



Global Knowledge Initiative Advances Agricultural Development Partnerships in East and Southern Africa

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In a region where 70% of the population lives in rural areas and half of those individuals live on less than \$1 a day, East and Southern Africans face a variety of challenges, especially at the intersection of agriculture, water and land management, and climate change. Smallholder farmers too often face unproductive land, limited water availability, and low crop yields. In recent years, climate change has only complicated these challenges by creating unpredictable and abnormal conditions. Opportunities for technology and knowledge dissemination, which could help mitigate food insecurity in the region, are limited due to access to critical resources and absorptive capacity. Despite these obstacles, African researchers dedicate their careers to identifying and solving the complex agricultural, water management, and climate-related challenges facing the region. Starting in April, a new, unique opportunity will help one team of African agricultural researchers access the international partners and resources needed to help them solve the scientific and development they are committed to addressing.

The Global Knowledge Initiative (GKI), an international nonprofit which seeks to solve development challenges related to science, technology, and innovation, is excited to announce the third round of our flagship partnership-forging program **LINK (Learning and Innovation Network for Knowledge and Solutions)**. Through LINK, GKI helps people locate critical resources required for scientific research, teaching, and innovation to address developing country-based challenges. We then enable partners to collaborate through competitions, trainings, and capacity building initiatives. Finally, we connect resource seekers together with the global network of problem solvers to bring solutions to scale.

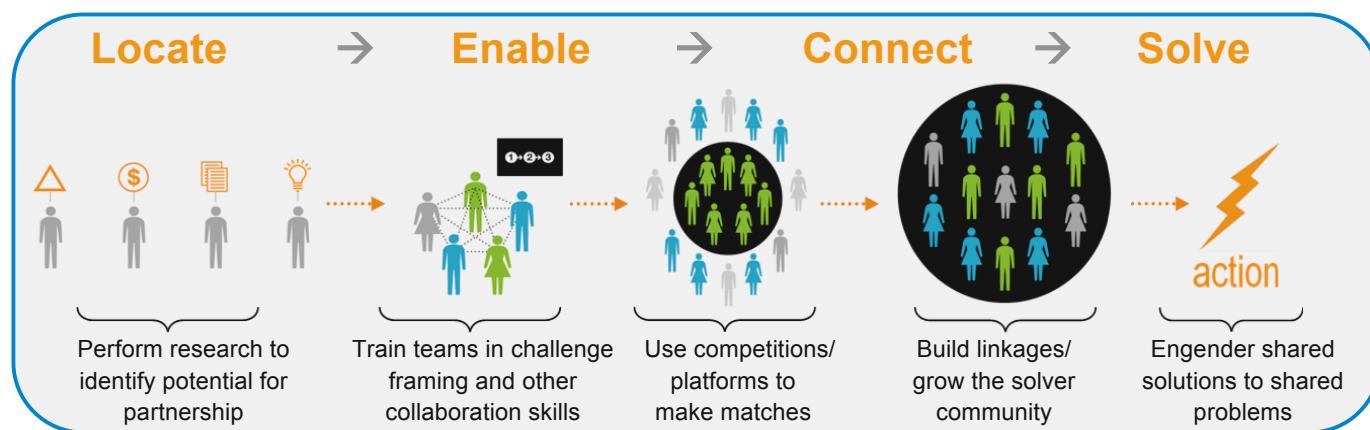
GKI is building on the success of two previous LINK rounds hosted in Rwanda and Afghanistan-Pakistan by initiating a third in East and Southern Africa. We will be soliciting Requests for Engagement from principal investigators across the region through April 30, 2012. Like LINK Round I and II, the scope of LINK Round III Requests for Engagement is defined by the [New Partnership for African Development's \(NEPAD\)](#) guiding framework for agricultural research, promotion, and capacity building, the [Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme \(CAADP\)](#). In addition, this round will also invite Requests for Engagement that build off the climate change priorities of the [2011 Johannesburg Communiqué](#).

Won by Dr. Daniel Rukazambuga, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at the National University of Rwanda, LINK Round I catalyzed partnerships and resources to help Dr. Rukazambuga and his team combat a threat to Rwanda's successful and economically valuable coffee sector – a mysterious potato taste defect. Through LINK, GKI deepened the team's understanding of Rwanda's context for collaborative innovation and connected them with notable solvers worldwide, changing the prospects for solutions to this vital agricultural industry for Rwanda and its people. Round II is a joint effort by researchers in Pakistan and Afghanistan to research new seed technologies and train rural Afghan farmers about on-farm seed technology applications and improved grain storage techniques.

For more information on the Global Knowledge Initiative or to receive a Request for Engagement form, please contact Program Officer Amanda Rose at Amanda@gkinitiative.org.

Background on the Global Knowledge Initiative and the LINK Program:

The Global Knowledge Initiative (GKI) seeks to spark, optimize, and sustain knowledge partnerships between the people and institutions of higher education and research. We define a knowledge partnership as one that builds individual or organizational capacity to create new knowledge or introduce relevant knowledge where it is needed. GKI arose from the 2008 Higher Education Summit for Global Development convened by the US Secretaries of State and Education and the Administrator of the US Agency for International Development. Attended by more than 200 University Presidents, heads of technology firms, and philanthropists, the Summit identified the need for a “clearinghouse for resources and information to help build knowledge partnerships that can tackle development challenges.” With a leadership team that includes the Prime Minister of India’s Advisor on Innovation and Public Information Infrastructure, Sam Pitroda, the Director of the Library of Alexandria, Ismail Serageldin, the former Science and Technology Advisor to the US Secretary of State, Nina Fedoroff, and former World Bank STI Strategist Sara Farley, GKI is poised to respond to this call.



In Phase I, LINK partners define a problem they confront in terms of its potential to be tackled collaboratively. Together with GKI, teams catalogue STI resources already available to them and measure the STI gaps that hinder progress. The phase focuses on a series of trainings and the performance of research to help Principal Investigators and their teams (1) make sense of the science, technology and innovation context in which their challenge is to be solved, (2) assess the knowledge partnership landscape to determine a baseline of collaborative activity, and (3) scout for optimal partners who may have resources available to help the team solve their challenge. In Phase II, GKI helps partners identify and collaborate with people and institutions offering the resources they need to fill those gaps. Beyond matchmaking, LINK builds team members' collaboration process skills to work effectively across disciplines, sectors, communities, and silos. GKI's role in Phase III is to identify complementary initiatives and partners. Using web-enabled collaboration platforms and the heft of the many science associations, academies, and networks with which GKI partners, we pluck critical players — both within and outside the STI community — and plug them into purpose-driven networks. We measure LINK's success in terms of real-world solutions with real-world uptake.