

The Consortium for Improving Agriculture-based Livelihoods in Central Africa (CIALCA): CGIAR, NARS, NGO and private sector partners join forces in the Great Lakes region.

During 2005, the Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGDC - Belgium) approved three proposals led by IITA, TSBF-CIAT and IPGRI-INIBAP:

- Sustainable and Profitable Banana-based Systems for the African Great Lakes Region (led by IITA).
- Enhancing the resilience of agro-ecosystems in Central Africa: a strategy to revitalize agriculture through the integration of natural resource management coupled to resilient germplasm and marketing approaches (led by TSBF-CIAT).
- Building Impact Pathways for Improving Livelihoods in *Musa*-based Systems in Central Africa (led by IPGRI-INIBAP).

The three projects operate largely in the same parts of Rwanda, Burundi, and DR Congo and with the same national partner institutes. In order to exploit these similarities in project objectives, structure and sites, the three CGIAR institutes and their NARS partners proposed to operate as a consortium. Using the different capacities of the participating institutes, the consortium aims to enhance research synergies, while avoiding needless duplication of research activities. This will maximize output with the available funding.

The setup of the 'Consortium for Improved Agriculture-based Livelihoods in Central Africa (CIALCA)' was endorsed by the Director-Generals of INERA, ISAR, ISABU, IRAZ in Kigali, on 15-16 September 2005. An operational model was developed, which included the recruitment of a CIALCA coordinator for Eastern DR Congo and Rwanda and the establishment of CIALCA offices in Bukavu and Kigali, respectively. In Burundi, CIALCA will operate through IRAZ, Gitega.

Following the meeting with the NARS DGs, individual project planning meetings were held in Bukavu, eastern DR Congo, 19-23 September 2005, for the TSBF-CIAT-led project, in Rubona, Rwanda, 2-7 October, for the IITA-led project and in Butare, Rwanda, 28 November-2 December 2005, for the IPGRI-INIBAP-led project. Subsequently, a CIALCA planning meeting for the banana work was held in Bujumbura, Burundi from 27 February till 3 March 2006. CD-Rom's containing presentations and outputs of these planning meetings were handed out to the participants and can be obtained through the CIALCA contact persons in Kigali, Bukavu or Gitega, or through the CGIAR centre contact persons (for contact details see below).

The INIBAP and the IITA project focus on banana-based systems, while the TSBF-CIAT project is legume-oriented. Project purpose, partners and areas of intervention are as follows:

INIBAP-led proposal:

Project description:

The purpose of the project led by INIBAP is to strengthen national and regional mechanisms to plan and orient investments, projects and research-and-development (R&D) synergies for increasing the contribution of *Musa* to rural well-being. In addition, the project will strengthen national frameworks for conserving local *Musa* germplasm, introducing and evaluating new cultivars and multiplying and disseminating clean planting material of superior cultivars. The project further aims to identify, with scientists, extension agencies, NGOs and farmers, market opportunities for bananas and banana products, to validate options for integrated pest and soil fertility management, and to develop improved *Musa* production systems. The project emphasizes strong partnerships and capacity building with NARS, Universities, NGO's, CBO's, and the private sector.

Partners: Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium), TSBF-CIAT, ISAR (Rwanda), IRAZ (Burundi), ISABU (Burundi), INERA (DR Congo), local universities, NGO's CBO's and private sector partners.

Areas of intervention: Burundi (Gitega, Kirundo, Cibitoke, Moso), Rwanda (Gishenyi, Cyangugu, Kibungo), eastern DR Congo (Kivu provinces).

IITA-led proposal:

Project description:

The *purpose* of the project led by IITA is to develop and disseminate in partnerships with all stakeholders technologies that improve the sustainability and profitability of banana-based cropping systems. Emphasis is put on identifying and exploring markets as a driving force for changing banana-based farming systems. Technologies promoted include amongst others locally adapted NRM options (including integration of legumes), integrated pest management options, the introduction of new banana hybrids, and improved post-harvest technologies. The project emphasizes strong partnerships and capacity building with NARS, Universities, NGO's, CBO's, and private sector. The project will also put emphasis on strategic research on sustainable use of the natural resource base.

Partners: UCL (Belgium), ISAR (Rwanda), IRAZ (Burundi), ISABU (Burundi), INERA (DR Congo), local universities, NGO's CBO's and private sector partners.

Areas of intervention: Burundi (Gitega, Kirundo, Cibitoke), Rwanda (Kibungo, Kibuye, Gitarama), eastern DR Congo (Kivu provinces), Uganda (upstream research activities)

TSBF-CIAT-led proposal

Project description: The *purpose* of the project led by TSBF-CIAT is to develop and disseminate in partnerships with all stakeholders resilient agro-ecosystems through integration of stress-tolerant and bio-fortified germplasm, inclusion of locally adapted NRM options, market-led diversification and intensification, and revitalisation of research for development capacity of all stakeholders. The strategy of the project is embedded in a vision of national and peaceful reconstruction and built on (i) a range of improved legume-based technology options that will make the difference in people lives, (ii) revival of capacity for research for development, (iii) facilitate access to markets, (iv)

improvement of nutrition and health of vulnerable groups, and (v) strategic alliances and partnerships.

Partners: Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium), INERA (DR Congo), CRSN (DR Congo), ECABREN (platform of NARES), DIOBASS (DR Congo), ISAR (Rwanda), World Vision (Rwanda)

Areas of intervention: DR Congo (Bas-Congo, Bandundu, and Sud-Kivu Provinces), Rwanda (Umutara, Bugesera, Kibungo), Western Kenya (upstream research activities).

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