

A+FS Network Newsletter 03/2013

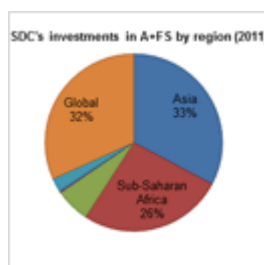
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Dear Agriculture & Food Security Network members,

Please find below our March 2013 Newsletter compiled by Michael Hirsbrunner. This Newsletter sets a focus on SDC's new Agriculture and Food Security portfolio and it presents our latest food security news, i.a. three recently published impact studies.

In the coming Newsletters of 2013 we will present to you different impact studies on agricultural research for development funded by SDC.

Feature



SDC Agriculture and Food Security Portfolio 2009-2011

In 2011, SDC has invested around CHF 250 million in Agriculture and Food Security (A+FS). This amount includes bilateral projects as well as multilateral contributions (mainly to the World Bank, the Regional Development Banks, to IFAD and to CGIAR) and disbursements to Swiss NGOs.

The highest share of SDC's investments in A+FS goes to Asia. However, many contributions under "global" concern Sub-Saharan Africa (in particular recent projects of the Global Programme Food Security and the contribution to IFAD).

An important focus of SDC's activities in A+FS is the support to improved Rural Advisory Services (RAS). Currently SDC supports around 130 RAS projects mostly in Africa and Asia and within all five thematic clusters.

[For more details see: SDC Agriculture & Food Security Portfolio 2009-2011 >>](#)

Focus Area: Rural Advisory Services



Survey: Home Economics & Nutrition

GFRAS and the Secure Nutrition Knowledge Platform of the World Bank are undertaking a mapping exercise on home economics and nutrition in extension and advisory services and workers in Africa, South Asia, and the Americas.

The objective of this work is to map the past, current and future rural extension services that include nutrition, home economic and diet-related activities. You are welcome to complete the survey online, it takes approximately 20 minutes.

[Survey on Home Economics and Nutrition >>](#)

Focus Area: Land Governance



Implementation of Voluntary Guidelines

In the coming months, regional awareness meetings to facilitate the implementation of the "Voluntary Guidelines on Governance of Tenure" have been planned. Two meetings already took place (Cameroon, Rwanda). Please save the dates and communicate them to other interested partners, be they governmental or research organizations, CSO, or others, as appropriate.

Tentative schedule for technical regional meetings to support the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Governance of Tenure:

Region	Host Country	Date (2013)
Asia & the Pacific	Bangkok (Anglophone)	1-5 July
	Fiji - Pacific Islands (Anglophone)	End July / Mid August
Latin America & the Caribbean	Peru (Hispanophone)	September
	Barbados (Anglophone)	To be defined
Europe & Central Asia	Bulgaria (Anglophone)	4-6 March
	Ukraine (Russophone)	13-17 May
Near East & North Africa	Jordan	22-25 April
	Morocco	3-7 June

[For more information see the relevant website of the FAO >>](#)



Global Land Forum in Guatemala

Every two years the International Land Coalition (ILC) organises an international Forum to convene its members and other stakeholders in the land issue to advance understanding of the complex and dynamic political, economic, environmental and societal linkages between land governance, food security, poverty and democracy. ILC's ultimate objective is to mobilise its members and partners to influence land-related policy practice. In pursuit of this objective, the Coalition facilitates multi-stakeholder processes in the search for people-centred responses to land governance

challenges.

The central focus of the Global Land Forum 2013 will be on territoriality, which brings together power, society and space. As Guatemala, the host of the ILC Global Land Forum and Assembly of Members is dealing with conflict and land right problems, it offers a unique opportunity to learn and share from experiences and perspectives on emerging land governance issues on site. SDC's Global Programme Food Security is a strategic partner of ILC and will participate in Guatemala.

[More on the Global Land Forum in Guatemala >>](#)

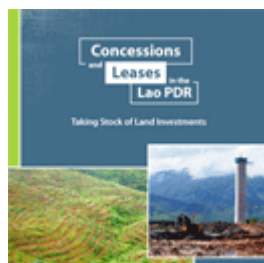


Governing Land for Women and Men

The first Governance of Tenure Technical Guide was launched on 14 January 2013 at the Gender and Land Governance Conference in Utrecht, Netherlands. This technical guide aims to assist implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines by providing guidance that supports the Guidelines' principle of gender equality in tenure governance.

The guide focuses on equity and on how land tenure can be governed in ways that address the different needs and priorities of women and men. It moves away from long-standing debates about gender equality in access to land, towards the mainstreaming of gender issues to achieve more gender-equitable participation in the processes and institutions that underlie all decision-making about land.

[Implementation Guide of "Governing Land for Women and Men" >>](#)



Lao PDR land concession inventory

The most comprehensive publication to date on land concessions and leases in Lao PDR has been launched. It shows that over 2,600 land-lease and concession agreements were granted covering a total of 1.1 million hectares of territory, or roughly 5% of Lao PDR's land.

