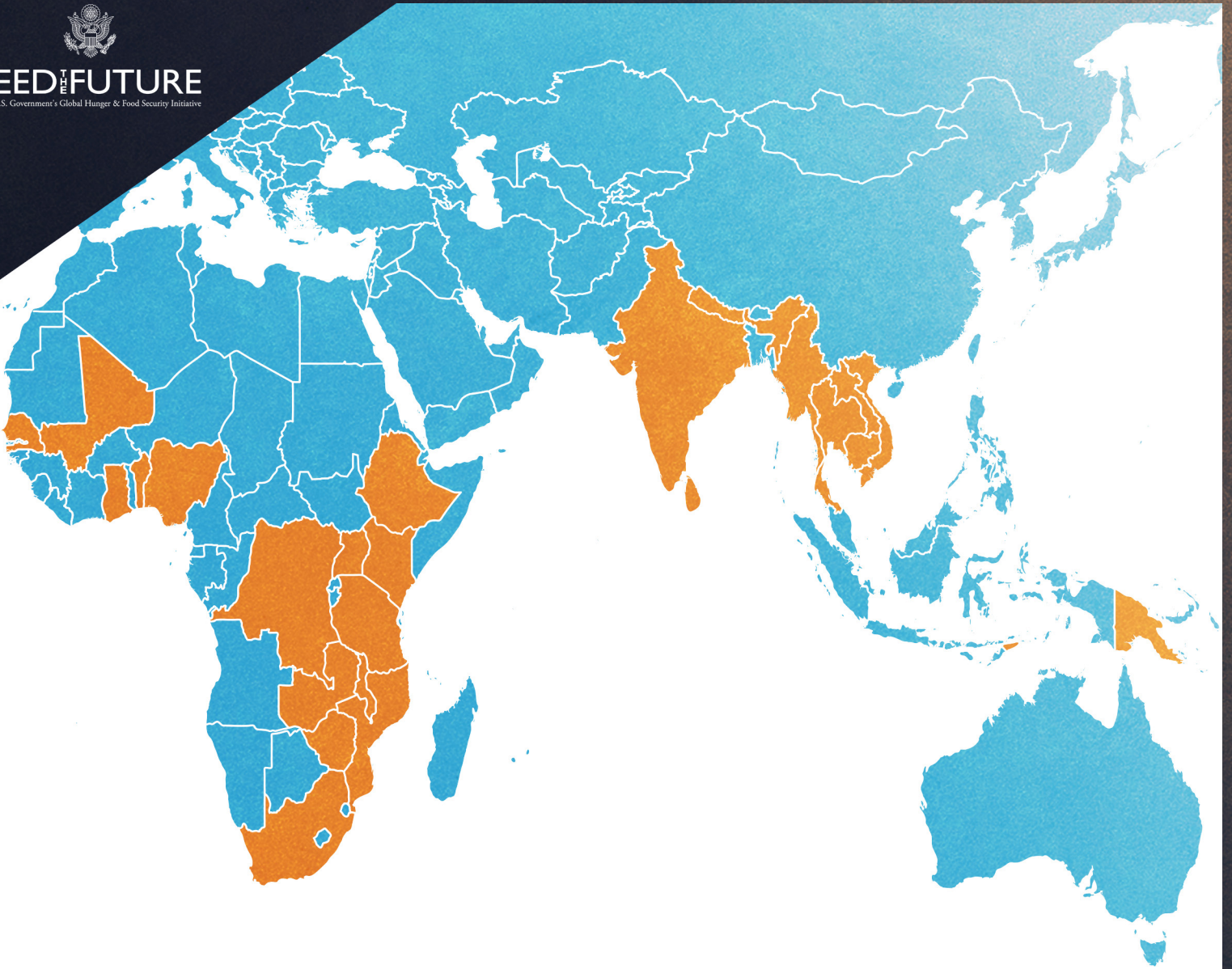




FEED THE FUTURE
The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative



FEED THE FUTURE INNOVATION LAB FOR FOOD SECURITY POLICY, RESEARCH, CAPACITY, & INFLUENCE

2020 Summary Report





OBJECTIVES

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Security Policy Research, Capacity, & Influence (PRCI) builds the capacity of local research centers and policy research networks in Africa and Asia to do research that impacts policy and programmatic decision making at national, regional, and continental levels.

