

Scaling Sweetpotato Seed Systems in Rwanda

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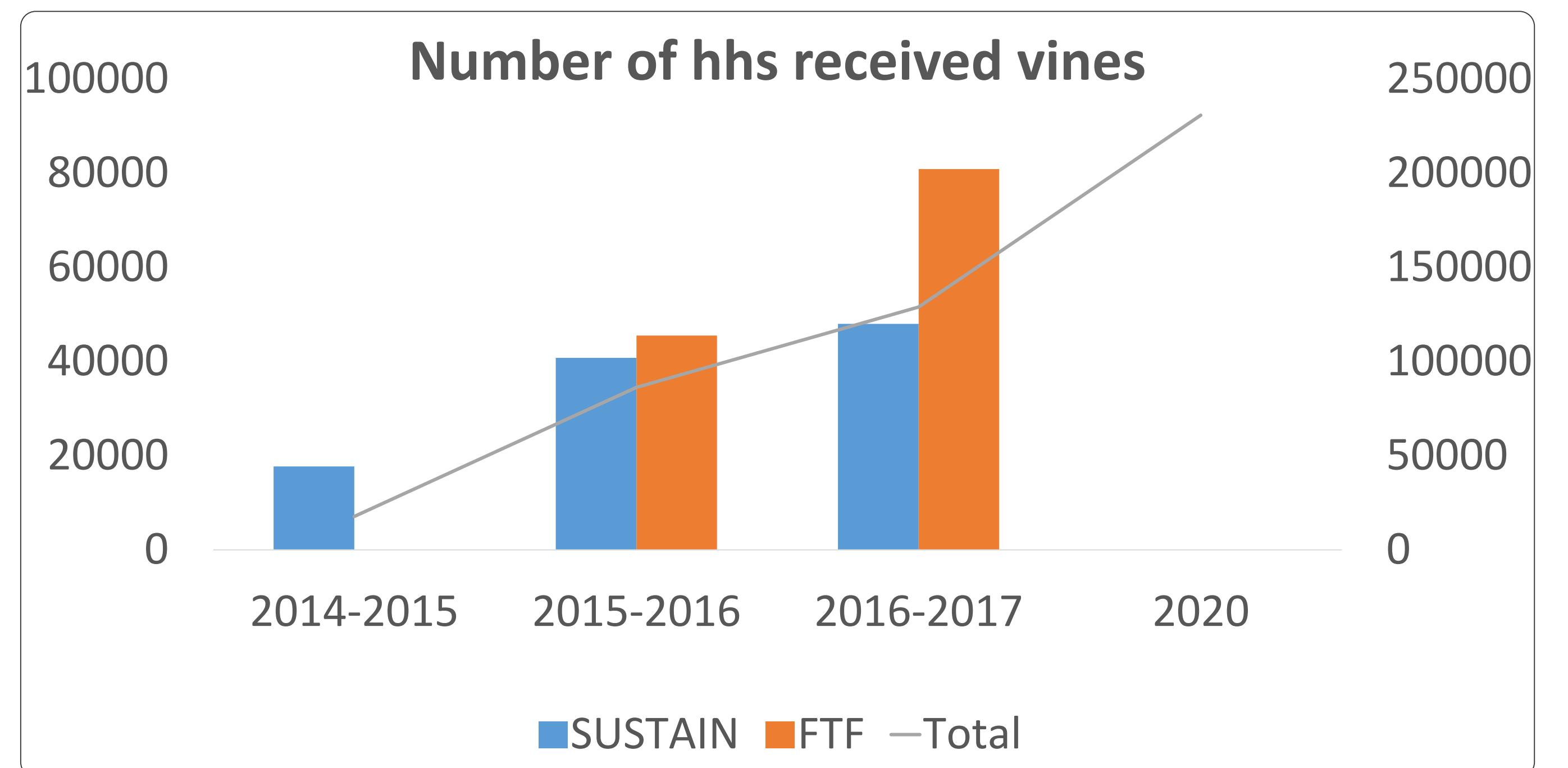


SWEETPOTATO SEED SYSTEM IN RWANDA

Sweetpotato in Rwanda is cultivated through the whole country. Farmers grow a wide range of varieties, usually in mixtures to satisfy their preferences, prolong availability and reduce risks in case of diseases and/or poor adaptability. One of seed system constraints, is the lack of improved varieties and clean planting materials. To solve this, a seed system was developed with the capacity to deliver clean planting materials of preferred varieties for further multiplication to farmers' fields. The use of insect-proof net tunnels was introduced as part of seed system. To spearhead the start of market-led vine dissemination, signposts were erected on the roads near each group main location.



