



## PRESS RELEASE

### PROJECT ON CAPACITY STRENGTHENING FOR THE SAFE MANAGEMENT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY IN SUB-SAHARA AFRICA (SABIMA)

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The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and The Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture (SFSA) have signed an agreement to strengthen the capacity for safe biotechnology management in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is a 3-year project (2009-2011) for a total investment of \$1,265,565 to be managed by FARA and implemented by the Sub-Regional Organisations (SROs) and the National Agricultural Research System (NARS) in six countries in Sub-Saharan Africa: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and Malawi.

***The purpose of the SABIMA Programme is to strengthen Africa's capacity in sound biotechnology management for enhanced food security.***

The specific objectives are to:

- Update information on the current status of agricultural biotechnology and biosafety in the six countries in Africa. This will include a database of human resources, laboratory infrastructure and research, development and technology transfer activities as well as biosafety legislation and stage of implementation.

- Identify the capacity building gaps in these countries and the modalities for intervention.
- Provide training in stewardship in FARA, the Sub-Regional Organisations (SROs) and the National Agricultural Research System (NARS) of the selected countries.
- Identify and train stewardship leaders in FARA, the SROs and focal persons/champions in stewardship in selected countries, and advocate and promote national buy-in in biotechnology access and use.

The project beneficiaries will be the SROs, NARS, FARA itself, policy makers, farmers, seed companies and consumers.

Mrs. Lucy Muchoki, a Board Member of FARA who signed the agreement on behalf of Dr. Monty Jones remarked that **“the project stewardship capacity that will be developed will underpin future initiatives for the proper deployment of proprietary biotechnology in the selected countries. The beneficiary countries will serve as mentors for sister countries in their respective sub-regions for the safe deployment of modern biotechnology”**.

Dr. Marco Feroni, the Executive Director of SFSA remarked that his organization **“was pleased to be associated with FARA’s biotechnology and biosafety policy platform goals that seek to enhance the capacity of African countries to deploy modern biotechnology safely for the enhancement of agricultural production and poverty reduction”**.

FARA is a public organization with head office in Accra, Ghana, that is committed to the increase in agricultural production and poverty reduction through the implementation of the AU-NEPAD Comprehensive Africa’s Agricultural Productivity (CAADP) Pillar IV which address research, technology dissemination and adoption. **FARA’s Mission is to create broad-based improvements in agricultural productivity, competitiveness and markets by supporting the SROs in strengthening Africa’s capacity for agricultural innovation.** FARA is implementing the project as a component of its African Biotechnology Biosafety Policy Platform (ABBPP).

SFSA is a non-profit organization based in Switzerland whose **Mission is to create value for resource-poor small farmers in developing countries through innovation in sustainable agriculture and the activation of value chains.** The SFSA’s two-pronged approach to improve livelihoods is raising agricultural productivity and linking farmers to markets.