By partnering with centers and networks that already have strong relationships with policy makers, PRCI ensures policy and programmatic influence from the start.

By building the research capacity of these partners, tying that research to policy priorities, and funding their institutional strengthening, PRCI helps grow their

reputations as sources of solid, evidence-based policy thinking. This further grows the influence that these centers can exert.

“PRCI is different because it does not impose topics or approaches on us, but helps us pursue the priorities we identified. PRCI will have a great impact on the way we do research here in BAME.”

*-Ndeye Fatou Faye
Bureau of Macroeconomic Analysis (BAME)
Senegalese Institute for Agricultural Research*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

PRCI successfully navigated a tremendously challenging first year of operation in the midst of a global pandemic, making major adjustments to its way of doing business while effectively implementing the core processes needed to put each of the partner centers in charge of their own capacity development – a central goal of PRCI.

With COVID-19 disrupting activities from March, 2020, the Lab implemented all elements of its workplan, including:

- Competitive selection of three African Centers for Policy Leadership
- Launch of three integrated research and training programs with partners in Africa and Asia
- Selection of two lead centers for South and Southeast Asia and start of research and training collaboration
- Launch of a webinar series with six webinars during the year
- Launch of the Lab’s institutional capacity strengthening program that puts local partners in charge of their own capacity strengthening; with them and five national partner centers in the region

Going beyond its workplan, partly in response to COVID-19, PRCI became a model of how to operate in a virtual environment by:

- Designing and implementing two 100% online technical training programs featuring synchronous and asynchronous training and with all training materials available online
- Assisting ReNAPRI – the Regional Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes in Africa - to carry out a highly interactive five-year strategic planning exercise entirely online. Through PRCI’s support, ReNAPRI now has a formally recognized lead role in content leadership for the Abuja II Soil Fertility Summit planned for early 2022, and is consulting with AU on how to support research and design for the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)
- Intensively mentoring researchers in its partner organizations through regular zoom calls and joint writing exercises
- Developing a Research-to-Policy (R2P) program to mainstream ex-ante thinking about policy impact into its research approach

By pivoting quickly to intensive online learning and collaboration, PRCI became a model of how to operate in a virtual environment

Moving into a post-COVID world, PRCI strives to be a leader in how to meld enhanced remote interaction with smarter use of in-person engagement

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: Core Center Training Program

To enhance research capacity PRCI’s technical training program is designed to support selected project-affiliated policy research centers in their conduct of research and policy communication using a trainer of trainer approach.



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African Policy Centers

“The breakout sessions were very useful because I interacted with other researchers and I was able to learn from them.”

-Core Center Training Participant



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Researchers Trained

“Although I had studied econometrics, I have not used it in my work for long and have almost forgotten everything. This training helped me to brush up on my knowledge again.”

