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INNOVAFRICA PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

A Bi-annual Newsletter of the Innovations in Technology, Institutional & Extension Approaches towards Sustainable Agriculture & Enhanced Food and Nutritional Security in Africa

INNOVAFRICA UPDATES AND ACHIEVEMENTS



THIRD CONSORTIUM MEETING OF INNOVAFRICA ORGANIZED IN PRETORIA, SOUTH AFRICA

The third InnovAfrica consortium meeting was held at Pretoria, South Africa in August 2018. The meeting was attended by over 50 participants representing 22 organizations from Africa and Europe. InnovAfrica partners reviewed the project progress and prepared a detailed work plan for the next six months. Speaking to participants, Ms Dessy Choumelova, Counsellor, the EU Delegation to South Africa acknowledged InnovAfrica consortium for good achievements. Dr Shadrack Moephuli, President & CEO ARC-South Africa highlighted the importance of InnovAfrica in food and nutrition security in Africa and the need for food systems that address climate change and biodiversity conservation. The meeting was also addressed by InnovAfrica Scientific Expert Advisory Board members Dr Ephraim Mukisira, Dr Denis Kyetere, and Professor Agnes Mwang'ombe. Meeting participants visited farmers and stakeholders involved in InnovAfrica activities at QwaQwa county of Free State Province.



VILLAGE KNOWLEDGE CENTRE SHARED WITH SENIOR MANAGERS AND SCIENTISTS IN KENYA

On 8th November 2018, Dr Donald Njarui presented a seminar on the Village Knowledge Centre (VKC) at Agricultural & Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) Headquarters in Nairobi. The seminar was attended by 17 senior managers and scientists from KALRO.

The VKC is an ICT-based platform that links farmers through phones and different online platforms such as social media for faster and timely sharing of information and knowledge to farmers on agricultural technologies. VKC promote knowledge transfer through a bottom-up approach to equip the rural community to make informed decisions.

The idea of VKC was conceptualized in India by the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) in 1980. Since then, the foundation has set up several VKCs across India with positive feedback from the farmers.



THE YOUTH GET TOGETHER IN MALAWI

In November 2018, the Soils, Food and Healthy Communities brought together 84 youths consisting of 34 men and 50 women from three youth clubs for training on group dynamics and democratic leadership at Kacheche, Mzimba.

Participants formed a committee to guide them with their activities within the InnovAfrica Project. Mr Laifolo Dakishoni encouraged the youth to take on an active role towards becoming innovators.

INTEGRATED FARM PLAN (PIP) IN RWANDA



The PIP approach was introduced to Rwanda in December 2017 by training staff at Rwanda Agricultural Board (RAB) and the farmer innovators (FI) from Kirehe and Nyamagabe districts. The PIP has been used to disseminate forage technologies among farmers in both districts. This approach includes the planning of integrated activities related to crop, livestock, soil conservation, marketing and other activities that generate household income. The first generation PIP members are currently evaluating the benefits of PIP implementation.

In September 2018, RAB staff organized visits to each FI to assess the PIP implementation progress and benefits. The visit concluded that the regular trainings and follow-ups have improved the FI's understanding on crops and livestock production and increased production and income.

BRACHIARIA GRASS ATTRACTS DAIRY FARMERS IN TANZANIA



InnovAfrica has been evaluating improved Brachiaria grass varieties in Rungwe, Tanzania to improve the availability of quality livestock feed. On 19th October 2018, Sokoine University of Agriculture organized a Farmer Field day to create awareness of stakeholders on Brachiaria grass. The field day was attended by 85 people including 72 dairy farmers (30 women), local and national MAP members, extension officers, NGO representatives, ASAS Dairies and media personnel. Following the field visit and discussions the participants, mainly the dairy farmers expressed their interest in planting Brachiaria grass. The participants expressed their satisfaction with the activities undertaken by the InnovAfrica project.

INNOVAFRICA HIGHLIGHTED IN AFRICA HIGHER EDUCATION WEEK AND RUFORUM BIENNIAL CONFERENCE



The European Commission Directorate of Research and Innovation organized a Horizon 2020 Info Day as a pre-conference event during the Africa Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference on 18th October in Nairobi. InnovAfrica, a Horizon 2020 supported project was chosen as the best practice example for the day. Dr Jacob Mignouna, the BecA-ILRI Hub's Director and InnovAfrica Co-coordinator gave a presentation on InnovAfrica and shared project activities and experiences. The event was attended by over 100 participants.



