

**IITA Board of Trustees Meeting  
April 26-28, 2010  
Ibadan, Nigeria  
Decisions**

**Succession Plans**

The Board was pleased to see the succession plans in place for the key positions at IITA including that of the Chief Financial Officer. Based on a recommendation from the Internal Auditor, the Audit Committee had proposed that succession plans for the next level down should be developed and the Executive Committee had requested that succession plans be in place for all retiring staff. Some specific comments related and/or approvals were as follows:

- Concern related to the succession of the Internal Auditor by the Senior Auditor. Being currently assigned to operations that would be subject to audit, presented a conflict of interest situation that would have to be taken into account if succession by the Senior Auditor became necessary during the period.
- It approved the plans proposed for Board Secretary succession.
- In the case of the DDG (R4D) it proposed a modification of the succession plans indicating permanent replacement would need to be considered within a 3-month rather than a 5-month period.

**Implementation of IITA Strategy 2011-2020**

Due to lack of time the Board subsequently decided to postpone further discussion of the Strategy and the elements suggested to the Board meeting in the fall.

**Consortium Constitution**

By unanimous vote the IITA Board agreed to join the Consortium of the CGIAR and requested the Board Chair to sign the Constitution dated 9 March 2010, and circulated to the centers, on behalf of IITA. It also discussed and agreed to elements of a letter to be written by the Chair providing a record of IITA's views on the changes and also gives a broad overview of IITA's position in and contribution to African agricultural development in the last forty years that signals the areas of work that IITA hopes to continue to be involved in under the new arrangements. The letter is appended as Appendix 1

**Mega Programs**

Trustees advised IITA to pursue leading roles in MP 1 (Agriculture Systems for the Poor and Vulnerable) and in particular for the sub program under it on Integrated agricultural systems for the Humid Tropics, and on the MP3 cluster on Root Tubers, Bananas and Plantains. Some members also recommended that IITA pursue a leading role in MP4 – Agriculture, Nutrition and Health. The Board advised IITA to position itself to play a significant role in other MPs where the management considered it logical to do so, based on resources and competency strength as well as comparative advantage and synergy with other centers. IITA should also be proactive in tapping into its existing networks and muster the political support that would assist in its bid for MPs. Board members were also urged to assist in this regard.

**Business Plan**

The Board requested IITA to develop a 10 to 15 page Business Plan that linked all its activities and how they will be resourced from a personnel and financial point of view. The Board considered it to

be an essential document for the Board at a time of change in Institute leadership and also a tool for attracting board members, staff and partners.

Given the number of demands on management at the present time, the Board authorized the DG to hire a business plan expert to develop the plan so that it would be available for discussion at the October 2010 Board Meeting. The Business Plan should help the institute to link its financial reporting and structures to programs, their outcomes, goals, objectives and time frames.

### **Communication Strategy**

The Board requested the Institute to reconsider its decision to remove the tag line and core message that accompanied the IITA logo. In its view the tag line is vital for communicating the core business of IITA to the outside world and requested that a new or revised message be developed for presentation to the Board in October 2010.

It also requested management to provide the Board in October with the budget allocation for communication activities at IITA, noting that all these costs were currently part of the R4D program budgets.

With respect to the strategy the Board requested management to ensure that the communication strategy is fully harmonized with the Institute Strategic Plan 2011 to 2020 and that an implementation plan with milestones and timeframe be provided to the Board at its fall meeting.

### **Executive Committee Report**

#### **IITA/Lukas Brader Scholarship Program**

The Executive Committee selected a student for the next scholarship proposed by Wageningen and endorsed by IITA Research for Development. A second student was also proposed and with an equally good Phd proposal that could also be supported provided adequate funds were available in the scholarship fund

#### **CCER on Management and Administration**

The Executive Committee discussed again the value of holding a CCER on management and administration and decided that in terms of timing, it might be more appropriate to hold it just before a new Chair and new DG were in place in early 2011.

#### **Board Awards**

On the recommendation of the Board Chair, the Executive Committee agreed to establish Board awards to recognize outstanding scientist, support staff, team and best publication. Terms of reference would be developed by the Board Chair the DDG (R4D).

### **Finance Committee Recommendations**

The Board approved the three issues brought to it for attention:

1. (a) The Institute should keep a close eye on restricted versus unrestricted funding in the context of the CGIAR reform to ensure that provision was made to recover the institutional support costs presently covered by unrestricted funding; (b) that at present a disproportionate share of personnel costs (63.2%) were covered by unrestricted funding and action should be taken as early as possible given the upcoming reform, to transfer these costs to restricted/megaprogram funding.

