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THE PSAC INSIGHTS

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF PSAC PROJECT IMPLEMENTED BY NAEB

NAEB inspected and distributed seedlings, produced to transform coffee and horticultural value chains under PSAC Project.



These seedlings were produced by women and youth at various NAEB-supported nurseries across districts. (Photo: courtesy of NAEB)

The National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB), through the Promoting Smallholder Agro-Export Competitiveness (PSAC) Project, has been working diligently towards the ultimate goal of the project: increasing the incomes of rural communities by fostering inclusive and sustainable agricultural export value chains. A key milestone in this endeavor has been the massive production and distribution of rigorous seedlings for coffee, tea, and horticultural crops such as avocado and mango.

These **seedlings** have been successfully produced by community groups of women and youth, providing them with life-changing job opportunities. Mature coffee, avocado, and mango seedlings were inspected, appraised, and distributed by NAEB to community farmers for mass planting during Season A. In the first phase, NAEB has received and distributed 666,911 coffee seedlings and 29,130 avocado seedlings to 376 farmers, along with 4,579 mango seedlings to 65 farmers.

These healthy, high-yielding seedlings are expected to significantly improve the lives of the smallholder farmers involved, enhance the viability and sustainability of their respective value chains, and advance Rwanda's agricultural exports

CONTENTS

	Page
• NAEB Distributed seedlings for VCs transformation	1
• Meet women and youth behind rigorous seedlings	2
• NAEB signed key agreements for PSAC implementation	4
• Seedling production earned women & youth RWF 431 M	5
• NAEB and CORDAID kick off cooperative assessments.....	5
• NAEB hosted a strategic meeting with DCOs & DFOs	6
• Transformative potential of patchouli farming	7

Some of the women and youth behind the successful seedling production and their aspiring stories

Mukankusi : A Story of Growth and Gratitude



(Photo: courtesy of NAEB)

Mukankusi is one of the gratified PSAC beneficiaries whose life is gradually improving, thanks to the seedling production job.

Mukankusi Tharcile: A Story of Growth and Gratitude
Mukankusi Tharcile, a 53-year-old woman, is a member of the Abishyizehamwe (United) group, which produces avocado seedlings in Bugarama Sector, Rusizi District.

She was amazed that the seedlings she produced for the first time were inspected and approved by NAEB, which motivated her and gave her the strength to do even better. She believes that their success in avocado seedling production is the result of carefully following the instructions given to them by the PSAC Project, including the proper application of fertilizers and other best nursery practices.

Through her involvement with the PSAC Project, Mukankusi has started to reap the rewards of her efforts in seedling production. After receiving her first payment, she immediately purchased a piece of land in her neighborhood.

“In the first installment, I received 247,000 Rwandan Francs, to which I added 160,000 from another group I belong to. With that money, I immediately bought a piece of land. I am really thankful.

I have also started aubergine farming and am now harvesting five sacks per season. I’m truly grateful,” she said.

If her group is given the opportunity to produce seedlings in the second phase, Mukankusi looks forward to even greater achievements with the PSAC Project.

“If we continue working with this project, I will achieve great things. My next goal is to buy goats and venture into livestock farming. Afterward, with the money I earn, I plan to buy another piece of land. I truly believe this will happen,” she shared.

Mukankusi is deeply thankful for the project, which has transformed her life, especially considering how difficult things were before.

“In this region, life is hard. When we first heard about this project, we were very excited. When a fellow member encouraged me to join, I was happy, but also scared and reluctant because, as a 53-year-old woman, I wasn’t sure I could do it. And now, look at what I am reaping. May God bless those who thought of us,” she concluded.

Uwajeneza Journey: From Struggling Youth to Empowered Seedling Producer



Uwajeneza is confident about transforming her life, thanks to PSAC. (Photo: courtesy of NAEB)

Uwajeneza Félicité, a 23-year-old female youth, is a member of the Dufatanye Community Group, which comprises 10 members.

The group has successfully produced coffee seedlings in Cyanika Sector, Nyamagabe District, under the PSAC Project. Félicité decided to join this group because of her passion for coffee and the income prospects it offered as a sustainable job. Before joining, she struggled to provide for herself, lacked hope for the future, and was jobless.

