

Information dissemination and capacity building

AfNet is organizing courses both in biophysical and social aspects including: Nutrient flows and Monitoring (NUTMON); Participatory Research and Scaling Up; Gender Analysis; Decision support Systems for agrotechnology transfers (DSSAT), and; Carbon sequestration and erosion control

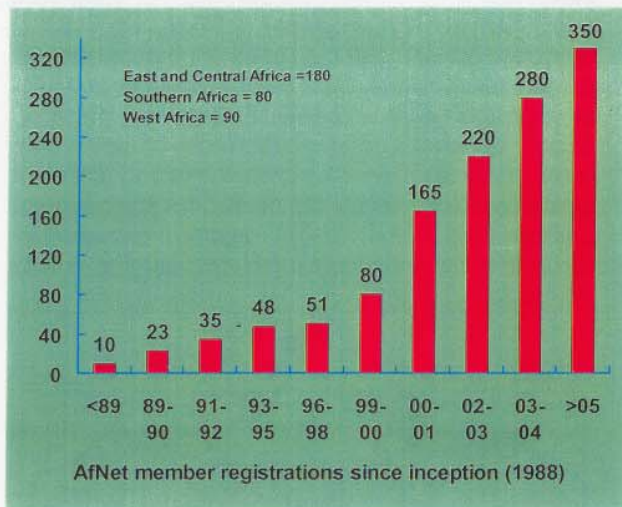
Recently, AfNet has published 3 books:

- Soil fertility Management in Africa: A Regional Perspective (Published 2003)
- Managing Nutrient Cycles to Sustain Soil fertility in sub-Saharan Africa (Published 2004)
- Improving Human Welfare and Environmental Conservation by Empowering Farmers to Combat Soil Fertility Degradation (Book of Abstracts)



Other information sharing: Two issues of the TSBF Newsletter "The Comminutor" are published annually. An internet based expertise database is being developed that will enable members to share their experiences and participate in eforums

AfNet Membership



Any scientist conducting research in Africa within the framework of the TSBF research strategy can apply for membership. Membership implies the sharing of objectives, principles and research approach. Membership can either be institutional or individual.

About CIAT

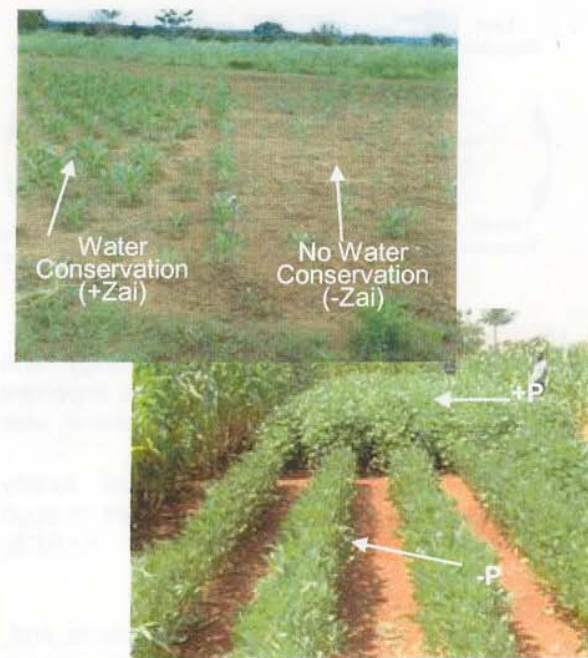
CIAT is one of the 16 International Agricultural Research centres, known as the Future Harvest centers, supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Its mission is to reduce hunger and poverty in the tropics.

Contacts

For more information about the African Network for Soil Biology and Fertility (AfNet), please contact the coordination office
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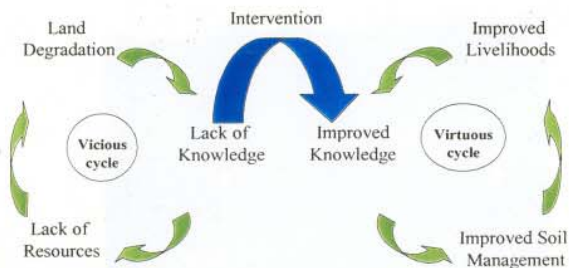
The African Network for Soil Biology and Fertility (AfNet)



Reversing Soil Fertility Decline in Africa

Why focus on soils in Africa?

