

**IITA Board of Trustees Meeting  
April 27 and 29, 2011  
Wageningen, Netherlands**

**Summary**

**Welcome to new Trustees**

The Chair welcomed new Trustees, Fatima Bamidele and Bruce Coulman attending their first meeting as IITA Trustees.

**Recruitment of Seventh Director General of IITA**

After one day of presentations and in person interviews of three short-listed candidates, the Board selected Dr. Nteranya Sanginga to succeed Hartmann as the seventh Director General of IITA, effective 1 November 2011

**Board Awards**

The Board endorsed the proposals for the Board Excellence Awards selected by an independent panel of Board Members and Scientists. It was agreed that a letter signed by all members of the Board and photographed will be sent to the individuals concerned and announcements made on the IITA website. A ceremony to honor awardees will be arranged in conjunction with Work Planning Week.

1. Outstanding Scientist: Ranajit Bandyopadhyay
2. Outstanding Support staff: Kathy Lopez
3. Outstanding Team: HOTCAT
4. Outstanding Publication: "Expression of sweet pepper hrap gene in banana enhances resistance to *X campestris* pv. *Musacearum*," by Lena Tripathi, H. Mwaka, J. N. Tripathi and J. K. Tushemereirwe

**Collaboration with ICIPE**

Following the discussion at the fall 2010 IITA Board meeting in Nairobi, the IITA Board Chair was planning to attend the ICIPE Board meeting but was unable to do so due to a conflicting engagement. Paula Bramel represented IITA. Discussions at ICIPE on the subject had only taken place at the Executive Board level and now required discussion by ICIPE governing council before any concrete action could be taken. With respect to the specific next steps, it was agreed that (1) the topic will be on the agenda of the next Governing Council meeting, (2) the minutes of the Executive Board, the IITA Board meeting(s) and Governing Council meeting circulated to all concerned, (3) that the IITA Board Chair or his representative attends the ICIPE Governing Council meeting, (4) that buy in from the donor community and African countries should be sought as powerful drivers of any future alignment/merger/joint venture and (5) that the two DGs develop a joint proposal that lays out the objectives of an operational alignment, the benefits and value added and expected results. The paper is to be presented to the IITA Board and to the ICIPE Governing Council for review and endorsement at the fall meetings of both Institutes.

**Board Chair's Report**

The Board Chair presented the outcome of various initiatives/meetings since the last IITA Board meeting. These included a modification to the clause in the joint agreement related to the claw-back principle, the fact that the 2% levy for system costs will not be applied universally, improved communications with the Consortium Board and role of center boards in CRP governance where the

center is not a lead but a participating center. One example was the CRP on Roots, Tubers and Bananas where IITA has a major financial stake with no mechanism for oversight.

### **Director General's Report**

The DG's presentation focused on the changing environment, its implications for IITA in terms of where it works, with whom and with what entities it works and how it operates. The formula, he said varies from country to country and demanded creativity within work teams to adjust to the different region/country situations.

The DG referred to the health of IITA's finances and its clean external audit report for 2010, the increases in Institute's productivity and overall impact of its work since 1971. IITA would continue to maintain its focus on scientific synergy, lower structural costs, and on IITA's strategic focus rather than the CGIAR's. He talked about the advantages and disadvantages of the CGIAR reform and his view of the future of IITA and provided some thoughts for improving Board efficiency.

### **Nominating Committee Chair**

The Executive Committee recommended and the Board approved the appointment of Roel Merckx as Chair of the Nominating Committee to succeed Nthoana Tau-Mzamane who will leave the Board after the fall meeting.

### **Report from the Executive & Finance Committee**

#### **2010 Results**

The Institute recorded a positive balance of \$268 k at the end of 2010. Total costs were \$58.5 m against a budget of \$58.3 m with total revenue at \$58.8, versus \$58.4 m anticipated. Unrestricted grants were up by almost \$4.0 m, and restricted grants up by \$1.0 m. Investment income was below budget by \$2.5 m as was other income.

#### **2011 Budget**

The Board approved the revised 2011 budget at \$57.7m due to lowered revenue expectations. Intensive fund mobilization efforts are urgently required as a number of restricted projects supporting areas of work are coming to an end. There is also significant uncertainty about unrestricted funding via the CGIAR to those CRPs that have not yet been approved.

