

## Story of Change

# Linking Processors, Fabricators, and Research Institutes for Economic Growth in Nigeria



A female trainee fabricating parts of a processing machine, during stakeholders' engagement at the Products Development Institute (PRODI) in Enugu.

## Adam Smith International, RISA Funded Project Milestones

- The RISA Fund facilitated mapping of technology centres (research institutes), fabricators, and processors involved in small scale processing equipment, by targeting research, design, manufacture and use of these centres across all the Nigeria' thirty-six states.
- Deepened engagement in Kano and Lagos by facilitating the establishment of a Coalition Network of Stakeholders for Agricultural Mechanisation (CONESAM).
- Established a web-based virtual platform to foster coordination, collaboration, and business development in the ecosystem.



### About the RISA Fund

The Research and Innovation Systems for Africa (RISA) Fund is a programme to support and strengthen research and innovation systems in six countries: Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, and Ethiopia. The programme runs from 2021 to 2024 and is funded by UKAid.

## About Adam Smith International, RISA Funded Project

Adam Smith International (ASI), has worked extensively in Nigeria to support the government's efforts to strengthen state structures, the business environment, and social cohesion.

ASI implemented the RISA grant through the Knowledge Exchange and Cascaded Commercialisation (KECC). The KECC is a systematic approach for small and medium scale end-user of research and development (fabricators and processor businesses) to access support for innovation and growth through linkages and collaboration with technology centres.

The main purpose of this project was to test opportunities to be realised from linking research institutes to local industry, especially cooperative groups, and local maker spaces among other important players involved in Small Scale Processing Equipment's (SSPE) in the agricultural sector in Nigeria.

### Why Research Institutes, Processors, and Fabricators?

The relationship between research institutes, processors, and fabricators cannot be downplayed. The research institutes provide the research or innovation needed to fabricators, enabling engineers to develop small scale processing equipment. This equipment is later be utilised by the processors in the agricultural sector.

*"Artisans, farmers, and all those involved in the value chain are business people. Linking these people with technology centres such as universities and research institutes gives an opportunity for the ecosystem to work together for a common good," says Terseer Nyulaku, team leader, ASI.*

Their close interaction leads to improved and productive agricultural mechanisation of the value chain, and leading to cascaded commercialisation which in turn results to economic growth.

*"Both fabricators and processors direct their efforts towards economic sustainability. They are all micro, small, and medium enterprises and that is a common denominator," adds Terseer.*

### Database of Fabricators and Processors

*"We are targeting small scale agricultural production, and our main purpose is to contribute towards reducing drudgery at the processing level, by adding value to products in the economy," explains Samuel Abbas, technical advisor, ASI.*

To achieve this, the RISA-KECC, identified technology centres, processors, and fabricators to inform existing clusters in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. This was made possible through desk research, field surveys, and data collection from relevant sources. To concretise the data, the information collected was disaggregated according to specialisation, number, location, business size, usage of small-scale processing equipment (SSPE), and other relevant data indicators.

*"We have a database of fabricators and processors cross the 36 states of Nigeria, and I doubt the government has such data. We know their telephone numbers, address, the kind of work they do, their needs, equipment they use, and most importantly, we were able to mark their specific location on GPS," confirms Terseer.*

### The Linkage Events in Lagos and Kano

To link the artisans, processors, and technology centers, the RISA-KECC organised stakeholder events in Lagos and Kano. The linkage was necessitated by the need for stakeholders to share information, feedback, and to promote a culture supportive of research and innovation. These provided a platform for knowledge exchange on availability of technology and access to skilled expertise. The participants discussed issues around lack of information, availability of needed technologies, opportunities, and challenges that exist in the agricultural ecosystem.

*"We have been waiting for a gathering like this, where we can share knowledge about our products and find out what small-scale processing equipments are available for processing our products," narrates Khadija Abubakar Jibri, a tea processor.*

The linkage events culminated in the formation of the CONESAM, a body that brings together key stakeholders in agricultural mechanisation. The coalition provides a platform for equitable and inclusive ecosystem governance and participation.

*"You needed to be at the closeout event to have seen the kind of conversations that took place because of stakeholders coming together. It was an achievement to form a coalition of stakeholders within the ecosystem and setting up a steering committee," confirms Samuel.*

The researchers developed a systematic framework for cascaded commercialisation to ensure fabricators and processors access support for innovation and growth from technology centres. In addition, they developed two sets of guidelines in partnership with stakeholders: guidelines for technical, financial, and economic analysis of agricultural machinery prior to extension to reduce risks associated to the adoption of new technology, and guidelines for fabricators to partner with clusters for participation in public procurement through a consortium approach.

*"Some issues within the ecosystem have already been identified and some of these frameworks will provide a head start in providing necessary information and guidelines needed within the space," adds Samuel.*

The formation of CONESAM and the development of systematic frameworks for cascaded commercialisation ensured that local level legal operating companies are facilitated to transform to Special Purpose Vehicles (SPV) for commercial partnerships.

### The Web-based Virtual Platform

The RISA-KECC partners established a web-based virtual platform to foster coordination, collaboration, and business development in the ecosystem. The website will facilitate continuous technology diffusion, co-creation, learning, marketing, soliciting, and publicising best-of-breed technologies in the ecosystem and among the CONESAM partner members.

*"The world is moving strongly towards the use of the internet. It is amazing we were able to get a web platform that brings together fabricators and processors beyond the scope of this project," affirms Samuel.*

Despite challenges such as insecurity, time constraints, geographical coverage of Nigeria, and the need to manage expectations among stakeholders, the RISA-KECC project has catalysed conversations among researchers, fabricators, and processors and provided a platform for stakeholders to collectively offer solutions to challenges encountered in the purchase and use of small-scale processing equipment in Nigeria.

**Organisation Name:** Adam Smith International

**Partner Contacts:** Samuel Abbas  
Technical Advisor, ASI

**Email:** samuel.abas@adamsmithinternational.com

**The RISA Fund Contact**

**Email:** info@risa-fund.org

**Website:** www.risa-fund.org

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