

STRENGTHENING KNOWLEDGE SHARING INITIATIVES ON CROP BIOTECHNOLOGY IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD



THE GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE CENTER ON CROP BIOTECHNOLOGY AND ITS NETWORK OF BIOTECHNOLOGY INFORMATION CENTERS

A major mission of the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) is to foster knowledge-based and transparent decision making on crop biotechnology. It facilitates and supports the sharing of information and experiences among different stakeholders through its Global Knowledge Center on Crop Biotechnology, more popularly known as the KC, which is based at the ISAAA Southeast Asia Center in the Philippines. Complementing its science communication efforts is its network of 25 Biotechnology Information Centers (BICs) and country nodes in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. Together they have gained credibility for playing a significant role in knowledge sharing initiatives and in encouraging a collective voice for crop biotechnology in the global arena.



Our audience includes policy makers, scientists, the academic community, media, farmers, the private sector, consumers, and other stakeholders involved in the agricultural milieu.

The network of Biotechnology Information Centers (BICs) reaches specific local audiences in each of the member countries. Through the multiplier effect of communication, the general public is eventually reached.

The KC and the BICs seek to facilitate informed decision making among developing countries with respect to crop biotechnology. As such it aims to:

- Assist national biotech programs in creating an enabling environment for the safe application of crop biotech.
- Generate, process, and package knowledge on crop biotech.
- Facilitate sharing of knowledge among various stakeholders.
- Develop and validate appropriate science communication modalities.

PUBLICATIONS



ISAAA is probably most associated with its Annual Review of the global status of commercialized biotech crops, which is published as ISAAA Briefs. These reviews are written by ISAAA's Chairman of the Board, Dr. Clive James, and have become the most authoritative single source of information about the status of commercial use of biotech crops globally, and the most-cited reference on the subject. The highlights of the 2010 Review for example are available in 55 languages, and has generated over 2.07 billion impressions (estimated number of people reached by the articles). About 2,415 media stories written in 43 languages in 77 countries were published.

INTERNET-BASED APPLICATIONS



Visitors to the ISAAA website (<http://www.isaaa.org>) seek information on the global status of biotech crops, and download materials for instruction and briefing purposes. Many of the ISAAA publications, including archived materials, are available for downloading in various formats; video series can be viewed by streaming directly on screen, and flash papers (Powerpoint presentations) can be used directly from the site. On-line ordering of publications is likewise possible through the website.

The KC has undertaken an active effort to reach more stakeholders in the developing world through the *Crop Biotech Update* (CBU), a weekly e-newsletter. The CBU summarizes global news with implications for developing countries, research highlights, documents, and announcements of events, and related topics. A Biofuels Supplement comes out every two weeks highlighting major developments in the field. Both newsletters reach over a million subscribers/recipients in 200 countries with the CBU translated into 12 other languages.

Most of the BICs have their respective websites with regularly updated content and materials from the ISAAA website.

PROCESS DOCUMENTATION

The experiences related to the adoption of Bt corn in the Philippines, tissue culture banana in Kenya and Tanzania, Bt cotton in India and China, and biotech papaya in Southeast Asia are captured in video. The BICs also produce their own documentaries on such topics as multi-purpose tree project, Bt cotton in Burkina Faso, and Bt brinjal in India. Institutional videos about ISAAA, Questions and Answers with Dr. Clive James, and a feature on Knowledge, Technology and Alleviation of Poverty are also available online. Many of the videos are being used in instruction, and as springboard for discussion in workshops and seminars.

Complementing the KC's knowledge management function is the generation of "robust" knowledge to contribute to the field of science communication. A handbook was developed to guide BICs on their science communication functions. In addition, a Brief documents experiences on communicating biotechnology by the KC's information network, with an abridged version prepared for easy reading. The latest publication is a book on the communication challenges in crop biotechnology in Asia and Australia.



CAPACITY BUILDING OF STAKEHOLDERS ON BIOTECH ISSUES AND RISK COMMUNICATION

The network conceptualizes and implements workshops for different stakeholders such as policy makers, scientists, regulators, academics, extension workers, media, and farmers. They are updated on biotechnology issues and equipped with skills to communicate effectively to various audiences. Many of the participants have done their own versions of these workshops in their respective countries, gained technical updates, obtained confidence to face media in radio and television, and answer questions for the print media. Study tours are also organized where stakeholders get to visit farmers' biotech fields and research institutions.





BIOTECH INFORMATION CENTERS

- **Regional Centers:** ISAAA AfriCenter
ILRI Campus, Old Naivasha Road, Uthiru, Nairobi 00605 Kenya
ISAAA AmeriCenter
105 Leland Lab, Cornell University, Ithaca 14853 New York, U.S.A.
ISAAA SEAsiaCenter
c/o IRRI, Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines
- **BICs:**

REGION	COUNTRY	HOST INSTITUTION
ASIA	Philippines	SEAMEO Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), Laguna
	Thailand	College of Agriculture, Kasetsart University, Kamphaengsaen, Nakhon Pathom
	Malaysia	Monash University, Petaling Jaya
	Vietnam	AgBiotech Vietnam, Hanoi
	Indonesia	Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Tropical Biology (SEAMEO-BIOTROP), Bogor
	India	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), New Delhi
	Bangladesh	Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh
	Pakistan	University of Karachi, Karachi
	Sri Lanka*	Colombo University, Colombo
	China	Chinese Society of Biotechnology, Beijing
	Japan*	NPO Hokkaido Bioindustry Association, Sapporo
	Korea*	The National Center for GM Crops (NCGC), Suwon
AFRICA	East and Central Africa (c/o Kenya)	ISAAA AfriCenter, International Livestock Research Institute Campus, Nairobi
	Egypt	Agricultural Research Center, Agricultural Genetic Engineering Research Institute (AGERI), Giza
	Francophone Africa (c/o Mali and Burkina Faso)	Institut d'Economie Rurale (IER), Bamako
	South Africa* (node)	AfricaBio, Centurion, Pretoria
EUROPE	Spain*	Ibercaja, Zaragosa
	Russia*	Bioengineering Center, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow
	Bulgaria*	AgroBio Institute, Sofia
	Italy*	Fondazione Bussolera-Branca, Mairano di Casteggio
LATIN AMERICA	Brazil (node)**	Celeres, Uberlandia, Minas Gerais
	Costa Rica*	Instituto Interamericano de Cooperacion para la Agricultura, San Jose
	Peru*	PeruBiotech, Lima
	Honduras*	Pan American School of Agriculture (Zamorano)

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DONORS

ABSP/II/Cornell University • ASARECA – Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa • Bayer CropScience Ag • BioInnovate Program, ILRI • CropLife International • Fondazione Bussolera-Branca, Italy • Ibercaja, Spain • IDRC – International Development Research Center of Canada • Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Pvt. Ltd (Mahyco) • Program for Biosafety Systems /IFPRI • SEAMEO SEARCA Philippines • USAID • USDA • U.S. Soybean Export Council • Vibha Agrotech Pvt. Ltd, India

CONTACT

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