

SUMMARY MINUTES

IITA Board of Trustees Meeting

Ibadan, Nigeria

27 November, 2013

- The IITA Board held an introductory session of the Board on November 27 and a full session on November 29. All members were present except Jill Findeis who could not attend for health reasons and the Permanent Secretary, Ibukun Odusote who had a conflicting travel engagement. Doug van den Aardweg of the Consortium Internal Audit Unit was present at the introductory session and attended the Audit Committee Meeting.
- In his report, the Board Chair talked about ongoing issues at the system level that including the Mid-Term Review of the CGIAR in 2014, the decision by the Fund Council to postpone new CRPS until 2017 and to extend all current CRPs, the fact that W1/2 funding will be contingent upon CRPs having approved gender strategies and satisfactory implementation, the importance of complying with the Consortium Intellectual Assets policy and the assessment of bilateral/w3 funding and alignment with CRPS.
- The Board discussed the Director General's Report presented on the opening day of R4D week. It congratulated the Director General on the spectacular growth of the Institute over the past two years from a budget of \$47.0 m in 2011 to \$94.6 m in 2013. They found the development of the Business Incubation Platform in one year to be exceptional.
- The Board expressed some concern about the impact of the rapid growth on project execution. The DG explained that this is an area that is being given priority attention given the potential loss of income with a less than 100% execution. However, given the magnitude of Africa's problems and the fundamental role IITA has to play, even at a level of \$200 m, resources are inadequate to solve the problems of Africa.
- The Board approved with enthusiasm the partnership engagement and capacity development strategies presenting the Directorate's contribution towards achieving the IITA vision of lifting 11.0 m Africans out of poverty and restoring 7.5 m ha to sustainable land use by 2020. The presentation covered the role of the various units in the Directorate, the principles of partnership engagement, guidelines for partnering with the private sector, a template for engaging in a public/private partnership, the BIP initiative and its role in linking science with delivery in order to bring IITA technologies to smallholder farmers.
- Harun M. Muruthi was selected as the recipient of the next IITA/Lukas Brader Scholarship supported by IITA and Wageningen University. His PhD research proposal title is "Risk assessment of soybean rust based on its distribution, variance and influence of environmental parameters in eastern and southern Africa." His IITA supervisor is Fen Beed.
- The management was congratulated on the good progress to date on the finances and on meeting the requirements of the financial recovery action plan (FRAP), also confirmed by the Consortium and resulting in the decision by the Consortium to discontinue its monitoring visits from 2014.

- The Board approved the 2014 operating budget at budget at \$101.m and the capital budget at \$6.056 m to be funded outside the capital reserve.
- In the area of intellectual assets, the Board agreed on a procedure proposed by management for annual Board assurance to the Consortium that IITA is in compliance with the CGIAR's Intellectual Assets Policy. The Center report on compliance has to be provided by end February 2014 followed by the Board statement on compliance at the end of April 2014. Responsibility for the task has been entrusted to Hilde Koper of the Projects Administration Office and will require cooperation from all scientists to provide the necessary supporting information.
- The Board congratulated the institute staff for the considerable progress made on internal audit issues, particularly in the area of risk. They noted and endorsed the succession plans in place for the top level positions in Finance including the recruitment of a Financial Controller at the IRS level to provide assistance to Mr. Sholola.
- The Program Committee was very pleased with the quality of program reporting, both with the material provided to members and with the presentations during the first 2 days of R4D week. They extended a special thanks to the DDG R4D for the significant improvement.
- The Board noted the considerable progress made in the Human Resources area and they congratulated the DDG (Corporate Services) and his team for implementation of a number of outstanding issues. These included the initiatives on the short term staff employment, the job certification and grading exercise, the staff satisfaction survey and follow up on those issues that had low scores, staff safety and welfare policy and the harassment and discrimination policy. They noted that the whistle blower policy is in place and has proven to be effective in bringing issues to management's attention.
- In the area of governance, the Board approved (1) a proposal by the Governance Committee to change Board operations in order to improve efficiency and enable the Board to play a more constructive role in promoting the Institute; (2) the appointment of Josephine Okot as a new Board member starting in May 2014; (3) the appointment of Roel Merckx and John Pickett to second terms on the Board; and (4) a Governance Committee workplan for 2014 that includes a review and analysis of Board composition together with succession planning for key Board positions so that the Board at all times has the right mix of skills and representation; a questionnaire to seek management feedback on Board effectiveness; and identifying restricted entities to be used in conjunction with conflict of interest
- The next meeting of the Board will be held in Cotonou from May 6 to 9.