

Knowledge for Development



Observatory on Science, Technology and Innovation for ACP Agricultural and Rural Development

CTA and S&T S&T Networking Dossiers About

November 2008

This email newsletter highlights the latest additions to the site Knowledge for Development.

CTA and S&T programme

Building a Critical Mass of Agricultural Scientists

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8452>

Real socio-economic change requires improving capacity in tertiary agricultural education. ACP governments should recognize the potential for universities and colleges to be sources of economic improvement and sustainable development. Governments should focus on and invest in producing graduates who can address critical issues such as poverty alleviation and food security.

Building a Critical Mass of Scientists in the ACP region – Final Report of 2008 E consultation Report October 2008

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8453>

The members of the Advisory Committee on Science and Technology for ACP Agricultural and Rural Development elaborated on the concept of a critical mass of scientists during their 2008 e-consultation.

Viewpoints from ACP Leaders

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8454>

Dr Aissetou Dramé Yayé (ANAFE, Kenya), Dr Pa'olelei H. Luteru (University of the South Pacific, Fiji), Dr Michael Madukwe, (University of Nigeria), Prof Dyer Narinesingh (University of the West Indies) and Dr Monty Jones (FARA, Ghana) on what it means to build a critical mass of scientists.

Developments

UN maps out national positions ahead of climate talks

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8399>

After a year of debate on what a post-Kyoto climate deal should look like, the United Nations has published a report setting out its ideas in the hope that it will facilitate an agreement during upcoming negotiations in Poznan, Poland, on 1-12 December. In the UN's draft report, European Union reiterated its commitment to limiting global average temperature increases to two degrees Celsius through measures such as emissions trading and technology transfer (Source: EurActiv, 25 November 2008).

Nigeria: NCRI discovers 57 varieties of rice

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8395>

The National Cereals Research Institute (NCRI) has developed up to 57 new improved varieties of rice to boost productivity of the cereal to meet the food and export needs of Nigeria. The mandate of the institute is to advance ways where Nigerian farmers can improve on their rice production, adding that the high yield rice discovered by the research activity of the NCRI will go a long way in complementing the effort of the Federal Government in tackling food crisis (Source: Ayegba Israel Ebije, All Africa, 25 November 2008).

Scientists form global bioenergy group

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8391>

The groundwork is being laid to form an international body of scientists involved in bioenergy and biofuels to evaluate research being conducted around the world and help guide policy making efforts. The working name for the embryonic international organization is the Global Bioenergy Science Platform. The intent of the platform is to be inclusive, with individual scientists and small institutions joining the larger consortiums and research centers (Source: Susanne Retka Schill, Biodiesel Magazine, 24 November 2008).

Two breakthroughs in rice science: Flood-tolerance and drought-tolerance boost yields

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8385>

Two scientific breakthroughs in rice crop science may give producers and consumers alike a new weapon against volatility in rice, the world's most important staple crop. Two of the biggest problems - flood intolerance and drought intolerance - associated with the two most common rice growing techniques - paddy and upland - have been solved. Interestingly, the water-proof crops are not genetically modified, but created by precision breeding (Source: Biopact, 21 November 2008).

Researchers to increase lifespan of cassava tubers

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8377>

Research is on to prolong the life of cassava tubers after harvest. Dr. Yona Baguma, a researcher at the Ugandan National Crop Resources Research Institute, says they have identified genes from wild cassava that can be incorporated into the local type to delay its post-harvest deterioration. The lifespan of locally adapted cassava will increase from two to 30 days. This will increase food security and cassava growers' income (Source: Aidah Nanyonjo, New Vision, 18 November 2008).

Nations consider a new scientific body for biodiversity, ecosystem services

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8357>

Close to 100 nations have called for the formation of a new scientific body able to put the loss of biodiversity, ecosystems and their multi-trillion dollar services at the top of the political agenda. The nations weighed the effectiveness of existing mechanisms to translate science into policy-action by governments including the merits of establishing an Intergovernmental Panel or Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) (Source: Africa Science News Service, 13 November 2008).

Food research 'Lost in Translation'

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8355>

Funders are pointing to a lack of public-private sector collaboration on the development of agricultural technologies for smallholder farmers, as well as problems getting new

technologies to smallholder farmers once they have been developed. Limited public funds and a small number of scientists available for crop science in Africa make it especially important for the public and private sectors to collaborate (Source: Nature News, 12 November 2008).

Agricultural practice could help reduce flood risk

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8351>

Coherent agri-environmental schemes could contribute to wider climate change adaptation objectives including safeguarding water quality, carbon storage, biodiversity and habitat conservation. New research suggests that integrating Sustainable Flood Management (SFM) principles into agricultural practice will require relatively few changes under the current legislative framework (Source: European Commission, Environment DG, 12 November 2008).

