

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Horticulture

Our global research network works with and promotes local leadership to advance horticulture and social innovations, empowering smallholder farmers to earn more income while better nourishing their communities.

Why growing fruits and vegetables matters

THE PROMISE OF HORTICULTURE FOR EQUITY AND EMPOWERMENT



What horticulture can do

Improving livelihoods — through higher profits and diversified, nutrient-rich diets — is a major goal of the Horticulture Innovation Lab research efforts around the world.

The Global Horticulture Assessment, an in-depth, collaborative, global analysis identified these major opportunities and challenges for horticulture development.

Diversify diets

Horticulture — growing fruits and vegetables — provides critical nutrients for a balanced diet. Diets low in fruits and vegetables contribute significantly to some of the world's most widespread and debilitating nutrient-related disorders.

Increase incomes

Farmers growing high-value crops, such as fruits, vegetables, flowers or herbs, consistently earn more than those growing other commodities. Horticulture can be an engine for agricultural and economic diversification.

What the horticulture sector needs

Gender equity, technological innovation, and information access are critical themes in all projects of the Horticulture Innovation Lab.

Gender equity

Vegetables, fruits and cut flowers are often grown and marketed by women, but women often have less access to markets, land, inputs and education. Addressing these constraints places women growers on the path to increasing productivity and expanding horticultural markets.

Technological and social innovation

Investment in innovation is necessary to harness opportunities in smallholder horticulture systems. From production to postharvest, to social empowerment, novel ideas will support more efficient food systems.

Access to information and research capacity

Commercial success in horticulture depends on locally adapted research and innovation, such as improved cultivars and seeds, management tools, market knowledge and effective postharvest practices. Sustained horticultural growth requires access to reliable information, a well trained workforce and local capacity to conduct both original and adaptive research.



OUR WORK ALONG THE HORTICULTURE VALUE CHAIN

Collaborating across borders for research

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Horticulture is one of 20 Feed the Future Innovation Labs that leverage U.S. university research to advance agricultural science and reduce poverty. The University of California, Davis currently leads three of the nation's Feed the Future Innovation Labs, each funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Since 2009

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Horticulture has supported collaborations involving more than 200 organizations and universities on projects for smallholder farmers around the world. Since its inception in 2009, the Horticulture Innovation Lab has invested \$55 million in agricultural research, training more than 38,000 individuals in 30 countries, including over 14,000 farmers who improved their farming practices, and ultimately, enhanced their livelihoods and the resilience of their community.

All research projects span the horticultural value chain, with the majority led by locally-based organizations within focus-regions in Africa, Asia or Central America, aligning with the U.S. government's Feed the Future global food security initiative.

Our Priorities

- Local leadership
- Increase access and consumption of nutritious foods
- Equity and inclusion in research, including women, youth, and other marginalized groups
- Holistic systems work across regional value chains
- Support fruit and vegetable food systems with potential to improve livelihoods
- Emphasis on engagement with Minority Serving Institutions

Critical Engagement Projects

Critical Engagement Projects are high-priority research projects of value to all four regions. The lessons learned in

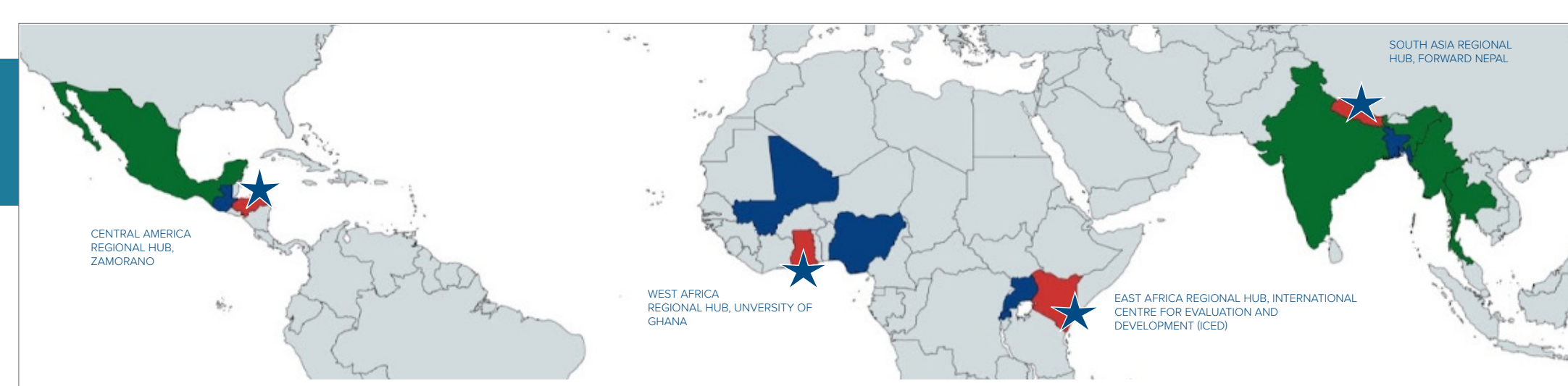
these two targeted projects will be distributed and shared for incorporation into all of the regional projects and include:

