An international research partnership for wheat improvement

OECD workshop, Paris

Hélène Lucas, February 26, 2016
An international research partnership for wheat improvement

- A framework to identify synergies and facilitate collaborations for wheat improvement at the international level

- Created in 2011 following endorsement by G20 Agriculture Ministries to improve food security
Why Wheat?

- The world’s **most widely grown staple crop**

- Provides **20% of all calories and 20% of all protein** in developing and developed countries

**but**

- Wheat production did not always meet demand in past years

- Demand will increase by **60% in 2050/2010**, while yields are stagnating and resources are declining

- Investment in wheat R&D is **disproportionally low** given the important of the crop
Wheat Initiative Vision and Mission

- **Vision:** a vibrant global wheat research community sharing resources, capabilities, data and ideas to improve wheat land productivity, quality and sustainable production.

- **Mission:** develop a global Strategic Research Agenda and support its implementation through **coordinated** actions, knowledge and resource sharing and efficient investment.
All countries and companies welcome!

16 countries, 9 private companies, 2 CGIAR Centres
Facilitating delivery by leveraging synergies and collaborations
From a Vision Document to a Strategic Research Agenda

2013

An international vision for wheat improvement

May 2013

www.wheatinitiative.org

2015

Strategic Research Agenda

July 2015

www.wheatinitiative.org
The Strategic Research Agenda

Wheat Initiative SRA themes

1 - INCREASE WHEAT YIELD POTENTIAL

2 - PROTECT YIELD
  • Controlling wheat diseases and pests
  • Improving wheat tolerance to abiotic stress

3 - PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT AND INCREASE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF WHEAT PRODUCTION SYSTEMS
  • Nutrient use efficiency
  • Agronomy and crop management

4 - ENSURING THE SUPPLY OF HIGH QUALITY, SAFE WHEAT PRODUCTS

5 - ENABLING TECHNOLOGIES AND-shared resources

6 - KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND EDUCATION

- Challenges and aspirations
- Research Needs
- Priority actions
First benefits

- Building momentum by stimulating debate and discussion
  - More focused support of wheat research at national level
  - Better understanding of undergoing international wheat research

- Coordination of wheat research, sharing efforts and resources
  - Towards a Wheat dedicated information system for scientific data
  - International Wheat Yield Partnership
  - Support to the wheat genome reference sequence
Challenges for SRA implementation - 1

- Build trust to avoid competition
- Engagement and long term commitment
- Different culture, language and structures
- Proliferation of global initiatives for research programming /delivering
  - A lot of overlaps
    - Confusion of activities covered by each initiative
    - Governance issues
    - Multiplication of membership fees
  - Reorientation of international funds towards development (importance of fundamental and applied research in agriculture)
  - No transnational funding mechanisms
    - For coordination
    - For joint calls
    - Importance of bringing together funding agencies (and private partners)
Challenges for SRA implementation - 2

- **Complex landscape for scientists (and others)**
  - Avoid overlap with other initiatives
  - Avoid multiplicity of funding sources

- **Expectations => responsibilities**
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