



# INSTITUTIONALIZING THE QUALITY OF COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS

**Locations** Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda

**Dates** 17/07/2012 - 31/12/2016

## Summary

The soil in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa is hampering the production of good quality and plentiful crops. Many new bio-fertilizers, bio-pesticides and other agro-inputs have been developed and commercialized but often haven't been properly assessed. CABI, working with partners, is supporting increased knowledge and information available to smallholder farmers and decision makers on commercial bio fertilizers and bio pesticides in order to support uptake, use and support for regulatory mechanisms.

## The problem

Soil fertility in sub-Saharan Africa remains an important constraint to farmer's ability to achieve optimum returns on their farms. Investments in this area are indispensable and will increase agricultural productivity here. One such area of investment is the introduction and promotion of other soil fertility management technologies including bio-fertilisers. This immediately focuses attention on the aspect of quality monitoring to ensure that farmers are exposed to products that actually work, and are environmentally safe.

The quality of agricultural inputs is of utmost importance to protect farmers, retailers, wholesalers and importers, and to minimize health and environmental hazards. The emergence of several new bio-fertilizers, bio-pesticides and chemical agro-inputs in countries, whether registered or not, focuses attention on the need to strengthen the often weak national and regional regulatory systems, to allow for more stringent assessment of both efficacy and safety of such products.

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## **What we are doing**

This project aimed to regulate commercial agricultural products and guarantee their effectiveness in order to improve the crop yields of smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa.

The team worked to build and strengthen the capacity of project countries so they can monitor the quality of these products before they are procured and distributed. This way, farmers only use products that are effective and can result in profitable yield increases.

The team wanted to understand the performance of these products within diverse smallholder farmer environments and ensure that these products delivered impact, both on a small and large scale. Although initial work was spearheaded by development agencies, the ultimate aim was to institutionalize, with the private sector gradually taking over delivery.

The team therefore:

- disseminated at least three effective products to smallholder farmer households
- continually screened and evaluated new products in the core countries
- established and institutionalized quality control and regulatory mechanisms
- communicated information on commercial products

In addition to managing this project, we also monitored, evaluated it and built institutional capacity.

In particular, CABI was responsible for the communications strategy and its elements, and ensuring the information on commercial products was made available to smallholder farmers and policy makers.

We therefore:

- developed a strategy that encompassed internal and external communications for smallholder farmers, and policy makers
- developed manuals on the use and screening of commercial products
- sensitized and communicated information to smallholder farmers through farmer field days, mobile cinema screenings, radio programmes, mobile phone messaging, mass media events, discussions with community extension groups, policy dialogue and more
- conducted private sector-led promotion campaigns and agro-business shows or fairs to promote selected effective products being disseminated in target areas
- linked with, and used, other CABI communication initiatives to drive a wide distribution of information

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## **Results so far**

So far, we have developed policy briefs for two countries, Tanzania and Nigeria.

We have produced ten (10) issues of 'Quality and yield' newsletters and had two media features published on commercial products in Kenya. The briefs were disseminated to stakeholders through AATF and IITA contact lists.

We also completed three extension manuals.

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## **Donors**

Bill and Melinda Gates foundation (through International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA))

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**Partners**

Africa Agriculture Technology Foundation (AATF), Africa 2000 Network Uganda, The African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership (AFAP), Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR), MEA Fertilizer, Notore fertilisers, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)

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