TWAS — torch bearer for science in the developing world

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8343>

It was a challenge almost as daunting as combating global poverty itself — help scientific research in developing countries catch up with the most advanced nations. But TWAS, the academy of sciences for the developing world, remained undaunted. Now, 25 years on, it is taking stock of its efforts. But education and training remain significant concerns (Source: Yojana Sharma, SciDev, 10 November 2008).

Can farmers axe rice imports through 'Nerica'?

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8337>

Heavy dependence on imported rice is crippling Gambian consumers, leading the government to call for New Rice for Africa, or Nerica, production to double. Nerica, a cross between low-yield African rice and high-yield Asian rice varieties, matures quickly, is more pest-resistant than many varieties, does not require intensive irrigation or fertilisers, and is high in protein (Source: IRIN, 6 November 2008).

Unique rainforest fungus makes bio-hydrocarbons, including diesel from cellulose

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8335>

A unique fungus that makes diesel compounds has been discovered living in trees in the rainforest. The fungus is potentially a totally new source of green energy and scientists are now working to develop its fuel producing potential. The fungus, which has been named *GlIOClaadium roseum*, produces a number of different molecules made of hydrogen and carbon that are found in diesel (Source: Biopact, 06 November 2008).

Starving and penniless, Ethiopian farmers rue biofuel choice

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8329>

As impoverished and landlocked Ethiopia was choked by high oil prices, the government allocated more than 400,000 hectares (988,000 acres) for biofuel crops development as part of a national strategy enacted last year. Farmers say Global Energy Ethiopia, an American-Israeli subsidiary which initially acquired 2,700 hectares to grow castor beans - a toxic plant whose seed provides castor oil, lured them with false claims of continuous harvests and financial incentives. But it has now been six months without a harvest and they haven't respected their promise to cover costs (Source: AFP, 04 November 2008).

Extra-nutritious bioengineered foods still years away

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8327>

Modified consumer products are in the relatively early stages of development, and there is seldom much money supporting their research. What's more, they often require the introduction of two or more new genes into the existing plant or, the insertion of a "transcription factor" that controls the activity of numerous genes. The health risks of this broader-brush genetic engineering have been far less studied than those that involve modifying or inserting a single gene (Source: Mark Kaufman, Washington Post, 3 November 2008).

The 10 percent that could change Africa

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8315>

Before the emergence of a global food-price crisis, African leaders pledged to increase support for agriculture. Recognizing the importance of a strong agricultural sector for economic growth and poverty reduction, they made a commitment to invest 10 percent of their national budgets in agriculture by 2008. As 2008 comes to an end, where do things stand? (Source: IFPRI Forum, October 2008)

Selected publications

Supply of pigeonpea genetic resources in local markets of eastern Kenya

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8427>

By Latha Nagarajan, Patrick Audi, and Richard Jones, IFPRI Discussion Paper No. 819, November 2008.

Smallholder producers in marginal and semiarid areas of eastern Kenya have not benefited greatly from research investments made in improvement of crops grown in such environments (sorghum, millet, and legumes, including pigeonpea) either by the international community or the national agricultural research system because of poorly developed seed systems. The existing pigeonpea value chain in local markets could be improved further, provided proper synergies exist between different actors in the system.

How can African agriculture adapt to climate change? Insights from Ethiopia and South Africa

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8406>

20 Briefs, IFPRI, October 2008.

This series of IFPRI Research Briefs is based on research supported by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany, under the project "Food and Water Security under Global Change: Developing Adaptive Capacity with a Focus on Rural Africa". The project aims to provide policymakers and stakeholders in Ethiopia and South Africa with tools to better understand and analyze the consequences of global change—in particular climate change—and to form policy decisions that facilitate adaptation in these countries and beyond.

Guide to laboratory establishment for plant nutrient analysis

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8408>

By M.R. Motsara and R.N. Roy, FAO, Fertilizer and Plant Nutrition Bulletin 19, 2008.

This 204-page publication provides practical guidelines on establishing service laboratories for the analysis of soil, plants, water and fertilizers. It also dedicates a chapter to biofertilizer assay and production, discussing the bacterial cultures that serve either as a source of nitrogen, such as Rhizobium, Azotobacter and Azospirillum, or for improving the availability of soil phosphorus, such as phosphate-solubilizing microbes. It provides methods for their isolation, identification, multiplication and commercial production.

Fifteenth session of the Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFAA)

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8433>

Dates: 9-11 December 2008

Location: Lusaka, Zambia

The fifteenth session of the Committee for Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture of Africa (CIFA) is expected to address the following issues: contribution of inland fisheries and aquaculture to food security, poverty alleviation and economic growth in Africa; ecosystem approach to inland fisheries and aquaculture including the enhanced management of small water bodies; roles of the public and private sectors in inland fisheries and aquaculture and partnerships between these two sectors; aquaculture innovations: options for input supply, marketing and production systems; and CIFA as an active partner with AU/NEPAD and the functions of Regional bodies to meet the changing demands of fish production in Africa.

