



BRIEF
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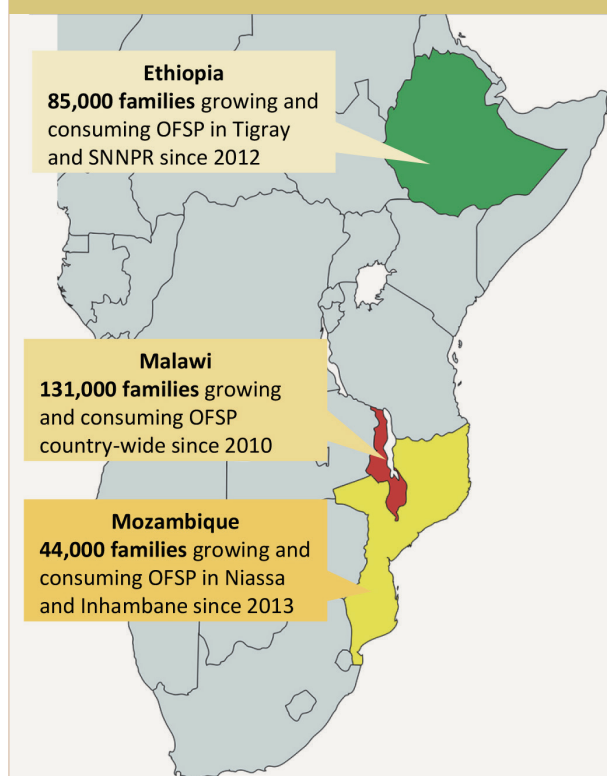
Irish Aid-CIP Partnership: Rooting out hunger and malnutrition in Africa with nutritious sweetpotato

Nourishing people—a solid investment

Irish Aid has invested about €10.5 million since 2010 in the development and delivery of biofortified orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) interventions, managed by the International Potato Center in Ethiopia, Malawi, and Mozambique. This support has enabled more than 260,000 families—all with at least one child under 5 years and 30% headed by women—produce and consume more nutritious OFSP foods, improving their diets, nutritional outcomes, food security and wellbeing. In addition, through farmer-to-farmer diffusion of technologies, a further estimated 540,000 families in the same communities and districts have adopted OFSP and improved agronomic and dietary practices. For each EUR 37 invested by Irish Aid, CIP has directly helped one family of five improve their farming practices and diets and indirectly benefitted two other families. This cost has consistently come down over the years as CIP's operations and partnerships have become more effective.

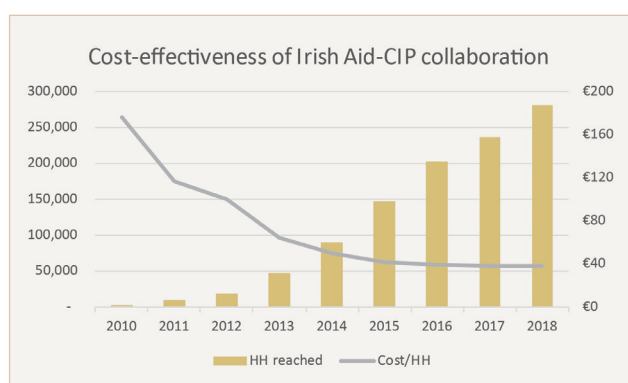


Irish Aid - CIP Partnership: Footprint in Africa



Joining up with multilateral support

Irish Aid's investment has strategically contributed to multilateral investments and leveraged additional bilateral support for CIP-led nutrition-sensitive agricultural initiatives. Since 2010, Irish Aid's catalytic support has helped CIP leverage about EUR 150 million for its sweetpotato program from various multi- and bi-lateral donors¹. At key program country (KPC) level, CIP and Irish Aid-convened multi-stakeholder fora have raised the profile of agricultural development and nutrition. Irish Aid's contribution—particularly through its unrestricted funds—has enabled the development of catalytic nutrition-sensitive agriculture partnerships across the agriculture and health sectors in KPCs and through global coalitions—involving research, civil society, public policy and private sector organizations.



Catalytic role

CIP has focused Irish Aid support on 'catalytic moments' in our research and development strategy where improved technologies, new knowledge and better policies could trigger sustained change benefiting millions of poor families. The implementation of this approach involves participatory 'learning loops' starting with self-analysis of system weaknesses and leverage points, design of structured interventions, and periodic reviews and analyses of progress and constraints. This support has strengthened science outputs and impacts of CIP's partnerships with national agricultural research systems (NARS) in all major research areas from breeding to consumption to policy.



Table 1. Irish Aid catalytic role for CIP's research and development strategy

Research area	Focus of Irish Aid support	System strengthening impact
Breeding and crop improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity development and advanced training of NARS for biofortification Regional technology exchange 	Improved competencies and processes for accelerated development and release of climate-resilient biofortified sweetpotato varieties
Production, input and output markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public-private partnerships and development of quality standards for seed systems Cascading of technical training to farmers through extension agencies Coordination of large dissemination initiatives by governments and civil society 	Enhanced access to quality inputs and knowledge by smallholder farmers through improved and coordinated delivery of products and services
Household consumption and food processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe and nutritious food preparation and storage practices in vulnerable households Nutrition education and counselling approaches to support maternal and child nutrition 	Enhanced and coordinated capacity of agriculture and health extension services to support vulnerable households in maternal and child nutrition
Policy and knowledge management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and monitoring of sweetpotato production by local government Space for nutrition-sensitive agriculture through multi-stakeholder fora Regional and global knowledge exchange 	Improved accountability and technical capacity for nutrition-sensitive agriculture planning and delivery by government and multi-stakeholder initiatives

1. The multilateral donors include the African Development Bank, the European Union and the World Bank; the bilateral donors include the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Department for International Development (DFID) and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), as well as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF).