2. Over the last two years, IITA had taken a more aggressive approach to investments of its cash in order to maximize the return. IITA had invested in medical receivables – US based instruments—with two companies, ARS and IPA. One investment had been ongoing for a year and the other less than a year. After some problems that eventually were sorted out, the IPA investment was assured to achieve a 15% rate of return, paying out interest of \$750,000 over the year and, in general, had been a good investment for IITA. On the investment with ARS, management had noted inadequate communications from ARS and slow payment of interest, matters which had yet to be resolved satisfactorily. The Finance Committee recommended as follows:
  - a. To request Dean Lewis to work with ARS to resolve the issues and ensure a positive outcome and payment of the interest and full recovery of the principal of \$10.0 million;
  - b. That an amount not to exceed \$5.0 be reinvested in IPA but to discontinue the investment ARS
  - c. To grant authority to Dean Lewis to follow up on alternative investments and provide a report to the Board on this and other investment related issues at the fall 2010 meeting.
3. The Finance Committee noticed that capital expenditure for 2010 was not accompanied by a detail of planned expenses that incorporated the purchase of land in Tanzania for the expansion of the station, plans for the new station in Zambia, implications of the implementation of the IT strategy, etc. Recognizing that a capital expenditure plan should be a component of the Business Plan, it requested management to provide the Finance Committee with a capital expenditure plan for a 5 year period starting in 2010 in the context of the draft business plan (Page 11) that linked all program activities to capital expenditure in a concrete way.

#### **Review of the Recommendations from the External Review of IITA**

1. A plan for how soil fertility will be addressed by the Institute should be presented to the Board at its fall meeting. (Recommendation 7). This is particularly important as IITA plans to take leadership for the MP on humid tropics. It is not a requirement that the comprehensive summary of past soil fertility work as requested by the EPMR was completed by this time, only a plan for how the Institute expected to address it the time frame for completing it.
2. That recommendation 9 on the recruitment of a biometrician should be cross referenced to the Crop improvement CCER recommendation on the need for having Institute capacity in bioinformatics noting that these were separate positions. Steps should also be taken to address the CCER recommendation on bioinformatics.
3. Recommendation 10 – Eliminate the contradiction that states implementation is both ongoing and achieved.
4. Recommendation 11 – This was an area of continuous concern about the knowledge of programs and ability of the Board to give strategic guidance to the programs. Therefore the recommendation should be recorded as ongoing rather than achieved.

#### **Innovation African Agricultural Research Park**

Yet in the very early stages, the Board agreed to carry the innovation park idea to the next level and established clear goals, targets and objectives. It recommended that a subcommittee of the Board consisting of the Board Chair, Trine Hvoslef-Eide, Dean Lewis, Tom Medlycott, the representative of the Government of Nigeria, and the DG guide the process to the next level.

The Board recognized that the initiative would be a major undertaking and had the potential to distract the Institute from its core business. It therefore suggested that if the decision was taken to

move the project to the next level, the Board should consider recruiting a person specifically responsible for the task.

During this sensitive period in the CGIAR and to avoid any misinterpretation of IITA's reasons for embarking on the project, it was felt that the matter was best treated openly, but downplayed until the goals, targets and objectives were clearly defined.

### **Gender Strategy**

The HR Committee recommended and the Board approved **the** Gender Strategy pending the HR Committee's review of the additions on implementation and monitoring. A revised—Committee approved Gender Strategy will be circulated to the Board before the next Board meeting to be approved by the Board via email

### **Program Committee Report**

The Board approved the Program Committee Report:

#### **Post Conflict Interventions**

The PC requests a report on recent Posts Conflict Interventions at the October 2010 meeting of the Program Committee.

#### **PC Recommendations**

1. **Banana and Plantain Strategy.** In general, the PC was very pleased at the quality of the paper presented. They asked IITA Management to revise the paper to sharpen the message as reflected in the PC discussion (eliminating the process oriented references to the Banana2008 conference, and using more precise IITA production data rather than general FAO statistics), as well as to think about a communications strategy to target relevant audiences. Furthermore, the PC recommended exploring alternatives for the implementation agency. The revised strategy and implementation options will be provided to the PC for their October 2010 meeting.
2. **Social Science Stripe Review.** The PC requested for its next meeting a report that provides IITA's response to the stripe review recommendations in terms of how social scientists will incorporate the recommendations in their activities, how the recommendations are being addressed in the development of the mega programs, and the linkage of IITA social scientists to the various programs.
3. **The NRM Strategy** read more as a description of the status quo than a forward looking strategy. Using the Humid Forest megaprogram as starting point, management was requested to develop a NRM strategy for the humid zone for the next meeting with the view that it could be used as a building block for developing the overall NRM strategy for the Institute.
4. **CCER on Agriculture and Health.** The PC requests (1) a prioritized implementation plan for CCER recommendations including their implications for resources; (2) a perspective of IITA's position in the wider landscape of health (medical, food industry, etc) and its linkages with other stakeholders as background for a discussion at the next PC meeting on how IITA planned to integrate its limited resources in the wider sector activities. The PC supports the CCER recommendation to establish an ethics committee on research with human subjects, and requests a report to the Board how this is being incorporated in the Institute's risk management strategy.
5. **CCER on Crop Improvement.** The PC concluded (1) that there was no need for a new biotechnology/GMO policy at the present time but noted the necessity to keep a close eye on the political environment and make changes if the environment changed; (2) The PC

recommended that management develops a prioritized implementation plan that included implications for resources that also reflected on seed system evaluation including partnerships; (3) It recommended that the IP policy be placed on the agenda of the full Board meeting.

