

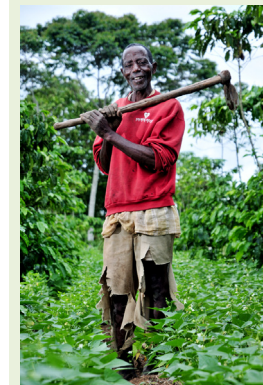
Country Profile - Belgium

Agricultural Research for Development

Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) is mainly supported through the development budget administered by the Belgian Directorate General for Development (DGD), and takes the form of multilateral, bilateral and indirect support aimed at pro-poor initiatives.

Key ARD objectives

- Targeting poor smallholder farmers as a matter of policy, Belgium takes food security and the elimination of poverty as its twin objectives - to be achieved through increased potential on the part of small family farms.
- Belgium seeks to further an integrated approach to ARD, insisting on the incorporation of sustainable production systems, participatory research, and gender inclusiveness.
- DGD reinforces existing ARD systems in the countries it supports by anchoring every project it funds within these structures and organisations.



DGD targets poor smallholder farmers
Credit: © Neil Palmer (CIAT)

Summary

Within the federal government of Belgium, funding for ARD is mostly the responsibility of the DGD. This takes the form of direct bilateral support through its implementing agency, the Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC); indirect bilateral support involving Belgian universities and scientific institutes; and multilateral support directed primarily to CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) centres working in Africa.

A smaller share of ARD is funded by Belgium's Communities and Regions through a complex structure of ministries, administrations and funds. The Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO) also supports programmes in sustainable development, global change, biodiversity and ecosystems, and information society technologies. Belgium is now placing emphasis on coherence between its different programmes, establishing complementarities between its different funding channels for greater impact. As such, ARD will be important to any action that targets agriculture, food security, biodiversity or the environment.

Main ARD budget and beneficiaries for 2010

Contributors

Directorate General for Development (DGD)	€ 19,210,000
Other federal entities	€ 405,000
Flemish Region	€ 260,000
Walloon Region	€ 125,000

Recipients

CGIAR and other international organisations	€ 9,200,000
Public entities in partner countries	€ 6,745,000
Belgian public entities	€ 3,475,000
NGOs & Civil Society	€ 580,000

Geographic focus

Africa	€ 11,354,300
Americas	€ 1,740,400
Asia	€ 2,182,750
Europe	€ 3,412,400
Global	€ 1,310,150

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ARD landscape

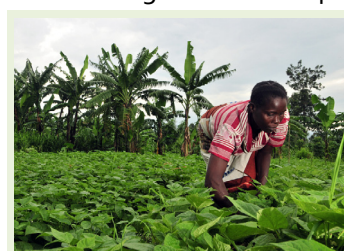
DGD extends support to ARD projects within a clear policy framework of commitments to sustainable development and poverty eradication. Belgium has institutionalised the concept of integrated ARD, and has introduced four basic principles to promote the approach: participatory approaches, sustainable management of natural resources, gender equality, and efficient and sustainable implementation.

ARD is supported through channels of multilateral, bilateral and indirect cooperation. Multilateral support is largely through member institutes of the CGIAR, to which DGD commits millions of Euros yearly in core funding. As a major funder Belgium has been an important voice in CGIAR reform, supporting a spirit of collaboration between centres, with Belgian universities, and with all stakeholders in project countries.

On the bilateral level, DGD supports ARD in many of its 18 priority partner countries. Direct bilateral projects are implemented by BTC, while indirect bilateral support is provided to cooperative partners in Belgian universities, NGOs, and scientific institutions such as the Royal Museum for Central Africa and the Institute for Tropical Medicine. Since 2001 the Regions (Wallonia, Flanders and Brussels) have been responsible for their own agricultural policy, and though oriented towards research in Belgium and Europe, they are increasingly offering their own financing for activities in the South.

Main ARD programmes

1. DGD's multilateral funding currently supports nine CGIAR centres as well as the International Trypanotolerance Center in the Gambia.
2. Since 2004 Belgium has made a particular contribution to inter-centre collaboration, uniting three DGD-funded projects in the Consortium for Improving Agriculture-based Livelihoods in Central Africa (CIALCA), a trailblazing model for CGIAR partnerships.
3. Support to Belgian universities is provided under the University Development Cooperation (UDC), bringing the Inter-university Council of the French Community of Belgium (CIUF) and the Flemish Inter-university Council (VLIR) together with DGD to collaborate with Southern institutions.
4. A Belgian Fund for Food Security (BFFS) was set up in 2009 to improve the food security situation for vulnerable population groups in the poorest African countries. The Fund adopts a multisectoral approach which includes research to boost food production.
5. BELSPO also contributes to elements of ARD, organising networks for information exchange between scientific institutes in Belgium and abroad and supervising federal institutes working on veterinary and biodiversity research.



Belgium united 3 DGD-funded projects to form CIALCA
Credit: © Neil Palmer (CIAT)

Perspective

In 2008 Belgium decided to substantially step up its efforts to support agriculture and rural development. By 2010 Belgium was spending 10% of its official development assistance in these domains, a percentage due to rise to 15% by 2015. This is a powerful indicator of growing Belgian commitment to the world's poor farmers. And as the CGIAR reform process proceeds, DGD has stressed the pursuit of efficient and sustainable implementation procedures in both research and development.

Further information

- [Directorate General for Development \(DGD\)](#)
- [Flemish Inter-university Council \(VLIR\)](#)
- [Inter-university Council of the French Community of Belgium \(CIUF\)](#)
- [Belgian Technical Cooperation \(BTC\)](#)

This country profile has been commissioned by EIARD (the permanent ARD coordination platform between the European Commission, Member States of the European Union, Norway and Switzerland) as part of a series providing an overview of policies and support for agricultural research for development by EIARD member countries. EIARD is not responsible for any omissions and inaccuracies contained within this document and the information is only correct up to the date of publishing.

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