CIP-Irish partnership to make systems work for vulnerable populations

CIP drives the introduction and adoption of improved technologies and practices by helping the public and private sector deliver the benefits of new agricultural research outputs to vulnerable populations. Milestones in the Irish Aid-CIP partnership in the three KPCs exemplify this approach.

Malawi: The Root and Tuber Crops Development Trust (RTCDT), initiated through an Irish Aid-CIP project, convenes government, civil society, research

and private sector stakeholders to discuss policy and coordinate service delivery to the smallholder farming sector. The Trust is now regularly consulted by the government in policy and investment decisions affecting the roots and tuber sector, and it acts as a forum for enhanced coordination among members. It has put nutrition-sensitive agriculture development into action in Malawi.

Ethiopia: The Bureaus of Agriculture (BoA) and Health (BoH) are key mandated institutions to provide nutrition related services to all Ethiopians. CIP's partnership with BoA and BoH evolved from local project collaboration six years ago to the full institutionalization of OFSP and nutrition-related education into the curricula of the main provincial training institutes of both ministries. Moving

away from the direct training of farmers and extension agents, CIP supports agricultural technical and vocational education training centers and health colleges improve their training of all extension staff and cascade their knowledge and technologies down to local farmer training centers and health centers. This partnership demonstrates how nutrition-sensitive agriculture can be integrated into the work of national institutions.

Mozambique: Provincial government authorities are instrumental in the delivery of services to smallholder farm households. With Irish Aid support, CIP has been working in Niassa Province since 2013 to strengthen local government capacity for cross-sectoral planning, and implementation and monitoring support of nutrition-sensitive agricultural initiatives. OFSP provided an ideal rallying point for both agriculture and maternal and child health services to coordinate their programs, including important linkages with civil society nutrition initiatives.



This government-led partnership has reached more than 30,000 households to date and CIP has begun a similar project with Inhambane Province authorities. Embedding agricultural research within this local government context, strengthens accountability and the capacity for demand-led agricultural development.

Future focus

1. OFSP for all:

Working through mandated institutions and civil society platforms, CIP will seek to establish OFSP as a universally accessible crop for smallholders in Ethiopia, Malawi, and Mozambique with a potential expansion to Sierra Leone and other Irish Aid KPCs. Lessons from Malawi suggest that country-wide coordination and coverage is feasible, and Ethiopia and Mozambique have shown how provincial level institutions can lead the promotion of nutrition-sensitive agriculture across sectors. Utilizing the continuous pipeline of new OFSP varieties, including those rich in iron, CIP expects to reach two million-plus additional households across Irish Aid's KPCs within the next five years.

2. Meeting the climate challenge:

Climate change has increased the demand for climate-smart OFSP varieties and CIP is responding on two strategic levels. We systematically evaluate all breeding populations in our regional sweetpotato platforms for key heat and drought tolerance traits.



Together with advanced training, we will help build long-term capacity among NARS to respond more quickly and effectively to changing agro-ecologies. Second, we already evaluate promising varieties in new vulnerable environments such as Afar in Ethiopia. CIP, NARS scientists and farmers will develop and apply methodologies for the selection of resilient OFSP varieties and work to improve climate-smart production systems. We plan to produce a list of proven climate-smart OFSP varieties for each KPC to meet the main climate challenges of importance to the poor.

3. Leveraging private sector investment:

To date, private sector investment in OFSP in the KPCs has been very limited. Production continues to be led by smallholders and incentives for commercial investments have not been evident. But with demand in orange roots in the food processing industry increasing in Ethiopia, Malawi, and Mozambique, CIP will work with selected commercial food processors—some already current collaborators—to establish sustainable supply chains for OFSP roots from smallholder farmers able to expand production beyond household needs. Advances in processing and packaging technologies make it feasible for small rural enterprises to manufacture high quality OFSP puree as an intermediary product and ingredient in final commercial processing. CIP will work with commercial partners to capitalize on this opportunity for developing sustainable, inclusive OFSP value chains driven by private sector investments and creating income opportunities male and female smallholder farmers.

4. Fostering global learning:

As an international research center, CIP has an important role in fostering knowledge exchange and dialogue across countries and regions addressing malnutrition-related challenges. CIP will further emphasize this role by facilitating regular regional learning events between partners from KPCs and linking them to international stakeholders like the Irish Potato Coalition and CGIAR platforms concerned with climate, markets and nutrition. While initially focusing on sweetpotato as learning examples, the scope of dialogue will be expanded to nutrition-sensitive agriculture more broadly to utilize learning from other biofortified crops and nutrition initiatives in the food industry. We expect to hold at least one regional event in Africa and one global event annually, where possible, integrating with other high impact fora on nutrition.

