

Green Super Rice for Africa and Asia

An international meeting to plan a project on Green Super Rice for the Resource-Poor of Africa and Asia (GSR) was hosted by AfricaRice on 24 and 25 February, at its regional research station in Ibadan, Nigeria.

The project aims to reduce poverty and hunger and increase food and income security of resource-poor farmers in Africa and Asia through the development and dissemination of Green Super Rice varieties that give high and stable yield without requiring heavy inputs.

The project targets at least 5 million poor rice farmers, including 3.5 million women farmers in sub-Saharan Africa, South-East Asia and South Asia. The long-term (10 year) goal of the project is to increase rice production by about 10% in the rainfed and irrigated areas of those regions. In sub-Saharan Africa, the project covers Nigeria, Liberia, Rwanda, Uganda, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, and Tanzania.

The African component of the project will be coordinated by AfricaRice and implemented in partnership with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and national programs of project countries, non-governmental organizations, farmers' associations and the private sector. Representatives of all the project partners attended the planning meeting.

Stress-Tolerant Rice for Africa and South Asia

Stakeholders of the project on Stress Tolerant Rice for Africa and South Asia (STRASA) met on 26 and 27 February, at the AfricaRice regional station in Ibadan, Nigeria, to review the progress made by the project and plan for 2009.

Funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to IRRI, the STRASA project aims to accelerate the development and delivery of improved rice varieties that are tolerant to five major stresses – drought, submergence, salinity, iron toxicity and low temperature.

AfricaRice is IRRI's main partner in implementing the African component of this project. The project member countries in Africa comprise Benin, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal in West Africa as well as Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda in East and Southern Africa.

The project highlighted the following achievements at the meeting:

- Production of seeds of improved and stress-tolerant varieties ready for evaluation in the project countries through farmer participatory varietal selection;
- Training of national scientists, technicians and farmers in modern breeding approaches, improved seed production and impact assessment;
- Implementation of improved and standardized screening facilities at the research stations of Africa Rice Center for the different stresses; and
- Establishment of a network of national scientists and partners in the project countries.

In addition to representatives from 16 sub-Saharan African countries, the President of the West and Central Africa Women Rice Farmers' Association, Mrs Penda Gueye-Cisse, as well as private seed producers were invited to the meeting to give their feedback.

March

Board highlights the Center's achievements

At the Board of Trustees meeting held from 7 to 10 March, the following achievements of the Director General Dr Papa Abdoulaye Seck and the staff members of AfricaRice were applauded:

- Significant increase in contribution from member states;