

Burundi – Agriculture

ICRA trainees conduct research on the competitiveness of local rice

May 25, 2011-Bujumbura-IFDC is partnering with the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) in the Ruzizi Without Borders program. Ruzizi Without Borders is an initiative to create synergies among stakeholders in the Ruzizi Plain as they collaborate on rice production intensification and regional integration. One of the challenges to intensification is the cost of rice production in the Plain. Because production costs are currently so high, locally grown rice is more expensive than imported rice. Therefore, the Ruzizi Without Borders program requested support from the International Center for Development Oriented Research in Agriculture (ICRA). A team of four trainees from ICRA's francophone program for capacity-building visited Burundi in May 2011 to conduct research on the local rice sector in the Ruzizi Plain.

The team met with many people working in the sector, conducted field trips and investigations regarding rice production, processing and marketing. Initial conclusions of this research showed that the local rice sector is more competitive than perceived. However, there are problems at the social and organizational levels. As a consequence, production and processing hinder the competitiveness of the local rice.

According to trainee Cossi Leonard Hinnou, the team discovered a great deal of information regarding the rice sector and how cultural values in Burundi also affect the sector. Hinnou believes that more participation is needed from collaborating institutions. "In order to improve the competitiveness, these factors will need to be remedied," Hinnou concluded.

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