

## **IITA Board of Trustees Meeting, 25 and 27 November 2015**

**Ibadan, Nigeria**

### **Report of the Board to the IITA Staff Assembly**

It is great pleasure for the IITA board of trustees to be meeting at the IITA Campus in Ibadan during R4D week. We had established a tradition of having our fall meeting in Ibadan, but due to the Ebola issue last year, we were unable to meet here. This year, most board members attended the first two days of R4D week providing with us the opportunity to get to know the IITA scientists from across Africa and learn more about the research underway. We were impressed with what we heard and I will say some more about this later in my presentation.

The CGIAR

The board met from Wednesday to today to carry out its mandate to assess that:

- 1) The vision, mission and objectives of IITA are aligned with the goals of the CGIAR;
- 2) IITA has programs and plans in place to translate its mission into end products;
- 3) IITA is managed effectively by its board appointed DG; and
- 4) The future health of IITA is not jeopardized by exposure to imprudent risks.

To accomplish this, the board reviewed and discussed presentations and reports on the human resources, finance and audit, and scientific programs of IITA.

From the report and discussion on Human Resources, the board reviewed the staff satisfaction survey and were pleased to note that, by and large, staff at the institute have a high degree of satisfaction with their work and workplace. There was a considerable improvement in satisfaction in most of the categories from the same survey that was conducted 2013. There are still some areas that need improvement, and an audit of HR identified some other areas that need some attention, but the HR unit has a plan to continue fine tuning procedures and addressing these concerns.

Under audit, the board reviewed reports from the IITA Internal Audit Unit, the CGIAR internal audit group, the external auditors and several documents related to risk management. The audits covered areas such as finances, support services, programs and stations. As in any large organization, whether public, private or NGO, ongoing audits are required to insure the smooth running of operations and reduce risk. Plans have been elaborated to improve a number of activities identified by the audits. The fraud that occurred at the southern hub was comprehensively reviewed by the audit, and the auditors are satisfied that additional financial controls instituted by management at all IITA locations will prevent a recurrence of this type of fraud.

The Director of Finance reported on the 2015 finances to date and presented a budget for 2016, which was approved by the board. There were two significant cuts to the W1/W2 funds for CRPs allocated by the Consortium Office in 2015. This occurred across all centers, leading to large staff layoffs at many centers. For the most part IITA has been able to avoid staff reductions, through sound financial management and the significant increase in W3/bilateral funding achieved through the fundraising efforts of the DG, based on the excellent science done at the Institute. IITA has a much smaller

percentage of its budget under W1/W2 funds than many other centers. By year end, the Institute's budget should show a small surplus which will be used to continue replenishing our reserves, which are still not up to the level mandated by the CGIAR. For 2016, the approved revenue budget is just over \$139,000 US. Note that this makes IITA the number 1 CG center in terms of revenue.

On the program side, we heard the latest progress on IITA research programs which support the goal of lifting 11 million Africans out of poverty and restoring 7.5 million ha to sustainable land use by 2020. One of the issues that the board has raised in previous meetings, is how to measure progress towards these goals. We heard the latest research on the development of methodology to assess this and noted that progress has already been achieved towards these goals. These methodologies have been published in the scientific literature and will aid other research institutes in assessing their goals. The DDG research updated us on the progress of proposals for the CRP second call, which consists of 12 CRPs. The Humid Tropics CRP, led by IITA, will not be part of the CRP 2 portfolio, however, much of the work will be incorporated into the RTB and MAIZE CRPs in flagships led by IITA. The new CRPs will start in 2016.

The Business Innovation Platform was established about two years ago to facilitate the utilization of IITA's technologies. In 2015, large amounts of aflasafe were produced and distributed particularly to Zambia. Demand for aflasafe across Africa is increasing with production facilities similar to ours being built, or planned in other countries. In addition, increasing amounts of NoduMax are being requested. Recently a CEO for BIP was hired.

So, in the assessment of the Board,

- 1) The mission, objectives and programs are aligned with CGIAR goals and will continue to be aligned in the new CRP portfolio.
- 2) The institute has plans in place to transform its goals into products. The success of the BIP is a good example of this
- 3) The Institute is managed effectively by its DG and his management team.
- 4) The Institute has not subjected itself to serious risks and has instituted additional controls in its operations.

The Board is proud to be involved in this dynamic institute and is committed to work with management and staff to insure that IITA continues to be the leading agricultural research institute in Africa.