



Global Agri Business Incubation  
Network's

**e-Newsletter**

**Issue 9**

### Key Promoters of the GABI e-Newsletter



## Sorghum value chain agribusiness incubator to build market links for Kenyan smallholder farmers

Sorghum smallholder farmers in Kenya can now look forward to better entrepreneurship and agribusiness opportunities and become stronger players in the value chain with the launch of the Sorghum Value Chain Development Consortium (SVCDC).

“Market-oriented agriculture is the most efficient way to solve the issues pertaining to small and marginal farmers of Africa. Income from marketed produce will enable farm families to purchase more food and farm inputs. This will further raise farm productivity, kicking off a series of investments that bring about local and national economic growth and creating a self-reinforcing pathway to prosperity of the agricultural sector,” ICRISAT Director General Dr William Dar said during the launch of SVCDC in Kenya on 14 March.

The Agri-Business Incubation (ABI) program of ICRISAT’s Agribusiness and Innovation Platform (AIP) has facilitated the establishment of the SVCDC, an agribusiness incubator that will work along the sorghum value chain, at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology (JKUAT). SVCDC 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.

“The establishment of agribusiness incubators like SVCDC is significant coming at a time when the Government of Kenya is initiating steps to promote entrepreneurs in agriculture, and ensuring food security,” said the chief guest at the launch, Ms Sisilia Karoke, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Government of Kenya. She also highlighted that breweries in the East African region are consuming large quantities of value-added products of sorghum, thereby creating a large demand for the crop. She also thanked ICRISAT for its commitment and contributions to the agriculture system in the country.

Prof Christine Onyango, Associate Professor and Deputy Principal, Taita Taveta University College, Kenya and Chair of the SVCDC Board, briefed the guests on the consortium's involvement in creating agribusiness enterprises along the sorghum value chains through the 4Fs: Food, Feed, Fuel and Fiber. This, she added, would benefit the stakeholders through training and capacity building, advisory services and technical backstopping through products and services.

Prof Mabel Imbuga, Vice Chancellor, JKUAT, emphasized that SVCDC will promote entrepreneurs in the sorghum value chain by deriving strength from all the partners of the Agribusiness Innovation Incubator Consortia (AIIC). FARA-UniBRAIN Facility Coordinator, Mr Alex Ariho highlighted the unique partnership between UniBRAIN and its sub-regional partners in different value chains in Africa.

Dr Dar, in his special address, congratulated FARA for its commendable activities in helping small and marginal farmers involved in sorghum cultivation through SVCDC. He also thanked the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and applauded the efforts of UniBRAIN for their commitment to the development of agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa.

Mr SM Karuppanchetty, Chief Operating Officer, ABI, reiterated that agribusiness incubators serve as an excellent platform to bring together all the stakeholders and develop an agricultural innovation system.

Partners in the Africa AIIC include the African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE), Pan African Agribusiness and Agro Industry Consortium (PanAAC), Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WE CARD), the Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA), and the AIP-ICRISAT under the FARA-UniBRAIN project. ABI-ICRISAT is currently handholding and mentoring six AIICs under FARA-UniBRAIN in Kenya (SVCDC), Uganda (ABP & CURAD), Zambia (AgBIT), Ghana (CCLEAR), and Mali (WAARI).



*Incubatees of the Sorghum Value Chain Development Consortium with partners from FARA-UniBRAIN at the launch of the SVCDC agribusiness incubator in Nairobi, Kenya.*

# News Round-up

## Inauguration of the SVCDC Agribusiness Incubator covered widely



*The story on SVCDC inauguration received a center-spread coverage in the "Daily Nation" a major Kenyan newspaper on March 14, 2014*

## Launch of WAARI Agribusiness Incubator receives wide publicity



*WAARI inauguration received wide press coverage in some of the major newspapers in Mali.*

## UniBRAIN partners review AIIC activities in Zambia

UniBRAIN partners' met at hotel Taj Pamodzi, Lusaka, Zambia during February 12 – 14, 2014 to review the activities of the partners and the AIICs for the period of Oct-Dec 2013 and to discuss on the progress made by six AIICs so far. During the meeting, it was decided that *UniBRAIN week*, a partners meet, would be organised every six months in each UniBRAIN AIIC, where all partners would participate and present their activities.

