



# NEWS . . . . .

**Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management  
Collaborative Research Support Program**

## September 2005

The SANREM CRSP project promotes stakeholder empowerment and improved livelihoods through knowledge-based sustainable agriculture and natural resource management systems. Copyright 2005.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [Message From Dr. S.K. De Datta, Administrative PI For SANREM CRSP](#)
- [Restoring Forest for Madagascar](#)
- [Traditional Landraces Being Repatriated to South American Villages](#)
- [First Board Meeting of SANREM CRSP Produces POP Manual](#)
- [Message From the Program Director, Theo Dillaha](#)
- [Mark Your Calendars: Biodiversity Conservation in Agriculture Symposium](#)

### Information for Long-Term Research Award Applicants

Have a question concerning Long-Term Research Applications you are preparing? We now have a site where we post responses to the questions we are receiving. The link is: [http://www.oired.vt.edu/sanremcrsp/LTR\\_FAQs.htm](http://www.oired.vt.edu/sanremcrsp/LTR_FAQs.htm).

### NEWS FROM M.E.

Thirty-four teams are finalizing their application for Long-Term Research Applications, which are due September 30. The Management Entity is responding to many question as they put finishing touches on their applications. Selection of projects by a review committee is expected by the end of the year.



The SANREM CRSP Management Entity at Virginia Tech is putting the finishing touches on the work plan for year 2 of the CRSP. Look for it soon on the Website.

SANREM Research Briefs can be found at <http://www.oired.vt.edu/sanremcrsp/rbrief.htm>. Our first brief, “Developing Social Infrastructure for Effective NRM,” has just been released.



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<http://www.oired.vt.edu/sanremcrsp/>



VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE  
AND STATE UNIVERSITY

## RESTORING FORESTS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF MADAGASCAR

Late last year, Madagascar President Ravolomanana’s helicopter crossed a forested corridor between two of Madagascar’s National Parks. The President, a staunch ecologist in a country that has publicly declared that it will lead African nations in environmental protection by tripling its protected areas from 1.7 to 6 million hectares by 2008, noticed significant environmental damage caused by clearcutting and road construction in 51 hectares in the Didy National Forest.



**An abandoned pile of logs in the clearcut protected area of Madagascar.**

It was clear to the President that something must be done. Since these corridors provide critical biodiversity-supporting pathways between National Parks, President Ravolomanana immediately ordered the Malaysian timber company responsible for the destruction to cease its work. He then called on his Minister of the Environment to have the damage assessed and determine the potential and methods for regrowth or restoration of the forest corridor.

Meanwhile, Principal Investigator James Fraser and co-PI Sarah Karpanty, both of Virginia Tech, and co-PI Patricia C. Wright of Stony Brook University were in Madagascar doing preliminary work to submit an application for a

long-term SANREM research award. At the bequest of the Malagasy Minister of the Environment, they were asked by the local USAID mission to do a rapid assessment of the damage done to the Didy forest and to make recommendations for regeneration of the area.

“The country of Madagascar is very committed to the environment, and the request came as a complete surprise,” said Karpanty. “The clearcutting and road caused excessive erosion, loss of habitat for a variety of wildlife, damage to the watershed, and other problems.” Many of these problems also triggered secondary effects, like the siltation of rice fields downstream, a reduction of biological diversity, and the introduction of extremely invasive, non-native plants.

While the government had a preliminary plan of replanting 20,000 trees in the area, the SANREM team report recommended that Madagascar replant 56,000 trees covering the entire area of direct damage. In addition they recommended establishing experimental plots, and a five-year research plan to address other issues of concern including soil stability, hydrology and aquatic ecology, terrestrial vertebrate biodiversity, invasive species management and experimentation on the logistical constraints of natural regeneration versus active restoration. If possible, the team recommends the government also establish a long-term maintenance plan to cover the next 30 years.



**Workers who assisted the SANREM team**



**MESSAGE FROM DR. S. K. DE DATTA,  
ADMINISTRATIVE PI FOR SANREM CRSP,  
ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND  
DIRECTOR OF OIRED AT VIRGINIA TECH**

We at Virginia Tech feel extremely fortunate and very pleased to have won the SANREM CRSP Cooperative Agreement Leader with Associate Award on September 20, 2004 following the highly competitive process. Being chosen as the ME to lead this CRSP is a privilege, and we will follow an open and fair process in the selection of activities, allocation of resources, and all other aspects involved in guiding the entire project. The process we outlined in our proposal fully ensures USAID’s major expectation: a clear and competitive process devoid of any conflict of interest. In this regard our management team is working closely with the USAID CTO for SANREM CRSP, Mr. Chris Kosnik.

