

Review of first session for Virtual Meeting of West Africa Sweet potato Breeding/Seed Community of Practice

The session was opened with encouraging words by Dr. Marion Quain speaking on behalf of the DG for CSIR, followed by the enthusiasm of Dr. Koussao Some from INERA-Kamoinse from Burkina Faso

Dr. Ted Carey and Dr Reuben Ssali shared the purpose and objectives of the COP and what we need to achieve in these 5 sessions.

Dr Abdullai Jalloh, Director of Research and Innovation for CORAF gave an excellent presentation embedding CORAF's current regional vision, strategy and activities for 23 countries under its mandate. His presentation generated much Q&A, in particular on the need to embed sweetpotato as a national priority crop, that it has been added to the regional catalog, For everyone to fill in the community of experts questionnaire and the opportunity to contribute to the Agri-entrepreneur tv and other communication and marketing strategies.

His presentation was followed by a very persuasive science based presentation by Dr Hugo Campos on the difference operational excellence in breeding can make to effective breeding outcomes

All recordings, presentations and links are available on CIP-COP West Africa MsTeam site in Files and please ask anymore questions or make any comments in the main chat.



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The session was opened with encouraging words by Dr. Marion Quain speaking on behalf of the DG for CSIR, followed by the enthusiasm of Dr. Koussao Some from INERA-Kamoinse from Burkina Faso. The 35 participants were then welcomed by Dr. Ted Carey who emphasized the opportunity created by initiating this joint CoP and the objectives of implementing excellent comparable trials and an integrated regional breeding strategy to embed Sweetpotato into future national breeding programmes. Dr. Reuben Ssali introduced the vision and purpose of the CoP and the detailed structure of these five sessions.

Dr. Abdullai Jalloh, Director of Research and Innovation for CORAF, gave an excellent presentation embedding CORAF's current regional vision and strategy for 23 countries under its mandate, responding to the critical AR4D challenges across the region. He outlined the major achievements and accolades, the strategic and operational plans and key on-going and upcoming initiatives; most importantly the nine crop-specific centres of excellence, with roots and tubers in Ghana. His presentation generated much Q&A, in particular on the need to embed sweetpotato as a national priority crop, that it has been added to the regional catalog, the community of experts questionnaire and the opportunity to contribute to the Agripreneur TV and other communication and marketing strategies. His presentation was followed by a very persuasive science-based presentation by Dr. Hugo Campos on the difference operational excellence in breeding can make to effective breeding outcomes.

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The session was opened with a review of Day one.

Dr. Bishwanath Das then gave an overview of the excellence in breeding program founded as a CGIAR wide platform in 2017 to increase the rate of genetic gains on farmer's fields and deepen the capacity of the National Research institutes.

Dr. Tawanda Mashonganyika then explained the usefulness of cross functional teams creating product profiles aligned to specific trait-based market segments. Tawanda also shared the six processes in the stage gate with Stage '0' being product design.

Dr. Bert de Boeck then gave a detailed presentation on the background to the concepts and importance of the experimental design. He explored the benefits and challenges of different trial types. He raised the importance of designing the trial in SPBase, complying with SOP' and appropriate data analysis.

Dr. Chris Simoes then gave an overview of the the Sweetpotatobase and its different functions.

These were lively questions and answers and after a review the session closed



Review of third session for Virtual Meeting of West Africa Sweetpotato Breeding/Seed Community of Practice

The session was opened with a review of Day Two and was quickly followed with Dr Innocent Nwankwo sharing the proposed trials in Nigeria. Key challenges included representing the Northern areas, contingency planning because of delays in receiving the necessary germplasm from Ghana due to COVID-19 and aligning all design and measurement with the Sweetpotato Data base.

Dr. K. Some then shared the proposed trials in Burkina Faso. Three different relatively secure ecological sites in the main growing areas have been identified. Key issues are identifying the basic and specific traits to be trialed to fit market segments and aligning with the Sweetpotatobase in design and measurement to ensure cross country comparability.