ABI-ICRISAT has been assigned to coordinate a strategic workshop organised by UniBRAIN on scaling up of its activities in Ethiopia in the month of April 2014 where all the partners and the AIICs would contribute actively. The inputs for the UniBRAIN compendium of technologies were also shared by the CEOs of the AIICs during this meet.

As part of the meet, the participants also visited the Agri-Business Incubation Trust (AgBIT) and interacted with the staff and their clients. They were provided with inputs on incubator operations and management. In a strategic meeting held with *Gilmarth Enterprises*, a client of AgBIT, ABI discussed on the challenges and service requirements of the clients and guided them with the way forward for running their venture successfully. The mentoring support provided by ABI-ICRISAT under the UniBRAIN project was well appreciated by all the partners and AIICs.



*UniBRAIN partners review the activities of the partners and the AIICs during the meet*



*Incubatees of AgBIT display their products*



*Participants of the meet pose for a group picture at M/S Green Patch, the farm of an incubatee of AgBIT in Zambia*

# Old Lake Green Solutions, Kikuyu, Nairobi, Kenya

*A case study from SVCDC, Kenya...*

## Background

OldLake Green Solutions is a start-up company being incubated at the Sorghum Value chain Development Consortium (SVCDC) - one of the value chain based Agri-Business Incubator being established under the UniBRAIN project funded by DANIDA. Old Lake Green Solutions have approached SVCDC for incubation support for their novel business idea of exploring the demand for energy in East African countries by manufacturing highly efficient and cost effective briquettes. The company aims at converting agricultural wastes including sugarcane bagasse, charcoal dust, coffee husk, sorghum straw, wood chippings and saw dust in to briquettes. Briquettes of Old Lake are smokeless and burn with steady and even flame. Heat produced from the briquette is constant and lasts longer. The company also manufactures other energy efficient products like Jikos which are suitable for all the customers including small holds and industries.



### Understanding the incubation Service requirement

- ✓ Facilitate purchase of Briquette making Machinery
- ✓ Funding assistance through banks or partnership
- ✓ Technical consultancy for reducing breakage
- ✓ Branding and marketing assistance-conduct market study
- ✓ Packaging technologies for briquettes



### Old Lake launched at the official launch of SVCDC business incubator





### Technical Support provided to Old Lake



### Floor Plan prepared for Old Lake



### day 5

### Export market at the door steps of Old Lake

- ❖ SVCDC to provide marketing assistance to Old Lake Green Solutions
- ❖ Old Lake Green solutions connected to M/s Muthuvel Carbons, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu for partnership and exports

## Helping African agribusinesses strengthen food value chains

“We are committed to work closely with our partners in Africa to boost the agri and food-processing sectors across the continent through strategic interventions that strengthen value chains, promote food safety, develop innovative products and technologies, facilitate entrepreneurship, and ultimately help the smallholder farmers,” said ICRISAT Director General, Dr William Dar.

The Director General was speaking at the inaugural session of the ‘Development of agribusiness and food processing business incubation centers’ held from 18 February to 1 March, 2014, at the ICRISAT headquarters.

Twenty-four food processing and agribusiness professionals from Africa countries like Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Mozambique, Angola, Cameroon, Ghana and Mali attended the training program organized by ICRISAT through its Agri-Business Incubation (ABI) Program under the Agribusiness and Innovation Platform (AIP).

The activity was part of ABI’s ongoing Food Processing Business Incubation Centre (FPBIC) Project supported by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India (MoFPI, GoI) under the India-Africa Forum Summit-II.

The two week program was designed taking into account the existing ground realities and gaps prevailing in the participating African countries with respect to setting up of food processing business incubators. Participants were involved in dedicated sessions on food biotechnology and nutraceuticals, health and nutrition through modern biotechnology, probiotics and bioactive foods, nutrition research, challenges in development and commercialization of functional foods, combating health and nutrition challenges through a partnership approach, incubator planning operations management, leadership, governance, financial, investments, and client scouting and engagement.

