



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

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et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

CONFERENCE

Thirty-fourth Session

Rome, 17 – 24 November 2007

PRESENTATION OF THE EDOUARD SAOUMA AWARD 2006-2007

1. By adopting Resolution 2/93 at its Twenty-Seventh session (November 1993) the FAO Conference instituted, as a new permanent feature, an award to a national or regional institution which, in the course of the biennium preceding the Conference, had implemented with particular efficiency a project funded by the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). The award bears the name of Dr Edouard Saouma and is directed towards the goals he served. It is conferred every biennium.
2. The elements of the Award are (i) a medal inscribed with the name of the recipient institution; (ii) a scroll describing its achievements; (iii) a cash prize of US\$25 000; (iv) travel to FAO headquarters in Rome by a representative of the winning institution to participate in the Award Ceremony and to receive the award on behalf of the institution.

Selection of the Winning Institution

3. The Edouard Saouma Award Selection Committee, under the Chairpersonship of the Director-General, selects the award winning institution; it comprises the Independent Chairperson of the Council, the Chairperson of the Programme Committee and the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. The selection has been made from a short-list drawn up by an Ad Hoc Inter-departmental Screening Committee, chaired by the Deputy Director-General and comprising the Assistant Directors-General of all the headquarters departments, the Director of the Field Operations Division, and the Chief of the Technical Cooperation Programme Service (TCOT) as Secretary.
4. Nominations are submitted by national institutions to FAO Representatives or UNDP Resident Representatives, as appropriate, for endorsement and eventual submission to the technical department in charge of the project's technical backstopping. FAO Representatives, FAO Regional Representatives or UNDP Resident Representatives, as appropriate, may also submit nominations directly to the technical department concerned.

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Conferment of the Award

5. The Award for the 2006-2007 biennium will be presented at the Thirty-fourth Session of the FAO Conference, at a ceremony to be held on 17 November 2007.
6. This year, the Award is being granted to the **Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Pesca y Alimentos (SAGPyA), Argentina**, the national institution that excelled in the implementation of the TCP project: TCP/ARG/2903 (A), Evaluación de la Capacidad, Infraestructura y Logística de Manejo Post-cosecha de Organismos Vivos Modificados e Identificación de Estrategias para Aplicar el Artículo 18,2a) del Protocolo de Cartagena sobre Seguridad de la Biotecnología
7. The national institution nominated has made remarkable achievements in terms of impact, catalytic effects and follow-up. Among the thirteen nominations, this national institution stands out due to the commitment and enthusiasm with which it implemented and transformed an initially modest contribution by the TCP into a success that well exceeds the amount invested by FAO.
8. With the introduction of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity, in particular Article 18.2, and the norms that are being introduced by the main grain importers, new scenarios of segregation and traceability are emerging. It is against this background that FAO assistance was requested. A TCP project was launched to strengthen national capacity in order to face the new challenges related to the marketing of grains and derived living modified organisms (LMOs). The project assessed the infrastructure, capacity and logistics for the handling, storage, transport, loading, unloading and export of maize and soya grains, including the derived LMOs, in all provinces where they are cultivated. The national grain chains were fully characterized and the need for modern infrastructure, equipment, stocking, logistics and training for the identification, segregation and traceability of the grain chain supplies were identified. The technical and legal requirements, in line with the Cartagena Protocol and with the norms of the main importing countries, were documented in order to assess the incremental annual costs per tonne of maize and soya grains, for each threshold allowed of LMO grains in the non-LMO lots, of 0.9 percent and 5 percent. An investment programme was developed to cover the identified needs, including training.
9. SAGPyA granted high priority to the implementation of this project by creating a working team, calling upon private and public specialists, integrating part of the technical staff of the project into the Dirección de Mercados Agroalimentarios and providing the necessary facilities and logistical support. Furthermore, it launched a programme of information, spreading the project outputs over all cereal- and oil-grain producing regions. Above all, the project contributed to SAGPyA taking the most important policy decision of the last 15 years in the grain sector, aimed at differentiating cereals according to the various uses.
10. The outputs of this project have been adopted by the national private stakeholders in order to redefine the programmes of maize segregation. A new branch of services has been developed, linked to the certification of the segregation and traceability of LMO grains, and some leading firms in the sector have used the results to estimate the segregation costs and to develop LMO detection programmes. The Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria improved its diagnostic methodologies and the outputs of this project were incorporated by the Consejo Agropecuario del Sur into its biotechnology programmes, and by the Instituto Nacional de Semillas and the Comisión Nacional de Biotecnología Agropecuaria, to improve the normative framework of seeds and approval of transgenic events. The country has been increasing its role in the discussion in the framework of the Cartagena Protocol and at present is leading the discussion in the Codex Alimentarius.

11. The performance of this project has been outstanding in terms of efficiency of project implementation, as well as impact and catalytic effects. The personal commitment and enthusiasm of the Director and the staff of this institution have been vital to the achievements of the project and are at the origin of its success, not only in terms of immediate objectives but also with regard to the sustainability of its achievements.