

## **China's "Green super rice for the resource poor of Asia and Africa" project receives financial support from the Gates Foundation**

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BEIJING, China - China started an international collaboration project on green super rice in Sanya, Hainan Province on March 23, 2009. The project received 18 million U.S. dollars of fund from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The project, titled "Green super rice for the resource poor of Asia and Africa", aims to develop new varieties of rice that can stand drought, flooding, cold weather, and toxic minerals such as salt and iron.

The overall goal is to breed at least 15 rice varieties and deliver these new, high-yielding varieties to small farmers in Asia (8 countries including China) and Africa (7 countries), along with training, said Dr. Li Zhikang, chief scientist of the project, and researcher from Chinese Academy of Agriculture (CCA).

Li said they will also seek to build a platform of analysis on different rice genotypes for molecular breeding currently conducted in African countries located to the south of Sahara, and Asia.

This project is the largest joint research program in China in terms of the amount of input and number of participating organizations. CCA will be mainly responsible for its implementation. Its partners include International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Africa Rice Center (WARDA), Institute of Genetics and Developmental Biology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Shanghai Agrobiological Gene Center (SAGC) and etc.

The project is fully supported by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and it will be carried out in three years.

It is estimated that the rice production in these countries could be increased by 20%, and 20 million poverty-stricken farmers will benefit from the project, Li said.

**Source:** Chinese Academy of Sciences <http://english.cas.ac.cn/>