-Core Center Training Participant



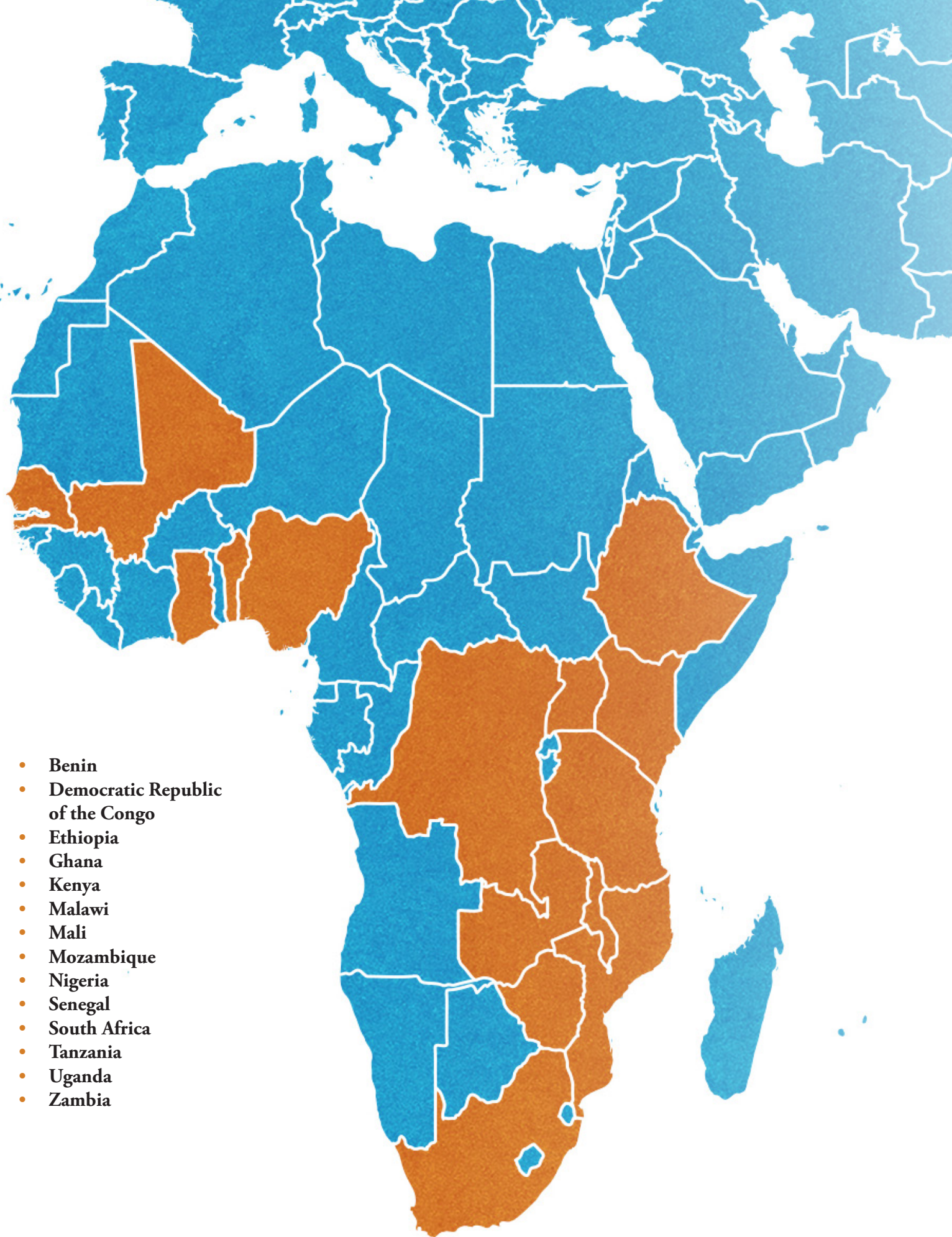
11
Training Modules

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: STAAARS+

The STAAARS+ Training Program is built on the idea that investing in individuals’ and small teams’ research capacity in a way that aligns with institution-level policy research and capacity building priorities will increase the effectiveness of institutional capacity development efforts under PRCI.



