

Interactive comment on “HESS Opinions “Urgent water challenges are not sufficiently researched”” by P. van der Zaag et al.

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I copy below an announcement by NSF here in the USA. Through a partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is making available \$50 M for research on agricultural challenges in developing countries.

Clearly not meant to support water research, this is the kind of research that we should lobby for in developed countries (US, Europe, Japan etc.) that will similar research in the area of water. However, this will require considerable lobbying efforts.

This will require that research on the kind of issues that van der Zaag talk about as being un-researched must gain acceptance by the best scientists as not only essential societally but also challenging scientifically. But before we can do this, water scientists

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must "unite" around common themes that embrace these and other issues, something we have found difficult to do.

In other words, we must first look inwards to "put our house in order" - are there any volunteers?

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Contact: Dana Topousis dtopousi@nsf.gov 703-292-7750 National Science Foundation

National Science Foundation announces partnership with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation The National Science Foundation (NSF) today announced a nearly \$50 million partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support innovative, solutions to critical agricultural challenges in developing countries. Each organization will provide \$24 million over five years to support a competitive awards program for science research projects that address drought, pests, disease and other serious problems facing small farmers and their families who rely on their crops for their food and income.

The award program will be called BREAD—Basic Research to Enable Agricultural Development—and will support a competitive award program for science research projects that develop innovative approaches and technologies to boost agricultural productivity in developing countries.

"This partnership enables NSF to seek breakthroughs and advances by funding international scientific partnerships aimed at addressing global farming problems such as drought, diseases, poor soil quality, the need for improved germplasm and for new technologies and production practices appropriate to small-scale farmers," said James Collins, NSF assistant director for biological sciences. "We are delighted to collaborate with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, who have shown real commitment and leadership in addressing the challenges facing farmers in developing countries, and

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in identifying researchers in these countries who might collaborate in these research efforts."

The NSF will manage the program using its peer-review process in consultation with the Gates Foundation. NSF funds will be used to support research carried out in eligible U.S. academic institutions, such as non-profit research organizations, including museums, research laboratories and professional societies. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's funds will be used to support eligible international partners via sub-awards from the U.S. awardees.

"This partnership with NSF is an exciting opportunity to tap into the most innovative, transformative ideas the global scientific community can offer", said Rob Horsch, deputy director of the agricultural development initiative at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "We believe the time is right to increase our investments in scientific research with the potential to create new pathways out of poverty for the millions of smallholder farmers in the developing world who support their families on less than \$1U.S. a day."

BREAD Program solicitations will be non-prescriptive, inviting a broad scope of applications. A solicitation for funding proposals under the BREAD program will be available in early June on the BREAD Web site, which will be accessible through http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5338&org=BIO. The site will include more details about the program, such as a Dear Colleague letter from Collins and information about outreach workshops that will be webcast.

"This is a unique opportunity to promote international collaborations among scientists from the U.S. and those in developed and developing world countries. We aim to challenge members of the global scientific community to come together to think about how their own areas of research expertise might be applied to the myriad of problems facing global agriculture today," said Deborah Delmer, the newly appointed BREAD program director at NSF.

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"What's truly special about the BREAD program is that it allows NSF to be involved in international research in a new way," said Jane Silverthorne, deputy director for NSF's biological infrastructure division. "The partnership is a great marriage between NSF's peer review process and the Gates Foundation's knowledge of the global science marketplace."

This funding program is part of the Gates Foundation's Agricultural Development initiative, which is working with a wide range of partners in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia to provide millions of small farmers in the developing world with tools and opportunities to boost their yields, increase their incomes, and build better lives for themselves and their families. The foundation is working to strengthen the entire agricultural value chain—from seeds and soil to farm management and market access—so that progress against hunger and poverty is sustainable over the long term.

Interactive comment on Hydrol. Earth Syst. Sci. Discuss., 6, 1411, 2009.

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