The land concession inventory is the result of a cooperation between the Lao government, the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

[Download the Lao PDR land concession inventory >>](#)



Farmers' Reactions to Climate Change

The A+FS Network has identified the issue of climate resilient small scale agriculture as one of its focus areas. The Network Brief No 3, produced by HAFL, presents a case study from the North of Benin.

The study shows that climate change has very negative effects on food security, especially in households headed by women. The adaptation strategies of the farmers are often inadequate. They tend to implement short-term measures that are influenced

by traditions and beliefs. Knowledge transfer could contribute to more sustainable adaptation measures if local circumstances are considered. Local NGO's and farmers' organisations could play an important role as intermediaries.

[A + FS Network Brief No 3 \(available in English and French\) >>](#)

Focus Area: Postharvest Losses



Conserve resources & save money

One session of the 2013 Global Forum for Food and Agriculture in Berlin focused on how to reduce postharvest losses and thereby conserve natural resources and save money.

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) launched a ten point programme to increase their commitment in rural development (only in German). One of the ten

points is to reduce and improve the awareness of postharvest losses.

To find potential entry points to cooperate with Germany, Max Streit, member of the A+FS Network Subgroup Postharvest Management, visited the conference and took place in the podium discussion.

[More information on the post-harvest session of the Global Forum >>](#)

[Zehn-Punkte-Programm zur ländlichen Entwicklung und Ernährungssicherung >>](#)

Global Programme Food Security



SDC and GMO: Your experiences

The SDC Global Programme Food Security has just published a briefing paper entitled "SDC and Genetically Modified Crops". All network members are invited to an open e-discussion on the topic "GMOs in the context of smallholder agriculture and food security". The e-discussion is via e-mail (as announced).

[SDC and Genetically Modified Crops \(En/Fr/Es\) >>](#)



Global Donor Platform Meeting

The Annual General Assembly of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development took place in The Hague at the end of January 2013 on the topic "Food, farmers and markets".

SDC actively contributed to the panel session, to the World Café with a discussion on the Tenure guidelines jointly held with the World Bank, as well as to the policy process of a revised Joint donor concept.

Have a look at the keynote speech of Prof. Tim Lang (video). The professor of food policy fundamentally questioned what contemporaries commonly viewed as progress in nutrition, equitable distribution and public health.

[All about the GDPRD Annual General Assembly >>](#)

Impact of Rice Research

Please find below three impact studies related to rice production. The studies have been produced by WRENmedia, funded by SDC and implemented by the European Initiative on Agriculture Research for Development (EIARD). These studies intend to share knowledge and promote more effective agricultural research

for development policies:



Smart water technique for rice

This International Rice Research Institute project enables farmers to reduce water usage in paddy rice by 15-30 per cent without compromising yields, by using a simple water level gauge and implementing smart but simple water management techniques.

[Study "Smart water technique for rice" >>](#)



Intensification of upland rice

The CGIAR's Sub-Saharan Africa Challenge Programme has improved fertilizer use by developing 'à la carte' fertiliser recommendations and strengthened farmers' understanding of inorganic fertilisers, to allow them to fine-tune and pick the most suitable recommendations, given their soil type and economic circumstances. As a result, land productivity and smallholder incomes have improved.

[Study "Improving smallholder incomes through intensification of upland rice" >>](#)



Rooting for more phosphorus

With support from the CGIAR Generation Challenge Programme a partnership of researchers in developing and developed countries has isolated a gene that enhances root growth, called 'Phosphorus Starvation Tolerance 1'. The gene has been introduced into rice plants to increase production, particularly for farmers who have to grow rice on low-phosphorus soils and cannot afford sufficient fertilizers.

[Study "Rooting for more phosphorus" >>](#)

Regional Issues



SDC Workshop in Malawi

The SDC Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) workshop on Rural Development (Lilongwe, Malawi, 4 to 8 February 2013), has been organized by SDC's geographical division. The goal of this Rural Development workshop was to share information on other ESA programmes and to build up relationships for future exchange.

As most workshop topics have been of interest to our thematic community, the SDC Agriculture and Food Security Network prepared a blog to inform you and collect your reactions. For more details read the posts, comments and the documents of the different modules: Water Management, M4P, Financial Services, Postharvest Management and Seeds & Fertilizers.

You are still welcome to comment the posts of the blog. You can do that either over the blog itself or on the SDC Food Security Website.

[Blog of the SDC Eastern and Southern Africa workshop on Rural Development >>](#)

[SDC Food Security Website: Questions & Answers >>](#)



New SDC projects

Two new SDC projects related to agriculture and food security (Support to Sustainable Agriculture in Cuba and HortiSempre in Mozambique) have been launched since January 2013. Beside those two projects, the Green Gold programme in Mongolia started its 4th Phase.

[Support to Sustainable Agriculture in Cuba](#)

Food security is a priority of the Cuban authorities. Supporting a more productive and sustainable agriculture (economically and environmentally) is aligned with the objectives of the Cuban socio-economic reform. The project aims at supporting three organic value chains (honey, fruits and vegetables) in nine municipalities. It will demonstrate the role of organic production as a catalyst in local development and for the improvement in the

quality of life of women and men.