Immediately after signing the Cooperative Agreement, we installed a management team following the designs outlined in our proposal. Our ME team features a strong technical and socioeconomic background and includes a gender equity specialist. The lengthy experience of the Office of International Research, Education, and Development (OIREd) in solidly managing a large portfolio of USAID grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements provides abundant guidance. Following the signing of the award by the Virginia Tech Office of Sponsored Programs, we took steps to implement the project according to the new guidelines stipulated in the RFA and contained in our proposal. We made sure all decisions were open and understandable. Every recipient of a sub-award will follow the same policies and guidelines, including Virginia Tech. We will never ask any of our partner institutions to perform any duties we ourselves would not accept. We strongly believe that the maximum amount of USAID funds should be used directly for programs with as little as possible being allocated to support administrative bureaucracy. Compared to some other long-term CRSP projects, SANREM CRSP receives fewer resources, therefore, Virginia Tech and all of our partners are expected to minimize management costs in order to free up funds for program activities.

The ME team developed a Policy and Procedure (POP) Manual, taking into consideration the CRSP guidelines which were approved by BIFAD. The governance structure of our proposal indicated that a board would be constituted in order to review and approve all policy issues. Indeed, this board was created from among the SANREM CRSP partner institutions and held its first meeting on August 16 and 17, 2005. The board members proved to be highly engaging and insightful in their deliberations and also approved the POP Manual which is now posted on the SANREM CRSP website.

The ME team is working hard to develop a strong pool of candidates for the External Review Panel (ERP) and External Evaluation Panel (EEP). Their goal will be to select a list of long term activities to receive funding for the next four years.

In summary, let me reiterate that the ME team of SANREM CRSP at Virginia Tech is confident that the implementation plan for SANREM CRSP is unfolding due to a coordinated effort and will result in outcomes with successful impacts. We look forward to our collaborations and the challenges which lie ahead.

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## MARK YOUR CALENDARS: BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN AGRICULTURE SYMPOSIUM

The SANREM and IPM CRSPs will sponsor a symposium on Biodiversity Conservation in Agriculture, Feb. 26 to March 1, 2006, most likely in the Dominican Republic. The goals of the symposium are to provide agricultural research and development specialists with a fundamental understanding of:

- \*the principles of biodiversity conservation,
- \*the importance of biodiversity conservation for agriculture and maintenance of key ecosystem services, and
- \*how biodiversity conservation can be integrated into agricultural development programs
- \*USAID Biodiversity Conservation program requirements and how they can be integrated into agricultural research and development programs

The target audience for the symposium includes:

- \*CRSP Program Directors and researchers
- \*USAID agricultural and natural resources development officers
- \*International Agricultural Research Center scientists

More details on the symposium program and hotel and travel information will be available on the SANREM website at <http://www.oired.vt.edu/sanremcrsp/symposium.html> by October 1.

## TRADITIONAL LANDRACES BEING REPATRIATED TO SOUTH AMERICAN VILLAGES

A trip by a group of Ecuadorian villagers to the national genebank in Quito, Ecuador, generated a great interest among the villagers. Many of the women in the group were not only interested in the medicinal plants, but also sacks of old heirloom potatoes. The villagers requested samples of these older potato types, but learned they would not be available until replicated. Many villagers have in the past replaced these traditional varieties with more productive but potentially weaker varieties, consequently losing some important traditions related to their use, as well as plant biodiversity.



**A local woman shows native plants**

This visit to the gene bank is part of a SANREM CRSP bridging activity by University of Georgia anthropologists Virginia Nazarea and Robert Rhoades. SANREM researchers are working together with South American communities, research

institutions, and NGOs for a renewal and conservation in the villages of the planting and use of traditional crop varieties.

In Cuzco, Peru, local leaders from six indigenous communities have asked the International Potato Center (CIP) genebank to return hundreds of potato landraces collected from their villages over time. The repatriation of these valuable landraces is now taking place in the recently established Potato Park.

**Landraces** are crop cultivars that have been managed, conserved, and genetically improved by



**South American women display their colorful collection of seeds for viewing and exchange.**

traditional agriculturalists. Nazarea and Rhoades are collaborating with Asociacion ANDES and CIP in researching and reinforcing cultural traditions around these old varieties.

This conservation through use depends on preserving everyday values and practices that sustain biodiversity on site and secure its persistence through attachment and memory. Thus the team is investigating and transmitting the ways that a diverse array of cultivated and wild plants is incorporated into traditional diets and healing preparations.

The researchers rely on ethnographic methods, oral history and community participation to document customs, sayings, myths and legends, with the intention of both conserving the information and transferring it to the next generation. Nazarea and Rhoades, working with an indigenous leader, Rafael Guitarra, compiled "Stories of Creation and Resistance," a book that records these stories in Quichua, Spanish, and English. A cultural revitalization in terms of culinary traditions is also taking place and the research team is documenting traditional recipes and sayings in a forthcoming publication, "Recipes for Life: Counsel, Customs and Cuisine from Andean Hearths."