With a stable job and a contract, Félicité is optimistic about her future. She can meet her needs through her earnings from the group without resorting to indecent means or succumbing to temptations from men (locally referred to as *ibishuko*).

Looking ahead, Félicité aims to become a professional, self-employed seedling producer for various crops. With the skills and knowledge, she has gained from the PSAC Project, she envisions producing all types of seedlings needed in her region and creating jobs for others.

Félicité expressed her gratitude to the Government of Rwanda for prioritizing women and youth in seedling production activities that are transforming lives. She urges fellow youth, who often overlook such opportunities, to change their mindset and embrace life-changing ventures like these.

Ganza: Shaping His Future and Pursuing Agricultural Dreams Through Seedling Production

Heritier Ganza, 25, is the leader of the Dukore Kirimbi Community Group, which produces coffee seedlings in Kirimbi Sector, Nyamasheke District.

Ganza entered the field of agriculture, specifically seedling production, driven by his passion and his educational background. He specialized in an agriculture-related section during his recently completed secondary education.

When the PSAC Project was introduced, it became a golden opportunity for Ganza to pursue his aspirations, providing him with a chance to secure employment in his field without a lengthy job search.

“I was really happy when I learned about this project. I studied agriculture in secondary school with the dream of working in this field. When PSAC came, it was an immense opportunity for me to put my knowledge into practice, change lives, and overcome unemployment,” he explained.

Through the PSAC Project, Ganza is aiming to gain the knowledge and income necessary to fund his university education, where he plans to major in agriculture.



(Photo: courtesy of NAEB)

Ganza is optimistic his dreams will be fulfilled through PSAC

“This project will help me earn money and acquire the knowledge and skills needed for effective coffee seedling production. Another important benefit is that it will enable me to save for university tuition, where I plan to study agriculture, specifically cropping,” he said.

Watch the heartfelt testimonies of these women and youth by [clicking HERE](#).

NAEB Signed Strategic Agreements for Effective PSAC Implementation

MoA with Districts to Strengthen PSAC Implementation



NAEB CEO (left) and Nyamasheke District Mayor (right) Signing MoA during the CEO's working visit to the District. (Photo: courtesy of NAEB)

NAEB has formalized its collaboration with Districts through signed Memoranda of Agreement (MoAs) to enhance the implementation of the Promoting Smallholder Agro-Export Competitiveness (PSAC) Project. These agreements establish a solid foundation for joint efforts to ensure the successful execution of PSAC activities across its operational areas.

The MoAs set a framework for collaboration, emphasizing a shared commitment to advancing agricultural export development and improving the livelihoods of smallholder farmers engaged in PSAC initiatives.

Under these agreements, Districts play a pivotal role in facilitating project activities. Their responsibilities include participation in the selection of beneficiaries, mobilization of farmers and cooperatives, and identification of project sites, among other interventions.

On the other hand, NAEB provides technical guidance, including deploying Field Officers to oversee daily operations, recruiting technical assistants to support coffee rejuvenation efforts, conducting joint monitoring activities, and offering necessary technical and logistical support to ensure smooth project execution.

MoA with Heifer International to Boost Horticultural Exports through the PSAC Project

NAEB and Heifer International have formalized a partnership to implement key horticultural activities under the PSAC Project, focusing on vegetables. This collaboration aims to enhance Rwanda's horticultural export sector, improve competitiveness, and promote crops like tomatoes, garlic, carrots, chilies, French beans, and onions.

Over five years, the project will reach 2,000 households, creating jobs, improving food security, promoting sustainable farming, and boosting smallholder incomes, particularly for women and youth.



A variety of vegetable farming will be promoted under the partnership.

Data sharing Agreement for the selection of PSAC beneficiaries.

NAEB and the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) have entered into an important data-sharing agreement, designed to enhance the selection process for beneficiaries of PSAC Project



SIGNED: DATA SHARING AGREEMENT

Through this partnership, NAEB will access vital information regarding the social and economic status of individuals in the geographic areas targeted by the PSAC. Accessing Imibereho Social Registry System will play a critical role in determining eligibility for project benefits, ensuring a more targeted and equitable allocation of resources.

