

Innovations Management Unit 2013

2013 was a very busy year for the Innovations Management Unit. Three new staff members joined the unit: Camille Enables for administration, Louisa Rapson as market analyst, and Dr. Dinesh Joshi as senior advisor for market research and technology transfer, based in India.

IMU, with the Global Institute for Tomorrow, developed a program for participants of the 30th Global Young Leaders Programme (YLP) who responded to IRRI's invitation to make business and strategic recommendations to commercialize its research technology, using Nutrient Manager for Rice for a business model. From classroom-based discussions and onsite visits to local communities, there was a proposal to start a new company to drive an integrated ICT platform to improve rice crop management and provide farmers with access to credit and farming-related information and services.

This platform would give IRRI the opportunity to reach out and significantly impact the socioeconomic livelihoods of smallholder farmers, while contributing to more environmentally sustainable farming methods. (Click [here](#) for a showcase of the business plan.)

To better understand commercial opportunities in our host country, the Philippines, an indepth study of the Philippine rice sector was started and will be published in 2014.

An overview of the private rice seed sector in India was initiated to examine potential partners for commercialization in the subcontinent. This process is ongoing and results should provide a useful insight into India's rice sector.

Working with personnel from the Genebank and the Seed Health Unit, IMU developed a new series of procedures and processes to facilitate the effective transfer to other institutes or agencies of IIR materials and breeding lines developed by IRRI breeders. This process takes into account all of the obligations that IRRI has with respect to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and the new CGIAR Principles on Intellectual Assets.

IMU has developed a new invention disclosure form that is available to scientists who have made a new discovery at IRRI. It is the first document to be completed in filing a patent application. This form can be requested from the IMU when needed.

IRRI has filed five patent applications, including inventions related to rice yield, grain chalkiness, growth in low phosphorous conditions, anaerobic germination, and a novel rice planting method. IMU is thankful to all 2013 IRRI inventors for their patience and assistance in this process.

IRRI has engaged its first patent lawyer in the U.S. who has been working diligently on these applications.

IMU will take the lead in a supplemental grant awarded to the C₄ Rice Project, coordinated by Dr. Paul Quick. This grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will investigate global best practices in transgenic crop intellectual property (IP) protection and develop a strategy for the successful IP protection of research products from the C₄ Rice Project.