

N2Africa newsletter – news from East and Central Africa

1. Setting the scene in East and Central Africa: All national staff that will support N2Africa activities have now been hired in East DR Congo, Kenya, and Rwanda. The first two N2Africa field vehicles are in use in DR Congo and Rwanda with a clear N2Africa sticker on both of its front doors (Photograph 1).



Photograph 1: The first N2Africa vehicle on the road in Rwanda.

2. Signing of sub-agreements: With the last contract currently being signed, ISAR, Rwanda, is the last partner to join the N2Africa team, totaling 9 research and development partners in Kenya, Rwanda, and East DR Congo.

3. Establishment and valuation of the first season activities and planning for the September 2010 season: With about 4 weeks to go after the Nairobi launching meeting and the first growing season in the East and Central African region, crash planning sessions were organized in Kenya, Rwanda, and East DR Congo to start field work, that have resulted in the installation of 5 different protocols with over 2,000 farmers across the region (Photograph 2 and 3). Planning for the upcoming September 2010 season has also been completed with the development of 6 new protocols.



Photograph 2: Adaptive research campaign in Western Kenya.



Photograph 3: Demo-kits used for the demonstration trials in Western Kenya.

4. The first responses! Responses to inoculation were visible in a substantial proportion of the soybean plots across all countries (Photograph 4) while visible responses of bush and climbing beans to inoculation were scanty at best. In the meantime, country planning meetings have been held in each of the countries in preparation of the September 2010 growing season where we are targeting to work with 6,000 households. In summary, we are on track!



Photograph 4: Soybean response to inoculation under farmer conditions in DR Congo.

5. Filming in the Great Lakes: A film crew visited various N2Africa and related CIALCA activities in East DR Congo, Rwanda, and Kenya and shot about 26 hours of footage.

6. The first impact: After seeing the response of soybean to inoculants, COCOF in Rwanda requested to have access to inoculants for 16 hectares of soybean production. COCOF is working with over 3,000 female farmers in Kamonyi district of Rwanda. Farmers in upland western Kenya requested access to climbing bean and those in lowland western Kenya requested seed from improved bush beans.