

No. 1 - Sept. 2012

COMPRO II PROJECT

Quality & Yield

Supporting smallholder farmers' decisions on top quality commercial products



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A word from the project leader



Participants of the East Africa Hub meeting held in Nairobi in March 2012

“...significantly increase farmer yields by 15-30%...”

Three years ago, we embarked on a project to contribute to increased information available to smallholder farmers and other stakeholders in sub-Saharan Africa on quality commercial products.

We called this initiative in short; **‘COMPRO I’**.

In this first phase, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, we worked with partners to assess commercial products available in the market that had the potential to significantly increase farmer yields by 15-30%.

This work was undertaken in Kenya, Nigeria, and Ethiopia.

The results

A very successful collaborative effort between project partners, private sector and government agencies in these countries on commercial products. Apart from the sheer volume of lessons on effective partnerships, the project was able to generate useful insights into an initial set of three products that demonstrated effectiveness in field trials.

In addition to the products, we learnt a lot on opportunities to strengthen regulatory mechanisms for inputs and commercial products quality monitoring and capacity building.

COMPRO II, which began in April 2012 moves this story along to the next phase.

With the continued support of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, we will focus attention on sharing experiences, information and building institutional capacity on top quality effective commercial products. Our target includes small holder farmers, extension personnel, researchers, input suppliers, regulatory agencies and policy makers.

We will also support implementation processes aimed at strengthening quality monitoring and capacity building for commercial products to ensure that farmers have access to information on high quality soil improvement technologies.

This process will take place in the initial core countries (Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria) involved in COMPRO I but also in three additional countries (Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana).

This maiden issue of the Quality & Yield COMPRO II newsletter tells you where we have come from and what we seek to achieve for the small holder farmer in the target countries. In subsequent editions, you will read stories and experiences from our COMPRO II partners in the field as they implement the project activities.

Dr. Cargele Masso (IITA) – Project Leader

Compro I sets the stage for more learning



COMPRO I team from Moi University and University of Nairobi (Kenya) with farmers at a farmer managed trail (FMT) for rhizobium inoculants for soybean in June 2011. Rhizobium inoculants (Category 1 bio fertilizer), were among the key products tested in COMPRO I that produced very encouraging results.

“...Are smallholder farmers throwing away good money for ineffective products?...”

This and other questions were partly answered as COMPRO I wound up in 2011. The lessons generated will enrich the process of implementing the successor project COMPRO II.

What was COMPRO I all about?

COMPRO I was a three-year project that sought to identify effective commercial products in Kenya, Ethiopia and Nigeria/Niger and build capacity of these countries to effectively monitor and regulate the quality of commercial products entering into the markets.

During the same period, the project supported human capacity development in these countries by supporting the training of MSc. graduates and PhD fellows in diverse aspects of soil fertility and monitoring processes. In these three countries our project team and partners worked with regulatory authorities to screen more than one hundred commercial products commonly sold to farmers for improvement of soil fertility and crop yield.

The result was that out of the more than one hundred products evaluated, only three showed increase by 15-30% when used as directed. Farmer awareness and adoption of those products may contribute to improved crop yield and increased revenue. These products included:

- (i) Rhizobium inoculants (Category I: bio-fertilizer) for soybean
- (ii) Mycorrhizal inoculants (Category II: bio-pesticide) for tissue culture banana
- (iii) Seed coating of fertilizer formulations (Category III: chemical products) for maize

Key lessons from COMPRO I

As a useful lens into the world of agricultural commercial products, COMPRO I highlighted the challenges facing the smallholder farmer in accessing good quality and effective products. Other key lessons are highlighted below:

- **Strengthening regulatory environments:** Capacity building and advocacy are key strategies to achieve this.
- **Strengthening product monitoring systems:** COMPRO I experience indicated that in some countries over 90% of products found in the market were not effective. It was clear that monitoring systems for biological and non-biological materials is in need of strengthening.
- **Improving product information sharing:** The need for advocacy for policy and programmes targeted at widespread dissemination of product information for the promising products to different agro-ecological niches. This should include educating farmers and extension agents on the importance of proper use of recommended products.
- **Targeting women farmers:** Women farmers comprise a large number of smallholder growers. Unfortunately, they also have limited access to vital information on agricultural production that constrains their productivity. To address this, better linkages with agricultural extension systems need to be established to help women farmers identify and effectively use high-quality commercial products.

