

Knowledge for Development

Observatory on Science and Technology for ACP Agriculture and Rural Development



June 2008

[CTA and S&T](#)

[S&T Networking](#)

[Dossiers](#)

[About](#)

This email newsletter highlights some of the latest additions to the site Knowledge for Development at <http://knowledge.cta.int>.

Approaching *deadlines* for abstracts (1500-2000 words) for CTA, ATPS, FARA, NEPAD, RUFORUM, Young Professional and Women in Science Competitions.

Young professionals in science competition (deadline 15 August 2008)

In English: <http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/6929>.

En français: <http://knowledge.cta.int/fr/content/view/full/6929>

This competition is open to all young professionals (18-35 years) in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). It seeks to promote scientific excellence and recognize and reward outstanding young professionals who are undertaking innovative research, technology development or agriculture related activities and communicating the outputs (knowledge, technologies and approaches) to improve agricultural performance in SSA. Entries can include any science, technology and innovation (ST&I) related activity undertaken within the last five years that shows measurable impact (potential or demonstrated) on agricultural development or rural livelihoods of African communities. Detailed guidelines are available on the website.

Women in science competition (deadline 15 August 2008)

In English: <http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/6953>.

En français: <http://knowledge.cta.int/fr/content/view/full/6953>

This competition seeks to identify and recognize women scientists in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) who are engaged in innovative and pioneering research and communicating the outputs (knowledge, technologies, approaches) for enhancing agricultural performance in SSA. It also targets women who are repackaging and communicating existing knowledge to improve the agricultural productivity and livelihoods of rural communities. Also targeted are those who are advocating for policy change to optimize the benefits of scientific and technological developments. Entries should include gender responsive strategies that incorporate a strong element of communication and outreach. Detailed guidelines are available on the website.

Call for papers and proposals

Perspectives in 'Agriculture, veterinary science, nutrition and natural resources' (call for papers, deadline 1 September 2008)

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7303>

CAB plans to publish a special issue on the subject 'Causes and Consequences of the Food Crisis', and invites papers for publication in this special issue. Our main interest is in papers that will concentrate on the impact of the crisis on individual or regional groups of developing countries and on the policy measures that they have implemented in order to help their poor population. The plan is to publish a selection of the papers that will be included in this issue in a book entitled *The Food Crisis*, to be published by CAB International. Papers should be submitted to David Hemming at d.hemming@cabi.org.

RIU African Innovation Challenge Fund: 2nd call for proposals (Africa, deadline 1 September 2008)

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7313>

RIU's (Research in Use) African Innovation Challenge Fund provides financial support to take promising research, funded by DFID, to the next stage of use. The selected initiatives contribute to RIU's purpose by delivering significant use of DFID's Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy (RNRSS) and other natural resources research outputs for the benefit of poor men and women in different contexts. This 2nd call for proposals focuses on Africa and concentrates on two key elements that are critical in getting research into use and from which lessons can be drawn for decision makers. These two elements are 1) novel communication methods and 2) public-private partnerships which can stimulate the use of natural resource technologies and processes produced by DFID research activities for the benefit of large numbers of people. The RIU African Innovation Challenge Fund focuses on the following countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Ghana, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Senegal, Mali and Niger. More information on the African Innovation Challenge Fund, guidance notes and application forms are available on RIU's website and are available in English and in French.

Developments

New project to boost Africa's rice production

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7215>

Japan, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) have launched a project to double Africa's rice production over the next decade. Called the Coalition for African Rice Development (CARD), the project aims to reduce Africa's reliance on expensive rice imports through the development and distribution of

the new resilient rice varieties for the continent's smallholder farmers. The new initiative hopes to build on successful programmes in countries like Uganda and Nigeria, where governments have cut rice imports in half over a few short years through investments in high yielding NERICA rice varieties that require little or no irrigation and are capable of growing in upland and lowland environments. Source: Henry Neondo, African Science News Service, 30 May 2008.