#### **Capital Expenditure Plan**

With respect to the capital expenditures in 2010 of \$5.2 m and proposed capital expenditures of \$4.0 m in 2011, the Board endorsed the Executive & Finance Committee conclusion that the current information base is inadequate to support decision making and requested management:

- To provide information related to facilities construction, labs, and location (relocation) of human resources as essential background for understanding actions that led to the expenditure of \$2.4 million invested to date in Tanzania, so it could be assured of the justification for further investments proposed.
- In the case of Zambia, the Committee requested deferral of any further investment on hub facilities in Zambia until similar plans had been reviewed and approved by the Committee, including management's plans for the activities to be undertaken in preparation for further investments.
- No expenditures should be made against the \$5.0 m transferred to the capital reserve until the reviews are completed.

#### **Board Budget**

The Board approved the 2011 Board budget at \$325,000.

## **Investment Update**

IITA had made two investments in 2009 and 2010 from surpluses of \$10.m and \$5.0 in higher return medical receivables. Investment collections had been slower than anticipated. To correct the situation IITA had transferred the investments to another company and was expecting the returns to improve in the coming year.

## **Report of the Audit Committee**

IITA received an unqualified audit opinion on the 2010 financial statements. The Audit Committee congratulated the CFO and his staff on the results and also for the satisfactory working relationship with external auditors. Based on the Audit Committee's recommendation the Board adopted the 2010 External Audit Report and Financial Statements.

The Board also approved the recommendation of the Audit Committee to appoint Ernst and Young as IITA's External Auditors for a further period of 2 years. The AC carried out an assessment using CGIAR guidelines and input from both the CFO and internal auditor and was satisfied that Ernst & Young fulfilled their responsibilities efficiently and had no conflict of interest.

Other issues discussed during the Audit Committee related to general controls and business continuity plans for Information Technology, the internal auditors work plan and quality assessment of the unit as well as risk management, specifically related to health and safety risks.

## **Human Resources Report**

Highlights from the HRC meeting were:

- The systems integration project integrating project management, finance, and HR. HR for U was the software selected and the system was expected to be up and running in the next six months.
- The policy of monetizing benefits of international staff was updated giving staff more flexibility in the way they want to use their benefits.
- A new medical insurance scheme for NRS in Nigeria has been introduced with the aim of providing more comprehensive health care to staff. It represents a big change from the policy in place for the past 40 years; the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture confirmed that it is consistent with the practice in a number of corporations in Nigeria.
- The HRC agreed to review the proposed gender strategy implementation plan proposed by IITA senior management and provide written comments and suggestions via email to the DDG/S with regard to the specification of indicators that would enable the HR Committee to better track performance in plan implementation.

## **Nominating Committee**

The Board endorsed the Nominating Committee recommendations:

1. To select John Griffith with expertise in finance and governance and Xikombiso Mbhenyane with expertise in health and nutrition to the IITA Board with terms to begin in fall 2011.
2. To select Bruce Coulman as the next Board Chair to succeed Bryan Harvey at the end of the fall 2011 meeting.

## **Update on EPMR recommendations**

The Board reviewed and updated the Institute's progress against the recommendations of the 6<sup>th</sup> External Program and Management Review of IITA. The Board was concerned particularly about recommendation 10 on the engagement with NARS partners in the light of the review of STCP indicating a difference of opinion with respect to relationships with the NARS. The DG informed them that in this

particular case the lack of involvement of the NARS partners was primarily an issue of funding and the review had not taken on board the complexities of the project. All other recommendations were either achieved or were ongoing.

### **Report of the PC**

Presentations and discussions at the PC meeting covered updates on IITA programs, Phase II Review of the STCP-PPP project, the NRM CCER, CRPs and the social science research agenda. Following those discussions, the PC detailed a list of recommendations for implementation by management which were approved by the Board. They were:

#### ***Program***

- Further refinement of the summary format for program reporting that defines and includes a limited number of indicators which can be monitored from year to year to reflect the current status of IITA's program portfolio.
- Concerned by the sharp declines in funding for specific projects, banana and plantain in particular, the DG and DDG/R should be encouraged to put extra resources into communication to advance the importance of banana and plantain as a staple food in Africa and IITA's competencies in research for improving banana and plantain production.
- The future reporting on programs should include research activities all along the value chain to enable Board members to understand the range of issues being addressed.

#### ***STCP – Phase II***

- Management is requested to develop a short paper before the planned meetings in Washington DC as background material for Emmy Simmons and Hans Jöhr who will be attending the meeting on behalf of IITA. The paper should include achievements, deliverables, way forward, impact and the repercussions if Phase III is not put back on track.

