BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Beans are an important crop for food/nutritional security, cash income and agro-ecosystem improvement in Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. The national bean programs of the three countries (along with SABRN and CIAT) have developed varieties in Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique. These varieties have potential for wider adaptation and use across agro-ecological region, suitable for various market niches.

Objectives

- To identify/verify farmers’ bean variety preferences in relation to diverse agro-ecological and socio-economic criteria;
- To enhance skills and knowledge of partners on various aspects, such as Participatory Variety Selection (PVS) and decentralized seed systems (including markets).
- To develop impact-oriented bean seed production and delivery systems of preferred varieties serving a range of range of users.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

1. PARTICIPATORY VARIETY SELECTION

All the three countries conducted a conclusive variety assessment by farmers and their ranking by female and male farmers after three years (2006-2009) of assessment and variety familiarization.

Stakeholders in the three countries selected the most preferred varieties both released and pre-released. More than 1000, 800, 700 farmers for Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique respectively have been reached in the three years of the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participating country</th>
<th>Varieties listed</th>
<th>Varieties selected across all sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2006/07</td>
<td>2007/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NARS in the three countries have been bulking start up seed for the preferred varieties and taking them through the variety release. In Tanzania one variety Njano Uyole has been released, Malawi will release 3 varieties by November 2009, and Mozambique plans to release 2 varieties.

Scaling out seed production through decentralized seed producers

The clientele in the three countries individual farmers; and farmer groups have been multiplying preferred varieties both released and pre-released which were appreciated for food security and market.

The objective was to test the affordability and viability of marketing new improved bean varieties using small packs approach through local service providers. In Malawi, a total of 1000 kg of kholopethe (SUG 131) were packed and information on the variety inserted in the packs. The potential areas were identified and the national bean programme plans to engage able/willing distributors e.g. maize mill, Kiosks/rural shops (groceries), petrol stations, health/nutritional center, church, women groups, grain banks, CBOs etc. in collaboration with partners.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The McKnight Foundation CCRP for funding. Governments of Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania for support and hosting the project. PABRA-CIAT for technical support. Partner organizations in 3 Countries: NGOs, CBOs, Traders (Private Sector) and Farmer Associations etc for collaboration.