



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ADVANCING 4R NUTRIENT STEWARDSHIP KNOWLEDGE IN SUPPORT OF CROP PRODUCTION INTENSIFICATION IN ETHIOPIA

September 3, 2014, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – A new research initiative was established this month between the International Fertilizer Association (IFA), the International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI), and a network of Ethiopian partners. This initiative will advance 4R Nutrient Stewardship knowledge and practices for crop production intensification within Ethiopia.

IPNI conducts research and development activities in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) via its Nairobi-based regional program Directed by Dr. Shamie Zingore. Dr. Zingore collaborates with various institutions to produce scientific and extension publications and decision support tools that contribute to improved understanding of the role of best fertilizer management practices in crop production intensification in SSA. The main focus is to support sustainable agricultural intensification in Africa by providing direction in plant nutrient management guided by the principles of 4R Nutrient Stewardship, which is defined as applying the right nutrient source, at the right rate, right time, and right place.

IPNI SSA Program will initiate the project for a period of four years, ensuring the time necessary to build human capacity in the target regions and ensure future sustainability of extension messages. The project will support technical staff, on-farm fertilizer trials, field days, training workshops, development and production of extension products, and dissemination of 4R technologies through radio programs.

“We shall use our recent experience gained in successfully building support for maize production intensification in Western Kenya based on the 4R Nutrient Stewardship to apply the concept to the Ethiopian setting,” explains Dr. Zingore. The project will provide valuable support to government programs in Ethiopia to increase fertilizer use and develop site-specific fertilizer products.”

Planned Outputs

1. New agronomic and economic knowledge generated on the impact of 4R components on crop production intensification in high potential maize production zones.
2. Extension agents and farmers in pilot sites trained on implementation of 4R practices.
3. 4R extension pamphlets for smallholder farming systems in SSA developed in English and local language.
4. 4R knowledge and project outputs from the pilot sites disseminated through television, radio and print media.
5. Videos of main project activities and impact of the project in the pilot site.
6. 4R Content developed in form of short messages ‘tips’ and disseminated to farmers.

Key Partnerships - IFA and IPNI is implementing the project in collaboration with the Ethiopian Institute of Agriculture Research (EIAR), Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA), Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture, International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), and International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC).

“This new project has come at an opportune time, as it will provide support to (existing) government programs and will also fill major gaps in information dissemination and training of farmers to improve knowledge of fertilizers and their correct use,” explained Dr. Zebene Mikru, Manager, Soil Testing Centre, Ministry of Agriculture. “I am confident that this initiative will generate important outputs that will contribute to agricultural development in Ethiopia.”

To achieve sustainable increases in crop productivity in SSA, there is need to increase fertilizer use, and support farmers to manage the fertilizers properly to ensure that crops are provided with the correct and adequate nutrients under variable soil fertility conditions.

“The previous pilot research led by IPNI, Ethiopian-led initiatives and policies set to stabilize agricultural growth, and recent improved access to information required to adapt 4R principles within the Ethiopian context are all contributing to a solid support base for the project to build upon, explained Dr. Terry Roberts, President of IPNI.”

“Given IFA’s focus on best fertilizer management practices and supporting increased balanced fertilizer consumption to drive yield gains in sub-Saharan Africa,” Charlotte Hebebrand, Director General of IFA stated, “IFA is delighted to support IPNI’s excellent research and outreach efforts focusing on smallholders in Ethiopia.”

For more background on this project from IPNI, please see <http://ipni.info/IPNI-3369>

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Note to Editors

The International Fertilizer Industry Association (IFA) is a trade association representing the global fertilizer industry, which provides the crop nutrients that allow farmers everywhere to meet the world’s growing food, feed, fiber and bioenergy needs in a sustainable manner. IFA member companies represent all activities related to the production and distribution of every type of fertilizer, their raw materials and intermediates. IFA’s membership also includes organizations involved in agronomic research and training. IFA has some 550 members in about 86 countries.

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