could benefit from direct support related to this training.

The training introduced Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM). ISFM refers to making the best use of inherent soil nutrient stocks, locally available soil amendments and mineral fertilizers to increase land productivity while maintaining or enhancing soil fertility. In addition to ISFM, the training provided in-depth information about fertilizers, improved seeds and crop protection products. Other topics were management of acidity and increased income because of the intensification.

Specific objectives of the training are:

- ❖ Capacity-building of agronomists and agro-input dealers in terms of fertilizer use to promote agricultural intensification.
- ❖ Training of trainers who, in turn, will train zone agro-assistants, agro-extension agents and farmers.
- ❖ Equipping trainers about tools and techniques for technology transfer and out-scaling that knowledge.

Mr. Venant Karikumutima works in the zone of Mukenke, Mbwambarangwe commune in the Kirundo province and has 22 years of extension experience. He said that before IFDC's training, he thought that applying organic manure was enough to increase yields. He explained that public opinion in Kirundo says that fertilizers are bad and that Burundi soils are already fertile. Because of the training, he now understands that the depletion of nutrients by the plants contributes to fertility loss and, consequently, this fertility must be restored through ISFM. He also learned about soil acidity and

how to manage it and is committed to making demonstration fields and teaching other agro-extension agents what he has learned.

Mrs. Frédiane Kandava, an agronomist from Vumbi zone, Vumbi commune in Kirundo province, agrees that before the training, she thought that there was no need to mix organic manure and mineral fertilizers in her farm's soils. She participated in the training with her colleagues and received educational documents, which will be very useful to her. She had not heard of ISFM before. Now she is able to understand the fertilizer formulations and understands the instructions on fertilizer bags.

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*IFDC Contact:*

Alexis Ntamavukiro  
257 22 25 78 75  
alexis@ifdc.org