

## SEMIs Phase I Year 2011 Report

### Executive Summary

The Seed Enterprise management Institute (SEMIs) project was started in February 2010. The project is based at the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS), University of Nairobi (UON) and is funded by Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). It was started as a way of providing much needed capacity, especially with regard to training, to the seed industry in sub-Saharan Africa.

One of the main objectives of SEMIs is to help seed companies in Africa produce more seed. A major challenge for seed companies all over Africa, apart from capital is knowledge- knowledge on how to produce, process, market and maintain quality of seed, and how to go about the intricacies of seed business and make a seed enterprise profitable. The SEMIs short courses on seed production, seed drying, processing and storage, seed marketing, seed business management and seed quality assurance and seed enterprise quality management were designed to furnish seed company personnel with knowledge on these important areas.

In the second year of the project, over 130 seed company personnel from over 40 different seed companies and 14 countries received training on the different aspects of seed in the seed value chain. The second year also saw the entry of two new countries in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Many of the seed companies whose personnel have received training here at SEMIs are small to medium enterprises with some located in very remote areas in their countries. Nevertheless, they are providing high quality seed to African farmers and in the process driving the Green Revolution in Africa

Twenty seven participants from twenty seven seed companies and 13 African countries received training on seed production. Dr. John MacRobert from CIMMYT and Dr. Kiarie Njoroge from CAVS with help from other personnel from CAVS, KARI and KEPHIS, were the main facilitators. For seed processing, drying and storage, a total of 28 seed company personnel from 28 seed companies received training on how to process, dry and store seed. Dr. Yuan Shyy from Iowa State University and Dr. Ayub Gitau from CAVS were the main facilitators.

The course on seed business management had 26 participants from 26 seed companies and 13 African countries. The participants in this course are mainly Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) who make the hard decisions in the seed company and ensuring sustainability and profitability. Aline O'Connor Funk, a consultant with AGRA and the Gates foundation and Professor Evans Aosa from the School of business were the coordinators of the course. Other facilitators were mainly drawn from the School of business, while Dr. Julius Kipng'etich, the director of the Kenya wildlife Service was invited as a guest speaker. Seed marketing had a total of 25 seed company personnel from 25 seed companies and 14 countries. Aline O'Connor Funk and Dr. Justus Munyoki from the school of business, with help from other staff at the school of Business and CAVS, were the coordinators of the course. The last course, seed quality assurance and seed enterprise quality management had a total of 27 seed company personnel from 27 seed companies and 12 African countries. The main facilitators, with help from UoN and KEPHIS staff, and other stakeholders were Dr. Mike Stahr and Dr. Joe Cortes from ISU and Dr. James Muthomi from CAVS.

Apart from training, SEMIs is involved in production of breeders' seed for beans. Currently, the project is producing seed of four bean varieties bred by scientists at UON. This particular project will go a long way in facilitating acquisition of improved bean varieties by small-holder farmers in Kenya.

As the third year of the project get underway beginning February 2012, over 150 seed company personnel from all over Africa are envisaged to be trained in the short courses. We hope to upscale production of breeders' seed of beans to at least 10 tonnes this year. The SEMIs seed laboratory and seed processing unit that is to be put up at the field station at CAVS is expected to be up and running by November 2012. We hope that the seed laboratory and processing unit will provide the crucial experiential training on seed systems that participants need in their seed companies. This, together with the short course trainings will equip the participants with the knowledge they require and put them in good stead to upscale seed production not only in their respective seed companies but in the whole of Africa.