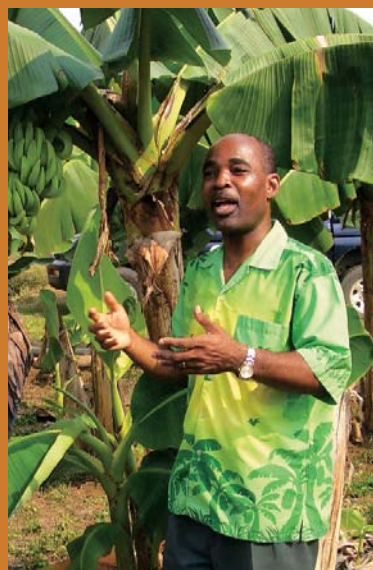


Globe-trotting hybrids

A plantain hybrid, FHIA-21. A. Javellena



Breeders whose creations have been tested in field trials: the late Phil Rowe of FHIA (left) and Kodjo Tomekpe, current Director General of CARBAP (right). D. Jones, R. Markham, INIBAP



results came out, the recommendation was made to release two dessert types, FHIA-01 and FHIA-02, and one cooking banana hybrid, FHIA-03. Since then, these three hybrids have been distributed to more than 50 countries.

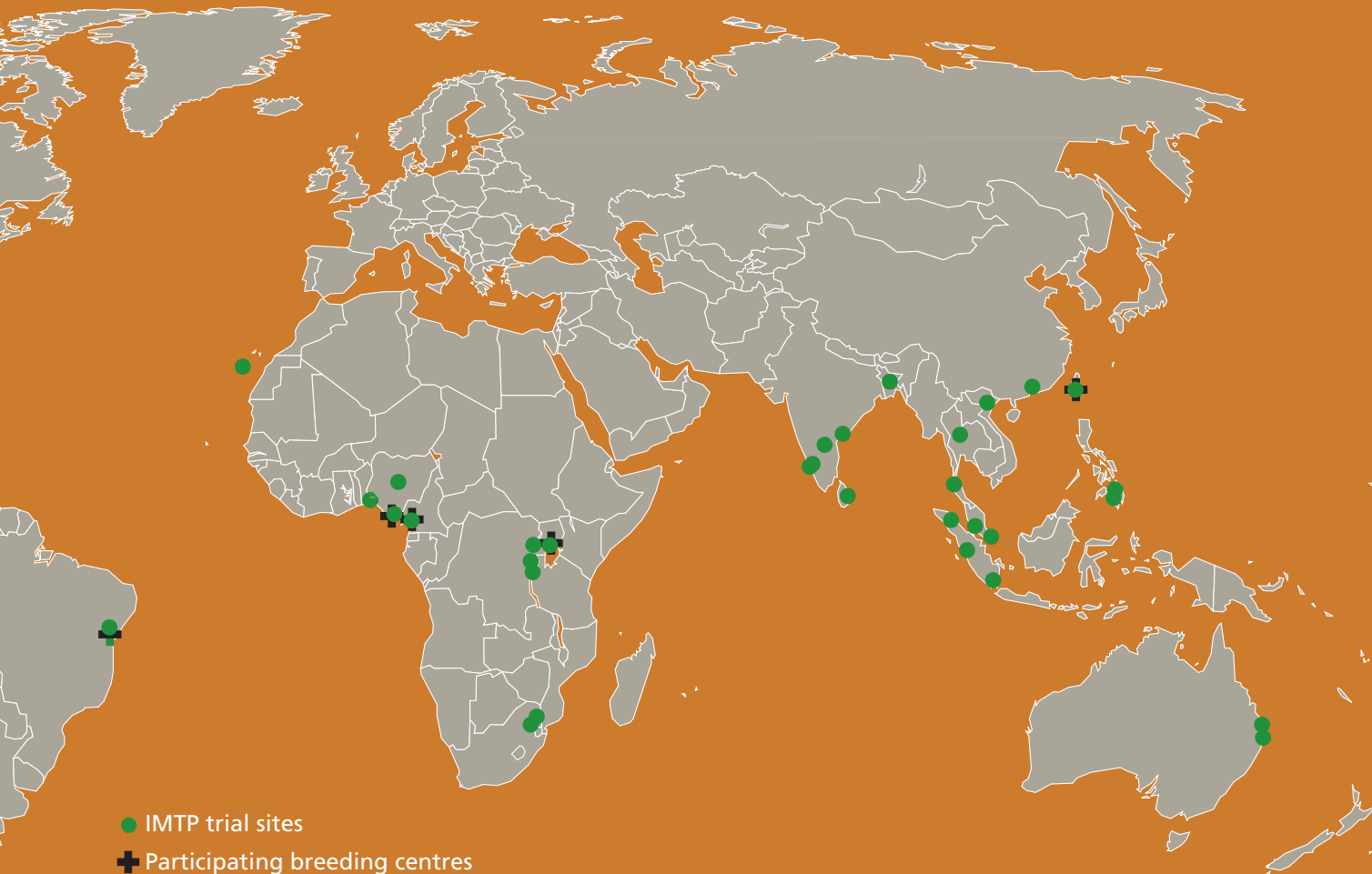
A second phase started in 1996. On this occasion, the hybrids were evaluated against two more diseases, Sigatoka disease (also known as yellow Sigatoka) and fusarium wilt, and two more breeding programmes, those of the *Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuária* (EMBRAPA) and the *Instituto de Investigaciones en Viandas Tropicales* (INIVIT), contributed some of their new varieties. The Taiwan Banana Research Institute (TBRI) also offered somaclonal variants for evaluation. The number of testing sites increased to 37, even though the participating institutes now had to finance their trials. The results singled out FHIA-23 and SH-3436-9 as the most tolerant to black leaf streak. The hybrid with the best overall performance was FHIA-23, although GCTCV-119 was also commended.

At present, 25 countries are participating in the third phase. In addition to FHIA and TBRI, the International Institute of



Visiting an IMTP trial in India. G. Orjeda, INIBAP





Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the *Centre Africain de Recherches sur Bananiers et Plantains* (CARBAP) and the *Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement* (CIRAD) have also volunteered hybrids for evaluation. For the first time, the partners were able to choose between carrying out an in-depth study involving epidemiological and ecological research, and a simplified performance trial against specific diseases. As in previous phases, partners used shared methodologies to ensure that results can be compared across sites.

One of the toughest tests hybrids have to pass is having their taste compared to that of local cultivars.
 T. Hemelings, KCDP