MoA with Ministry of Defense to Accelerate Coffee Rejuvenation

An MoA has been signed with the Ministry of Defense to expedite coffee rejuvenation efforts. This initiative focuses on the replacement of old coffee trees on 543 hectares across 26 sectors in six districts: Karongi, Nyamasheke, Rusizi, Ruhango, Huye, and Nyamagabe. A total of 1,559,724 coffee seedlings will be planted. The Ministry of Defense will guide and supervise farmers throughout the tree replacement process, ensuring the survival and health of the newly planted seedlings through follow-up maintenance, farmer sensitization, and technical support on good agricultural practices.

NAEB and CORDAID Kick Off Cooperative Assessments to Identify Those to Benefit from Capacity Building.

CORDAID International, one of the implementing partners of the PSAC Project, has officially launched its assigned activities that focus on capacity building and institutional strengthening. These efforts target farmers, cooperatives, private financial institutions, and facilitate market linkages for smallholder exporters, as outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement signed with NAEB.

In partnership with, CORDAID has taken on a wide range of responsibilities, including building the capacity of 108 cooperatives across three value chains: coffee, tea, and horticulture. With 246 registered cooperatives currently identified, CORDAID, using the Cooperative Assessment Matrix, is conducting a comprehensive survey to select the 108 cooperatives that will benefit from its capacity-building programs.



CORDAID enumerators interacting with cooperative members during data collection in Rwamagana District (Photo: courtesy of NAEB)

This initial survey aims to assess the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of farmer cooperatives and community groups to determine how best to support them. The findings will be used to design tailored training programs to address specific challenges identified.

The survey has been carried out across all 14 districts where the PSAC Project operates. CORDAID teams, supported by PSAC field officers, engaged representatives from community groups and cooperatives, administering structured questionnaires to gather insights into their operations and identify areas for improvement.

Under the NAEB-CORDAID agreement, CORDAID will prioritize capacity-building support for cooperatives within the coffee, tea, and horticulture value chains. In addition, it will focus on promoting climate resilience in financial services by strengthening financial institutions' ability to adapt to climate-resilient finance and sustainable development practices.

Women and Youth Gain RWF 431million in First Phase of Coffee, Tea and Horticultural Seedling Production, Positively Impacting Their Lives



Mutoniwase Mireille, weeding coffee seedlings in Nzahaha Sector, Rusizi District (Photo: courtesy of NAEB)

PSAC Project stands as a hope for smallholder farmers across Rwanda. With a strong emphasis on gender and social inclusion, the project is dedicated to uplifting rural households, particularly women and youth.

One of the most significant achievements of the PSAC Project is its massive coffee, tea, avocado, and mango seedling production initiative, which has already started to reshape the lives of its beneficiaries, especially women and youth, who have successfully produced robust seedlings through a community-based approach.

Though the project's long-term impact is yet to be fully realized, the early results speak volumes about its potential. Through partnerships with 92 community groups, the project has created seedling production employment for 1778 people including 1,376 women and 858 youth, spanning the coffee, tea, and horticulture value chains.

In the coffee sector alone, 297 women and 246 youth have found meaningful economic opportunities, collectively earning RWF 63,944,043. Similarly, in the tea value chain, 696 women and 370 youth have been engaged, earning a total of RWF 327,520,796. The horticulture sector has also been a source of significant economic support, with 383 women and 242 youth earning RWF 40,257,625.

In total, the project has generated financial gains amounting to RWF 431,722,464 across all three targeted value chains.

NAEB hosted a strategic meeting with Cash Crop Officers and Filed Officers aimed at accelerating PSAC Project implementation

NAEB) convened a strategic meeting with Cash Crop Officers and PSAC District Field Officers to review the implementation progress of PSAC Project. The meeting focused on assessing progress, addressing existing challenges, and devising actionable strategies to expedite the implementation of time-sensitive activities.



(Photos: courtesy of NAEB)

NAEB CEO Claude Bizimana urged District Cash Crop Officers and Field Officers to focus on time-sensitive activities

Discussions focused on key issues within PSAC-targeted value chains, including accelerating the identification of coffee farmers ready to plant new, high-yielding coffee seedlings after uprooting old, unproductive coffee trees, as well as developing plans for new seedling planting.