Field visits were also organized to some of the agribusiness incubators under the Network of Indian Agri Business Incubators (NIABI). Participants were also provided with hands on training on management practices for efficiently and profitably managing food business incubators.



Participants of the “Training on development of Agribusiness and Food processing Business Incubation Centres in Africa under IAFS – II” pose for a group photograph, during the valedictory session of this training program.

## Capacity building on food safety and quality for African partners

Creating opportunities for the food processing sector in African countries will promote agribusiness development for the benefit of smallholder farmers. I am seeing the need for the implementation of appropriate food quality standards and enhancing the technical skills of laboratory personnel in order to leverage on the potential of the agribusiness and food processing sector in Africa,” said Dr William D Dar, ICRISAT Director General.

The Director General expressed these views at the inaugural program of the advanced training on “Analytical Techniques and ISO/IEC 17025: 2005 for Food Testing Laboratory Personnel from African Countries” under the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) II initiative.

The capacity building program exposed the participants to laboratory accreditation (ISO/IEC 17025:2005), food safety and regulatory standards, as well as on rules and regulations in food industry and their implications with respect to international trade barriers. A five day hands-on training on different analytical aspects of food testing was also arranged at one of the most reputed ISO17025: 2005 accredited food testing laboratories in India – the National Collateral Management Services Ltd (NCML), Hyderabad. There were 24 participants from across 10 countries of the African continent.

Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Kiran Puri, Joint Secretary (Finance), Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI), Government of India, and the Chief Guest for the occasion, elaborated on the importance of this training program in enhancing food testing capabilities of the respective African countries.

During the recent visits by the ICRISAT team to the African partner countries where the five FTLs are being implemented under IAFS II, it was identified that laboratory accreditation (ISO/IEC 17025:2005), hands on analytical training, trouble shooting, instrument maintenance, and servicing were the areas that need to be strengthened.

As part of the feedback on the training program, Mr Robert Kelly Salati from Zambia said: “The trainers inspired us to think critically. We not only learnt more skills but better ways of thinking. Most of the food testing laboratories in Africa have not been accredited and so this training will be helpful to lead us to changing this. This will help us develop Africa”.



Dr William Dar, DG ICRISAT speaks during the inaugural session of the training program (Left)  
Participants undergo training at the NutriPlus Knowledge (NPK) Program lab at AIP-ICRISAT (Right)



# News & Opportunities

## Call for Concept notes

### USAID - DIV Innovations venture

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the Development Innovation Ventures (DIV) to provide funding for scaling up innovative ideas. This is an opportunity for NGOs from all countries. Applicants can apply at any stage without being prior recipients of DIV funding. Stages are determined by the content of the project, not by the funding required.

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

## Call for Pre-Proposals

### Benefit-sharing Fund

The Benefit-sharing Fund provides financial support to projects with the following priorities:

- i) Information exchange, technology transfer and capacity-building for the implementation of the International Treaty;
- ii) Managing and conserving plant genetic resources for food and agriculture on-farm;
- iii) The sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. The support is open to any governmental or non-governmental organization, including genebanks and research institutions, farmers and farmers' organizations, regional and international organizations based in a developing country that is a Contracting Party to the Treaty.

**Budget:** US\$10 million | **Deadline:** 05 May 2014 - [Click for more details >>](#)

## Events

- 2nd Annual Africa Food Security Conference & Agri-Exhibition, Nairobi Kenya, 14-15 August 2014
- Training program on Analytical techniques used in Nutrition, Food safety and Biosafety from September 7 - 20, 2014 at ICRISAT, Andhra Pradesh, India

## Video

Watch SVCDC present their milestones and achievements in a beautiful video here:

[SVCDC: Milestones & Achievements](#)

WAARI agribusiness incubator inauguration was extensively covered by the media in Mali  
Watch the news clipping here.

[News clip 1](#) | [News clip 2](#)

## Reach Us

### **Global Agri Business Incubation Network's e-newsletter**

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