COMPRO II in the last six months

In the news

Partnerships meeting on sustainable products - Zanzibar

The COMPRO II Partnership Development Meeting was held from on 2 to 4 October 2011 in Zanzibar. A wide range of partners attended this meeting including the project funding partners, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BGMF). Others were, Egerton University, IITA, CIAT-TSBF, EIAR, FIPS-Africa, CABI, BECA, Makerere University, AGRA, University of Ghana, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate (KEPHIS), AATF, Tansed International Ltd., YARA, World Bank



COMPRO II launched in Dar es Salaam in May 2012

Scientific Advisory Committee formed

The Committee includes individuals with proven experience in the project thematic areas. These are: Roel Merckx, soil fertility management; Seth Danso, microbiologist; Ivana Osagie, private sector-Notore; Martha Byanyima, COMESA regulation; and Rebbie Harawa, AGRA). Ex-officio members include: Dr Prem Warrior, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; Dr Bernard Vanlauwe, IITA Director for Central Africa and Director for NRM; and Dr Cargele Masso, IITA scientist and COMPRO-II Project Leader.



West African hub meeting – Ibadan, February 2012

West and East African Hubs develop COMPRO II plans

The West African team met at IITA, Ibadan Nigeria from 26 to 28 February 2012. The East African Partners met from 1 to 2 March 2012 at Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi. At each meeting key project partners including academia, private sector and development agencies were represented from Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia.



East African hub meeting – Nairobi March 2012

COMPRO II officially launched - Dar es Salaam

The COMPRO II project was officially launched in May in Dar es Salaam in an event attended by Dr. Fidelis Myaka, the director of research and development at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives (Tanzania). Dr Myaka officially launched the project on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture.

Project partnerships agreements firming up

Agreements have been finalized with, FIPS-Africa - Dissemination activities, CABI - Communication activities, AATF - Regulation and country representatives in most participating countries. The participating countries include Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Laboratory capacity development plans underway

The project will invest in lab infrastructure through a number of project partners under Objectives 2 and 3. These will include Egerton University (Kenya), Sokoine University of Agriculture (Tanzania); Makerere University (Uganda), EIAR (Ethiopia), KNUST (Ghana), and a laboratory in Nigeria.

Public-private sector partnerships are taking shape

Under FIPS' leadership, partnerships are envisaged with AMIRAN in Kenya, YARA in Tanzania, and NOTORE in Nigeria. These will support dissemination and promotion of top quality and highly efficacious commercial products including Rhizobium Inoculants, seed coating technologies and other technologies.

