



Global Agri Business Incubation
Network's

e-Newsletter

Issue 11

Key Promoters of the GABI e-Newsletter



Horticulture value chain agribusiness incubator launched in Zambia

Smallholder farmers in Zambia can now look forward to better entrepreneurship and agribusiness opportunities with the launch of first ever full-fledged Agribusiness incubator in Lusaka- the Agribusiness Incubation Trust popularly called AgBIT. AgBIT is a public private partnership initiative aimed at producing innovative young entrepreneurs and agribusiness leaders to champion productivity and profitability of the agricultural enterprises that can spinoff new agro-enterprises. AgBIT works towards achieving the goal of transforming itself as the leading generator of young agribusiness entrepreneurs in the horticultural value-chain so as to create jobs and wealth in Zambia.

AgBIT is one of the six agribusiness incubators being established under the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa's initiative on Universities, Business and Research in Agricultural Innovation (FARA-UniBRAIN) project with mentoring support from ICRISAT-ABI of the institute's Agribusiness and Innovation Platform (AIP). AgBIT is primarily promoted by a unique consortium of public and private organizations including the University of Zambia, Mulungushi University, Zambia Agriculture Research Institute, Natural Resources Development College and Frontier Development Associates.

"FARA is committed to help the African farming community through initiatives like AgBIT. We will work towards promoting agro-entrepreneurs in Zambia and elevate the position of horticultural products in the international market," said Dr Yemi Akinbamijo, Executive Director, FARA during the launch.

AgBIT supports agribusiness SMEs, farmer organizations, innovators and students by providing them an array of business incubation services. Services provided by AgBIT include, pre-incubation service to help budding entrepreneurs select the best agri-ventures, prepare business plans, extend technical services in product development and standardization, quality certification, linkages with the financial institutions, product promotion, marketing and many more customized services. The incubator will also help its entrepreneurs by providing them access to new technologies which are available in the National Agricultural Research System and other international research institutes through its partner organizations.



Dignitaries and Partners from FARA-UniBRAIN and ICRISAT at the launch of AgBIT agribusiness incubator.



Cultural activities and the cake cutting ceremony takes place during the inauguration



Incubatees of AgBIT display their products during the launch of the agribusiness incubator

10 New Startup Incubators To Watch In Africa

One of the major challenges faced by startups is accessing sufficient capital and business advisory. To address this challenge, business incubators were established to help to speed up the growth and success of start-ups by providing them with funding, angel investors and coalition among other things. This innovative sector has sprung into life in the past few years and is becoming a rapidly emerging phenomenon in Africa, with new incubators being launched with greater frequency. These incubators offer support to businesses ranging from tech and agriculture to construction and education.

An article titled '10 New Startup Incubators To Watch In Africa' has featured WAARI & SVCDC in '[Ventures](#)' an online magazine on business & entrepreneurship. WAARI & SVCDC have been featured as given under:

West African Agri-Business Resource Incubator (WAARI): Lauded as the first ever full-fledged agribusiness incubator in West Africa, the West African Agri-Business Resource Incubator (WAARI) was officially launched in January 2014 by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and its Universities, Business and Research in Agricultural Innovation (UniBRAIN) partners in Selingue province of Mali. The incubator will serve as a training, research and advisory centre for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), start-ups and enterprises undertaking change and innovation. Its launch signifies the importance of agribusiness development in building a sustainable economy in Africa.

Sorghum Value Chain Development Consortium (SVCDC): The sorghum-based agribusiness incubator was launched with an express mandate to improve agribusiness education and catalyse the growth of sustainable enterprises for young people, especially agribusiness students and graduates in Africa. The syndicate will provide hand-on services to start-up business right from conceptualisation; support. This initiative is also supported by UniBRAIN and the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA).

The other incubators featured in the list are:

- **Think Incubator**
- **i-CRE8 South Africa (i-CRE8 SA)**
- **The Rwanda Media Hub**
- **The Passion Incubator**
- **SWAPP (Sustainable West Africa palm oil programme)**
- **Seda Construction Incubator**
- **Edupreneurs**
- **CIPMEN (Niger)**

To read the full article: [10 New Startup Incubators To Watch In Africa](#)

Fonio: A nutritious grain which could make farming in West Africa more sustainable!

