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# Grow more with less: adaptation, validation and promotion of SRI in the Americas as a response to climate change

A consortium of partners including the Dominican Institute of Agricultural and Forestry Research (IDIAF), the Dominican Council of Agricultural and Forestry Research (CONIAF), the National Federation of Rice Producers (FEDEARROZ-FNA) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), will be executing a project to validate the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in the Dominican Republic and Colombia with financial support from the Regional Fund for Agricultural Technology (FONTAGRO).

SRI is an innovation practiced by 9.5 million producers on over 3.4 million hectares in 50 countries innovation. Instead of a predetermined technological package, SRI is utilizes flexible practices based on four fundamental principles:

- ☐ Favor early and healthy plant establishment
- ☐ Minimize plant competition
- ☐ Build fertile soils rich in organic matter and soil biota
- ☐ Manage water carefully, avoid flooding and water stress, for ideal plant development

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the principles of SICA have been tested with positive results in several countries. However many of these initial efforts have not been properly monitored, evaluated and documented. These initial experiences, have however, identified high cost of labor required for transplanting individual seedlings as a challenge for scaling SRI in the hemisphere.

This two year project will validate SRI in Dominican Republic and Colombia to help reduce the vulnerability of small rice farmers to climate change.

The project is being implemented under FONTAGRO's 2014 Call for Proposals: "Innovation for the Adaptation of Family Agriculture to Climate Change in Latin America and the Caribbean." Supported by FONTAGRO and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the call supports innovation platforms and coordination mechanisms that foster competitiveness and sustainability.

SRI Plots in the Dominican Republic. Photos: Juan Arthur, IICA.

**Specific objectives:**

1. Validate and document the effectiveness of SRI for rice-producing families and adapt then practices to the local context, applying a technically rigorous methodology in Colombia and the Dominican Republic
2. Identify an effective way to reduce the high costs of labor in SRI systems through mechanization.
3. Increase the knowledge and skills of researchers, technicians and rice producers on SRI principles, practices and benefits.

The project's technical and operational strategy is based on three activities: a) validate the system in the two countries through the implementation of demonstration and control plots, b) adapt the implementation of the principles of SRI to the local context, and c) train researchers, technicians and producers in its use. The project will identify appropriate machinery to support the transplantation and weeding in SRI plots, evaluate their performance in the field.

The project will lay the foundations of the successful dissemination of this innovative system with multidimensional - social, economic and environmental - benefits, which will increase the resilience of small rice producers to climate change while strengthening their food security.

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