Targeting two million smallholder farmers in COMPRO II



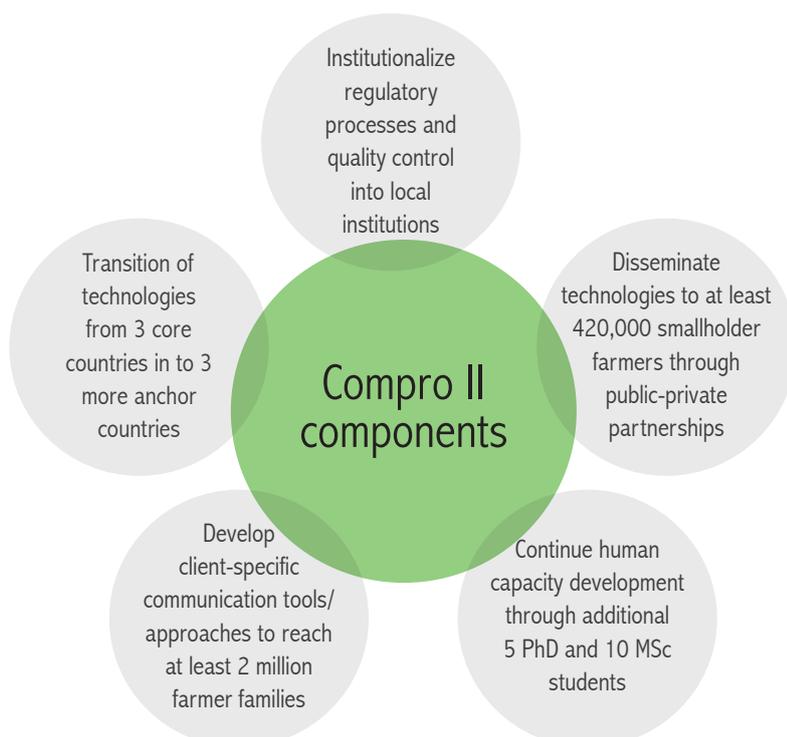
“...use public-private partnerships to promote effective commercial products and technologies...”

In COMPRO II, partners have set lofty goals. We aim to make a substantial contribution to food security and poverty reduction among small holder farmers. COMPRO II aims to reach over 2 million smallholder farming households in the participating countries, with information on effective and profitable commercial products by 2016.

The project will use public-private partnerships to promote effective commercial products and technologies that can achieve at least 15-30% yield increase with substantial impact on food security.

The project partners are committed to ensure that at least 21% of the households reached will test an effective technology, and at least half of this group will adopt the effective technology.

A key component of the COMPRO II project is that partners will promote effective commercial products, while at the same time encouraging farmers to adopt the technologies with accompanying integrated soil fertility management (ISFM) techniques.



What COMPRO II aims to achieve

Objectives

- To disseminate at least three effective products to smallholder farmer households
- To continue screening and evaluation of new products
- To establish and institutionalize quality control and regulatory mechanisms
- To communicate information on commercial products
- To undertake project management, M&E and capacity building

Outcomes

As the project progresses (in its entire five-year span), project partners will be tracking proportions of a set of specific outcomes on quarterly, annual, and end of the project period.

These will cover the rates of adoption of effective products by farmers, private sector involvement and uptake of the technologies, policy level awareness and institutionalization of quality control, regulations and monitoring processes by regulatory agencies. The project anticipates increased human capacity both at service provision level as well as training in universities on quality aspects in commercial products.

Partnerships within COMPRO II

Partnership is a key principle and strength of the COMPRO II project. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation provides the financial support to the project while five organizations: IITA, FIPS Africa, CIAT-TSBF, CABI, and AATF lead each of its main objectives. Other collaborating agencies bring in a rich mix of skills and field experience to ensure successful implementation. The list below gives a summary of other partners involved in COMPRO II:

- Federal Fertilizer Department, Abuja, Nigeria
- Ghana Standards Authority Plant protection and regulatory services
- Institute of Agricultural Research of Ahmadu Bello University (IAR/ABU), Zaria, Nigeria
- National Agric. Seeds Council, Abuja, Nigeria
- AGRA Policy
- Amiran Kenya Ltd.
- National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Nigeria
- Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate (KEPHIS)
- Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR), Ethiopia
- Makerere University (Uganda)
- Egerton University (Kenya)
- Uganda National Bureau of Standards,
- Africa 2000 Network (A2N)
- Tansed International, Tanzania
- Sokoine University
- Tropical Pesticides Research Institute, Tanzania
- Agricultural Research Institute - Mlingano, Tanzania
- NOTORE, Nigeria
- Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana
- Tanzania Fertilizer Regulatory Authority

'Quality & Yield' is the newsletter of the COMPRO II project. It is a quarterly publication that highlights key activities and experiences of the project. We welcome short and medium length articles by project partners.

Send your comments and articles to C.Masso@cgjar.org

COMPRO II is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation