



Global Agri Business Incubation  
Network's

*e-Newsletter*

Issue 7

### Key Promoters of the GABI e-Newsletter



## FARA-UniBRAIN and ICRISAT discuss project up-scaling

To review the project activities of ICRISAT's Agri-Business Incubation program and the way forward in up-scaling the UniBRAIN project (Universities, Business and Research in Agricultural Innovation) of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), Mr Alex Ariho, UniBRAIN Facility Coordinator visited ICRISAT. Director General William D. Dar, in a meeting with Mr Ariho, discussed strategic plans of FARA and ICRISAT in scaling up incubation operation in the rest of the African continent. FARA is an apex organization bringing together and forming coalitions of major stakeholders in agricultural research and development in Africa.

UniBRAIN is an initiative for advancing agribusiness incubation and improved agribusiness education in Africa. It is supported by the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Danida) and facilitated by a team of seven partner institutions. ICRISAT, through its Agri-Business Incubation program, is one of the partners, which has been entrusted with the mentoring activities of the UniBRAIN Agricultural Innovation Incubator Consortia. Mr Ariho also met Dr Shoba Sivasankar, Director, CGIAR Research Program on Dryland Cereals and the Center Commissioned External Review (CCER) Panel of experts which was reviewing ICRISAT's strategy for sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).



*Dr Dar presenting ICRISAT information material to Mr Alex Ariho (2nd from right)*

## Unleashing the African Agri-Business through UniBRAIN Agri-Incubators at the EMRC AgriBusiness Fair

The EMRC AgriBusiness Forum 2013 was held in Kigali, Rwanda during 06-09 October 2013 highlighting the significance of the pan-African forum for the future of the African agricultural sector.

Alex Ariho, Facilitator Coordinator for Universities, Business and Research in Agricultural Innovation (UniBRAIN) along with SM Karuppanchetty, COO, AIP-ICRISAT; Steve Giddings, Regional Facilitator: Africa-Infodev-World Bank, South Africa; and Dr. Pia Chuzu, Programme Officer at FARA, Ghana, led the UniBRAIN side event of Business Elevator Pitch Competition at the EMRC 2013 Agribusiness Forum, which focused on "The Agri-Food Sector: A Catalyst for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth in Africa", held in Kigali, Rwanda.

SM Karuppanchetty represented ICRISAT and presented on the Best practices and lessons in agribusiness incubation during a workshop on Agribusiness Incubation – An instrumental tool to unleash the potential of African agriculture and fuel the economic transformation in order to promote the UniBRAIN Agribusiness Innovation Incubator Consortia (AIICs) during the forum. The UniBRAIN Facility Coordinator, Alex Ariho officially opened the elevator pitch competition for UniBRAIN supported agribusiness incubators from AgBIT, Zambia; CURAD and ABP Ltd from Uganda, setting out exciting prospects for collaboration and investment in African agribusiness. The elevator pitches sparked animated discussions and deliberations.

The Best Elevator Pitch award was received by Mr. Denise Kasule of Sermalina Beverages Limited, an agribusiness start-up under Consortium for Enhancing University Responsiveness to Agribusiness Development (CURAD) incubator and Priscilla Mtopa, Director, Ronipam, an agribusiness start-up under the Agribusiness Incubation Trust (AgBIT) Ltd incubator of UniBRAIN. The event resulted in mobilisation of interest for investments and partnership opportunities for scaling up of the UniBRAIN AIICs in new countries like Nigeria, Tanzania, Senegal etc. Further, it has also helped the AIIC clients in networking with potential investors and clients



*Ms. Priscilla Mtopa (Second from left) poses with the panel of judges after receiving the Best Elevator Pitch Award.*

## ABI-ICRISAT conducts Agbiz Idol Camp in Kenya under the FARA- UniBRAIN initiative

The Agri-Business and Incubation Program of ICRISAT conducted an Agbiz Idol camp as part of the Agri-Business Education Fair organised by the African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE) and its partners under the Universities, Business and Research in Agricultural Innovation (UniBRAIN) initiative of FARA on 11 October 2013 at the World Agro Forestry Center in Nairobi, Kenya.

This camp has helped in promoting entrepreneurship among the African students and created a competitive agribusiness environment by scouting innovations in Agribusiness.

About 16 students and academicians participated in the camp and presented their business ideas. The contestants were screened under two categories: Entrepreneurs and Academicians. An eminent panel, consisting of Mr Alex Ariho, UniBRAIN- Facility Co-ordinator; Mr. Ralph Von Kaufmann, former UniBRAIN Facility Coordinator; Mr. S.M. Karuppanchetty, COO, ABI -ICRISAT and representatives from the UniBRAIN AIICs evaluated the business ideas of the contestants.

Ms. Irene W Gichingiri and Mr Goodhope Shombe won the awards in the entrepreneur category whereas Dr. Hortense Atta Diallo and Dr Niran Thompson were declared winners in the Academicians category. The winners were felicitated by Mr Alex Ariho, UniBRAIN- Facility Co-ordinator and Dr. Francoise Driver, University of Mauritius, with an award and a certificate of participation.

ABI-ICRISAT shall provide the entrepreneurs with assistance in building their business plans and will be facilitated for incubation under Creating Competitive Livestock Entrepreneurs in Agribusiness (CCLEAR), Ghana, through off-site incubation set-up for their winning idea of starting an animal husbandry venture.

As part of the Agri Business Education Fair, Mr SM Karuppanchetty, COO, ABI-ICRISAT presented on his experience and shared his best practices on handholding and mentoring business incubation centres under the Network of Indian Agri-Business Incubators (NIABI) and Global Agri-Business Incubation (GABI) network. ABI-ICRISAT also exhibited on the agri-business technology opportunities from the NIABI network in India. Mr R Bhubesh Kumar, Deputy Manager, ABI-ICRISAT organised and facilitated the conduct of the Agbiz Idol camp which saw many entrepreneurs, academicians and research scholars as participants.



*Mr SM Karuppanchetty presenting the experiences of ICRISAT in handholding NIABI incubators*

## The Agri Business Education Fair: Image Gallery



*Ralph von Kaufmann, former facility coordinator of UniBRAIN interacts with the audience during a session*



*Alex Ariho, facility coordinator of UniBRAIN responds during an interaction*



*Lucy Muchoki, CEO-PanAAC in deliberation with Dr Aissetou Drame Yave*



*Prof Henry M. Bwisa (extreme left) from JKUAT on the panel during a session*



*Dr Nelson Sello, Principal Research and Stas Officer, Ministry of Agriculture, Botswana interacts with an entrepreneur*



*Entrepreneurs display their wares at a stall*



*The Participants of the Agri Business Education Fair pose for a group picture!*

## High-level delegation from Ghana and Uganda explores partnership opportunities with AIP-ICRISAT

A high-level delegation of Ministers from Africa visited the ICRISAT headquarters on 28 October 2013. The three-member delegation was composed of Mr Aston Peterson Kajara, Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Government of Uganda; Dr Musheibu Mohammed-Alfa, Deputy Minister of Environment, Science, Technology and Economic Development, Government of Ghana; and Prof Karim M Maredia, Professor and Director, World Technology Access Program, Michigan State University, USA.

The ICRISAT-AIP team led by Dr Kiran K Sharma briefed the delegation on the Platform's operations and activities in Africa. These activities involve handholding of Agri-Business Incubators under the Universities, Business and Research in Agricultural Innovation (UniBRAIN) – Forum of Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) project, and the setting up of Food Testing Laboratories and Food Processing Business Incubation Centers under the Indo-African Forum Summit

Mr Kajara expressed appreciation of AIP's public-private partnership model and assured to extend all the help required by ICRISAT in the effective implementation of projects in Uganda.

Dr Mohammed, on the other hand, expressed interest in partnering with AIP in setting up and exploring funding opportunities for a science park in Ghana.

Both the Ministers agreed to jointly provide soft landing facilities for Indian seed companies so that local seed demand could be met and suitable crop varieties could be promoted in the region.



*AIP-ICRISAT staff with Mr AP Kajara (5th from left); Prof KM Maredia (2nd from left); and Dr M Mohammed-Alfa (3rd from left).*

## ICRISAT fosters 10 years of Agribusiness Incubation

“We needed to create a vehicle that could be multi-faceted in harnessing the potential of entrepreneurship for the farming community,” Director General, Dr William D. Dar said of ICRISAT’s Agri-Business Incubation (ABI) program. Dr Dar was speaking at the tenth anniversary celebration of ABI on 5 December.

Dr Dar added that ICRISAT began the ABI program in 2003 under the Agribusiness and Innovation Platform (AIP), with a focus on accelerating technology exchange by nurturing agriculture-based commercial enterprises.

In ten years of its operations, ABI has become a self-sustaining entity within ICRISAT, an agribusiness incubator model replicated at different locations in India in partnership with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), and scaled-up to a global level, especially in Africa and Asia, through partnership with various R&D agencies.

The event, “ABI@10”, was organized at the ICRISAT headquarters to recognize and felicitate the efforts of the scientists, partners, clients and stakeholders who have been a part of this program since its inception.

In his welcome address, Dr Kiran Sharma, Chief Executive Officer, AIP, highlighted the importance of ABI as a unique initiative of ICRISAT which facilitates the creation of competitive agribusiness enterprises through technology development and commercialization. He thanked the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India for their support in establishing the Agri-Business Incubator at ICRISAT.

Among the participants and other distinguished guests at the event were, Dr JA Chowdary, Co-Chair, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Andhra Pradesh State Council and Dr P Murugesu Boopathi, Former Vice-Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.

A session on “Success Stories from ABI” as a platform for sharing and exchange of ideas; and a Brainstorming Session on opportunities for enhancing ABI’s activities, particularly in developing a conceptual framework for Public-Private Partnership incubators were also held.

Since its inception, ABI has supported over 200 agribusiness ventures and benefited over 500,000 farmers in Andhra Pradesh and neighboring states. It has also identified and supported some very good innovative products and technologies and taken them to the market. ABI has facilitated commercialization of more than 100 agro-technologies, extending its handholding and mentoring services to the 22 Business Planning and Development units set-up under the National Agricultural Innovation Project (NAIP) of ICAR.

ABI has successfully taken its co-business incubation services to Africa by partnering with the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) in implementing the Universities, Businesses and Research in Agricultural Innovation (UniBRAIN) project. Under this project, ABI is mentoring and handholding six value-chain agribusiness innovation and incubation consortia spread across five countries in Ghana, Mali, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia.

## Abi@10 in pictures



*Dr Dar with Dr PM Boopathi (2nd from right). Also seen (from L-R) are Drs KK Sharma, JA Chowdary, and Mr SM Karuppanchetty, CEO, Agribusiness Incubator Program, ICRISAT.*



*Dr Dar interacts with a client of ABI at an exhibit stall during ABI@10.*



*Dr William Dar, along with distinguished guests, scientists of ICRISAT, Principal Investigators and BPD managers of the ICAR-BPD units, partners, clients and ABI staff pose for a group photograph during the event*

## ICRISAT to host the 20th ASPA Annual conference in 2016

ICRISAT will host the 20th Asian Science Park Association (ASPA) Annual Conference in Hyderabad in 2016. This was confirmed by Director General William D. Dar to the ASPA Board represented by Chairperson Dr Jong Hyun Lee.

The conference will provide Science and Technology Parks (STPs) in India with an opportunity to network with the global community of STPs and promote cross-country linkages, thereby allowing Indian entrepreneurs to explore global market linkages and strengthen technologies beyond the national borders. ASPA is an international nongovernmental organization established in Japan in 1997 to enable joint developments in the areas of scientific technology, industry and economy in Asia.

*Mr Aravazhi Selvaraj, COO, Innovation and Partnership Program, AIP-ICRISAT presents at the 17<sup>th</sup> ASPA Conference in Gwangju Metropolitan City, South Korea.*



## ABI-ICRISAT gets 'Best Incubator' Award at FOOD 360°

The Agr-Business and Incubation Program of ICRISAT was awarded the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry FOOD 360o Award in the Best Incubator category at the third edition of FOOD 360° (International conference-cum-exhibition on Agribusiness and Food Processing) held on 6-7 November in Hyderabad, India.

In his message, Director General William D. Dar said, "We are pleased to be associated with this initiative as it is consistent with ICRISAT's new strategic plan to 2020 which is based on the Inclusive Market-Oriented Development (IMOD) approach. Food processing is one of the most important links in the agricultural value chain that enables value addition. Enabling farmers to become part of this link by engaging them as entrepreneurs and through small and medium term enterprises (SMEs) can help in the development of a vibrant agrarian and rural economy."

A knowledge report titled "Strategies and Support Mechanisms for Promoting Entrepreneurship in Food Processing Sector for IMOD" prepared by ICRISAT, the knowledge partner for the event, was released by Chief Guest Mr Siraj Hussain, Secretary, Ministry of Food Processing, Government of India.

Speaking on behalf of Dr Kiran Sharma, Chief Executive Officer, AIP, Dr Saikat Datta Mazumdar explained that the report aims at providing prospective entrepreneurs with an overview of the benefits of food business incubators, through successful case studies of food incubation ventures promoted through ICRISAT's AIP, and that it would serve as a valuable guide for the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Mr S Aravazhi, COO, Innovation and Partnership program, delivered the keynote address during a session on "Mega Trends in Agri and Food Sectors", in which he spoke on the opportunities in the food processing sector in the context of changing consumer food preferences, food technology developments, sustainability imperatives and policy framework.

Receiving the award from Mr PK Mohanty, Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh, were Mr SM Karuppanchetty, Chief Operating Officer (COO), Agribusiness Incubator program; Mr S Aravazhi; and Dr Saikat Datta Mazumdar, COO, NutriPlus Knowledge program of ICRISAT's Agri Innovation Platform (AIP).

ICRISAT also took part in the exhibition, showcasing products and services related to agribusiness and food processing technologies.



*Mr SM Karuppanchetty, Dr SD Mazumdar and Mr S Aravazhi, receiving the award from AP Chief Secretary PK Mohanty.*



*Dr SD Mazumdar (2nd from right) with the other dignitaries, during the release of the ICRISAT Knowledge Report.*



## News & Opportunities

### Call for Proposals

#### Call for Proposals: Securing water for food: A Grand Challenge for Development Competition

The objective of this call is to enable the production of more food with less water and/or make more water available for food production, processing, and distribution in developing and emerging countries. The call is jointly funded by USAID and the Government of Sweden

**Deadline:** 17 January 2014 - [Click here to read more >>](#)

### Africa Exclusive

#### Call for Proposals: Energy and Environment Partnership for Southern and East Africa - Grants to support energy projects

The Energy and Environment Partnership (EEP) Program with Southern and East Africa (S&EA) is seeking high-quality applications for projects in the two regions that can contribute to the reduction of poverty by promoting an inclusive and job-creating green economy and by improving energy security while mitigating global climate change.

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

#### Call for Proposals: Sida-Research Training Partnership Program – Uganda

The call for proposals for Sida-funded partnerships between Makerere University (MaK) and Swedish universities is now open. The program, named "Research Training Partnership Program as an integral part of Institutional Research Capacity Strengthening", aims at supporting the strengthening of institutional research training capacity at universities in Sweden's target countries and regions, contributing to increased number of research graduates. Comprehensive partnerships between individual Swedish universities or a consortium of universities which contribute to the development of human resources and the research capacity of Makerere University are encouraged to apply.

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

*The GABI e-newsletter wishes all its readers a very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year 2014*



## Reach Us

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