

Highlights
November 2014
Kampala, Uganda

- The IITA Board met in Kampala, Uganda from 25 to 28 November. The Board was joined by Consortium Board member Ganesan Balachander who participated actively in the discussions of the Program Committee and open sessions of the Board. Elena Figus of the CG Internal Audit Unit participated in the Audit Committee meeting. The Board also welcomed new Board members Sonny Echono, Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Josephine Okot, Managing Director of Victoria Seeds of Uganda and new staff member Tariro Mutamuko, Internal Auditor.
- The practice has been to hold the second meeting of the year in Ibadan in conjunction with R4D week. Board members consider the opportunity to hear the scientific presentations and meet and have in depth discussions with scientists to be very valuable; however, the travel restrictions imposed by some countries stemming from the Ebola virus crisis, limited the number of Board members who could attend the meeting and therefore necessitated the change in venue.
- As part of the program, the Board visited Mukono-Wakiso one of the four Humidtropics field sites in the Lake Victoria Crescent Zone. It attended a platform meeting of the various stakeholders and visited a farmer engaged in the Humidtropics. A second activity was a visit to the research station in Kawanda the site of the banana work conducted in partnership with the National Agricultural Research Organization where Lena Tripathi and counterparts at NARO presented their work. As the last activity of the day the Board met with the staff and students working at the Office in Kampala and engaged in a spirited dialogue about a number of aspects of their work at IITA.
- On system level issues, the Board Chair and DG provided information on the Medium Term Review of the CGIAR, the Strategy and Results Framework and the 2nd call for CRPs, which led to a lively discussion by Board members. The initiation of the reform of the CGIAR in 2010 included a decision to undertake an evaluation after three years to assess progress and make course corrections if needed and was the reason for the Mid-Term Review. The review panel chaired by Sir. John Beddington, former science advisor of the UK, and comprised of eminent persons from across the globe including the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of Nigeria, has recently released its report and recommendations. See [Mid-Term Report](#).

One of the recommendations of the Panel was to ensure that the Strategy and Results Framework, first written at the time of the reform and now going through a modification process, addresses the highest priorities for research and provides guidance for the 2nd call of CRPs to begin in 2017. The strong message that is prevalent in discussions is that in the next round of CRPs, donors will be looking closely for greater coherence and collaboration both within and outside the CGIAR, potential for impact, and clear connection between the CRP objectives and system level outcomes.

- In the Director General's report, Dr. Sanginga presented the highlights and challenges from 2012-2014; notably, a reengineered institute with a significant increase in funding, improved

infrastructure and staff morale, stronger partnerships and scientific breakthroughs in the face of a number of challenges, and the effects of the failed investment. The emphasis for the 2015 to 2017 period is to: build on the achievements; consolidate the growth; reposition IITA working with African policy makers at the highest levels; capitalize on IITA's comparative advantage in sustainable intensification; strengthen the Humidtropics CRP; develop a strong agenda on food-health/nutrition-resilience/degraded land; strengthen IITA's hubs as a central location for CGIAR centers; increase bilateral resource mobilization; and be a major player in big data through the E-Research platform.

In the discussion that followed the Board congratulated the DG on the significant increase in funding for the institute, and for tightening fiscal management to insure that IITA operates above the line in this fiscal year. It drew attention to the importance of the youth initiative beyond IITA and endorsed IITA's initiative to work with the African Development Bank to support scaling out the program to 20 African countries. They encouraged IITA to play a leadership role in the area of sustainable intensification and, to advance this role, recommended that IITA launches its leadership with a workshop in Africa in 2015—the international year of soils—on the management of degraded lands.

- The Board was pleased to note the good progress on the BIP. The infrastructure had been completed, governance and management are in place with the formation of an Advisory Council, and an experienced CEO had been recruited. While run completely separately from IITA, the Board agreed that the BIP should be a key component of IITA's organizational structure focusing on the marketing and delivery of IITA's research products, a social enterprise applying commercial strategies for human wellbeing.
- The DDG PCD presented an update of the various activities under Partnerships and Capacity Development and the Head of Communications presented the unit's plans and approach for incorporating communications as a strategic component for delivering impact. The Board was very pleased with the integration of communication science in the strategy and the importance given to the two-way communication process.
- The DDG R4D gave an overview of the research agenda to the Program Committee that covered science quality and development impact, IITA and big data, and updates on a number of initiatives that included the Cotonou Center for Climate Change and Biodiversity and the Soil Health Platform. The PC thanked the DDG R4D for the comprehensive overview of the research both present and future. It welcomed the emphasis placed on M & E and the training being undertaken to inculcate an M & E culture at IITA and it looks forward to the results. The major focus of the Program Committee however was on the Humidtropics CRP and the other CRPs in which IITA plays a major role. In the discussions that followed, the PC recommended the need for greater clarity on the added value of the Humidtropics and its contribution to lifting people out of poverty, and to sustainability and replicability with a focus on demand driven research and quality science with sustainable intensification as the overarching theme. With respect to the other CRPs, the PC recommends that IITA strengthen its participation in all the CRPs in which it has a stake with particular attention to Roots, Tubers and Bananas (RTB) where demand is primarily in Africa, and IITA has high levels of investment; Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE), given its focus on soils and IITA's leadership of the Humidtropics; Policies, Institutions and Markets (PIM) for its work on foresight modeling and the

potential for working on policy issues related to water and land; Agriculture for Health and Nutrition (A4HN) where IITA has potential to make a major contribution in the area of aflatoxins and mycotoxins; MAIZE where IITA should strive to play a leadership role in one of the flagships and to expand its maize activities to eastern and southern Africa; and Grain Legumes, capitalizing on the cowpea work and the work on soils where legumes play an important role.

- The Board congratulated the Institute on the growth in funding over the last few years at the rate of 16.7% a year and the projected funding of \$138.0 m in 2015. They noted the challenges and the Institute's efforts to address them through improved project execution, reductions in overall spending and implementation of full cost recovery from the end of the first quarter of 2015. With that background the Board approved adoption of the 2015 operational budget of \$137.747 m against revenue of \$138.498 m and the 2015 capital budget of \$9.109 m to be funded by various sources including \$1.250 m from the capital reserve.
- The main items on the audit committee agenda were risk management, the internal auditor's report, a report by the representative of the CG Internal audit unit, and review and update of IITA's investments and security plans. The Audit Committee welcomed the continued improvement in risk management at IITA with the high risks areas identified, mitigating actions in place, and the risk register periodically updated and modified. They were pleased to learn of the initiatives undertaken to improve security at Ibadan and other critical locations, and thanked the DDG (CS) for his leadership.
- The Human Resources Committee commended the Institute for the progress made to establish equitable salaries, monitoring systems for staff satisfaction, remuneration and other benefits, and an inclusive workplace in the face of funding challenges. It looks forward to receiving continued reports on compensation actions, assessment of staff satisfaction over time, results of gender mainstreaming and training initiatives across the sites.
- A critical activity of the Board is to review its own operations, its composition to ensure it has the right mix of disciplines, representation and diversity, its procedures to ensure transparency and to undertake timely succession planning for the Board to continue to operate effectively. It reviewed the report of the Risk Committee that identified the potential risks associated with the Board and was pleased to note that a number of the mitigating actions had already been implemented. To fill two vacancies that will occur at the end of 2015, the Governance Committee identified the following criteria for selection.

Geographic Representation: West Africa/Scandinavia/Germany/Switzerland

Specific Disciplinary Criteria: Plant Pathology/biotechnology/nutrition/agro-industries

General Criteria: Strong scientific background, applied agriculture