#### ***NRM CCER***

- The NRM CCER team's conclusion that the NRM contribution requires greater focus in IITA's program than the sustainable intensification strategy. They suggested that soil health, considered at the plot to farm scales, provides an appropriate focus against which productivity increases can be assessed. However, the aspiration in the longer term should be to expand the sustainability metric to consider intensification at the scale of agro-ecosystems and measure productivity gains relative to ecosystems health.
- The NRM CCER team proposes investment in soil measurement and its analysis in trials. The background for the recommendation is that deficiencies are seen in the systems scope and environmental measurement of experimentation with respect to NRM research. Yield responses to environmental drivers such as rainfall, soil water, soil fertility or other measures of the natural resource state are not common.
- IITA should enhance its capabilities in simulation modelling that is essential for systems research.
- The PC does not agree with the CCER team's view that classical soil analytical approaches are inappropriate. The PC considers classical soil analysis still a valuable tool which should be used to a greater extent for the perennial production systems in the humid tropics of SSA, to allow a systems view in NRM research in these regions. Greatly expanded use of soil analysis is needed, but it must be combined with other analytical approaches as recommended by the CCER team.
- Broaden the systems research scope of IITA research to address the complexities of production systems in terms of cropping sequences, species mixtures and the influence of biotic stresses across the range of agroecological and market variability that exists in target action sites.
- Capitalizing on IITA strength in socio-economic research efforts, IITA can assist this field of research by adding further rigour to its understanding of how research can impact in smallholder production systems and publishing its findings.

- To address the gaps in IITA capacity to tackle complex systems interactions as identified in GIS and modelling, analytical services, land inventory and environmental databases, soil health (especially on managing organic matter), surface soil and residue management.
- In terms of disciplinary capacity, a critical need is for soil health capacity in IITA's program in West Africa. Also needed are skills to link experimental work to both systems modelling and spatial analysis. The demand for spatial analysis, data standards, sampling strategies, and database design and archiving necessitates that IITA requires the capacity to manage these issues within the West Africa action areas and should assume responsibilities within CRP1.2.
- The CGIAR has in its mandate to support the NARS and this objective is confirmed in CAADP Pillar IV. IITA is encouraged to explore ways where it can support the "complementary pathways" of progressing private sector partnerships and policy as well as investing in capacity building within the NARS.
- While the NRM CCER review team's recommendations are accepted in principle, it does not mean that IITA should immediately take action to implement all these recommendations on its own. Several of the NRM CCER team recommendations will require partnerships with other entities, e.g. other centers in the CGIAR Consortium, NARS, and other national, regional and international partners.
- The NRM CCER recommendations should be integrated in the design of CRP1.2 Humid Tropics led by IITA with the view that NRM integrity will be a fundamental goal for the CRP and provides an excellent opportunity for IITA to strengthen its involvement in resolving issues of unsustainable natural resource use and degradation.

#### **CRPS**

- Continued monitoring of the development of the CRPs in which IITA is involved as a participant. The PC believes that this is especially important for CRP 3.4, Roots, Tubers, and Bananas/Plantain, as such a large segment of IITA scientists will be involved in this Program.

#### **Social Science Research Agenda**

- IITA's involvement in CRP 2 as it is further developed should be reviewed to ensure not only that IITA's social scientists are well integrated into this research agenda but also that the resources of other centers participating in this CRP are appropriately tapped to strengthen IITA's own capacities, e.g., in macro-economics, as well as in analysis of value chains of concern to IITA, i.e., root, tuber, banana, and plantain value chains.

#### **Innovation Africa**

The DG provided an update of activities he has engaged in to date towards an establishment of a research park on the campus of IITA Ibadan, the main objective of which is to attract scientists and like-minded professionals from a range of organizations with similar objectives, capture scientific synergy and boost research productivity, share the facilities available at Ibadan—a concept that will eventually be extended to the IITA hubs in SSA—and in doing so share the costs of running the facilities at Ibadan and other locations.

While fully behind the concept and agreeing the concept should be moved forward, without concrete proposals and business plan the Board was not in a position to make any additional decisions and requested the DG to ensure that the IMD Terms of Reference include the Innovation Park proposal and its principles. The paper should be presented to the Board for review at the fall 2011 meeting.

#### **Self-Evaluation Form**

Reporting on the results of the self-evaluation exercise conducted after the October 2010 Board meeting, the Vice Chair indicated that the results were not significantly different from previous results.

Except for continuing concern on the knowledge of programs, scores were all above 4 on the scale of 1 to 5.

A new form is under developing that incorporates comments and feedback from all Trustees.

#### **Fall Meeting**

The fall meeting of the Board will be held in Tanzania. The Board Chair agreed to seek feedback from members on the most convenient dates as soon as possible between late October and mid-December.