Bountiful rice harvest from 'Sawah' system

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7118>

A new rice-growing system developed for the wetlands of West Africa could significantly increase the region's yield capacity, bridging the gap between production and consumption and offering a long-term solution to the food crisis in Africa. The 'Sawah' rice-growing system, developed through IITA's five-year 'Hirose Project' and validated in the rain-fed wetland areas of central Nigeria, produces average yields of 3.5 tons per hectare compared to 1.5 tons per hectare in traditional lowland rice farms. Source: IITA, 5 June 2008.

AGRA now targets to strengthen seed production systems

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7122>

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) has convened today's top agricultural regulatory agencies to discuss ways to repair the failing seed production systems in the continent that could suffer the most from the current food crisis. Through its Programme for Africa's Seeds Systems (PASS), AGRA recognizes that improved seed is an important tool for helping farmers attain food security. One of the primary goals of the PASS strategy is to establish a vibrant, competitive African seed sector, and this can only be achieved by working closely with various stakeholders in the seed value chain. Source: African Science News Service, Nairobi, 3 June 2008.

Soaring food prices: investment in agriculture needed in developing countries

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7169>

In adopting a resolution on rising food prices in the EU and the developing countries, MEPs say that priority should be given to investment in agriculture, aquaculture, rural development and agribusinesses in developing countries. Fairer international trade rules and an assessment of the effects of speculation on food prices are also underlined by MEPs. On agro-fuels, the Parliament wants production to be linked to strong sustainability criteria and to see second generation bioenergy developed. Source: Thomas Dudrap and Richard Freedman, European Parliament, 23 May 2008.

Take biofuel crops off the land and grow them at sea

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7193>

The dream of tackling climate change with biofuels has been tarnished by the rush to produce them on land. There are serious environmental costs, including deforestation, water use, production of greenhouse gases and energy-efficiency limitations. To agriculturalists, the oceans are vast and grossly underused fields that are well-provided with sunlight and water. The full potential for sea cultivation (mariculture) has only recently been recognized. The greatest outcome of switching biofuels production to the oceans would be the return of land to food production, making food and nutrition more easily available to the world's poor. Source: Ricardo Radulovich, SciDev, 6 June 2008.

Research into desert plant could help development of energy crops for arid regions

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7111>

Scientists at the University of Liverpool are investigating how a Madagascan plant could be used to help produce crops in harsh environmental conditions. The plant, *Kalanchoe fedtschenkoi*, is unique because, unlike normal plants, it captures most of its carbon dioxide at night when the air is cooler and more humid, making it 10 times more water-efficient than major crops such as wheat. The researchers believe that the novel genes found in *Kalanchoe*, could provide a model for how energy crops could be grown on unutilized desert and semi-arid lands, rather than on farmland needed for producing food. Source: Biopact, 20 June, 2008.

Europe warms to GM crops as possible solution to food crisis

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7233>

The European Union has launched a study into whether a large-scale expansion of genetically modified crops would curb soaring global food prices. Plans by the Commission to give 'pre-marketing authorisation' to 16 genetically modified organisms (GMOs) have been blocked by the Council of Ministers, which is the EU's main decision-making body. The Commission has urged member states with national bans on GM crops to lift them, saying that they are not 'scientifically justified'. Source: Andrew Grice and Vanessa Mock, Brussels, *The Independent*, 21 June 2008.

EU food, grain industries call for GMO flexibility

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7236>

Leading companies in Europe's food industry joined forces with key players in much of the EU grain sector to demand tolerance for tiny amounts of genetically modified material not yet allowed in EU markets. EU feed makers have long complained of problems sourcing raw material, warning that the consequences of Europe's extreme caution and 'zero tolerance' of unauthorized genetically modified organisms (GMOs), could be disastrous for the food and feed sectors. The biotech industry says it is impractical and unrealistic not to accept that they will occasionally be found in import cargoes. Source: Jeremy Smith, Greenbio, Brussels, June 13, 2008.

Events

Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7221>

Dates: 24-27 August 2008

Location: University College Cork, Ireland

The theme of the Agricultural Biotechnology International Conference Foundation (ABIC) 2008 Cork is Agricultural Biotechnology for a competitive and sustainable future. At a time when global agricultural faces significant challenges, an in-depth discussion of how ag-biotech can influence the sustainability of global agriculture while maintaining competitiveness is both timely and necessary. The goal of ABIC Cork 2008 is to provide a stimulating forum for delegates to network and discuss the ag-biotech topics most pertinent to their day-to-day experiences.