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Fellows



- Benin
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mozambique
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zambia

AFRICA

PRCI in Africa works through ReNAPRI and three Centers for Policy Leadership (CPLs) that were selected competitively during the Lab's first year: ISRA-BAME (Bureau d'analyses macro-économiques) in Senegal, EPRC (The Economic Policy Research Center) of Uganda, and CPEEL (Center for Petroleum, Energy Economics and Law at the University of Ibadan) in Nigeria. Researchers from two additional African research centers – The African School of Economics in Benin and the Institute of Disaster Risk Management & Food Security Studies of Bahir Dar University in Ethiopia – won STAAARS+ fellowships and through those are engaged in PRCI's research program

ReNAPRI is a network of 11 policy research centers across East and Southern Africa and Ghana. By supporting the ReNAPRI secretariat, working with it and its member centers to develop a highly participatory five-year strategic plan, and providing seed money for the research program it has developed, PRCI has helped ReNAPRI to achieve its vision of becoming an important player in regional and continental policy deliberations. Currently, ReNAPRI is one of three technical lead for preparations for

the Abuja II Soil Fertility Summit, expected to take place under the auspices of the African Union in early 2022; Additionally, ReNAPRI coordinates with the African Union Department of Trade to support implementation of the AU Commodities Strategy under the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

Through ReNAPRI, PRCI stands poised to have a major influence on these high level continental policy initiatives

PRCI works with each of the three CPLs to develop a four-year strategic capacity development plan and then provides them the funding to pursue that plan. Researchers from the CPLs and ReNAPRI centers participate in mentored, collaborative research with senior researchers from MSU and IFPRI, and benefit from PRCI's fully online (synchronous and asynchronous) Core Center technical training program (see Spotlight). Each center has strong links to their local policy makers. PRCI's R2P program builds on this policy knowledge and access to develop concrete strategies to bring its research to bear on policy making in the country.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: ReNAPRI Strategic Planning Process

To strengthen institutional capacity, PRCI works with selected policy research centers to improve existing internal systems and processes. In 2020, via a series of virtual workshops and collaborative engagements, PRCI facilitated ReNAPRI's five-year strategic planning initiative.

“The team began by undertaking a historical journey of ReNAPRI, looking at the organization's achievements and challenges, and thinking about where we saw ReNAPRI heading in the next five years.”

-Nalishebo Meebelo

Senior Program Coordinator, ReNAPRI

“A strength of ReNAPRI has been and will always be the initiative of its member centers but now we are also seeing effective coordination and leadership from the center. This will generate a really high payoff for the network and its members over time.”

-John Medendorp

Institutional Capacity Strengthening Lead, PRCI



- Cambodia
- East Timor
- India
- Laos
- Myanmar
- Nepal
- Papua New Guinea
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand
- Vietnam

ASIA

PRCI in Asia has partnered with two sub-regional leads to build-out a network of policy research centers working on common research. Kasetsart University Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics (KU) serves as the capacity building and research hub for Southeast Asia, while Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) in New Delhi plays the same role for South Asia. Working through KU and RIS, PRCI supports their efforts to strengthen their regional presence by partnering with Associated centers in the sub-regions: Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS) in Nepal, Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI) in Cambodia, Economic Research Institute for Industry and Trade (ERIIT) in Laos, and Institute of Policy Studies in Sri Lanka (IPS).

During Year 1, PRCI built fully online training materials under its Special Topics training program (see Spotlight) for use of the new BACI dataset of global trade and carried out three workshops with Asian partners on use of the dataset for trade analysis. This training set the stage for year 2,

in which researchers from the centers will work with PRCI researchers to carry out empirical trade analyses with a view to informing policy deliberations on food and agricultural trade.

The training materials have been adapted to be accessible to a global audience and now, together with PRCI's Core Center training modules, form an outstanding training resource for young researchers in Africa and Asia

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: *Special Topics Training Program*

Policy researchers and policy analysts in the policy research institutions and academic institutions in selected Asian developing countries were invited to participate in an online training session on trade flow analysis.



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Asian Policy Centers



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Researchers Trained



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Training Modules

“[The course was] well organized with contents and exercises which are practical for our research in our countries and for the region as well.”

-Special Topics Training Participant

“I benefited from the exchange of experiences and networking possibilities through the partnership and the entire gathering was extremely useful for team building with PRCI's network in Asia.”

*-Pasakorn Thammachote
Professor, Kasetsart University*

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