

Country Profile - Finland

Agricultural Research for Development

Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) fits into the strongly rural development-focused policy and strategy of Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA). MFA is the main supporter of research activities at Finnish universities and research centres, funding for four CGIAR centres, and development research co-financed with the Academy of Finland.

Key ARD objectives

- Raising agricultural productivity ecologically and sustainably, development of small-farm livelihoods, and improvement of working conditions in rural areas.
- Improvement of competitiveness in the rural sector.
- Improving food security and safety.
- Encouragement of agriculture and rural innovation systems (research, counselling, training, farmers' unions, and cooperation with the private sector).

Summary

Finland is involved in several areas of agricultural research for development, running alongside a major focus on forestry and agroforestry research. Funding from the MFA supports CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) institutes, networks of Finnish universities, and cooperation with developing countries to strengthen their national research efforts with Finnish expertise in research and technology.

The central goal of Finnish development policy is to contribute to the global effort to eradicate poverty through economically, socially and ecologically sustainable development in accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Finland is participating in efforts to enhance targeting of agricultural research in the most important sectors for achieving MDGs in the future, while paying special attention to the needs of poor small producers, especially women.

Additionally, MFA commissions short-term development policy research projects as a central tool for policy planning and implementation, building dialogue between the Ministry and researchers working closely with global issues. This applied research brings together Finnish expertise from many disciplines to promote policy coherence for development and strengthen North-South partnerships.



Measuring photosynthesis in an eucalyptus forest in Eastern Kenya
Credit: © Vesa Kaarakka

Main ARD budget and beneficiaries for 2010

Contributors

Ministry of Foreign Affairs	€ 8,200,000
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Recipients

CGIAR: ICRAF, ILRI, IFPRI and CIFOR	€ 3,000,000
Finnish Universities and research centres through the Academy of Finland	€ 1,000,000
Universities and research centres through commissioned development policy research projects	€ 200,000
Collaboration between CGIAR and Finnish partners	€ 3,000,000
Partner Country institutions through ICI	€ 1,000,000

ARD landscape

As the sole major ARD funder, MFA contributes to bilateral research involving Finnish universities and research centres, and to the core funding of the CGIAR centres for forestry (CIFOR), agroforestry (ICRAF), livestock (ILRI), and food policy (IFPRI) which were chosen for their alignment with Finland's own research priorities, strengths, and development policy goals.

The Academy of Finland's yearly research grants are instrumental to Finland's development research capacity and to the status of agricultural and rural development in the broader research agenda. Many of these Academy-funded projects are built on North-South research partnerships.

Finland's universities, the principal ARD actors within the country, have established a number of communication networks, research cooperation programmes, and exchange programmes between researchers in Finland and elsewhere. The main centres of ARD are the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry at the University of Helsinki, and MTT Agrifood Research Finland.

Main ARD programmes

1. The largest share of Finland's ARD contribution falls within its multilateral cooperation policy through core funding to four CGIAR centres. MFA has also initiated collaboration between the four CGIAR centres and Finnish partners on large-scale research programmes.
2. Research funded by the Academy of Finland benefits from Finland's strong knowledge base in research and technology. A particularly strong focus on forestry and agroforestry programmes reflects Finland's long history in this sector.
3. The Institutional Cooperation Instrument (ICI) for North-South collaboration has been launched by MFA to strengthen the capacity of partner countries' public sector institutions. Through a corresponding programme for Higher Educational Institutions (HEI ICI), Finnish research institutes are initiating collaboration with national institutes in partner countries.
4. The Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) administers several scholarship programmes for educational exchange. CIMO also administers a North-South-South Higher Education Institution Network Programme to enhance capacity in all participating countries.
5. One important aspect of ARD in Finland are University courses organised in developing countries, where students both from Finland and partner country participate, learn and create networks.
6. The Finnish Universities Partnership for International Development (UniPID) network facilitates shared ARD activities, allowing discussion between researchers, information exchange, and participation in the larger EU-funded CAAST-Net and SANORD-Network.

Perspective

Rural development and food security have long been an area of high priority in Finnish policy, and ARD, as a component of this, will continue to receive strong support. Finland looks to strengthen developing countries' own capacities with Finnish expertise, whether in collaboration with international research institutions or through national systems. In the future, Finland wishes to further strengthen collaboration with these institutions, bringing Finnish universities and researchers into wider cooperative undertakings.

Further information

- [Ministry for Foreign Affairs](#)
- [MFA Development Policy Guidelines on Agriculture and Food Security 2010](#)
- [Academy of Finland](#)
- [Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, University of Helsinki](#)
- [MTT Agrifood Research Finland](#)

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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Published: August 2011