



First Announcement



Integrated Soil Fertility Management in Africa: From Microbes to Markets (ISFM Africa)

A conference of allied organizations and projects accelerating delivery of needed agricultural technologies to African small-scale farmers and includes the 15th Conference of the African Association for Biological Nitrogen Fixation

Venue

Nairobi, Kenya from 22-27 October 2012

Purpose

The Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility Institute of CIAT and the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Nairobi invite participation in an innovative conference intended to critically analyze agricultural technologies, innovative products and land management strategies benefiting small-scale agriculture in Africa. This conference assembles the strengths of several organizations and collaborative research projects committed to designing, refining and delivering potent solutions to food insecurity and agricultural resource degradation in sub-Saharan Africa. A particular focus of this conference deals with the comparison and scaling-up of candidate breakthrough technologies, monitoring and evaluation of their impacts within rural settings and along agricultural value chains and strategies to increase human and institutional capacities in Integrated Soil Fertility Management. Examples of these breakthroughs include better management of Biological Nitrogen Fixation and other beneficial biological processes; strategic combination of biological, organic and mineral resources in the management of soil fertility and land quality and the commercialization and adoption of new biotechnologies. The conference will feature invited keynote speakers in plenary sessions, followed by sessions of related thematic oral and poster presentations. The conference will result in electronic proceedings that include its presentations and posters, and short papers based upon them; and is intended to provide guidance to the agricultural research, extension and development community working with African small-scale farmers. A website supporting this conference will soon be posted.

Themes

The conference seeks to improve both scientific and practical understanding of how ***biological, organic and mineral resources are best integrated in the management of agricultural soils by African small-scale farmers***. Specific themes include:

Advancing plant-microbe interactions in crop nutrition. This theme includes symbiotic and plant growth promoting microorganisms relating to crop mineral nutrition, but not those relating to plant protection and health.

Enhancing biological nitrogen fixation in African smallholds. This theme explores the use of elite rhizobia, improved legume varieties and management and effective inoculant delivery systems. The sessions relating to this theme constitute the 15th Conference of the African Association of Biological Nitrogen Fixation (AABNF 15).

Exploring options for sustainable intensification and diversification of farming systems. This theme examines the more efficient use of human and agricultural resources in the restoration, protection, maintenance and improvement of soil fertility with particular reference to technologies and practices accessible to small-scale farmers cultivating degrading soils.

Identifying bottlenecks and opportunities for implementation of ISFM. This theme addresses issues pertaining to governance, policy formulation and implementation, tenure, access to markets and credit and perceptions and countermeasures toward risk.

Commercializing breakthrough technologies. This theme explores how proven scientific findings are best translated into commercial products and practical land management technologies for dissemination to, and adoption by African smallholders. This theme also examines mechanisms of quality assurance related to these new products and lessons learned through entrepreneurial pursuit.

Building capacity in Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM). This theme explores how best to develop capacities among farmers, development agents, researchers and educators in Africa to better manage soil fertility and agricultural resources. Preference is given to case studies describing success stories at the farm, community and institutional levels.

Sponsoring Organizations

TSBF-CIAT and the University of Nairobi serve as conference hosts. Other sponsoring organizations include AABNF, AfNet, COMPRO, FiBL (Switzerland), N2Africa Project, the US International University and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences through funding from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of its special allocation on global food security (UD40). Other local and international sponsors are welcome and will be provided recognition within the soon-to-be-posted conference website.

International Advisory Committee

An International Advisory Committee is being formed and will be identified within the soon-to-be-posted conference website.

Local Organizing Committee

Dr. Ken Dashiell (N2Africa) Co-Chairperson

Dr. Saidou Koala (TSBF-CIAT) Co-Chairperson

Prof. James Kahindi (USIU)

Prof. Nancy Karanja (University of Nairobi) Coordinator of AABNF 15 Sessions

Dr Kristina Roing de Nowina (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences)

Dr Cecile Thonar (COMPRO and FiBL)

Dr Paul Woomeer (N2Africa and AABNF)

Abstract Format

Language: Either English or French are acceptable

Layout: MS Word, A4 page size, margins of 2.5 cm (1 inch), Times New Roman, single spacing

Title: Centered, bold, 12 point, title case

Authors: Complete first name, middle initials and complete surname, centered, bold, 12 point, bold name of presenter

Affiliations: centered, 12 point, separated by semicolons followed by E-mail address of presenter

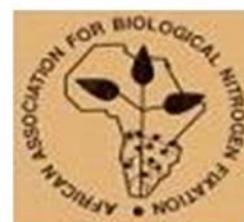
Abstract: 10 point, maximum 300 words

Submission: Via the soon-to-be-posted website, indicate preference for oral presentation or poster. Oral presentations in French should be supported by English language presentation materials

Deadlines

Deadline for Abstract submission is **30 April 2012**. Other deadlines concerning registration, payment of fees and paper submission will appear in the soon-to-be-posted conference website.

Contacts



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