Fonio is one of Africa's oldest cereals. It is rich in amino acids and is said to be the most nutritious of all Earth's grains. Its low sugar content also makes it ideal for people with diabetes.

The Dogons of Mali, an ancient people, refer to the fonio seed as "the germ of the world". They believed that the whole universe emerged from the fonio seed – the smallest object known.

West African farmers mainly cultivate white fonio (*Digitaria exilis*), which is also called fundi, findi, acha or "hungry rice".

In West Africa fonio is considered to be the tastiest of all cereals. Serving fonio as a dish at festivals or important ceremonies is always a good choice because of its fine and delicate taste. As a popular proverb says "Fonio never embarrasses the cook". Fonio is also known for its nutritional properties, which are often deficient in today's major cereals.

Processing fonio is a difficult and time-consuming task because of the extremely small size of the grain. This product is called "fonio paddy" or "raw fonio". Like rice, processing paddy into whitened fonio is done in two stages. The first stage, known as dehusking or peeling, involves removing the husks from the seed to obtain the dehusked grain. The second stage, known as whitening, aims to remove the bran (the pericarp and the germ) from the grain. In order to obtain a quality product, all dirt and sand must be eliminated. This means that the product should be washed several times which also adds to the amount of time and effort required for preparation. Thus, mechanizing the processing and the cleaning of fonio is essential both to reduce the painstaking work for women and to improve the quality and availability of the marketed product.

Ms Mariam Togola from Bamako produces and sells 6000 kgs of precooked fonio every year who is looking for incubation services from WAARI-Mali to make fonio more competitive in the market in terms of quality and price. She is also being helped with improved grain processing techniques and modernized equipment. To meet these needs, the business incubator at WAARI will also help her with a strategic business plan, better packaging methods, an improved market to sell her produce and meeting the market demand.



Mr Cheick Diarra, Business Manager,; Mr David, Technical Officer, WAARI and Mr Bhubesh kumar, Deputy Manager, ABI-ICRISAT with Ms Mariam Togola



Ms Mariam Togola displaying the clean, white fonio prepared by her

Boot Camp secures funding support for agribusiness entrepreneurs

The 'Boot Camp on Business Development and Capital Raising' conducted by the Agri-Business Incubation Program of AIP-ICRISAT prospects secure business incubation support and three prospects secured funding from participating banks.

The camp was to help start-ups explore opportunities in agribusiness, farm opportunities and food processing ventures, and provide a platform for sharing and exchange of ideas and innovations in availing incubation services, funding assistance and marketing support.

"This boot camp gave me a deep insight on the tools necessary to analyze my idea and feel confident about it. It helped build my network, work on new opportunities available in the agricultural sector and learn from my peers," said, Mr Manjunath from Gulbarga, a participant.

Mr SM Karuppanchetty, COO, Agri-Business Incubation (ABI) Program, ICRISAT-AIP, discussed the role of ICRISAT-AIP in promoting start-ups, agribusiness ventures and nurturing innovations including the various opportunities that small and medium entrepreneurs can avail in various sectors of the rapidly growing food industry. He also highlighted on the schemes available under Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India.

Mr Aravazhi Selvaraj, COO, Innovation & Partnership (INP) Program of ICRISAT-AIP discussed the funding opportunities available from the Technopreneur Promotion Program (TePP) of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Government of India, banks and venture capitalists.

The camp was held on 5 August at ICRISAT-India. More than 40 agribusiness innovators and entrepreneurs from the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Karnataka, explored new opportunities in farm opportunities, food processing ventures, funding assistance and marketing support.



Mr SM Karuppanchetty elucidating the role of ICRISAT in promoting agribusinesses at the Bootcamp



Mr Rami Reddy, a client of ABI sharing his success story with the participants

News & Opportunities

Call for Proposals: Africa Exclusive

Call for Proposals: USAID - Improved Food Security in Ethiopia

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) /Ethiopia invites proposals from the private sector, education and research institutions (and organizations working with them) for improving food security in Ethiopia. This initiative will be used to identify and test innovations that produce cost-effective and scalable solutions to address the problems of Ethiopian households with regards to food insecurity.

Deadline: 15 September 2014 - [Click for more details >>](#)

WLE Nile: Open Call for Expressions of Interest (EOIs)

The CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE) invites Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from consortiums of partners to carry out research for development projects that will contribute to its demand-driven research agenda in Nile Basin-East Africa region.

Deadline: 22 September 2014 - [Click for more details >>](#)

PREPARED in East Africa

The Planning for Resilience in East Africa through Policy, Adaptation, Research and Economic Development (PREPARED) Project, invites concept papers from regional and national organizations in East Africa for projects to support the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s initiative to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of East African economies, trans-boundary and freshwater ecosystems and communities.

Deadline: 19 November 2014 - [Click for more details >>](#)

Awards & Fellowships

Call for Proposals

US Department of Agriculture -- Borlaug Fellowships 2015

The US Department of Agriculture is now accepting applications for the 2015 Norman E Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship Program. The program offers training and collaborative research opportunities to scientists, researchers, and policymakers from 34 eligible countries

Deadline: 31 October 2014 - [Click for more details >>](#)

28th Khwarizmi International Award (KIA)

The Khwarizmi International Award seeks to recognize the efforts of researchers, innovators and inventors from all over the world and appreciate their invaluable achievements and contributions to various fields of science and technology. Agriculture and Biotechnology are among the fields considered for the awards

Deadline: 10 November 2014 - [Click for more details >>](#)

Events

International Conference on Advances in Food Sciences (ICAFS 2014) October 8-9, 2014, Jinju, South Korea

The primary goal of the conference is to promote research and developmental activities in Advances in Food Sciences. Another goal is to promote scientific information interchange between researchers, developers, engineers, students, and practitioners working in South Korea and abroad. The conference will be held every year to make it an ideal platform for people to share views and experiences in Advances in Food Sciences and related area. Topics of interest for submission include, but are not limited to Food Biotechnology, Food engineering, Food microstructure development and characterization, Food properties including thermal, chemical and mechanical properties, Antioxidants and photochemical, Lipids, Macronutrients, Micronutrients, Minerals and trace elements, Protein, amino acids and nitrogenous compounds, Proximate composition, Diet studies, Growth and development, Infant feeding, Nutrition education, Nutrition policy, Reproduction and lactation, Socioeconomic status, and Sports nutrition.

[Click for more details >>](#)

Global forum for Innovations in Agriculture (GFIA), March 9-10, 2015, Abu Dhabi

GFIA is organizing a major international exhibition and conference focused on the future of sustainable agriculture. The aim of GFIA is to deliver measurable impact through a cutting-edge conference and exhibition.

GFIA side events will complement the main plenary program and include:

- Partnerships for Food Security & Climate Resilient Agriculture
- Post-harvest Loss Initiative
- NGOs' Critical Role in Agricultural Productivity
- 2nd Africa Agriculture Technology Platform
- The MENA Farmers Programme
- Africa Spotlight - The Africa Agricultural Leaders Forum
- Aquaculture Development in the Middle East & North Africa

[Click for more details >>](#)

Call for Papers: 3rd Global Science Conference on Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA), Montpellier, France, March 16-18, 2015

The conference on CSA will address key research issues facts and figures from developing and developed countries and will support a collaborative effort with broad social participation. Special attention will be given to vulnerable countries and populations. It will therefore contribute to the strengthening of a CSA scientific community and will provide a further opportunity for developing a global research agenda.

Papers due: 01 October 2014 - [Click for more details >>](#)

Reach Us

Global Agri Business Incubation Network's e-newsletter

Mr. Alex Ariho

UniBRAIN Facility Coordinator

Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)

12 Anmeda Street, Roman Ridge, Accra, PMB CT 173 Cantonments, Accra, Ghana

FARA Tel: +233 302 772823, 779421, 774619, 777838, FARA Fax: +233 302 773676

Email: AAriho@fara-africa.org

SM Karuppanchetty

Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Agri Business Incubation (ABI) Program – ICRISAT

Patancheru, Hyderabad, 502324 - India

Tel: +91-40-30713414

Fax: +91-40-30713074 / 75

Email: karuppanchetty@cgiar.org

