"The third Global Science Conference on Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA)" is part of a research initiative which started in October 2010 in The Netherlands to simultaneously address the themes of agriculture, food security and climate change. Two scientific conferences have been held so far, at the University of Wageningen in 2011 and at the University of California, Davis in 2013. Montpellier 2015 is the third of these conferences. Its objective is to update the CSA science basis.

Two other conferences on the “policy side” of CSA were held in Hanoi (2012) and in Johannesburg (2013). These have led to the process known as the "Global Alliance on CSA" whose goal is to accelerate the implementation of climate-smart agriculture in identifying promising approaches and encouraging the incorporation of principles in the corresponding policies and public funding mechanisms. The Alliance has been formally launched at the United Nations summit on climate change in September 2014 in New York.