

**MULTI-FUNDER INITIATIVE**

## Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFS RF)

### Expanding adoption of nutritious, disease-resistant potatoes in Colombia

A marriage of scientific knowledge and traditional practice has led to the development of three highly nutritious, robust, and productive yellow potato varieties. Researchers from Colombia and Canada are working with public and private sector partners to increase production and consumption of this nutritious and all-natural food staple across Colombia and beyond.

### Higher yields and new business opportunities

Malnutrition and iron deficiency are prevalent among many rural Colombians, especially young children. That will change with the introduction of three high quality yellow potato cultivars (Criolla Ocarina, Criolla Sua Pa and Criolla Dorada) selected by farmers, breeders and scientists. In previous field trials, these low-cost varieties delivered higher yields (15%), improved nutrition (double the protein and 20% more iron and zinc than the most cultivated Colombian variety), twice as resistant to late blight disease, higher incomes (18%), better appearance, and strong consumer acceptance.

### The potential to reach millions of consumers

The next step is to work with farmers of all sizes to make these new potato varieties available to millions of Colombian consumers, particularly those living in the most food insecure regions of the country. The goal is to replace up to half of Colombia's total yellow potato production with the new varieties.

Campo Vivo, a private venture led by Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, and the multinational company McCain of Canada, will support seed production and marketing as well as link seed producers and seed buyer organizations. The project will also work directly with 800 small potato farmers (30% of whom are women) and 700 medium and large farmers producing the new yellow potato varieties.

National media campaigns will fuel consumer demand for the varieties throughout Colombia. The results will also be relevant to other Andean countries, particularly Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador.

### Expected results

- Higher yields, reduced production costs, and increased demand of new varieties, resulting in higher incomes for smallholder farmers
- Replacement of up to 50% of Colombia's total yellow potato production (at least 100,000 tonnes) with the new varieties
- Availability of more nutritious potatoes to more than 200,000 consumers, with expansion to at least 1.5 million people in Colombia
- Development of an education program that combines increased consumption of more nutritious potato varieties with better food habits for 22,000 children in schools of Bogota
- Increased levels of zinc and iron among 80% of children under five years in targeted regions
- Establishment of Training Schools for Family Agriculture to improve knowledge of good agricultural practices, managerial skills, nutrition, sanitation, and inequalities in family roles
- Better informed decision makers leading to improved food security and nutrition policies

### LEAD RESEARCHERS

Teresa Mosquera Vásquez, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Colombia

Hugo Melgar-Quiñonez, McGill University, Canada

**Country:** Colombia

**Funding:** CA\$1.5 million

**Duration:** November 2015 to February 2018

The **Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFS RF)** is a program of Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through Global Affairs Canada (GAC).



### International Development Research Centre

PO Box 8500 Ottawa ON Canada K1G 3H9

Phone +1 613 236 6163 • Fax +1 613 236 7293

cifsrf@idrc.ca • www.idrc.ca/cifsrf