

Pan-African trials fast-tracking the delivery of new soybean varieties

Brian Diers, Randy Nelson, Godfree Chigeza
bdiers@illinois.edu

Univ. Illinois, Univ. Missouri, IITA Zambia FTF Soybean Innovation Lab, SIL

Abstract: Transferring SIL technologies to the private sector through public-private partnerships PPP is a key structural component of SILs research-for-development R4D strategy. To date, SIL engages in 55 different public-partnerships across 15 countries. These partnerships serve multiple essential roles to assure SILs research is appropriate and scalable. The private sector increasingly shoulders more of the load in bringing key technologies to farmers and other target recipients as public research and extension dollars continue to decline. SIL transferred its successful Pan-African Soybean Variety Trial program, an initiative that drastically increases the scale and pace of new variety introduction, evaluation, registration and release, to the private sector in Malawi, where partners have the unique ability to interpret market forces, maintain the correct incentives to meet market demand and have critical networks of customers and extension providers. This research-for-development partnership matched SILs research expertise and deep technical knowledge of soybean seed systems with a diverse set of private sector partners, some who were interested in evaluating their soybean varieties through a transparent, third-party testing platform and others who were interested in licensing and bringing to their producer networks new, high-yielding and disease resistant soybean varieties.