

## IITA-Zambia moves to new home

The 11<sup>th</sup> of March marks a major milestone in the history of IITA-Zambia as the day that the institute's regional headquarters for southern Africa is finally "home" – moving to its new, permanent research and administration facility in Kabangwe, Chongwe District in Lusaka Province, some 15 km north of downtown Lusaka City.

The facility is situated within the sprawling 50-ha IITA Southern Africa Research and Administration Hub (SARAH) campus. Current infrastructure includes a science and administration block with offices, laboratory and conference room, a pavilion, a security gatehouse and drivers' lounge, an agricultural machinery fabrication workshop, a cassava processing building, farm machinery and equipment shed, and demonstration/trial fields currently planted to cassava, soybean, cowpea, and maize.

At the first official staff meeting at the new site, David Chikoye, Regional Director for Southern Africa, told IITA-Zambia staff that "although there are some things that still need to be finished in this new facility, this is ours, a place that we can finally call home."

"Teething challenges are expected of new facilities, but we'll eventually smooth things out," he added. "The important thing is that we are already here, and with these facilities we can move our research agenda for southern Africa even faster and more efficiently."

"For now, all I am asking is for your cooperation and patience – moving and adjusting is never an easy thing to do, especially considering that we have been in our old office since



From left to right: Drs Ntawuruhunga, Chikoye, and Chigeza having a hearty laugh in front of the main science and admin block.

IITA-Zambia was set up back in 2009." Chikoye was referring to the former office situated in a rented two-storey house in Avondale, Lusaka.

The moving of IITA-Zambia to the new SARAH site is the culmination of the dream that was first set into motion with a ground-breaking ceremony held almost 3 years ago, on 12 September 2013. That event was presided over by Dr Guy Scott, then Vice President of Zambia, and attended by IITA's Board of Trustees and Senior Management Team.

"This SARAH facility would never have materialized without the help of the African Development Bank (AfDB), which provided funds for construction through the SARD-SC project. On behalf of the IITA-Zambia Team,

I would like to thank them for their support," Chikoye emphasized.

Chikoye also revealed immediate expansion plans for the new SARAH facility, including the construction of screen houses and a cassava in vitro seedling laboratory this year. "If things fall into place, we should have these additional research structures up by the end of this year," he proudly concluded.

IITA-Zambia's official address is now: IITA-Zambia, Southern Africa Research and Administration Hub (SARAH) Campus, Plot 1458B, Ngwerere Road (5 km off Great North Road and adjacent to ZamSeed Farms), Chongwe District, Lusaka Province, PO Box 310142, Chelston, Lusaka, Zambia.



Panoramic view of the new structures. (From L-R: security gatehouse with drivers' lounge, generator house, main science and administration block housing staff offices, laboratory, small kitchen, and conference room, cassava processing building, and agricultural machinery fabrication building).

# Legumes change fortunes of farmers and empower women in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania

While it is the number one cash crop for most farmers in Tanzania, maize is getting a serious run for its money from legumes such as beans, groundnut, and soybean which are becoming commercial crops in the cool and hilly terrain of the Southern Highlands. In addition, legumes are also good for tackling malnutrition and soil infertility as they are a cheap source of protein and are able to fix nitrogen from the air into the soils.



Women farmers benefit from legume production and technologies.

This turn of events is being fueled firstly by many years of collaboration between farmers and Tanzanian and international research institutions, a range of development partners, and the private sector that has seen the development and dissemination of improved varieties and good agronomic practices enabling farmers to increase their legume yield by up to four times.

These include the government-funded Uyole Agricultural Research Institute with technical backstopping from international research organizations such as [IITA](#), [International Center for Tropical Agriculture \(CIAT\)](#), [International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics \(ICRISAT\)](#), and [Wageningen University](#); development NGOs such as [One Acre Fund](#) and [Farm Inputs Promotion](#)

[Services \(FIPS\)](#) and support from the Tanzanian Government and the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#).