- Low/ declining/ unstable land productivity
- Interactions with the other factors such as pests and diseases, water quality, C sequestration, climate change
- Limited returns to crop breeding
- Declining capacity for soil research in CGIAR, NARES and Universities
- More than 50% of Africans live on <1 USD per day
- 200m people are chronically hungry
- In 2002, Africa received 2.8m tons of food aid
- Growth rate for cereal grain yield =1%, while for population=3%
- Declined cereal production, 150 to 130kg/person/yr
- Low returns to labour



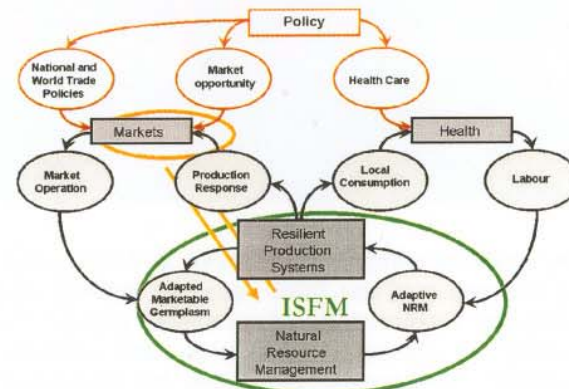
AfNet Objectives

The African Network for Soil Biology and Fertility (AfNet), which is single most important implementing agent of TSBF programme, was established in 1988 to:

- Overcome the challenge of soil fertility degradation in the African continent through networking of people from NARES, universities and NGOs in order to:
 - I. Build-up knowledge base,
 - II. Translate understanding into actions, and,
 - III. Create synergy with partners to achieve enhanced output
- Strengthen and sustain stakeholder capacity to generate, share and apply soil fertility and biology management knowledge and skills to contribute to welfare of farming communities

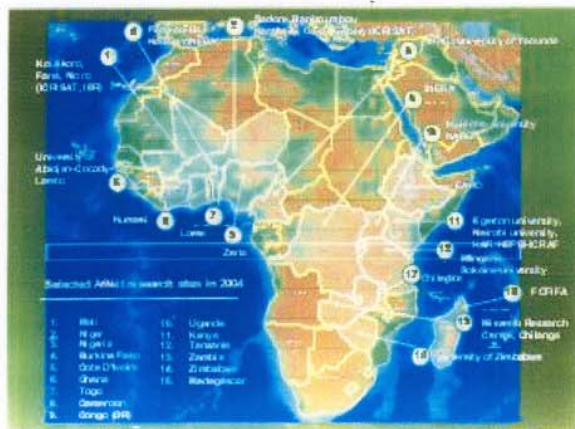
The New Strategy

AfNet has adopted the new paradigm of Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM), a holistic approach to soil fertility research that embraces the full range of driving factors and consequences of soil degradation – biological, chemical, physical, social, economic, and political. Also, within the more than 80 sites of network trials in different agro-ecological zones distributed in East, South, Central and West Africa regions, increasingly focus is given to adaptive research in addition to the basic research.



AfNet has increased its efforts in scaling up results of best bet soil fertility technologies to more farmers and communities employing a range of dissemination tools such as farmer field schools (FFS) and brochures interpreted in local languages.

AfNet Research Sites



Strengthening AfNet

AfNet continues to be the cornerstone network for soil research in Africa.

In May 2004, AfNet held a symposium in Yaoundé, Cameroon on Improving Human Welfare and Environmental Conservation by Empowering Farmers to Combat Soil Fertility Degradation. The symposium was attended by 155 scientists and donor representatives from 32 different countries.



The recommendations of the symposium emphasized on:

- Effective capacity building,
 - Institutional linkages, and,
 - Concept and process studies and scaling up.
- In follow-up to the recommendations, the selection of the new AfNet Scientific Steering Committee was made to ensure eco-regional representation, with members drawn from Eastern, Southern and Western Africa.

