

## ILRI Clippings

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# CGIAR Drylands Research Program sets directions for East and Southern Africa

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This week in Nairobi, the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) hosts a 'Regional Inception Workshop' of the CGIAR Research Program '[Integrated and Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems for Improved Food Security and Livelihoods in Dry Areas](#).' The program is led by the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA).

The dry areas of the developing world occupy about 3 billion hectares and are home to 2.5 billion people: 41% of the earth's land area and more than one-third of its population. About 16% of this population lives in chronic poverty. Drylands also face serious environmental constraints, which are likely to worsen as a result of climate change. Dryland agro-ecosystems include a diverse mix of food, fodder and fiber crops, vegetables, rangeland and pasture species, fruit and fuel-wood trees, medicinal plants, livestock and fish.



This research program is about getting the mix right in order to alleviate poverty, enhance food security and ensure environmental sustainability in dryland agro-ecosystems while enhancing social and gender-equitable development. The overarching challenge is to deliver benefits to the poor and vulnerable, especially women. It will thus focus on target dryland areas/systems, identified by two criteria: (i) those with the deepest endemic poverty and most vulnerable people, often associated with severe natural resource degradation, environmental variability, and social marginalization, and (ii) those with the greatest potential to impact on food security and poverty in the short to medium term.

The program is driven by a conceptual framework in which four Strategic Research Themes (SRTs) cut across the five focus Regions (they represent the steps in the impact pathway).

- SRT1: Approaches and models for strengthening innovation systems, building stakeholder innovation capacity, and linking knowledge to policy action
- SRT2: Reducing vulnerability and managing risk
- SRT3: Sustainable intensification for more productive, profitable and diversified dryland agriculture with well-established linkages to markets
- SRT4: Measuring impacts and cross-regional synthesis

During the proposal development, it was apparent that details of implementation at the Target areas and Site level within each of the five Target Regions, would need to be further developed though “regional inception workshops’ with partners.

The June 2012 workshop has been developed by an interim Interdisciplinary Research Team headed by ILRI, with participants from the World Agroforestry Institute (ICRAF), the **International Water Management Institute (IWMI)** and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT).

The meeting aims to bring together partners working in the target areas in East and Southern Africa to discuss key hypotheses and research questions; to agree on initial sites for activities; and to develop impact pathways and implementation plans.

Expected outcomes of the workshop include:

1. Specific research hypotheses for the action and satellite sites, based upon a problem analysis that identifies the key constraints and challenges.
2. Impact pathway based upon problem analysis, successful interventions, and identified research for development gaps. This pathway will define outcomes, objectives, outputs.
3. Agreement on initial sites in each target area.
4. Initial activities for 3 years proposed in each action and satellite site.
5. Confirmation of partners’ roles.
6. Implementation plan drafted with impact indicators.
7. Additional characterization information.

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