

# Abstracts

## Innovations as Key to the Green Revolution in Africa: Exploring the Scientific Facts

*Editors: Andre Bationo, Jeremiah M. Okeyo, Boaz S. Waswa, Paul Mapfumo, Fredah Maina and Job Kihara*



## The African Network for Soil Biology and Fertility (AfNet)

The African Network for Soil Biology and Fertility (AfNet) was established in 1988 as a pan-African Network of researchers in Sub-Saharan Africa. AfNet is the single most important implementing agency of Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility Institute of the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (TSBF-CIAT) in Africa. More recently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and The International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) for hosting AfNet under the umbrella of FARA. Since its inception, AfNet has grown steadily and the current membership stands at over 400 scientists. The Network aims at strengthening and sustaining stakeholder capacity to generate, share and apply soil fertility management knowledge and skills to contribute to the welfare of farming communities in the Africa. This is achieved through the adoption of the integrated soil fertility management (ISFM); a holistic approach to soil fertility that embraces the full range of driving factors and consequences namely biological, physical, chemical, social, economic and policy aspects of soil fertility.

The main activities of AfNet are:

- (i) **Research and development activities:** Network trials are scattered in more than 100 sites across the continent. The research is undertaken in collaboration with national agricultural research systems (NARS) scientists, farmers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local and foreign universities and advanced research institutes (AROs). Other partners include the CGIAR centres, system wide programmes (SWPs), Challenge Programmes (CPs) and other networks. The main research themes include: soil fertility management, nutrient use efficiency, conservation agriculture, targeting of recommendations to farmers and scaling-up success stories, among others
- (ii) **Capacity building:** AfNet's capacity building agenda is achieved through degree oriented training (MSc and PhD research) in the domain of ISFM as well as through short courses. Over the years AfNet offered several training courses on topics such as participatory research and scaling-up, decision support systems (DSSAT), proposal and scientific writing, presentation skills, soil erosion and carbon sequestration and nutrient monitoring (NUTMON) in agro-ecosystems, markets and agroenterprise development.
- (iii) **Information dissemination:** In an effort to facilitate exchange of information among all stakeholders, AfNet has published several books, newsletters, brochures and posters. AfNet has successfully organized 9 international symposia where researchers from across the continent were able to share their research experiences. AfNet has also established The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library (TEEAL) to facilitate information dissemination to researchers and students.

The AfNet Coordination Unit is comprised of The Coordinator, two research assistants and one administrative assistant. The AfNet Steering Committee consists of a multi-disciplinary and gender balanced team of African Scientists drawn from the Eastern, Southern, Central and Western Africa regions.

### Soil Fertility Consortium for Southern Africa (SOFECSA)

The Soil Fertility Consortium for Southern Africa (SOFECSA) is a multi-institutional and interdisciplinary regional organization founded 2005 to develop and promote technical and institutional innovations that enhance contributions of integrated soil fertility research and development to sustainable food security and livelihood options in Southern Africa. SOFECSA is an impact-oriented consortium operationalised through a 15-member technical management/steering committee in collaboration with the host institution (CIMMYT-Southern Africa), a regional coordinator and support staff, and country-level teams drawn from diverse stakeholders.

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