

13 African countries have biotech crops in different stages of development, but approvals are slow

A new report published by the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA) shows that GM crop cultivation increased by three percent to 189.8 million hectares in 2017.

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“There is great improvement around the world [in crop biotechnology adoption], but Africa is still missing the opportunity. If you look at the share of Africa’s benefit from biotech agriculture, it’s very low, despite the fact that research is ongoing,” said Dr Margaret Karembu, the director of Nairobi-based ISAAA AfriCentre, who presented the report.

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Tanzania has allowed confined field trials of GMOs, carried out at the Makutupora Viticulture Research and Training Centre in Dodoma.

Agriculture researchers in the country have so far developed drought-resistant maize through conventional methods under a region-wide philanthropic project called Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA), which is trying to get climate change-resilient crops into the hands of smallholder farmers.

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13 African countries have some biotech crops in different stages of development; the research involves 12 crops and 14 traits. Governments around the continent are evaluating the research and approving crops that feature stacked traits, like insect-resistance and drought tolerance in corn.

Editor’s note: This article was originally published on a Tanzanian news site. This summary has been edited for clarity.

Read full, original article: [Biotech adoption gathers pace in Tanzania](#)