

Rwanda plans to fund irrigation, research

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RWANDA. Next year, Rwanda's government will start implementing the \$3.2 billion fourth agriculture transformation agenda, with new targets to drive growth of a sector considered central to achieving middle-income status.

The final draft of the Fourth Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA4), only awaits to be adopted into the budgets of the next six fiscal years starting 2018.

The six-year plan includes a response to emerging climate-related challenges coupled with pressure to feed and provide employment to the growing population amid the constraints of limited land. This will see the government invest in irrigation and research.

Projections show the government will increase the acreage under irrigation from 48,500ha to 102,281ha in the next six years to 2023.

This will involve expanding marshland to 60,023ha and hillside ir-

rigation to 13,413ha, while small-scale irrigation will expand six-fold to 28,848ha from the current 4,574ha.

The strategy also outlines a roadmap for tackling inefficiencies in provision of inputs and constraints to value addition, as well as issues around nutrition.

The strategy involved consultations between local, regional and international stakeholders and facilitated by the Agriculture Ministry.

Agriculture Minister Geraldine Mukeshimana said the plan took into consideration the commitments the country made through various conventions it ratified on eradication of hunger and poverty in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Malabo Declaration.

"We also aligned the new strategy to changes in the environment and settlement policies because concerns around climate change and rapid urbanisation were not at the level we see today when we designed the previous phases," she said.

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