



Hope For The Future: Sowing the seeds for agricultural research in Somalia



The CGIAR Regional Collective Action for Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) recently supported the Somali Agricultural Technical Group (SATG) in organizing workshops in Hargeisa and Nairobi to identify ways to promote agricultural research in Somalia. The workshops were held under Flagship Program 4 which aims to enhance food security in ESA countries affected by natural disaster and/or conflict through research-related activities that contribute towards effective and appropriate emergency preparedness, relief and recovery interventions.

The Hargeisa workshop (23-24 November 2010), focused on the self-declared state of Somaliland and the semi-autonomous region of Puntland. There were over 30 participants from universities, international organisations (FAO and IFAD), local and international NGOs, government ministries, and the private sector. The meeting was opened by the Minister of Agriculture for Somaliland, and included presentations on the institutional contexts in Somaliland and Puntland. Both regions are relatively stable and peaceful, and basic state institutions are functioning, thus providing an enabling environment for sustainable, long-term programmes for agricultural research and development (R&D). Implementing agencies working in the agricultural sector are now focusing on longer-term development, including institutional capacity building. The meeting participants identified four technical priority areas (testing, adaptation and multiplication of appropriate varieties of food and fodder crops; improved crop protection practices; post-harvest technologies; and soil and water conservation). Three institutional priority areas (capacity development; compilation of existing R&D information; and coordination among R&D institutions, both local and regional) were also identified. It was agreed that a Steering Group would be established in Somaliland to coordinate the activities needed to move forward on the priority areas identified.

Meanwhile, the Nairobi workshop (29-30 November 2010), focused on the less stable region of south-central Somalia, where there has been no effective government since 1990, and various NGOs and international organizations provide services to farmers and pastoralists. These include the provision of seed and veterinary supplies, training, rehabilitation of irrigation canals, and post harvest technologies. Seed distribution is a common short-term intervention, but limited effort has been made to assess the agro-ecological conditions, varietal suitability and technology adaptation to the local context. The Nairobi workshop included over 60 participants, mainly from local NGOs but also including international organisations (FAO, IFDC, WFP, and the MDG Center) and NGOs, Mogadishu University, and the private sector. The latter were particularly interested in the video presentation featuring successful agro dealers from ESA, and confirmed that there are several agro dealers already operating in Somalia, and that they can potentially disseminate new technologies, but constraints of quality control and technical capacity must first be addressed. It was agreed that a follow-up meeting of the key players would be convened to discuss in more detail how a technology testing and transfer system can be operationalized for south-central Somalia.

Participants at both workshops noted the important role of CGIAR centers in providing technologies suitable for testing in Somalia, and sought the assistance of SATG in facilitating linkages to CGIAR centers and other regional and international research organizations. SATG was also requested to support project development and resource mobilization to address the identified priority intervention areas.

For more details, please contact Dr Hussein Haji (hhaji@satg.org) or Kate Longley (k.longley@cgiar.org). Additional information is available at www.satg.org.

The Collective Action underpinning the workshops involved collaboration between CGIAR Regional Collective Action Flagship Program 4 (coordinated by ICRISAT), SATG, the Ministry of Agriculture (Somaliland), IFAD, FAO, IFDC, CEFA, Concern Worldwide Somalia, PICO Team, and representatives from WFP, MDG Center, University of Mogadishu, University of Hargeisa, University of Golis, University of Amoud, University of Tima Cadde, various international and local NGOs working in Somalia, as well as Agrofafa and other private sector organisations.

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Newsbytes

CGIAR Ongoing Research (<http://ongoing-research.cgiar.org/>) has been redesigned. The Research Map now has over 400 on-going research projects of the CGIAR and makes research information accessible, facilitates information and knowledge sharing and collaboration.

The redesign has been mainly influenced by feedback from users, who are at the centre of the Map, as well as by our own quality improvement goals. The Research Map now includes features that encourage re-usability and better searchability of information. Among the features that you will find in the map: RSS feeds, Embed maps, downloadable project reports, Ongoing Research News, "Ask a question" dialogue box for more interaction with the people responsible for the projects.

From covering research work in various African countries, the map has now been expanded to include projects in other regions where there is a CG presence: information from these areas is in the process of being updated.

For more information review the Frequently Asked Questions. To contribute project information and any other feedback send a message to Anne Munene (A.Munene@CGIAR.ORG) and/or Evelyn Katingi (e.katingi@cgiar.org). For technical support, contact cgmapp-support@cgiar.org

CGIAR Ongoing Research is the result of a collaborative effort between Collective Action in Eastern and Southern Africa and the ICT-KM Program of the CGIAR

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