3rd African green revolution conference

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7224>

Dates: 28-29 August 2008

Location: Oslo, Norway

The conference will discuss the continuing process to transform Africa's agricultural landscape from subsistence farming to sustainable modern agriculture. The speakers and participants will report on progress made in 2008 and drive actionable plans to be executed in 2009. Kofi Annan, Chairman of the Board of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), will be joined by leaders from business, academia, government, non-profits and NGOs to address the value of public/private partnerships to increase productivity in African agriculture, achieve food security and pursue wider African economic growth priorities.

1st all Africa congress on biotechnology

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7227>

Dates: 22-26 September 2008

Location: Nairobi, Kenya

The theme of the Congress will be 'Harnessing the Potential of Agricultural Biotechnology for Food Security and Socio-Economic Development in Africa'. In addition to the main theme, Congress participants will have an opportunity to listen to experiences of other countries in Europe, Asia, the USA and Latin America with modern agricultural biotechnology and its applications in their economic transformation processes. Running for five days, the Congress Programme covers familiar agricultural biotechnology topics expected at such an event, plus more novel cutting-edge biotechnology topics. Social and ethical issues in biotechnology are discussed and the role played by agricultural biotechnology in the alleviation of global poverty is addressed.

Selected publications

OECD/FAO Agricultural Outlook 2008-2017

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7119>

Due to a combination of permanent factors underpinning the recent increases in food prices, the food crisis is here for another 10 years at least. The OECD/FAO report sets out to answer vital questions surrounding the current food crisis and agricultural development, such as which of the factors that are driving up prices are temporary and which will prove to be more permanent influences. How will they individually and collectively affect price levels, price trends and price volatility in the future? How will markets react to currently high prices and a more uncertain price outlook? What are the appropriate policy responses? OECD/FAO, June 2008.

Innovation system approach to agricultural development: policy implications for agricultural extension delivery in Nigeria

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7120>

A sustainable and dynamic approach to agricultural development has remained of great concern to the government and is a priority for discourse in the policy arena. Past efforts have concentrated on investment in research and development that was established on the consensus that the application of science and technology is responsible for the structural transformation required to propel the agricultural sector. This paper concludes that government, policy makers and administrators should invest and promote research in sectors/sub sectors of economic and food security importance, and should encourage and facilitate farmer and private sector innovative strength by enacting favourable policies (patenting and reward system) that will act as incentives. By Agwu, A. E., Dimelu, M. U. and Madukwe, M. C. *African Journal of Biotechnology* Vol. 7 (11), pp. 1604-1611, 3 June 2008.

Land and sustainable development in Africa

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7123>

Land reform and social justice were placed high on the agenda at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa in 2002. But fears that smallholder farmers, among others, would be excluded from the development process resulted in a simultaneous event, organized by the Landless People's Movement. Much of the analysis contained in this publication grew out of papers presented at this alternative pro-poor forum. In speaking up for landless people, Amanor and Moyo argue that current land tenure laws merely reinforce the injustices of colonialism. With in-depth studies from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Kenya, Botswana and West Africa, the authors call for 'a new agenda for sustainable development concerned with notions of social redistribution of natural resources and land, and public participation in control over appropriation and accumulation of land'. By Amanor and Moyo (ed.), published by Zed Books, 2008.

Bio-fuels research in the CGIAR: a perspective from the Science Council

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7129>

A major question is whether biofuels obtained from feedstocks are effective in combating climate change and what impact they will have on soil and water resources. Another fundamental issue relates to the magnitude and nature of their impact on food prices and ultimately on the livelihoods of the poor. A possible solution to overcome the current potentially large negative effects of large-scale biofuel production is developing second- and third-generation conversion techniques from agricultural residues and wastes and step up the scientific research efforts to achieve sustainable biofuel production practices. SC Secretariat, 24 April 2008.

