

COMPRO at a glance

The commercial products (COMPRO) project will screen, evaluate and scale up innovative chemical and biological commercial products, aiming at an increase in cereal, legume and banana yields by at least 30%. Its objective is to assist farmers in obtaining increased and stable crop yields, and ultimately to generate more income through marketing of their produce. This effort will directly empower about 175,500 households (or approximately 1.3 million persons) in targeted agro-ecological zones in Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger and Nigeria. COMPRO is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation.

COMPRO Team

The following scientists are leading the project teams:

Dr. Didier Lesueur – He is the principal investigator and is coordinating the entire project.

Dr. Joyce Jefwa – She is leading the mycorrhiza activities. She has immense experience in mycorrhizal inoculation.

Dr. Pieter Pypers – He is leading the process research on soil fertility and crop nutrient acquisition.

The scientists are supported by a strong team of lab & greenhouse technicians, microbiologists, research assistants and MSc & PhD students.

The project is also collaborating with partners from IITA (Nigeria) led by Dr. Robert Abaidoo and supported by Dr. Ado A. Yusuf (Post Doc), Moi University (Kenya) led by Prof. Robert Okalebo and EIAR (Ethiopia) led by Dr. Tolessa Debele in undertaking greenhouse and field research on different soils in some selected agro-ecological zones.

Project Progress

The project has made tremendous progress towards achievement of set milestones since inception in December 2008 as highlighted below:

- Construction of a greenhouse on the ICRAF campus was completed and the greenhouse is fully operational.
- Formation of project teams in Kenya and Nigeria. Discussions with Ethiopian partners are currently ongoing.
- Characterization of mandate areas has been done and action sites are identified.
- A baseline survey is currently underway and expects to be completed in November 2009.
- A comprehensive database of all products obtained from private companies developed. We currently have a database of over 50 products.
- At least three rhizobial, two other microbial and two chemical products showed scope for increasing maize and soybean yields under greenhouse conditions. These products are currently being evaluated under field conditions in the 5 mandate areas in Kenya. Six products show promise on bananas but are soil-dependent.
- 5 PhD students and 5 MSc students have been taken on board and are actively involved in the project.
- The first progress report has been submitted to the donors and was received positively.

COMPRO Steering Committee

The COMPRO project comprises of a Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) that advises the strategy and scientific issues for achieving the objectives of the Project. The SAC members are Dr. Nancy Mungai – Microbiologist/Soil fertility, senior lecturer, Egerton University, Kenya, Dr. Senenet Kelemu – Plant pathologist: Director BECCA, ILRI, Kenya, Dr. Kady Sanon – Soil Microbiologist (Mycorrhiza): INERA, Burkina Faso, Prof. Seth Danso – microbiologist/agronomist, University of Ghana, Legon, Prof. Roel Merckx – soil scientist, KUL, Belgium, Dr. Jean-Luc Chotte – Microbiologist, IRD-Montpellier France. The committee had its inaugural meeting on 22nd – 23rd of June, 2009. The two-day meeting consisted of (i) a well-appreciated field trip to Chuka, Central Kenya, where a visit was paid to at least one Rhizobium inoculation trial (RHINO-1) as part of the BMGF project and (ii) a day of presentations of the preliminary results and of the partners from three different partner countries. At the end of this last day, the SAC gathered and formulated recommendations and comments, summarized in an evaluation report. Overall the committee was highly impressed by the significant progress made by the project. The detailed report is available on the COMPRO project folder.

Capacity Building

In line with objective 5 of the project, a number of MSc & PhD students have been incorporated into the project and are currently undertaking various project activities. The PhD students are Moses Thuita, Keziah Wairimu, Aliou Faye, Agnes Kavoo and N'cho Odon Clement. The MSc students are Mary Atieno, Wivine Munyahali, Samuel Mathu, Aliyu Ibrahim Abubakar and Laditi Muibat Abiola. The students are being supervised & guided by the lead scientists in the project. Discussions are also at an advanced stage with Moi University to offer courses at the University.

Photos



Field Trials



Greenhouse Trials



Training workshop in Nigeria



Bacterial culture

Past Events

COMPRO SAC meeting
22-23 June 2009
Nairobi, Kenya

Visit by Roel Merckx (SAC member) to on-going Field work in Bondo and Bungoma (12-15 Oct 2009).

Upcoming events

Visit to Ethiopia to discuss partnership with EIAR (21-23 Oct 2009).

Presentation of student proposals (December 2009).

For additional information on the project please contact D.Lesueur@cgiar.org , P.Pypers@cgiar.org or J.Jefwa@cgiar.org Also view our project folder.

This newsletter does not give a complete overview of all ongoing or planned COMPRO activities but only highlights a few recent activities. Submitting an event, development for COMPRO Quarterly? We accept constructive contributions to the newsletter. Please email to A.Oruta@cgiar.org. We look forward to receiving your submissions. Thank you.