

Gates funded genetically modified but non-GMO eco-rice rolls out across Asia, Africa

“Green Super Rice,” developed jointly by the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines, is beginning to have a dramatic effect on crop yields.

At some point next year, as much as 1 million hectares in Asia and Africa will be planted in the new strains, which have been produced by intricate crossbreeding and “back crossbreeding” to produce multiple strains that are more resistant to salinity from rising seas, more impervious to drought and disease and can achieve above-average yields without the use of fertilizers or pesticides, making them environmentally safe.

Research to come up with Green Super Rice – which does not involve genetic modification, making its strains acceptable to anti-GMO activists – began in 1998 with the launch of a molecular breeding program originally involving more than 18 countries and 36 institutions.

It involves the painstaking crossbreeding of more than 250 different potential varieties and rice hybrids. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation originally funded the program with an US\$18 million, three year grant. Because the strains have been produced by publicly funded organizations, they do not require payment of royalties, such as those demanded by Monsanto and other commercial companies.

Read full, original article: Rice Revolution: Super strains developed in China and the Philippines hold promise to feed the world's Poor