High food prices: the what, who, and how of proposed policy actions

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7131>

The complex causes of the current food and agriculture crisis require a comprehensive response. In view of the urgency of assisting people and countries in need, the first set of policy actions—an emergency package—consists of steps that can yield immediate impact. Investment in these actions calls for additional resources. Policy makers should consider mobilizing resources from four sources: the winners from the commodity boom among countries; the community of traditional and new donor countries; direct or indirect progressive taxation and reallocation of public expenditures in the affected countries themselves; and mobilization of private sector finance, including through improved outreach of banking to agriculture. By Joachim von Braun et al., IFPRI Policy Brief, May 2008.

Agricultural R&D capacity and investments in the Asia-Pacific region

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7142>

Science and technology (S&T) are major contributors to food security, poverty reduction and economic growth, as has been proven in Asia since the early-1970s through the Green Revolution in agriculture. Continuing to secure such gains, however, is becoming an increasingly complex undertaking. More than ever, quantitative data are vital for measuring, monitoring and benchmarking the performance of agricultural S&T systems, including their inputs and outcomes. This brief reviews major institutional developments and investment and human resource trends in agricultural research and development (R&D) in 11 countries of the Asia-Pacific region. The brief draws on a set of country briefs, reports and underlying datasets developed by the Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators (ASTI) initiative. By Nienke M. Beintema and Gert-Jan Stads, IFPRI Research Brief Policy No. 11, 2008.

Business for Development 2008: promoting commercial agriculture in Africa

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7149>

Business for Development 2008 offers a fresh look at African agriculture and seeks ways for it to become a profitable industry. The changing pattern of international trade in agriculture has profound implications for Africa. The book's authors discuss these trade flows, map the corporate landscape of agro-food (including the emergent indigenous sector) and assess trends in international development co-operation in agriculture. Particular focus is given to 'aid for trade' programmes that aim to foster private-sector development and trade-capacity building. The book emphasizes how the domestic and international private sectors can become drivers of change. This book is a must read for government officials, private actors and the donor community and it may help lead to more balanced support programmes. OECD, May 2008.

Patenting the 'Climate Genes'...and capturing the climate agenda

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7150>

The world's largest seed and agrochemical corporations are stockpiling hundreds of monopoly patents on genes in plants that the companies will market as crops genetically engineered to withstand environmental stresses such as drought, heat, cold, floods, saline soils and more. BASF, Monsanto, Bayer, Syngenta, Dupont and biotech partners have filed 532 patent documents (a total of 55 patent families) on so-called 'climate ready' genes at patent offices around the world. In the face of climate chaos and a deepening world food crisis, the Gene Giants are gearing up for a PR offensive to re-brand themselves as climate saviours. ECT-Group, May/June 2008, Issue # 99.

Gender and climate change: mapping the linkages. A scoping study on knowledge and gaps

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7154>

This paper, prepared for DFID's Equity and Rights Team, seeks to make the most of the available resources, pulling from them useful insights that could inform and strengthen future research on and interventions into gender and climate change. It seeks to identify gaps in the existing body of work on gender and the environment, which has focused primarily on women's agricultural livelihoods, access to natural resources or disaster risk reduction. Where possible it reviews best practice on adaptation and mitigation, with an emphasis on research, policy and practice. By Alyson Brody, Justina Demetriades and Emily Esplen June, BRIDGE, June 2008.

Jobs for ACP Scientists

IITA: post-doc scientist - banana/plantain agronomist, Nigeria

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7177>

As a member of the banana and plantain improvement team, the post-doctoral scientist will contribute to the development of such packages through extensive interaction. A recent PhD degree in agronomy, physiology, crop management, seed systems or a related discipline is

required. Initial appointment is for three years. IITA offers a competitive remuneration package paid in US dollars. *The position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.*

IFPRI : post-doctoral/research fellow, Ghana

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7182>

The post-doctoral/research fellow will work under Ghana Strategy Support Program (GSSP) for a two-year, fixed-term, renewable appointment. The program has a focus on strategy and policy issues in relation to agriculture, the food system, rural change and poverty reduction. A PhD in Economics, Agricultural Economics, Public Policy or closely related field and experience in research on policy issues is required. IFPRI offers a multicultural, collegial research environment with competitive salary and excellent benefits. We encourage women and developing country professionals to apply. *The position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.*

IFPRI : post-doctoral/research fellow, Ethiopia

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7183>

The post-doctoral/research fellow will work the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) Division on a two-year, fixed-term, renewable appointment. The ISNAR division conducts research, capacity strengthening and communications activities to advance organizational, institutional and technological knowledge and innovation as a contribution to IFPRI's mission of providing sustainable solutions for ending hunger and poverty. A PhD degree in Public Administration, Development Studies, Economics, Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Sciences, Social Science or a related field and experience in research and capacity strengthening in agricultural knowledge and innovation systems are required. For more jobs at the IFPRI visit the website.

