

# Standard International Field Trials (SIFT)

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The Standard International Field Trials (SIFT) is a cooperative experiment with the practical objective of accelerating the worldwide introduction of new potato cultivars with durable resistance to late blight. SIFT is conducted under the umbrella of the larger and more comprehensive international potato project, PICTIPAPA, in which it constitutes one of five modules. The coordination of SIFT was assigned by PICTIPAPA to CIP at its inception in 1994, largely due to CIP's comparative advantages in logistical aspects of germplasm exchange, testing and networking among developed and developing countries. Funding to begin the project was identified through GILB in 1996. This experiment provides a unique opportunity for public, private and semi-private institutional cooperation to reduce dependence on pesticides in developing countries.

A planning committee, including GILB Steering Committee members and CIP staff, and an implementation committee of regional participants are involved in planning and execution of the trial. Special agreements have been developed among the developers of the submitted varieties and the participating, or

evaluating, institutions. Activities to date have involved soliciting, selecting and preparing materials for international exchange and the development of standard methodologies for the conduct of field trials in several different countries. The plan also calls for follow-up activities in each country with farmer participatory models for the utilization of promising varieties. Sites have been selected in Latin America (Mexico, Peru, Argentina and Ecuador), Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia) and Asia (China and Indonesia). India has also expressed interest to join the project.

The first set of varieties for SIFT was contributed by European (Poland, Denmark, Austria, Scotland, Holland), Latin American (Argentina) and International (CIP) breeding programs. CIP prepared quarantine planting material for shipment of 23 varieties or advanced clones to the participating countries and the first trial has just been completed in one location—Indonesia. In addition to the expected benefits in terms of scientific cooperation and varietal uptake, it is likely that the infrastructure of SIFT may have spin-off value for additional, complementary objectives of importance to GILB.

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