

Sowing the seeds of the future



Agropolis Fondation:
Sowing the seeds of the future



agropolis fondation

Supporting agricultural research
for sustainable development

In the 21st Century, agriculture continues to be a fundamental instrument for sustainable development and poverty reduction... Agriculture alone will not be enough to massively reduce poverty, but it has proven to be uniquely powerful for that task... it is time to place agriculture afresh at the center of the development agenda...

World Development Report, 2008



The challenge: plants for the future

Plants are the world's single most important source of food and non-food products. They are at the heart of a rapidly developing and globally integrated knowledge-based bio-economy. Experts agree that in the near future, 90% of raw materials for food, energy, chemistry and other pharmaceutical processes will be derived from biomass.

However, increasing pressure on natural resources and the demonstrable effects of climate change threaten the future of many of our plant resources. Deforestation, desertification, overgrazing, soil erosion, deterioration of water resources, species migration, loss of biodiversity and bio-invasion are all signs of potentially irreversible changes that are particularly pronounced in the Tropics and the Mediterranean area.

Agricultural research has a vital role to play in responding to these challenges, which are among humanity's most pressing problems.

Three quarters of the world's poorest people - Professor Paul Collier's so-called "bottom billion" who live on \$1 a day or less - rely on agriculture to feed themselves and their families.

Who we are



From its base in Montpellier in the South of France, the Foundation draws on an extraordinary pool of expertise and talent in agriculture, food, biodiversity and the environment.

Agropolis Fondation is a grant-making foundation committed to support and promote research and higher education in agricultural science and sustainable development. It received an initial endowment of €20 million in its establishment in 2007 and an additional €25 million funding from the French Government in mid-2011.

With plants of agronomic interest as its primary focus, the Foundation promotes innovation while ensuring that cutting-edge science responds to critical development challenges through interdisciplinary and integrated approach to plant research, i.e., from its genes to its environments to its final uses.

We focus on key issues at the interface of temperate, tropical and Mediterranean regions: increasing demand for plants and plant by-products for food and non-food uses; agricultural adaptation to climate change; prevention and management of risks (e.g., erosion of biodiversity and natural resources, food safety, etc.).

The Foundation supports a scientific network which involves a critical mass of 2,000 staff including 1,000 scientists working on a continuum of competences on plants, namely:

- Genetics and genomics, plant breeding, ecophysiology
- Integrated crop protection, plant pests and diseases, symbionts, population ecology
- Agro-ecosystems, agri-environmental innovations and resource management
- Agri-food systems, processing and quality of food and non-food materials
- Innovation processes and social management of innovation

Charter members

Agropolis Fondation's charter members are four of France's top institutions for development-oriented research and higher education in agriculture and international scientific cooperation.



What we do



Intellectual rigour, a willingness to forge international links with private and public sectors and a commitment to sustainable development, capacity building and knowledge sharing; these are the principles that underpin our work.

To be able to meet our objective of mobilizing excellent and relevant science, the Foundation launches Calls for Proposals and commissions projects conceived to enhance the creation, sharing and use of knowledge.

1. Fellowships Programme: *promoting mobility and cultivating talent*

Designed to contribute to brain circulation and mobility of established and promising international scientists in various disciplines, our Fellows work in a stimulating scientific environment in and around Montpellier and with access to state of the art facilities.

2. Grants Programme: *supporting and encouraging innovation*

This programme is directed at establishing and strengthening world-class scientific platforms, funding exploratory, risky, interdisciplinary and innovative projects, as well as supporting international training courses, publication and dissemination of research results.

3. Flagship Programmes: *developing major international initiatives*

These interdisciplinary and potentially high-impact research initiatives are expected to lead to major scientific breakthroughs.

4. Louis Malassis Scientific Prize: *recognizing and rewarding talent*

The Prize is conferred to a distinguished and a young scientist from any country for their exemplary and promising contribution to research, development and/or capacity building in the field of agriculture and sustainable development.