WARDA, social scientist, Benin

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7189>

The Africa Rice Center (WARDA) is looking for a highly qualified social scientist to join its Program for Partnerships, Learning & Innovation Systems. The focus of the research within this program is on scaling-up of farmer-education approaches, the strengthening of formal and informal seed systems, rice value chains and multi-stakeholder rice platforms, and questions related to social inclusion in rice R&D initiatives. Candidates should have a first degree in Agricultural Science and a PhD degree in Sociology/Anthropology. *The position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.*

Fellowships & grants

AWARD fellowships, round one (deadline 18 July 2008)

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7210>

The Gender & Diversity program invites applications for the first round of fellowships under the African Women in Agricultural R&D (AWARD) Program. The fellowship will support African women agricultural scientists from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia with PhD degrees, including those in postdoctoral positions, and women scientists with MA/MSc/MPhil or BA/BSc degrees.

Rothamsted: the African Fellows Program (deadline: 6 August 2008)

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7207>

Rothamsted International Fellowship Scheme assists in capacity building, institutional strengthening and knowledge transfer in order to find relevant solutions to the problems of achieving sustainable agricultural production, as well as improving rural development and the conservation of biodiversity. The development of effective partnerships is fundamental to ensuring the success of the programme in order to build long-term strategic alliances.

ICGEB: two biosafety fellowships (deadline: 15 August 2008)

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7201>

The International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) is currently offering two biosafety fellowships in the framework of a new capacity building initiative focused on sub-Saharan Africa. The candidates will be nationals from a sub-Saharan African country (not necessarily currently based in Africa); hold an advanced degree (preferably a PhD in a biotechnology-related field) and/or have at least two years of experience in the field of biosafety. Applications from women are particularly encouraged.

NAM S&T Centre : fellowships offered for 2008

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7204>

In line with its efforts to promote the South-South and North-South cooperation in science and technology, the Centre for Science and Technology of the Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries (NAM S&T Centre) is currently executing three Fellowship schemes that aim at supporting the deserving young scientists and researchers in the developing countries to upgrade their academic and research skills and invites applications from suitable candidates for the year 2008.

Projects, initiatives and organizations highlighted

DTMA - The Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa project

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7239>

The Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa Project is part of the DTMA Initiative and is supported by the B&MGF to accelerate drought tolerant maize development and deployment in 11 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The mission of the Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa (DTMA) Project is to significantly scale-up efforts to reach a greater number of poor farmers in SSA with maize varieties that have increased levels of drought tolerance. Over the next ten years the project's goal is to generate maize varieties with 100% superior drought tolerance; increase productivity under smallholder farmer conditions by 20-30%; and reach 60-75 million farmers in SSA.

AMCOST – African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology

<http://knowledge.cta.int/en/content/view/full/7284>

The African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology (AMCOST) was established in November 2003. It is the Ministerial high-level platform for developing policies and setting priorities on science, technology and innovation for African development. It functions through two subsidiary bodies: AMCOST Bureau of ministers and a Steering Committee comprising of permanent secretaries or their equivalent. The Bureau (composed by five Ministers coming from each of the five economic African Regions) meets at least once a year while the Steering Committee meets at least twice a year. The Bureau is the institutional mechanism to take the decision on the political question between the Ministerial Conferences. Next meeting of the Bureau is in Abuja (Nigeria) next November.

You are subscribed to this mailing list as **name@xxx.com**. To unsubscribe, send a blank email to leave-cta-news@xxx.com

Publisher: CTA

Coordinating editors: Rutger Engelhard, Contactivity and Judith Francis, CTA



CTA is an institution of the ACP Group of States (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) and the EU (European Union), in the framework of the Cotonou Agreement and is financed by the EU.