

Gabon explores areas of partnership with IITA

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Gabon, His Excellency Emmanuel Issoze-Ngondet, is exploring a partnership with [IITA](#) in the area of youth engagement in agriculture.

The Prime Minister, who met with a delegation from IITA led by Director General [Nteranya Sanginga](#) on 8 September in Kigali, Rwanda, highlighted some of the challenges facing the agriculture sector in Gabon

and wants IITA to use its expertise to assist the country in addressing some of its challenges.

He pointed out that young people in Gabon have shown little interest in the agricultural sector, hence the sector is dominated by ageing men and women who operate at minimum scale. This, according to him, is a result of young people's mentality that they cannot make a livelihood in agriculture. He added that the country has come to realize that it needs to act fast in ensuring that the youth change their mindset to "secure the agriculture sector."

"We need to convince the young people that they can make a livelihood outside of administrative/government jobs, but because they are impatient and agriculture requires a lot of patience, they run away from it. It is important to engage the youth and encourage them to return to the land, because that is the foundation of development," he stated.

Speaking on how to engage youth in agriculture, Sanginga explained about



L-R: The Gabon Minister of Agriculture, Biendi Maganga-Moussavou; the Prime Minister, Emmanuel Issoze-Ngondet, and IITA DG Nteranya Sanginga.

Continued on page 2

MasterCard Foundation receives IITA delegation in Kigali

IITA Director General [Nteranya Sanginga](#) led a delegation from the Institute to the Rwanda office of the [MasterCard Foundation](#) on 7 September to explore areas of partnership with the Foundation.

While receiving the [IITA](#) team at their office in Kigali, the country representative, Alamayehu Konde, expressed appreciation for the work done by IITA with the youth in Africa. He said that the Foundation has a target to reach out to 18 million youth by 2030 and is willing to partner

with Africa-based organizations in achieving this. He added that the Foundation intends to work with the countries to define their needs, leveraging on challenges and available opportunities.

Responding on behalf of IITA, Sanginga expressed his delight

about the Foundation's work and the approach of working with Africa-based organizations, evident in the opening of the first African office in Kigali. He

reiterated the Institute's commitment to work with the Foundation in agrifood and agribusiness opportunities for young people.

The MasterCard Foundation office in Kigali is its first operational office in Africa.



MasterCard Foundation country representative, Mr Alamayehu Konde, taking IITA management around the new MasterCard office in Kigali.

Gabon explores areas of partnership with IITA Continued from page 1

the IITA Youth-in-Agribusiness model. He related how IITA started with a pilot group of about 30 young people and changed their orientation about agriculture. He said that although this took some time through the incubation program, many of them now own and operate private agribusiness enterprises.

He added that the program, which started with a small group in Nigeria, is now being replicated across Africa.

Sanginga also gave an overview of research at IITA, including recent developments in cassava and the work that IITA is currently carrying out in Togo. He expressed the need to get Gabon engaged and the need for their financial support. He added that IITA is ready to assist and has the technical resources to start supporting agricultural development in the country.

The Head of the TAAT Clearing House, Mpoko Bokanga, also gave an overview of the TAAT program.

Gabon's Minister of Agriculture, Biendi Maganga-Moussavou, who was also part of the meeting, was very excited about partnering with IITA and TAAT, especially regarding the youth program. He emphasized the need for providing technical training for the youth agribusiness programs.



Group photograph of IITA officials and staff, and the Gabon government cabinet.

IITA receives award at Nigerian Risk Awards

[IITA](#) was among the awardees at the 2018 Nigerian Risk Awards (NRA) held on 6 September in Lekki, Lagos. The Institute was represented by members of its Risk Management Committee (RMC) including Rasheed Fagbenro, Kayode Awobajo, and [Sylvia Oyinlola](#).



Jubilant IITA representatives talking to NRA moderator, L–R: Kayode Awobajo, Sylvia Oyinlola, and Rasheed Fagbenro.

Speaking on the selection and assessment process, NRA co-chair Tunde Popoola noted that this year, the award recipients were able to provide evidence of implementation and demonstrate actual value provided by the organizations' risk management programs. He said: "This year's awards recognize organizations that have successfully integrated and that promote risk management culture and practices. The decision-making

process is merit driven and a new metric was introduced to attest the evidence of success made by organizations."

IITA won the award in the nonprofit category amid high commendations from the panel of judges.

A member of the panel of judges and Director of KB Risk Consulting Limited in the UK, Kate Boothroyd said:

"I believe this is the first time that IITA has entered the awards. The organization has shown its clear commitment to risk management and provided evidence of the level of detail and effort that they have put into their process, framework, and people. Well done!"

The panel also noted the hard work and dedication of IITA to risk management that has made the Institute stand out, pointing to the fact that the RMC has influenced colleagues selflessly to reach the organization's risk management and safety goals. IITA was also commended on its efforts to ensure participation of all stakeholders in the process.

