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## Water-Efficient Maize for Africa: PIPRA Supports CIMMYT in Negotiations

[PIPRA](#) and [Morrison & Foerster, LLP](#) played a key role supporting public sector interests on behalf of [CIMMYT](#) in recent negotiations surrounding [CIMMYT's](#) role in a \$47 million dollar project to deliver drought-tolerant maize to sub-Saharan Africa.

The [Bill & Melinda Gates](#) and Howard G. Buffett Foundations announced their support this week for a project, led by Nairobi-based [AATF](#) (The [African Agricultural Technology Foundation](#)), in collaboration with Monsanto Company and [CIMMYT](#) (The [International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center](#)) that will work to provide new varieties of water-efficient, locally-adapted maize for small-scale African farmers.

Maize is the staple food for more than a quarter of a billion Africans and, according to 2008 estimates produced by the [USAID](#) Famine Early Warning System Network, climate change could decrease rainfall in eastern and southern Africa by up to 25% over the coming decades. "By 2020 all of Africa will have an expected crop reduction ranging from 10-20 percent," according to John Shroder, Professor of Geography and Geology at [University of Nebraska Omaha](#).

Drought-tolerance in maize to increase food security in Africa is the subject of much ongoing global research. The Water-Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) project represents a key public-private partnership in this area, combining [Monsanto's](#) expertise in molecular marker assisted breeding and transgenics with [CIMMYT's](#) advanced breeding programs for tropical maize, and [AATF's](#) experience in the stewardship of genetically modified (GM) projects.

[CIMMYT](#) chose [PIPRA](#) and technology transactions attorney Jonathan Dickstein from the San Francisco offices of law firm [Morrison & Foerster](#) to integrate public sector issues and interests on behalf of [CIMMYT](#) into the WEMA public-private partnership (PPP) research agreement. PPPs can be difficult to negotiate, given the deep cultural differences between the public and private sectors related to confidentiality, publication rights, public goods, and intellectual property rights. [PIPRA](#) offers a unique resource with its experience in articulating public sector

goals and its mission to provide services to support the strategic management of intellectual property rights among public agricultural research organizations worldwide.

Posted by Kyle Jensen at [3:22 PM](#) 

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