



Tropentag, October 9-11, 2007, Witzenhausen

“Utilisation of diversity in land use systems:  
Sustainable and organic approaches to meet human needs”

## Challenges to Training Stakeholders for Management of Banana *Xanthomonas Wilt*

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### Abstract

*Xanthomonas wilt* of banana (BXW) is having a major adverse effect on banana production in the Great Lakes region of East and Central Africa. Equipping farmers with knowledge to recognise the disease and take appropriate management measures is viewed as the most important component of integrated management of this disease. The Crop Crisis Control Project (C3P) is a regional initiative to address BXW in six affected countries including Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, DR Congo and Tanzania, mainly through education, training and communication programs. Half of the countries are French speaking and the other half are English speaking. The C3P training programme was initiated with two regional training workshops carried out in September/October 2006, each lasting one week long. One workshop was on production of healthy banana planting materials through newly introduced macro-propagation technology while the second workshop was on diagnosis and management of BXW. The participants from each country were selected to represent technical, extension, and policy making institutions and upon return to their countries the participants were expected to organise training for more people to further spread knowledge for BXW management downwards to farmer level. In addition to lectures and field visits, additional course materials were provided to participants as handouts and electronic copies (CD and flash sticks).

The major challenge in executing a regional training programme was in communicating simultaneously to a combined audience of French and English speakers. In one workshop this challenge was addressed by having a bilingual trainer while in the other a simultaneous translation system was used. When a bilingual trainer was used the sessions took twice as long while field sessions faced difficulties since the simultaneous translation system could not be used under field conditions. However, even without efficient translation, there was a significant improvement from  $\approx 60$  to  $>85\%$  in understanding of BXW after field demonstrations. Additional challenges are identified as course notes available only in one language ( $\approx 70\%$  of French speakers) and lack of access to computers hence low utilisation of electronic training materials ( $\approx 60\%$ ). The paper examines challenges and documents various approaches of communicating IPM to multilingual audiences.

**Keywords:** Africa, banana, C3P, training, *Xanthomonas wilt*