Dr Luka Wanjohi then shared the 5 evolving SOP's covering phenotyping, crossing, NIRS and germplasm data management workflows and genotyping project management and tracking, giving timelines for the full documentation needed to implement these SOP's. The link to the ongoing data management discussion group using Slack is shared in the main MsTeams chat.

Dr. Chiedozie Egesi concluded the session describing an effective cross functional product advancement workshop to identify promising improved clones that can replace popular varieties in the market. Using Cassava as an example, this excellent presentation demonstrated the importance of sharing best practices across the different root crop interventions. There were lively questions and answers and after a review the session closed



The revised agenda for today

Date and Session Name	Time	#	Presentation	Presenter
Wednesday June 3rd Strengthening breeding and seed system linkages	10.00		Re-cap	Sue Canney
	10.05	1	Sweetpotato Digital Catalogue & how to upload information on newly released varieties https://research.cip.cgiar.org/sweetpotato-catalog/cip_sp_catalogue/	Luka Wanjohi
	10.20	2	Country updates on current EGS capacities and linkages to seed value chain actors (Ghana, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Senegal and Sierra Leone)	Country Representatives
	10:35	3	How do we strengthen breeding and seed system linkages?	Break out groups (Sue Canney)
	11.00	4	Plenary feedback	Country participants (tbd)
	11:15	5	Scaling RTB crop variety validation and diffusion using farmer citizen science (TRICOT) in Ghana	T. van Mourik (CIP)
	11:45	5	Wrap up	Sue Canney and M. McEwan
	12:00		End of session	

Day 4 Feedback from the plenary groups

Questions: 3 prioritized ways to strengthen breeding and seed systems linkages, challenges and solutions to the challenges

1. Need for the breeders to incorporate the end user traits and to incorporate them into the new varieties. Main challenge is NARI/ Funding/ PP to get accurate traits.. Costs money and sometimes this funding is not there at the right amount to do a good job. The solution is to advocate for more funding from the institutes and external funding.. The right variety is the 'queen'
2. Farmers' awareness on available recent releases so that they stimulate demand. \$ again a challenge as often only up to release. If people are getting returns from marketing the varieties this will create incentive. Rather than working on a specific crop we need to broaden out so that we broaden with other crops within an RTB 4 year marketing campaign.
3. Creating market demand should be a 'stage-gated' system for variety release and clean up. So that there is multiplication ahead of release, ensure seed system players contribute to PP development, Stagegate 0 so that they are sensitizing the market ahead of time.
4. Integration of the seed system into the Breeding programme and on farm trial stage and that marketing is integrated into normal behavior and workplans need for advertising and promotion.

Review of fourth session for Virtual Meeting of West Africa Sweetpotato Breeding/Seed Community of Practice

The session was opened with a review of Day three and was quickly followed with Luka Wanjohi giving a presentation on how to photograph, record and upload information on newly released varieties on the Sweet potato catalogue.

This was followed with Margaret McEwan giving an in-depth synthesis of the data sent in on the current EGS capacities and linkages to the seed value chain actors from Ghana, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mali and Cote D'Ivoire. This generated much discussion about DVM incomes and the resources and timing for marketing strategies and preparedness.

The 32 participants were then sent into four random breakout groups and asked to prioritise 3 activities that can strengthen the linkages between breeding and seed systems. Key points raised are to ensure that seed systems actors are appropriately represented in the stage gate/product advancement process and Best practices including marketing to be a normal integrated part of people's responsibilities.

Dr. T van Mourik then shared an in-depth view of the TRICOT approach and how measuring readiness to scale up can fit into the ranking based on this large-scale trialing of three randomised varieties across multiple farmers sites. A system that embraces environmental variability through large data sets more than controlling replicability on each site. This presentation generated lively questions in the chat in particular around the comparable costs with demo, M&B and other established trialing technologies and acceptance by release committees.

The session ended with a quick review of the day

