

## IBP marks turning point with revamped website

**13 August 2019, Texcoco, Mexico** – The Integrated Breeding Platform (IBP) has grown into a mature non-profit entity providing technology and breeding services to different types of organizations around the world. As such, a revamped website appeared as the obvious way of showcasing its achievements and offering more effectively.

“We have come a long way since the IBP was first initiated in 2009 as part of the Generation Challenge Programme (2003-2013). Back then, the mission was to provide a one-stop-shop with resources online to support breeders in the developing world. Our range of action has since expanded greatly, especially after we registered as a non-profit organization in December 2014. We have embedded in various breeding networks, and positioned ourselves as a trusted broker of tools and services, partnering with breeding institutions all over the world, both in the public and private sectors,” says Jean-Marcel Ribaut, IBP Director. A number of public initiatives have also emerged in recent years around the need to modernize plant breeding, and the IBP works closely with many of them to complement and share in a common vision. “Our revamped website is an opportunity to explain how we work in close collaboration with these partners, as well as to clarify what remains our niche expertise; i.e. products and support services for plant breeding digitalization,” confirms Dr Ribaut.



**(Re)discover the @IBPlatform**  
**The new website is out:**  
[www.integratedbreeding.net](http://www.integratedbreeding.net)

### **A recipe for sustainability: striking balance between private sector practices and serving the public good**

Much has been achieved in the past few years in this regard. The IBP counts with over 600 BMS Pro users around the world, of which 60% are based in Africa, across 27 organizations (15 in Africa). Clusters of champion users are sprouting in various locations to train and support their peers, and the 7 IBP Regional Hubs have been deeply committed in facilitating technology adoption locally through various workshops and promotional activities. Graham McLaren, Global Deployment Manager for the IBP, testifies: “We have fine-tuned our approach over the years, allowing us to accompany organizations more effectively in their shift to digitalized plant breeding, which I’m convinced is one of the most powerful means available to accelerate the delivery of better crop varieties.”

The impact of this strategy is compounded by the work conducted with 8 Universities in Africa to train new generations of plant breeders. BMS Pro has been embedded in MSc curricula, reaching 100+ students each year in the use of technology adapted to plant breeding, and more than 950 professionally active breeders and technicians have been trained in the workplace over the last 3 years alone. Gorgui Alioune Mbow, Deployment Manager for West & Central Africa, agrees: “Young plant breeders are generally more comfortable with adopting new technologies and, as such, are at the forefront of the digitalization effort.”

To sustain these activities, the IBP relies on three main sources of revenue: donor funds to lead projects in Ag R&D in developing countries; project partnerships where it is inscribed as a technology and service

provider in public or donor-funded projects at partner sites; and sales of BMS Pro to organizations with the capacity to pay for it. As a non-profit entity, all revenues are reinvested in the continued development of its software and services, including technology adoption and technical support activities in developing countries, thus ensuring the IBP's mission is fulfilled, and that BMS development remains sustainable.

Indeed, the nature of the product itself has been a key factor in the IBP's capacity to serve diverse audiences, both in the public and private sectors, as it builds on a combination of professional, proprietary components, such as Breeding View (conceived and owned by VSNi, the IBP's commercial partner), and a core open source system. BMS Pro also makes use of Breeding Application Programming Interface (BrAPI) calls to expand the possibilities further for users, by allowing to plug with other public or proprietary applications. "Our product development team is very conscious of both our public mission as well as the need to be competitive in a very active market," explains Mariano Crimi, Product Manager for the IBP. "In the end, we strongly believe that all our users, whether in public institutions or private companies, will appreciate using professional-grade functionality, keeping full ownership of the core database and its contents, and having the flexibility to use other tools conjointly."

### **Looking ahead**

Emboldened by this success, the IBP now turns to the future with the continued intent of playing its part in accelerating the delivery of improved crop varieties to smallholder farmers in the developing world, with a focus in Africa, by being the partner of choice for breeding institutions looking to digitalize and modernize their activities through the adoption of technology and best practices.

"In short, the IBP is at a turning point in its existence, and we needed to reflect this change in the way that we present ourselves. The new site will no doubt help us tackle the challenges and opportunities ahead of us, if only by giving greater visibility to our partners and donors, and to the results we are achieving together," says Valérie Boire, Communication and Knowledge Manager for the IBP, who led the website revamp effort. "The IBP website now provides clear entry points to both the product and available services, as well as to free online resources for the breeding community, and an appeal to donors to fund the IBP's mission in developing countries."

(Re)discover the IBP at [www.integratedbreeding.net](http://www.integratedbreeding.net).

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### **About the Integrated Breeding Platform (IBP)**

The Integrated Breeding Platform (IBP) is a not-for-profit entity whose mission is to help accelerate the delivery of new crop varieties in response to a well-defined demand, in the context of an increasing need for food, and unprecedented environmental challenges. It does so by providing IT tools, crop breeding services and training to breeders, especially in developing countries, so that they may fully join in the global effort towards achieving food security. We believe that access to the right tools and opportunities will help breeders achieve more efficiency in crop improvement, and therefore have a concrete and direct impact on their specific local environments.

The IBP's main donor for the last 10 years has been the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (Phase I from 2009 to 2014; Phase II from 2014 to 2019). Funding from the Foundation to the IBP will continue through the CGIAR Excellence in Breeding Platform (EiB), to participate in the development and adoption of crop information management systems. Other major ongoing activities include working with IFAD and AfricaRice on the EBCA project (to enhance breeding capacity in Ghana, Senegal and Uganda), and the USAID Peanut Innovation Lab (to digitalize breeding programs and enhance the genetic potential in peanut production across Africa).

For more information visit: [www.integratedbreeding.net](http://www.integratedbreeding.net)

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