



Highlights
IITA Board Meeting
Kalambo, DRC
11, 13 & 14 May, 2016

- The IITA Board met in Bukavu, DRC from 11 to 14 May. They were joined in the first session of the Board and the Program Committee meetings by the scientists and senior managers from the Kalambo Station.
- The meetings were preceded by field visits to the Murhesa Research and Training Center, the Katana Cassava Processing Center, the Kalambo Research Station and the IKYA Youth Center and retail outlet. Trustees were impressed with the ongoing work at Murhesa on characterization of yam germplasm, banana macro-propagation, cassava nutrient management, youth maize production and biofortified bean multiplication under HarvestPlus. The Katana Processing Center was a good example of how IITA's initial support and training has enabled the development of a village enterprise through the processing and sale of cassava flour channeled through the Youth Agripreneurs to generate income for the community and provide a market for 740 farming households.

- The Board Chair reported on the results of the recent meeting in Rome on the CGIAR transition and the decision by donors and centers to establish a two tier system of governance, the Systems Council consisting mainly of donors, a System Management Board consisting mostly of centers with a Systems Management Office run by an Executive Director responsible to the System Management Board for executing his/her functions. Under these new arrangements there will be only one CGIAR office to be located in Montpellier and considerably more interaction between the different entities of the system. All centers have been asked to nominate candidates for the System Management Board and IITA will follow with a nomination.
- In the DG's report he referred to the changes in the CGIAR and what they mean for the centers. Under the new system, IITA will continue to adhere to the Strategic Research Framework and Consortium Research Program, Phase 2 portfolio, covering the systems research and site integration niches, aligning with CGIAR priority countries and engagement in the System Management Board. Given the uncertainty over centralized funding, the major focus will be on bilateral funding. Improving operational efficiency by increasing investment in support services, such as human resources, automating finance and enhancing strategic capacity, integrating ICT to support the mega projects that IITA is engaging in; strengthening areas such as biosciences, capacity development, mechanization and seeking the opportunities for linking Research for Development (R4D) to delivery and impact—the role of ARIs, BIP and Youth Agripreneurs, documenting the progress made on measuring IITA's key performance indicators and responding to Africa's needs.
- The Board approved the revised IITA Organogram to include the clearing house for implementing the African Development Bank project, "Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation," (TAAT) a position for site integration reporting to the Deputy Director General I (Research for Development) (DDG-R4), the re-designation of Partnerships and Capacity Development to Partnerships for Delivery to reflect the change to delivery partnerships, the transfer of ICT, Communications, Project Administration and Project Development under Research for Development and building the capabilities of the hubs to operate as self-managing units organized to deliver impact and covering the range of functions from finance to advocacy and resource mobilization.
- The Board agreed that the synergies with IITA's vision make TAAT an excellent opportunity for implementing IITA's strategy and also provide a service as the executing agent in partnership with governments and a range of partners to scale up the use of agricultural technologies for agricultural transformation in Africa so that "Africa can feed itself and transform its economies by targeting agriculture as a source of wealth and job creation. " They recognized the enormity of the task ahead with TAAT and other mega projects in the pipeline that IITA will be undertaking in the future. It agreed with the DG of the importance of ensuring the human capital requirements are addressed and the risks are evaluated and identified and the mitigating actions are in place.
- The DDG (P4D) gave an overview of activities under the former Partnerships and Capacity Development, as well as the activities of the BIP and the performance of the four businesses and the Youth Agripreneurs. Looking forward, Partnerships for Delivery in addition to managing the BIP, Capacity Development and the Youth Agripreneurs, will be responsible for (1) overseeing

and coordinating the ENABLE Youth project and all IITA youth projects; (2) implementing and managing development and delivery projects—the TAAT, World Bank and IFAD projects; (3) coordinating delivery of IITA R4D and supporting delivery components of all IITA projects; (4) providing support to the Nigeria Zero Hunger Initiative led by President Obasanjo on behalf of WFP; (5) establishing the mechanization office to develop and manage IITA’s mechanization programs and projects.

- Based on the recommendations of the Audit and Finance Committee, the Board :
- Adopted the 2015 audited financial statements.
- Requested management to ensure that the external audit issues identified in the management letter are fully addressed
- Recommended improvement in supervisory controls at headquarters and at stations
- Adopted the 2016 operating budget of \$144.622 m, revenue of \$144.372 M, and surplus of \$0.750 m.
- Approved the borrowing policy
- Requested management to prepare on optimum reserve levels paper that specifically meets the needs of IITA.
- The Human Resource Committee reviewed progress against established targets for the three main functions of HR considered the most critical for achieving the Institute’s mission: (1) attracting the best talent; (2) Creating an inclusive environment where people thrive and grow and engage in fulfilling work; (3) ensure HR systems and processes effectively and efficiently support people. Overall results indicate that IITA has made good progress against those indicators that were measured; however, in the area of gender equality a lot of work has yet to be done. Indicators on HR systems and processes will be evaluated in 2017. Other discussion items in the HR Committee addressed the specific action to be taken by HR to improve work life balance, career advancement, professional development and increasing the representation of women in all IITA staff categories. It also reviewed the action taken to address the recommendations of the HR conducted by the CG Internal Audit Unit.
- On the recommendation of the HR Committee the Board approved the Institute Code of Conduct that provides guidelines to staff and all associates on standards of professional conduct and ethical choices to be made in the performance of their duties and in the course of their relationship with the institute.
- The Program Committee (PC) had an excellent meeting with animated and interesting in depth discussions. The PC Chair commended the DDG R4D for the preparation and her clear and precise report and thanked the Directors, Bernard Vanlauwe and Victor Manyong for their presentations on the key performance indicators. The reports have been very useful to the Committee to be informed of the thinking and the logic behind their work. Considering that the work is cutting edge and donors are very interested in it, the PC strongly recommends that it is published in scientific journals in partnership with an external organization or organizations working on similar issues and could also be considered as an output of the 50th Anniversary of IITA.
- Dr. B. M. Prasanna, Director of the Maize CRP and staff member of CIMMYT (International Wheat Improvement Center) attended the Program Committee meeting and gave a

presentation on the Maize CRP – achievements to date and the strategy for CRP Phase 2. He recognized the close working relationship between CIMMYT and IITA and their combined achievements as well as their commitment to cooperate and overcome obstacles that occur from time to time. He also made a convincing plea for strengthening breeding programs and seed systems.

- As points for consideration, the PC referred to the need to strengthen the publication culture at IITA, to maintain the Institute’s comparative advantage in systems research and to extend it to CRPs where it currently does not feature and also integrate the delivery activities in IITA’s Program Committee meeting in future. In November 2016, R4D Week will be replaced by P4D Week.
- At the recommendation of the Governance Committee, the Board approved the appointment of three new Trustees who will begin their terms in November 2016. Also at the recommendation of the Governance Committee, given the rapid turnover of members in the last year before the end of their terms for both health and personal reasons, the Board approved the extension of four Trustees by 6 to 12 months giving time for new trustees to become familiar with the issues of the Board and the ongoing changes in the CGIAR.
- The Chair concluded the meeting by bidding farewell to Prof. Olusola Oyewole and Lalitha Vaidyanthan who were leaving the Board at the end of their terms and by thanking the staff of the Kalambo Station for their excellent arrangements for the meetings as well as the field trip.