LEVEL OF ADOPTION OR USE



Orange fleshed sweetpotato vines distribution and adoption has dramatically increased over the last of three years. This is explained by the number of households received vines from year one to year 3 where the number of farmers increased from 17,719 hhs to 128,809 hhs with an increase of 82%. This is mainly driven by marked growth of Orange Fleshed Sweetpotato (OFSP) roots market, Institutional buyers and the government commitment to the food security and nutrition promotion.

SCALING STRATEGY

In Rwanda, the scaling strategies consisted on:

- Establish of Decentralized Vine Multipliers (DVMs) through CIP partners and assist DVMs to construct aphid net tunnels,
- Subsidize the acquisition of the first clean material by the DVMs from the national research station organization (RAB)
- Erect road signposts near each DVM location indicating quality vines available to market the established vine multipliers
- Undertake the promotion of Orange Fleshed Sweetpotato (OFSP) through all media outlets
- Efforts to enlist extension service workers to understand the value of OFSP and promote them to rural communities
- Promote the nutritional value of orange-fleshed roots and the benefits of vitamin A for fighting malnutrition among children under 5 years old and pregnant women.
- Local and commercial processing of OFSP into finished products was promoted
- Train agriculture promoters through partners organization, extension services and local administration staff in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture & Ministry of Health

END USERS AND BENEFITS

Different people are now benefiting from strengthened sweetpotato seed system such as: Research institution by producing clean planting materials under protected area; DVMs are generating money from vines sales; The yield increased at farm level; nutrition status improved throughout pregnant women and children under five years old; Processed products such as Biscuits, Bread, Mandazi are now available and consumed by all kind of people in Rwanda. Sweetpotato is no longer called a woman crop but grown by both women and men and called "Garuka twiyunge" means come and re-conciliate with you.

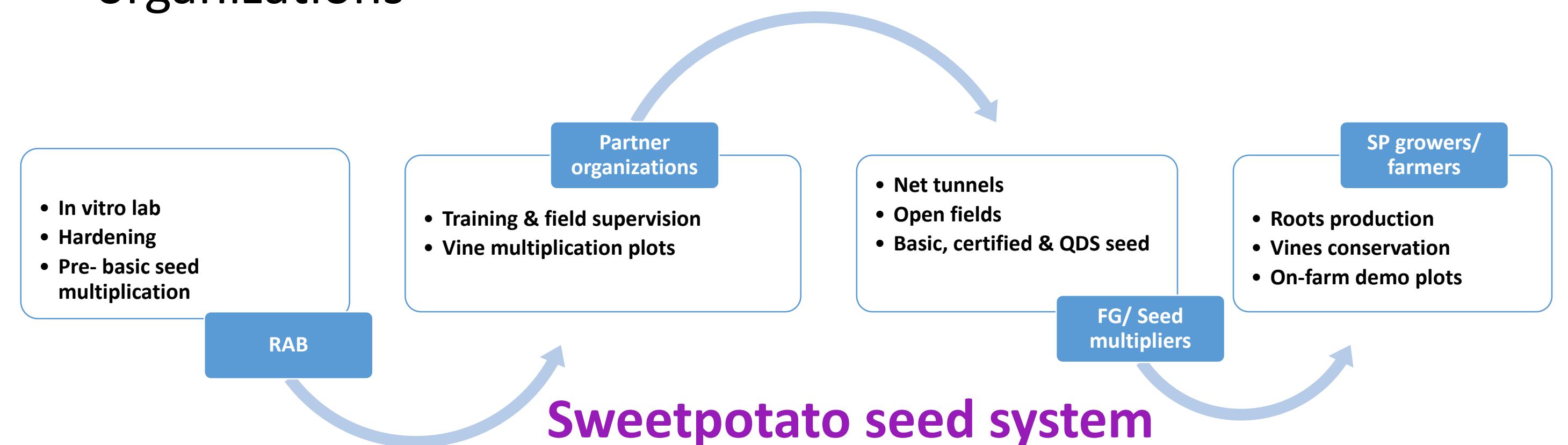
CRITICAL GAPS AND NEXT STEPS

The most challenges of Sweetpotato seed system in Rwanda are:

- Land shortage for quality vine multiplication
- Limited access to the marshlands due to crop prioritization
- Lack of consistent market for quality vines & roots
- Unexpected high demand of vine during emergence period

To strengthen the seed system, there is a need of

- Strong government support on seed system
- Build a strong networking for OFSP initiative through different organizations



KEY PARTNERS FOR SCALING

DFID & USAID for financial support to SUSTAIN & FTF projects;
Government of Rwanda through RAB for research, institutional support and coordination of seed system;
DERN, YWCA, Imbaraga, UNICOOPAGI & OSEPCCA for activities implementation on the ground



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