- Engaging and understanding informal mid-stream actors in the horticulture sector in Nigeria and Rwanda, in collaboration with Wageningen Economic Research Institute
- Determining the financial, nutritional, and social trade-offs between short and long horticulture value chains in Kenya, in collaboration with GROOTS Kenya and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

Regional Projects

Over the next three years, the Horticulture Innovation Lab will manage 12 projects over four regions. These projects will focus on:

- Improving pre-/post-harvest management to reduce harvest losses and enhancing marketing and market access of vegetables in East Africa - in collaboration with International Centre for Evaluation and Development, Kenya Agriculture Livestock and Research Organization, Muni University, University of Nairobi, and North Carolina State University
- Improving the affordability and availability of healthy diets through African indigenous fruits and vegetables and school gardens in West Africa - in collaboration with CSIR; Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa; Obafemi Awolowo University; University of Ghana; University of Sciences, of Techniques and Technologies of Bamako; Utah State University; Young Professionals for Agricultural Development; and World Vegetable Center
- Developing appropriate technologies for climate smart agriculture for smallholder farmers in Honduras and Guatemala - in collaboration with Acceso Organization, Rafael Landivar University, Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, and Zamorano University
- Increasing urban and peri-urban production, reducing soil-borne pathogen impact, and engaging youth in production systems in Nepal and Bangladesh - in collaboration with Agricultural Forestry University Nepal, Bangladesh Agriculture University, FORWARD Nepal, Nepal Agricultural Research Council, and Welthungerhilfe



REGIONAL HUBS CONNECTING FOUR CONTINENTS ACROSS THE GLOBE

Regionally led, globally supported

The Horticulture Innovation Lab has four Regional Hubs spread across three continents, bringing together key stakeholders for horticultural development activities in the focus-regions of East and West Africa, Central America and South Asia.

The four Regional Hub management teams are based at universities and educational institutions, including International Centre for Evaluation and Development in Nairobi; University of Ghana in Accra; the Panamerican Agricultural School, Zamorano, in Tegucigalpa; and FORWARD Nepal in Kathmandu.

Regional Hubs conduct research, build networks, and serve as contacts for local organizations and USAID Missions, responsible for in-country management of projects and Principal Investigator (PI) support.

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Engaging graduate students in development



The Horticulture Innovation Lab Trellis Fellowship Fund connects U.S.-based graduate students with in-country organizations to conduct collaborative research.

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) leads the implementation of the Trellis Fellowship program, annually selecting graduate students from 1890 Land Grant Universities in the U.S. These students contribute approximately 100 hours a year to research activities both remotely, and on-the-ground in-country, spending two-weeks time in research locations.

Through this program, new connections and collaborative partnerships are formed between in-country graduate students, local stakeholders, and community members.



SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Creating inclusive and empowering systems

GenderUp is a tool developed in partnership with the Alliance of Biodiversity International & CIAT and Wageningen University of Research, to support project and research teams in scaling agricultural innovations in a gender responsible way.

The tool methodically and intentionally guides teams in a series of workshops to:

- Identify gender and other relevant diversity among innovation users for more successful and inclusive scaling of agricultural innovations

- Improve their scaling strategy by anticipating unintended negative consequences for different groups in society

This method facilitates technologies to scale in a manner that enables adoption by women, without reinforcing marginalizing social forces.



ABOUT US

The Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Horticulture, also known as the Horticulture Innovation Lab, is managed by a team at the University of California, Davis, in the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, under the Department of Plant Sciences.

Funding for the Horticulture Innovation Lab is provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development, as part of the Feed the Future global hunger and food security initiative.

Dr. Erin J. McGuire is the Director of the Horticulture Innovation Lab.



OUR GLOBAL NETWORK



The Horticulture Innovation Lab Consortium consists of global leaders in horticulture, agronomics, agri-sociology, agribusiness and agri-policy. Consortium partners include Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, World Vegetable Center, Texas A&M Borlaug Institute, and Michigan State University.

Consortium Specialists include Dr. Christine Stewart at the Institute of Global Nutrition at UC Davis (Nutrition and Food Safety), Hilary Proctor at Making Cents International (Youth Opportunities), and Dr. Janelle Larson at Penn State University (Gender Equality, Equity, and Participation).

Consortium Scaling Partners include Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture and International Fertilizer Development Center.

Contact us



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