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The K-Ricebelt Project: 3,562 Tonnes of High-yielding Rice Seeds Were Produced in Seven African Countries in 2024

Sejong, 2 April 2025 — The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) and the Rural Development Administration (RDA) announced that a total of 3,562 tonnes¹⁾ of high-quality and high-yielding rice seeds were produced in seven African countries through the K-Ricebelt project.

1) 689 tonnes in the Republic of Ghana; 146 tonnes in the Republic of The Gambia; 267 tonnes in the Republic of Senegal; 640 tonnes in the Republic of Guinea; 24 tonnes in the Republic of Cameroon; 1,765 tonnes in the Republic of Uganda.; and 31 tonnes in the Republic of Kenya.

The K-Ricebelt project is the Republic of Korea's official development assistance (ODA) project, aimed to contribute to achieving zero hunger in

Africa by building large-scale zones for rice seed production in African countries, producing high-yielding rice seeds, and supplying them to farmers.

A total of 3,562 tonnes of rice seeds produced through the K-Ricebelt project in 2024 have exceeded the initial production target of 3,000 tonnes by 19% (562 tonnes). The production is also larger than the 2,321 tonnes produced in 2023 by 53% (1,241 tonnes). The K-Ricebelt project also produced an average of four tonnes of rice seeds per hectare, up by 8% from 3.7 tonnes of 2023 and up by 67% from 2.4 tonnes produced through Africa's conventional cultivation methods and its native rice varieties. Thus, a demand for rice seeds produced through the K-Ricebelt project is expected to rise in Africa. The rice seeds produced in 2024 will be supplied to farmers in Africa.

- K-rice varieties: ISRIZ-6, ISRIZ-7, Korea-Mo, Agyapa, and UKAFACI-39
- The average productivity of K-rice varieties in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea-Bissau: 5.23 tonnes per hectare
- The average productivity of local rice varieties in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea-Bissau: 4.26 tonnes per hectare

Meanwhile, with more and more nations expressing the intent to participate in the K-Ricebelt project, the MAFRA and the RDA have been working to expand the project. The MAFRA and the RDA have completed the feasibility study on the K-Ricebelt project for the Republic of Sierra Leone, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, and the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. The Korean government also completed the project of building rice paddies as a test bed to analyze the K-rice seeds' adaptability to the local agricultural environment.

As a result, K-rice varieties produced a 23% larger yield of rice seeds than local rice varieties did. Local farmers said that it was easier to cultivate and manage

K-rice varieties because of their earlier ripening time. They also said that K-rice varieties had a strong resistance to damage by diseases and insects and had a richer flavour than local rice varieties.

The MAFRA plans to replicate the successes of the K-Ricebelt project in the southern region of Africa. In 2024, the MAFRA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the participation in the K-Ricebelt project with four African countries—the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Madagascar, the Republic of Malawi, and the Republic of Zimbabwe. The MAFRA will work harder to ensure that the K-Ricebelt project can function as a platform to bring more advancement to Africa’s agriculture and rural areas. To this end, the MAFRA will connect the K-Ricebelt project to other areas such as support for the rice processing and distribution industry, improvement of the living environment of rural areas, etc.

<The K-Ricebelt project in seven African countries as of March 2025>



Senegal: Farmers are sowing rice seeds.



The Gambia: Rice seedbeds are being prepared.



Cameroon: Rice seedlings are being transplanted.



Guinea: Farmers are being educated on rice farming.



Uganda: Rice plants of the K-rice variety (UKAFACI-39) are being grown.



Kenya: Rice plants produced through the K-Ricebelt project are being harvested.



Ghana: K-rice seeds are being supplied to farmers.

<Rice paddies as a test bed for cultivation of K-rice seeds as of March 2025>



Côte d'Ivoire: rice paddies for K-rice varieties and local rice varieties



Sierra Leone: growth comparison between the K-rice variety (Agyapa) and the local rice variety (ROK24)



Guinea-Bissau: Rice plants of the K-rice variety (ISRIZ-7) are being harvested.