And secondly, a ready market within and in the neighboring countries of Zambia, DR Congo, Malawi, and as far down as South Africa has also contributed to legumes getting more attention nowadays.

## Project helps farmers gain access to markets and agroinputs, and women get into business

In northern Nigeria, a project is helping legume farmers gain access to markets and a more sustained supply of agroinputs. The Putting Nitrogen Fixation to Work for Smallholder Farmers in Africa ([N2Africa](#)) Project is providing these farmers and value chain actors with technologies and options that they can use to improve productivity and ensure the sale of their products.

N2Africa is a five-year project that aims to provide smallholder farmers in 11 countries with effective technologies and crop management practices for improving soil fertility and boosting legume production. The goal of the project is to increase the adoption of inoculants, fertilizers

and improved nitrogen-fixing legumes as well as facilitate sustained market access for the resulting crops so that farmers can continue to improve the quality of their soil and household income and nutrition. It is now on its second phase.

In Nigeria, the project is being implemented by IITA and partners in 43 local government areas in eight states (Borno, Kano, Kaduna, Benue, Kebbi, Kwara, Niger, and the Federal Capital Territory). So far, over 20,000 soybean, cowpea and groundnut farmers benefited in 2015. Working together with 22 different public and private sector partners, the project has been able to provide farmers with improved market access as well as sustained supply of fertilizers, inoculants and other legume-related agro-inputs.

"The value of benefits to farmers and legume value chain actors within the project areas has been immense," explained both [Emmanuel Sangodele](#), Country Coordinator N2Africa Nigeria and [Nkeki Kamaj](#), N2Africa Borno project coordinator.

"The network of over 450 agro-dealers and community based seed producers created by N2Africa Nigeria ensures a sustained supply of inputs for farmers and creates an outlet for their produce. We facilitated the distribution and sale of over 2.3 tons of inoculants and 490 tons of phosphorus fertilizers. Over 10,000 farmers gained markets for their crops in 2015 through our resource centers for disseminating market information in Kano and Kaduna states as well as through soybean processors identified in Benue and Niger states."

"Furthermore, our focus on providing opportunities for women led to the establishment of three women-led businesses in soybean products in 2015," Sangodele added.

In Borno State, Kamaj said the focus had been on engaging youth in agribusiness opportunities within the legume value chains, with at least 2,000 youths now earning a living by engaging in legume input supply, value addition, or marketing activities. The project had released starter packs in kind and cash to kick-start their businesses.

Training on soybean processing and utilization in 11 communities in Bayo local government area sensitized women on the nutritional value of soybean, built their capacity on soybean processing and utilization, empowered the women economically through soybean processing, and created awareness on the effect of nutrition on infants and young children as well as on infections and diseases, he further added.

The N2Africa Nigeria and Borno projects convened the Annual Review and Planning Meeting, 21-23 March, in Abuja, Nigeria, and brought together all project implementers and stakeholders in Nigeria, to look at the overall progress of the two projects to date.

N2Africa is led by [Wageningen University](#) and IITA and is funded by a grant from the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#) to Wageningen University. It is envisaged that within the 5-year timeframe of the project, more than 550,000 smallholder farmers in Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Uganda (core countries), and Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe would have adopted the project technologies and tripled their investments by getting \$3 back for each \$1 invested.



Farmers in their legume field.

# What are the long-term effects of fertilizers and inoculants? N2Africa project tries to find out

"We are asking farmers to use inoculants and fertilizers while growing their soybean. We know some of the applied nutrients such as P and K remain in the soil as not all is taken up by the crop. We also ask farmers to rotate soybean and other crops such as maize and they also use fertilizers on the maize. So the question is how much fertilizer should the farmers continue to apply in subsequent seasons?" asked [Freddy Bajjukya](#), an agronomist at IITA and Country Coordinator for [N2Africa](#) in [Tanzania](#).

"Can the use of inoculants reduce the use of nitrogen fertilizers? The trials will give recommendations on how to minimize the use of fertilizers by maximizing the fertilizers applied and inoculants," Bajjukya said while speaking during a tour of projects being supported by the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#) in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania.

