

DM2009 Project Summary

Project Number: 3959 Booth Number: 46

Innovative Pilot Scheme Would Match Seeds to the Needs of Women Farmers

COUNTRY: Ethiopia

ORGANIZATION: Bioversity International

FUNDING REQUEST: \$200,000

OBJECTIVE: To develop an innovative, low-cost strategy for managing risks to agricultural systems posed by the adverse effects of climate change through the use of locally adapted crop varieties in order to protect the lives and livelihoods of at least 200 vulnerable women farmers at two target sites. The project seeks to impact development by ensuring vulnerable farmers access to better-adapted varieties of vital food crops to mitigate climate-change risks to food security.

RATIONALE: Women farmers in Ethiopia are the primary seed custodians who must confront significant climate uncertainty every year and who regularly face food shortages as crops fail. Farmers employ locally available and indigenous varieties to hedge their bets. While this constitutes a valid adaptive strategy to confront climate variability, locally available varieties may no longer be sufficient. Communities need to look further than their neighbors' fields for the best-adapted seeds. Climate change is generating the need to redistribute crop varieties, achievable through the re-release of materials from the National Genebank and an evaluation system that has local women selecting the best available seeds. This process will contribute to short- and long-term adaptation systems to confront climate change in Ethiopia's marginal areas and prevent women farmers from falling deeper into poverty.

INNOVATION: This project provides a unique framework for combining an improved understanding of climate change scenarios in Ethiopia and available crop-diversity information from a range of sources (including genebanks) with farmers' own experience, indigenous knowledge, and traditional adaptation strategies.

CONTACT: Mohammad Ehsan Dulloo

e.dulloo@cgiar.org

www.bioversityinternational.org