6. **SP-IPM.** The PC suggested that the reporting format for the SP-IPM should follow the agreed upon format for the other IITA programs.

#### **Format of Updates on Programs**

The Board discussed a reporting format for programs. The formats presently in use did not provide the information that was needed for evaluating programs or getting a good understanding of the disciplinary strengths and weaknesses and seeing the progress over time. For the future the Board proposed:

- a. That future program updates, generally limited to around 2 pages and presented to the PC/Board at each meeting will include: (1) a paragraph on the state of the art, objectives and strategic outputs, progress and plan of activities for the year, achievements against planned output targets for the past year, any deviations from stated objectives, its resources both human and financial, including forward looking funding plans in terms of proposals (pending, approved, rejected).
- b. Once agreed to, all programs would use a uniform format for presentation.
- c. IITA's R4D staff would develop a template incorporating the suggestions made by the Board and send it to the PC Chair for approval.
- d. Henri Maraite also agreed to think about information that he would like to capture in the template that would provide the board the information it needed to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the disciplines and share it with the Board before providing the information to Management.

#### **Forthcoming CCERS**

According to the Board agreed schedule, the next CCERS to be undertaken by IITA were:

- Natural Resource Management
- Post Harvest including processing and commercialization
- Market Research
- Impact Research with focus on the role of the Opportunities and Threats Program.

There was also strong support on the Board for taking a value chain approach and focusing the Post Harvest and Markets on specific crops starting with cassava and eventually covering both cocoa and bananas and plantains.

With the suggestion that the NRM CCER should be the first in the series of CCERS to be commissioned by IITA (starting in 2011), the Board agreed that the topic of CCERS including the suggestion to follow a value chain approach, be placed on the agenda of the next Program Committee Meeting. It requested IITA management to develop the TOR for the NRM CCER as well as a schedule of CCERS that captured the value chain approach. It was further suggested that a potential CCER on seed systems be discussed as a joint endeavor with sister centers.

#### **Self Evaluation**

It was also agreed to develop an instrument for evaluation of the Board by senior management. Hans Joehr agreed to provide an instrument for discussion with the Board Chair.

### **Performance Indicator Submission**

Results from the 2009 submission were pending and would be shared with the Board as soon as they were received.

### **Nominating Committee Recommendations**

#### **Evaluation of Board members for a second term**

The Nominating Committee reviewed the practices that had been followed and the instruments used for evaluation of members for a second term. The complexity of the task, in its view, warranted a more structured evaluation and it developed a revised form for this task (Annex 1). The Committee also felt that it was a good occasion to remind the Board of their key responsibilities. Under the current practice, the evaluation was conducted by members of the Nominating Committee; however, given the importance of the exercise the Nominating Committee proposed that it should be conducted by the full Board and it sought Board feedback of its proposal.

#### **Evaluation of Paul Mafuka for a second term**

On the basis of results utilizing the revised evaluation form the Nominating Committee recommended the appointment of Paul Mafuka for a second term on the Board. During the detailed report of the results of the evaluation and discussion that followed, Paul Mafuka excused himself from the meeting.

#### **Trustee Committee Membership**

The Nominating Committee proposed to the Board to formally consider the Program Committee as a Committee of the whole Board since all members attend Program Committee meetings.

#### **Board Succession Planning**

The Nominating Committee recommended that the Board gives high priority to ensuring that succession plans were in place for the Board Chair, Nominating Committee Chair and PC Chair by the October 2010 meeting.

The Board approved the recommendations of the Nominating Committee. In addition, it recommended and approved the continuation of Henri Maraite as NC Chair until the expiration of his term on the Board in October 2010; (2) approved the revised instrument for evaluation of members for second terms, agreed that future evaluations of members for second terms should be conducted by the full Board but administered by the Nominating Committee Chair, and that communicating the results should be the dual responsibility of the Board Chair and Nominating Committee Chair; (3) as such, the results of the evaluation of Paul Mafuka would be communicated to him by both the Board Chair and Nominating Committee Chair.

#### **Future Meeting Venue and Dates**

The venue for the next meeting was under discussion and expected to be decided by July 2010. Provisional dates were 18 to 22 October pending confirmation of members who were absent. Subsequent feedback from one of the two members absent endorsed the proposed dates.