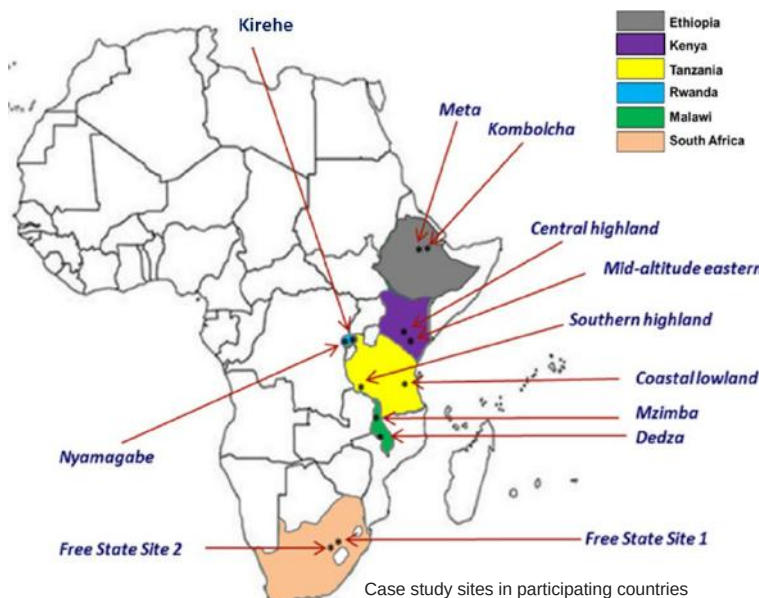
MAINSTREAMING YOUTH AND WOMEN INTO GROWING BRACHIARIA GRASS

On 19th October 2018, KENAFF, KALRO and the local extension office jointly organised a meeting in Kimbimbi village, Kirinyaga County to mainstream youth and women into Brachiaria grass. Forty-seven participants including representatives of Kimbimbi Women Dairy Farmers attended the meeting. Participants were informed on potential of Brachiaria grass to secure their future through the multiple income-generation opportunities. The participants were introduced to Brachiaria in the field which sparked an interest amongst the participants who requested for more information on its cultivation processes and registered to be issued with the seeds. The meeting agreed to organize trainings to build the capacity and skills of women and youth on Brachiaria production.



CREATING AWARENESS USING VERNACULAR POSTERS IN KENYA

The vernacular posters were used to inform farmers on availability of Brachiaria grass seeds. In between 27th September to 4th October 2018, the InnovAfrica team and local extension officers distributed 550 and 770 posters in Kirinyaga County and Kangundo sub-County, respectively. The A4 size posters were displayed at easily visible strategic locations. This included trees along rural roads, in market centres, petrol stations, churches, dairy co-operatives premises and other public buildings where the local people visit frequently. Posters were also provided to the local administration offices to put in areas where InnovAfrica team did not reach. There was an immediate response with onlookers crowding on to the poster to inquire about the content.



INNOVAFRICA COMPLETES MAPPING BASE LINE SCENARIOS

InnovAfrica has completed Work Package 1, an important component of the project, resulting into six deliverables. Household survey of over 3800 farmers in the six case countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa and Tanzania was conducted by case country partners and task leaders. The large data set collected in wp1 will also be used to prepare journal articles on gender, socio-economic status, food and nutrition security, access to market and credits, and adaptation strategies of small holder farmers to climate change.



INNOAFRICA SHOWCASES BRACHIARIA GRASS TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURAL SHOW

From 27-30th June 2018, InnovAfrica project participated in the Agricultural Show of Kenya, Machakos Branch, to create awareness on the Brachiaria technologies. Two Brachiaria grass cultivars *Brachiaria brizantha* cv. Xaraes and *B. decumbens* cv. Basilisk was planted in mini plots at Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization stand within the showground. Posters with details on the establishment, management and nutritive quality of the grasses were also displayed. The Brachiaria grass was a crowd puller especially dairy farmers, scholars, and students. About 770 peoples visited the Brachiaria grass show plots of which 95 males and 59 female framers expressed interest on the grass and registered for receiving Brachiaria seeds.

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Upcoming events and activities

Next consortium meeting in Mbeya, Tanzania, 12 - 15 Feb, 2019

Project mid-term review meeting in Brussels, Belgium, 21 - 22 Feb, 2019



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