HortiSempre

The demand for horticultural products in the Nacala corridor (Mozambique) is rising but increasingly met by imports. Small-scale farmers have not been able to seize the opportunities of this growing market. HortiSempre aims at addressing the key bottlenecks (with a special focus on promoting micro-irrigation solutions) in the production of existing locally grown horticultural products with the objective to increase farmers' revenue.

Green Gold

The programme wants to reduce poverty and improve the livelihoods of 100'000 semi-nomadic herder families (500'000 men, women and children) in Western Mongolia. Through collective action, sustainable pasture management and income generating activities are supported. Applied research will generate practical knowledge to be disseminated to herders and collective action groups by the government extension service. Promising market access chains for high quality Yak down are developed. The programme is now in its 4th phase (01.2013-12.2016).

[Further SDC projects implemented after May 2012 >>](#)

Who is Who?

Some of the A+FS Network members are probably familiar to you, others are not.

In order to give a face to the names on the members list, every Newsletter shortly presents some of the A+FS Networkers:



Bellah Mpofo

is from South Africa. She is a plant scientist by training and has more than 25 years of experience working in agricultural research and in seed policy formulation, implementation and harmonisation. She is programme manager coordinating the SDC funded "Harmonised Seed Security Project" in four southern African countries.

Her expectations of the A+FS Network are to have a platform to exchange views and experiences and to learn how other members of the network are dealing with the challenges they are facing. At the A+FS F2F-meeting in Zollikofen of May 2012, Bellah Mpofo profited from the opportunity to meet and exchange experiences with colleagues involved in other sectors and other regions.



KR Viswanathan

is located in New Dehli, India. He acquired his Bachelor Degree in Veterinary Medicine and Surgery and has a Master in Microbiology and Business Management. After commissioning the Indian Armed Forces and in three different Indian Ministries (the last assignment was as Joint Commissioner in the Ministry of Agriculture), he joined SDC India in 1999 and currently is Deputy Head of Climate Change and Development.

His expectation towards the A+FS Network is to bring together all those working on agriculture and food security issues in SDC in promoting organisational learning, which eventually converts the network itself into a learning organisation. From the A+FS F2F in Zollikofen in 2012, he profited both individually and organizationally, as the event helped in effective knowledge sharing on crucial issues including the relevance of results based monitoring, agricultural advisory services and the concept of risk sharing towards ensuring food security.

[A+FS Network members list >>](#)

Further Information

Global Food: waste not, want not

A new study by Institution of Mechanical Engineers states that with the global population estimated to reach 9.5 billion by 2075, mankind needs to ensure it has the food resources available to feed all these people. With current practices up to 50% of all food produced is wasted. There is a need to act and promote sustainable ways to reduce waste from the farm to the supermarket and to the consumer.

[Report "Global Food: waste not, want not" >>](#)

Learn about new advances in rice science in Africa

AfricaRice released its Annual Report 2011, which provides compelling highlights of the work carried out by the Center and its partners to sustainably boost the rice sector in Africa by bringing rice research and development to the aid of Africa's poor.

[Africa Rice Center \(AfricaRice\) - Annual Report 2011 >>](#)

3rd Africa Rice Congress in Yaounde, Cameroon

The Third Africa Rice Congress – to be held from 21-24 October 2013, in Yaoundé, Cameroun – will have as its main theme: 'Rice Science for Food Security and Agri-business Development in Africa'. The Congress will bring together representatives from the public and private sector, civil society organizations, farmer associations and research and extension communities engaged in the development of Africa's rice sector.

[3rd Africa Rice Congress >>](#)

Swiss Re's Risk Dialogue Magazine on food security

The current magazine of the Swiss Re, Centre for Global Dialogue features different interesting articles with a focus on strengthening food security. Approaches are different – but all agree that concerted action along the supply chain, including financial services, can strengthen agricultural productivity and resilience.

Of particular interest is the African Risk Capacity (ARC), which is also supported by SDC. The African Risk Capacity (ARC) is a treaty-based organisation, recently established as a Specialised Agency of the African Union (AU) by a conference of 41 African states.[1] This groundbreaking project is designed to improve current responses to drought food security emergencies and to build capacity within AU member states to manage these risks. As an African-owned, continent-wide index-based weather insurance pool and early response mechanism, ARC offers an African solution to one of the continent's most pressing challenges.

[Risk Dialogue Magazine: Strengthening food security >>](#)

[Article about the African Risk Capacity \(ARC\) >>](#)

Bhutan goes organic: a lesson for us all?

By banning the sales of pesticides and herbicides Bhutan has outlined a clear path for the future of its agriculture: it will become the first wholly organic country in the world. The goal is not only to go organic, but to grow more food as well. Bhutan aims to achieve this with a region-by-region and crop-by-crop approach. At the same time it will study and introduce new methods of growing traditional crops in order to increase yields.

[Bhutan goes organic: a lesson for us all? \(Blog post by Greenpeace International\) >>](#)