Sustainable intensification of maize-legume cropping systems for food security in eastern and southern Africa (SIMLESA)

Key details

Location
Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania

Duration
Start Jan 2010   **End** Jun 2014

Budget
AUD 21,649,935

Commissioned organisation
International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center

Partners
Agricultural Research and Technical Services; Agricultural Research Council; Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa; Department of Employment; Economic Development and Innovation; Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research; Instituto de Investigacao Agraris de Maocambique; International Crops Research Institute for the Semi Arid Tropics; Kenya Agricultural Research Institute; Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security; Mozambique Agricultural Research Institute; Murdoch University; Queensland Dept of Employment; Economics Development and Innovation

Project Leader
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ACIAR Research Program Manager
Dr Eric Huttner

Program
Crops

Project code
CSE/2009/024

Overview

This program was part of the Australia Food Security Initiative for Africa. It built substantially on completed ACIAR projects in Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. It focused on maize as the main staple and legumes as an important dietary protein source for the rural poor. Combined rainfed maize-legume cropping systems show considerable promise in boosting productivity and helping reverse the decline in soil fertility that is a fundamental cause of low smallholder productivity in the region.

To intensify maize-legume cropping systems in a sustainable way while reducing yield variability requires an integrated approach to the complex production and marketing system for these crops. Through participatory research and development with farmers, extension agencies, non-government organisations (NGOs) and agribusiness along the value chains, the program aimed to improve maize and legume productivity by 30% and to reduce the expected downside yield risk by 30% on approximately 500,000 farms within 10 years.