International workshop on: Economic empowerment of women through science & technology interventions

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8434>

Dates: 14-16 December 2008

Location: Tehran, Iran

To deliberate on the urgent need for capacity building for women in order to economically empower them, the Centre for Science & Technology of the Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries (NAM S&T Centre) is organizing a 3-days International Workshop jointly with Iranian Research Organization for Science & Technology (IROST), Ministry of Science, Research & Technology, Tehran and Iranian Association of Women's Studies (IAWS), Tehran.

Beyond Kyoto: Addressing the challenges of climate change, science meets industry, policy and public

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8436>

Dates: 5-7 March 2009

Location: Aarhus, Denmark

During this international climate conference (2-day conference followed by 1-day technical excursions to a selection of related private and public demonstration sites) you will have the opportunity to gain cutting edge knowledge, share and develop ideas and network with key players on the climate scene. The objective of the Conference is to contribute to advanced use of knowledge as the basis for regulatory frameworks, innovation and the development of new technologies for sustainable development and eco-efficiency.

Jobs for ACP scientists

APAARI - vacancy: APARIS coordinator

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8442>

APAARI is seeking a well-qualified and experienced person for the position of Coordinator of the Asia-Pacific Agricultural Research Information System (APARIS). Under the overall supervision of the Executive Secretary, APAARI the incumbent will be functioning from the APAARI Secretariat at Bangkok, Thailand. All interested persons should send the applications along with their CV with names of two referees/contacts by 31 December 2008.

Deputy Executive Director (DED)

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8444>

FARA is the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa, the apex organization bringing together and forming coalitions of major stakeholders in agricultural research and development in Africa. Reporting directly to the Executive Director, the DED will contribute to FARA's Strategic Programme planning and be responsible for enforcing the monitoring and Evaluation in FARA. The DED will be responsible for the development and oversight of FARA Networking Support Functions (NSF) and their relevant programmes and projects in all the five key programme areas. S/he will lead a team of professional scientists at the FARA Secretariat in ensuring the effective and efficient coordination, development and implementation of the FARA programmes and initiatives.

Fellowships and Grants

NAM S&T Centre research fellowship

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8445>

The Centre for Science and Technology of the Non-aligned and Other Developing Countries (NAM S&T Centre) is implementing a NAM S&T Centre Research Fellowship programme to provide the scientists and researchers of its member countries an opportunity to affiliate themselves with the scientific institutions located in another member country for upgrading their research skills, undertaking short-term joint projects, delivering lectures, developing linkages and establishing closer cooperation with the scientists/institutions in their fields of interest. The applicant must already have in possession of an invitation letter from the proposed host institution with the undertaking that the institution will take care of the entire local hospitality expenses of the applicant during affiliation with the institution. The filled in application forms duly endorsed by the Focal Points of the NAM S&T Centre in the respective member countries, along with the acceptance letter from the host institution should be submitted to the NAM S&T Centre. Names / contact addresses of the Focal Points of the Centre in various countries may be downloaded from the website of the NAM S&T Centre. There is no last date for submitting applications, they will be considered on first-come-first basis depending upon the availability of the seats.

The Sustainability Science Fellowship

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8447>

The Sustainability Science Program at Harvard University's Center for International Development offers doctoral, post-doctoral, and mid-career fellowships in Sustainability Science. The fellowships are tenable at the Center for International Development during Harvard's academic year beginning in September 2009. Fellowships are available for 10 months (September 2009-May 2010), 12 months (September 2009-August 2010), the fall semester (September-December 2009), or the spring semester (February-May 2010). The Sustainability Science Program at Harvard's Center for International Development seeks to facilitate the design, implementation, and evaluation of effective interventions that promote sustainable development. To that end, we seek to advance scientific understanding of human-environment systems; to improve linkages between relevant research and innovation communities on the one hand, and relevant policy and management communities on the other; and, more broadly, to build capacity for linking knowledge with action to promote sustainability. Applications for the fellowship are due January 15, 2009.

Projects

Call for abstracts – ProInnova Nepal May 2009

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/8450>

The Innovation Asia-Pacific Symposium will take place from 4 to 7 May 2009 in Katmandu, Nepal. PROLINNOVA is co-organising this symposium with ICIMOD (International Center for Integrated Mountain Development) and CIAT Asia. PROLINNOVA partners in Nepal – LI-BIRD and Practical Action are playing a leading role in all the activities leading up to the symposium. RIU has already committed itself to financially support the symposium and several other donors are considering funding. Closing date for submission of abstracts is 20 December 2008.

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