5. Partnerships: *building synergies for greater impact*

We continuously seek to establish strategic collaborations with public and private partners in order to further our scientific efforts, promote development-oriented research, extend our reach and foster synergy.



Agropolis Fondation's whole range of activities is ISO 9001-certified

“Scientifically, Montpellier is a research goldmine... Having a concentration of plant biology experts in the various fields of plant research in one area is quite rare. I find working with them very enriching and stimulating. Montpellier offers more than just the know-how...”

Dr. Francine Perrine-Walker
Australia/Mauritius
Agropolis Fondation 2009 Post-doctoral Fellow



Our ambition



“By imagining the future, we give value to the present.”

Albert Jacquard,
French biologist and writer

Our ambition is to make a significant difference to society and to the natural world through robust, high-impact and socially relevant research.

Over the next 10 years we aim to promote a significant quantitative and qualitative leap on the following levels by:

- Favoring research impact and the development of innovative solutions by supporting original scientific approaches
- Boosting human capital by setting up highly attractive Fellowship programmes that will facilitate international mobility, and by supporting innovative projects that combine research and training
- Fostering synergies by reinforcing involvement in major international programmes, strengthening linkages with the private sector (SMEs, industrial groups, foundations, producers’ organizations...) as well as valorizing and disseminating research results.

Our innovative approach is also underpinned by access to the most advanced research techniques and facilities.

The international community can make use of the outstanding pool of talent and experience in Montpellier, home to one of the world’s largest concentration of expertise in the food, agriculture and environment sectors. Collaboration between this group and other top scientists from around the world is at the heart of what we do.

“The overall caliber of research in Montpellier in the genetics of tropical crops is better than anywhere else in the world. These skills serve as a magnet to attract interactions with overseas scientists with complementary skills.”

Jeffrey D. Bennetzen
*Member, US National Academy of Sciences
2008 Agropolis Fondation Visiting Senior Fellow*



► **ARCAD:** Improving crop biodiversity assessment and use in Mediterranean and tropical regions



► **Pl@ntNet:** Interactive plant identification and collaborative information system

How we can work together



While we have the facilities and equipment - from experimental sites to technological platforms - and a unique pool of scientific expertise, the challenge far outweighs our current means.

We seek to establish partnerships with those keen on exploring with us solutions to the world's food, agriculture and biodiversity challenges. We are convinced that joining forces will result in a better synergy of efforts in promoting scientific excellence and relevance while maximizing development impact.

To achieve greater impact, we can work together in encouraging breakthrough research and building human capital by:

- Co-funding scientific programmes on commonly identified priority thematic areas
- Co-funding Fellowships programme to favour brain circulation and capacity building
- Developing funding mechanism to launch Joint Calls for Proposals
- Organizing knowledge sharing and capacity-building events (e.g., debates, seminars, workshops)

Working with Agropolis Fondation offers an exciting opportunity to contribute to creating sustainable solutions to fundamental questions through innovative agricultural research.

We have on-going partnerships and co-funding activities with various international institutions and initiatives such as the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD), the Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education (CAPES), the French National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Control (INRIA) and Fondazione Cariplo.

The future is NOW. Be our partner and join us in sowing the seeds of the future through innovative research.

“We are very grateful to Agropolis Fondation for hosting several AWARD Fellows in Montpellier. They have benefited immensely by working with renowned scientists, having access to state-of-the-art equipment, and networking with international researchers.

We also deeply appreciate Agropolis Fondation’s encouraging support for our potential Francophone Africa expansion plans. Such partners are a rare find.”

Vicki Wilde
Director

African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD)



together



► 2010 Louis Malassis International Scientific Prize Award Ceremony during GCARD 2010 (March 2010, Montpellier)



► Fondazione Cariplo President Giuseppe Guzzetti and Agropolis Fondation Director Anne-Lucie Wack sign Partnership Agreement (September 2011, Milan)

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