



Sweden and ICRISAT

Enhancing incomes, Reducing poverty, Improving lives

Introduction

The goal of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) is to harness the power of technology for development, food security, poverty alleviation and environmental protection, targeted at poor rural families in the semi-arid tropics (SAT) of the world. But ICRISAT cannot do this alone. Countries, such as Sweden, help ICRISAT achieve this goal through their support and encouragement, as well as through financial assistance.

Along with research for development, ICRISAT sees the need for more effective social assistance programs to help the poorest of the poor connect to markets, but in a way that builds their own resilience rather than creating dependency. ICRISAT's Inclusive Market-Oriented Development (IMOD) strategy focuses on helping the farming poor in the drylands to access markets to increase their incomes and improve their livelihoods.

Inclusive Market-Oriented Development (IMOD)

In 2010, after an extensive review of ICRISAT's strategy with regard to dryland agriculture in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, ICRISAT realized the need for market connections to extricate the highly vulnerable subsistence farmers out of poverty. It was strongly felt that harnessing markets for smallholder farmers combined with research for development to improve systems for managing risks would bring them into the mainstream to take part in and gain from the benefits of development. Thus was born ICRISAT's Inclusive Market-Oriented Development or IMOD strategy.

The new IMOD strategy has two major dimensions. First, a dimension of research-for-development (R4D) that will help harness markets for smallholder farmers. Second, knowing that the poor are highly vulnerable to risks, we need R4D to improve systems for managing risks that could otherwise keep the poorest from participating in those market opportunities.

Rather than considering poverty to be a 'normal' and inevitable state in the drylands, the IMOD framework seeks a fundamental transformation to a different state – one of markedly higher agricultural growth and prosperity. To put it succinctly, the strategy is designed not to alleviate poverty, but to help end it.



Drs Johan Rockstrom and SP Wani in the field at Patancheru.

Enabling the poor to connect to markets to reap higher rewards triggers a self-reinforcing cycle of re-investments in raising productivity, which raises incomes even further. The focus must shift from relief aid to the innovation, ingenuity and energy of the poor themselves, and of those who help them.

Interactions with Sweden

Over the years there have been a few interactions between ICRISAT and Sweden.

2010: Drs Larisa Gustavsson and Eva Ann Kristen Johansson from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences visited ICRISAT-Patancheru in September 2010. They met several ICRISAT scientists and had discussions on current research development initiatives.

2009: Dr Jennie Barron, research fellow from the Stockholm Resilience Center – Stockholm Environment Institute and Dr Borjesson from Stockholm University visited the ICRISAT-Sadoré station, Niger, in March 2009. After the field visit, which covered ICRISAT's main



Swedish scientists with their ICRISAT counterparts at ICRISAT-Sadoré, Niger.

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Dr SP Wani at the Stockholm World Water Week Conference.



ICRISAT scientists check the pearl millet crop – HNB 67 Improved – that is resistant to downy mildew.

research projects at Sadoré, Dr Barron was convinced that “we should definitely stay in contact and work out future collaboration in the region”.

Dr Johan Rockstrom, Executive Director, Stockholm Resilience Center, visited Patancheru in November to discuss a collaborative project on investigating resilience for food and ecosystems services in the Indian watershed system.

2007: Dr SP Wani, Principal Scientist-Watersheds, ICRISAT, participated in the World Water Week conference held in Stockholm from 12-18 August. He presented a paper, *Biofuel for improving livelihoods and protecting the environment in the semi-arid tropics through community watersheds: challenges and opportunities*.

Some impacts made possible through donors, such as Sweden

- ▶ 720 improved varieties derived from ICRISAT’s breeding programs have been released globally in 78 countries yielding over 250 million dollars in benefits to poor farmers and consumers across the SAT
- ▶ Creation of the world’s first ever hybrid variety of a food legume crop – pigeonpea
- ▶ Integrated pest management techniques to reduce pesticide usage
- ▶ Guinea-race sorghum hybrids developed

- ▶ Resistance to downy mildew in millet, wilt in pigeonpea, and rosette virus and leaf spot in groundnut
- ▶ New “super early” chickpeas with greater drought and disease resistance
- ▶ Pearl millet hybrid – “HNB 67 Improved” – developed through marker-assisted selection to resist downy mildew
- ▶ Integrating trees, water harvesting and more diverse crops in dryland farming systems
- ▶ Reducing dryland system risks and adapting to expected climate change
- ▶ The CGIAR’s largest gene bank, a collection of over 119,000 diverse varieties and wild relatives of the staple food crops of the poor, held in trust for humanity, and under active research to find new genes that can improve human health and welfare.

Towards the future

ICRISAT has already done much towards reducing poverty, hunger, and environmental degradation, but there is still much to be done. Together with partners such as Sweden, we plan to realize our goal to protect the environment and improve livelihoods of the poor and the marginalized in the semi-arid tropics of the world.

About ICRISAT



The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) is a non-profit, non-political organization that conducts agricultural research for development in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with a wide array of partners throughout the world. Covering 6.5 million square kilometers of land in 55 countries, the semi-arid tropics have over 2 billion people, and 644 million of these are the poorest of the poor. ICRISAT and its partners help empower these poor people to overcome poverty, hunger, malnutrition and a degraded environment through better and more resilient agriculture.

ICRISAT is headquartered in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India, with two regional hubs and four country offices in sub-Saharan Africa. It belongs to the Consortium of Centers supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

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