During Rhoades and Nazarea's most trip to Cotacachi, Ecuador the community organized a small fiesta. Several women laid out their colorful collection of seeds for viewing and exchange. There was storytelling about the origin and history of seeds and the men and women together presented a drama and dance on childbirth and baptism. The researchers presented the villagers a draft of their new book, based on the villagers own accounts.

This research recognizes that local people have generated most of the plant diversity that benefits people today, and they also serve as custodians of this biodiversity. This SANREM CRSP work of Rhoades and Nazarea supports the Convention on Biological Diversity, which emphasizes not only in situ conservation but also the critical significance and the need to conserve indigenous people's knowledge.

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## **FIRST BOARD MEETING OF SANREM CRSP PRODUCES POLICY AND OPERATING PROCEDURES MANUAL**

The Board of Directors of the new SANREM CRSP held its first meeting in Blacksburg, Virginia on August 16 & 17, 2005. The Board elected as Chair Alton Thompson, Dean of the School of Agriculture and Environmental and Allied Sciences, North Carolina A & T State University.

Administrative Principal Investigator S. K. De Datta welcomed the Board on behalf of the Management Entity (ME), Virginia Tech's Office of International Research, Education, and Development. He reported that the ME was working closely with USAID and following an open and transparent process in making all awards. He stated that the ME plans to direct as much of the funds as possible toward research activities having development impact and not toward administration.

Project Director Theo Dillaha gave a status report on the SANREM CRSP project. This included reports on bridging awards, planning awards and long-term research activity awards. He said that the ME expects to receive 35 applications for the 4 to 6 long-term research activity awards it plans to make.

The Board discussed the responsibilities and duties of the various advisory bodies for the SANREM CRSP. A Policy and Operational Procedures (POP) Manual was reviewed, revised and approved, and a list of potential External Evaluation Panel (EEP) and External Review Panel (ERP) members was approved for final selection and submission to USAID.

The POP Manual is available at <http://www.oired.vt.edu/sanremcrsp/POPManual.pdf>.

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**MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR,  
THEO DILLAHA**

Welcome to the first issue of the new SANREM CRSP newsletter. This quarterly newsletter will be published in two forms, a simple emailed text form and a full-color PDF version available from our website (<http://www.oired.vt.edu/sanremcrsp>). The newsletter will provide timely news on SANREM CRSP activities and highlight program accomplishments.

The primary objective of the SANREM CRSP is to increase the capacity of USAID and other development organizations to advance land management practices that provide long-term social, economic, and environmental benefits to the poor in developing countries. Our activities will emphasize: host-country capacity building, development of systems for post-program sustainability, and scaling up of local successes for national and regional application. SANREM is attempting to increase the role of USAID Missions in SANREM funded activities. We are encouraging SANREM partners to consult with Missions during proposal formulation, development, and implementation to ensure that SANREM activities address critical development knowledge gaps that will improve the efficacy of Mission and other development activities.

Now for a quick update on where SANREM is and what we have accomplished in our first year. The new SANREM CRSP was fully staffed and opened for business on Sept. 30, 2004. By Oct. 18, a Bridging Grant RFA had been developed and released to support 18-month high impact research activities from previous SANREM CRSP phases. Twelve bridging grant applications were received by the Nov. 23 deadline and four bridging awards were initiated on Jan. 1, 2005. These bridging wards are described later in the newsletter.

SANREM held a Kick-Off Meeting on Dec. 6 and 7, 2004. The meeting was attended by partners from six universities, five IARCs, and three NGOs, as well as three USAID representatives. At the Kick-Off meeting, long-term program directions were discussed and the Technical Committee selected the bridging awards that were funded.

On Jan. 7, 2005, SANREM issued RFAs for the SANREM CRSP Long-Term Research Applications, (due Sept 30, 2005) and for Planning Grants (due Feb. 23, 2005) to support travel and meetings to develop Long-Term Research Applications. Seventy-four Planning Grant Applications were received and 18 were ultimately selected for funding by the Planning Grant External Review Panel. With respect to the Long-Term Research Awards, 34 notices of intent were received by the July deadline. The Long-Term Research Applications will be reviewed in September and October by the SANREM CRSP External Evaluation Panel and Long-Term Research Award recipients will be notified in early December and funded by January 2006.

The program is evolving on almost a daily basis. I encourage you to visit the SANREM website frequently for more updated and detailed information about the SANREM program and its accomplishments. Please do not hesitate to contact us when you have questions or suggestions about the SANREM program.

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Please send us your ideas and news items for the SANREM CRSP News. Comments about the newsletter are much appreciated, too. Send mailto: [kirkneal@vt.edu](mailto:kirkneal@vt.edu)

Visit the SANREM CRSP Website at <http://www.oired.vt.edu/sanremcrsp/>

This e-mail newsletter is published by the SANREM CRSP Management Entity (ME), Virginia Tech's Office of International Research, Education, and Development (OIRE).