Participants emphasized the importance of expediting the reception of mature seedlings, ensuring their smooth distribution to prepared farmers, and facilitating timely planting to maximize survival rates.

Addressing the participants, NAEB CEO Claude Bizimana commended the contributions of Cash Crop Officers to the implementation of the PSAC Project. He urged them to develop a clear activity plan to ensure effective execution, particularly for the upcoming time-sensitive tasks.

“Collaborate with Field Officers to develop a comprehensive roadmap with a well-defined timeline for key and urgent activities. This should include the precise number of coffee farmers who have uprooted old coffee trees and are prepared to plant new seedlings”. The CEO emphasized the need for a clear management process of ready seedlings and effective collaboration

“Outline the process for receiving ready seedlings, their distribution, and planting. Additionally, detail the human and material resources required to ensure successful implementation. We are committed to working closely with you to achieve efficient and effective execution.”

District Cash Crop Officers, together with PSAC Field Officers, pledged to prioritize the development of plans for efficient seedling distribution and timely planting, while also creating a comprehensive roadmap to streamline project implementation. This commitment includes enhancing communication and collaboration to ensure timely information sharing and effectively addressing urgent tasks.

The meeting concluded with significant outcomes, including the resolution of existing challenges, the establishment of a clear plan to accelerate activities, enhanced collaboration, and a renewed collective commitment to achieving project targets.

This collaborative effort underscores NAEB’s dedication to boosting smallholder farmers’ productivity and competitiveness, ultimately driving sustainable growth in Rwanda’s agro-export sector.

Patchouli: Mudakikwa's High Expectations for Life-Changing Gains Through PSAC Project



(Photo: courtesy of NAEB)

Mudakikwa, one of pioneers of Patchouli farming in Rusizi District, sees greater opportunities with PSAC Project

Joseph Mudakikwa, an ambitious patchouli farmer from Rwimbogo Sector in Rusizi District, is an example of the transformative potential of patchouli farming in Rwanda. Rusizi District has emerged as the leading region for patchouli cultivation, and Mudakikwa has been at the forefront, growing this aromatic crop for the past five years.

As one of the pioneers in his region, he has so far reaped the benefits of this lucrative venture, improved his family's quality of life, and laid the groundwork for greater aspirations.

Since venturing into patchouli farming, Mudakikwa's life has had early positive changes thanks to gains from this plantation. With the income generated from the crop, he has managed to buy livestock, which not only supports his household but also its organic fertilizer enhances the productivity of other crops, such as coffee and various subsistence crops, on his land.

Recognizing the lucrative nature of patchouli farming, Mudakikwa is setting his sights on even greater achievements. With the support of NAEB through PSAC Project, he envisions a brighter future for his family and community.

His ultimate goal is to expand his patchouli plantation from its current size of one hectare to an impressive ten hectares.

This expansion would dramatically increase his productivity and profitability, paving the way for him to graduate from poverty and achieve financial independence

PSAC Project is expected to play a pivotal role in turning Mudakikwa's dreams into reality. By focusing on transforming patchouli cultivation, the project aims to enhance the lives of smallholder farmers like Mudakikwa and attract new entrants to this promising sector. Patchouli, which thrives when intercropped with coffee or banana plantations, is a crop with significant economic potential.

Through PSAC, patchouli cultivation is set to expand to 200 hectares across five districts: Rusizi, Nyamasheke, and Nyabihu in the Western Province; Nyaruguru in the Southern Province, and Musanze in the Northern Province.

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Promoting Smallholder Agro-export Competitiveness Project (**PSAC**), is a 6-year Government of Rwanda project, implemented by NAEB. Funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Government of Spain. PSAC overall goal is to increase incomes of the rural poor, by supporting inclusive and sustainable agri-exports' value chains such as Coffee, Tea, Horticulture. PSAC was officially launched in March 2024.

-For more information on PSAC Project, [click here](#)

-Check out key activity highlights of PSAC Project via [this link](#)

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