In his congratulatory message to the RMC, IITA Director General [Nteranya Sanginga](#) applauded the work of the committee: "The hard work and dedication of you all has brought this honor to IITA. The IITA Board and Management appreciate the good work that your committee is doing to help strengthen IITA to be able to deliver on its mandate."

"We will support you fully in carrying out this key function. And I personally encourage you to continue your pursuit of cutting edge and excellent risk management administration in IITA," he concluded.

The other awardees at the Risk Summit were the Lagos State Emergency Management Agency (LASEMA), Lagos State Safety Commission (LSSC), Association of Enterprise Risk Management Professionals (AERMP), Dangote Group, Forte Oil, UBA Pensions, and Ex-governor of Ondo State Dr Olusegun Mimiko.

Events

- **SEMEAR review, planning, and annual meeting**, 17–20 September, Nampula, Mozambique
- **Basic bioinformatics workshop**, 19–21 September, Ibadan, Nigeria
- **Hands-on basic molecular biology techniques**, 24–28 September, Ibadan, Nigeria
- **Training on "Cassava virus diagnostics to support virus elimination at KEPHIS"**, 24–27 September, Germany
- **Big Data Convention 2018 "Decoding the Data Ecosystem"**, 3–5 October, Nairobi, Kenya

Got a story to share?

Please email it with photos and captions every Wednesday to iita-news@cgiar.org or Katherine Lopez (k.lopez@cgiar.org) and Uzoma Agha (u.agha@cgiar.org) for headquarters and Western Africa, Catherine Njuguna (c.njuguna@cgiar.org) for Eastern Africa, and David Ngome (d.ngome@cgiar.org) for Central Africa.

Forest Center commemorates meeting of Nigerian conservation body with tree planting ceremony

[IITA](#) and the [Nigerian Conservation Foundation](#) (NCF) have long-standing relationships, covered by a memorandum of understanding, to strengthen conservation activities of the [IITA Forest Center](#) (FC) in Ibadan. Thus, the National Executive Council (NEC) of NCF held their board meeting at IITA Headquarters, Ibadan, on 6 September to discuss issues relating to biodiversity conservation and forest restoration.

According to the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO), Nigeria lost an average of 47.5% of its forest cover between 1990 and 2010. In an effort to address this situation, the FC organized a tree planting ceremony to commemorate the NEC meeting. The ceremony was attended by IITA management staff and guests from the Oyo State Ministry of Natural Resources, University of Ibadan, Commonwealth Forestry Association of Nigeria, College of Forestry, Ibadan,

Olive Branches School, and Centre for Environment, Renewable Natural Resources Management and Research.

Speaking on behalf of IITA, [Hilde Koper-Limbourg](#), Deputy Director General, Corporate Services, welcomed the participants, saying, "It is a great honor to have you in our midst. I am very pleased to see that you are interested in piloting the protection and conservation of our ecosystem, and I encourage you

all to synergize efforts to preserve the full range of Nigeria's biodiversity."

Chief Izoma Asiodu, President, Board of Trustees, NCF, appreciated IITA for hosting their meeting. "IITA has not only dedicated its resources in the preservation and restoration of forest cover but has also worked with partners to ensure that Nigeria's forest cover is not completely depleted. I must confess, there are few places like IITA in Nigeria!"

Commending IITA for its conservation agenda, [Chief Ede Dafinone](#), NEC Chairman said, "Based on the development that I have seen in IITA, it is obvious that knowledge exists in the institute. I congratulate IITA for its level of expertise, especially in the area of nature conservation." The Founder of the Ogbudu Conservation Center, Onari Duke, expressed her deepest conviction that the continued information and resource sharing between NCF and IITA "will reinforce and deepen our commitment to promote the conservation of natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations." She also emphasized the need for the development of a comprehensive reforestation strategy.

FC Manager Adewale Awoyemi briefed participants on the center's activities and efforts on forest restoration. He highlighted the importance of sustainable development while emphasizing the need to enhance biodiversity conservation and education.

In his vote of thanks, the Director General of NCF, [Dr Muhtari Aminu-Kano](#), applauded the participants for their support and also encouraged them to work in their different capacities to ensure that forest cover is restored in Nigeria.

Thereafter, participants proceeded to the IITA FC Tree Heritage Park where the NEC members planted nine indigenous tree species, three of which are listed as threatened on the International Union for Nature Conservation Red List of Threatened Species. During the planting, FC interns read out a brief description of each tree.

The ceremony also featured a tour around IITA and the FC nursery, bird watching, and a musical rendition by students of Olive Branches School, who are members of the FC School Conservation Club.



NCF DG, Muhtari Aminu-Kano, about to plant a tree during the tree planting exercise at IITA Tree Heritage Park.



Group photograph of all the NEC members and the students from Olive Branches School at IITA-Ibadan.