The team included [Jeff Ehlers](#), a Program Officer at the Gates Foundation and N2Africa researchers/staff and partners from the Agricultural Research Institute at Uyole (ARI Uyole), [IITA](#), [International Center for Tropical Agriculture \(CIAT\)](#), [International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics \(ICRISAT\)](#), [One Acre Fund](#), and [Farm Inputs](#)

[Promotion Services \(FIPS\)](#). They visited the N2Africa field trials being conducted by ARI-Uyole and IITA in Mbeya Region.

The objective of N2Africa or "Putting nitrogen fixation to work for smallholder farmers in Africa", which is led by [Wageningen University](#) is to increase legume production in countries in sub-Saharan Africa to improve health and soils and increase the income of smallholders. In the Southern Highlands, the project is promoting the production of soybean and the use of inputs such as fertilizers and inoculants to increase production and productivity.

The second trial visited was in a farmer's demonstration field at Iwanga village, Mbezi District being conducted by the Umoja farmers group in collaboration with ARI-Uyole and N2Africa. The objective is to allow farmers to select the most preferred soybean variety for official release in the region.

"We are growing these three new varieties to select the one we prefer the most. As you can see some are already looking very promising. But we cannot tell for now until we harvest. Then we will see which will have the best yield and we will recommend this to the



*Bajjukya giving a briefing on the long-term trials.*

researchers," explained Joseph Mompesh, a lead farmer who acts as a link between farmers and researchers.

According to [Jeff Ehlers](#) from the Gates Foundation, these were very important activities in efforts to promote the production of soybean in the country and that the Foundation was pleased to help support the efforts by the Tanzania Government to tackle poverty and malnutrition through this initiative.

## Borno State Youth Agripreneurs get start-up grant

Following the workshops organized by the [IITA Youth Agripreneurs](#) for 40 youth in Borno State in September 2014 and 2015, N2Africa has approved grants for the trained Agripreneurs to kick-start their agribusiness enterprises.

After selecting 20 potential agribusinesses from the identified crops, the youth chose the following: production and marketing of soybean, cowpea, and groundnut; groundnut oil and cake production; farm inputs/agrochemical supply; pesticide application services; animal fattening using grain legume crop residue as the main feedstuff; poultry keeping using grain legume by-products as feedstuff; local fabrication of labor-saving agro-tools; and fish farming using grain legumes as a major component of fish feed.

The beneficiaries have registered their businesses with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) under 40 different names, which were also used to open commercial bank accounts for their businesses. The Agripreneurs will also have access to soft loans which will be provided by the Bank of Agriculture (BOA).



*Borno youth undergo training.*

The business plans assessed and approved by the BOA will be funded at 12% interest, while those that satisfy the requirements of the Bank of Industry (BOI) will be funded at 5% (if there are matching funds) or at 9% (if there are no matching funds).

To kick-start these business plans, as well as reduce the debt burden (repayment of capital with interest) on the Borno Youth Agripreneurs, N2Africa had—in October 2015—approved a grant of NGN 450,000 (\$2250) for each

Agripreneur, and NGN 2.5 million (\$12,500) for the groundnut oil and cake project. N2Africa-Borno plans to provide the grants in three installments. The first installment was made at a formal ceremony on 3 December 2015 in Biu, with the Emir of Biu as the chief host and the Executive Governor of Borno State as the Guest of Honor. The remaining installments will be paid later, subject to good progress and full adherence to acceptable accounting standards by the Agripreneurs.

Got a story to share? Please email it with photos and captions every Wednesday to Katherine Lopez ([k.lopez@cgiar.org](mailto:k.lopez@cgiar.org)), Jeffrey T. Oliver ([j.oliver@cgiar.org](mailto:j.oliver@cgiar.org)), Catherine Njuguna ([c.njuguna@cgiar.org](mailto:c.njuguna@cgiar.org)), or Adaobi Umeokoro ([a.umeokoro@cgiar.org](mailto:a.umeokoro@cgiar.org)).