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## Upgrading rice value chains in sub-Saharan Africa: a current situation and a perspective to bring higher quality local rice to the market

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### Abstract

Rice value chains in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) are characterised by a high degree of fragmentation and inefficiencies resulting into low productivity of locally produced rice and its low quality compared to the imported rice from other rice producing regions of the world such as Asia and the Americas. The quality issue could be one of the causes for the high percentage rates of the imported rice (52% as of 2021) to the total rice consumption of 33 million MT in SSA. AfricaRice and her partners have been undertaking three post-harvest and value chain development studies in the region that are critical to informing interventions needed to reverse this situation. The studies are (1) Examination of rice quality traits demanded in rural and urban markets in West and East Africa. As of 2021, 1,213 white and parboiled milled market samples were purchased from markets in eight African countries. The results of the sample analysis and socioeconomic surveys have been translated into consumers’ demands, which can be crucial information for varietal development and dissemination, (2) Valuation of quantitative and qualitative rice post-harvest losses (estimated at US\$ 10.2 billion in 2021), identification of three priority areas for loss reduction and loss mitigation tools/technologies suitable for smallholders who are dominant in the region, and (3) Site-specific value chain upgrading that targets all five components of the value chain upgrading trajectory (process, product, functional, channel and intersectoral upgrading) to improve productivity, sustainability and nutrition. This paper summarises some of the key findings of these studies and provides a perspective on rice value chain development in the region.

**Keywords:** Consumer demand, post-harvest loss, rice quality traits, sub-Saharan Africa, value chain upgrading