



New Seed Initiative for Maize in Southern Africa (NSIMA) Phase 3

Duration: 3.5 Years (1.06.2011-31.12.2014)

Budget: CHF 2,580,000-00

Implementing Agency: CIMMYT

Partners: FARNPAN, Government extension officers, local universities and research centres

Project location: Botswana, D.R. Congo (Katanga Province), Lesotho, Swaziland, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe

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Current Situation

In Southern Africa, 70% of the population rely on agriculture for food, mainly Maize. It is also the main source of income for other family needs. But the impact of climate change is threatening this life-giving crop for millions of small holder farmers. Severe droughts in recent years have scorched millions of hectares of maize across the continent, pushing farming families into poverty and hunger. Therefore, new varieties of maize tolerant to drought need to be developed. This has been done mainly by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT). SDC has been active in supporting international partners such as CIMMYT to promote a greater production of quality seeds of improved varieties. Within the last decade Africa has witnessed a major increase in the number of seed companies marketing various types of improved maize seeds. Nevertheless more than half of the maize area (6.7 million ha) is still planted with traditional unimproved low-yielding varieties.

Swiss Objectives

The overall goal of the project's third phase is to improve the food security of farmers in selected countries by the development and promotion of new seed varieties. This will be done through the stimulation of the production, marketing and use of improved maize varieties with increased productivity, nutritional value and acceptance under the stress-prone conditions of resource-poor farmers in SADC countries, particularly in Botswana, DRC, Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa

NSIMA III will pursue the two main following objectives:

1. Varieties of maize developed and released in NSIMA I and II, are multiplied through both market mechanism and other agencies that are pro-active and responsive to resource-poor farmers' needs.
2. Establish a market based network cooperation and cross- border transmission of benefits amongst project countries for maize seed variety development, registration and dissemination, seed-related initiatives (such as the SADC Seed System), and public-private partnerships that will stimulate these varieties.

What will change?

By 2016, the drought-tolerant maize program is expected to boost maize yields by as much as 30 percent, benefiting up to 40 million people in 13 Sub-Saharan African countries and improving the food security of the sub region. Through this particular project by the end of 2014, retailers and agro dealers will be stocking and distributing different types of quality seeds that are adapted to climate change so that farmers can have access to new varieties of Maize better adapted to the local situation. Poor farming households will thus be able to have access to sufficient food for their family needs as well as the ability to earn an income for their other requirements.