



## Two IITA-developed soybean varieties released in Zambia

The Seed Control and Certification Institute (SCCI) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAL) of Zambia officially approved for release two IITA-developed soybean varieties—TGx1740-2F and TGx1937-1F—during its ordinary session on 23–25 September.

In its memo of approval, the Variety Release Committee of SCCI indicated the approved local names of the two soybean varieties as “Kafue” for TGx1740-2F and “Mwembeshi” for TGx1937-1F. New crop varieties released in Zambia are traditionally named after rivers in the country.

According to Therese Gondwe, IITA scientist based in Zambia and one of the team members who presented the varieties for consideration by SCCI, the two varieties show consistently high grain yields and are self-nodulating. “The latter characteristic is very important to soil health and has a positive effect on the productivity of cereal crops planted after them. The varieties also give high fodder yields (crop residue after threshing) as a result of high biomass production,” she added.



The two soybean varieties: TGx1740-2F (left) and TGx1937-1F (right).

Specifically, TGx1740-2F, or “Mwembeshi”, is an early maturing variety, tolerant of drought and resistant to a number of diseases and pests such as bacterial pustule, soybean rust, soybean mosaic virus, frogeye leaf spot, Witch’s broom, purple seed stain, common soybean fly, thrips, pod sucking bug, and the pod borer. The variety is also known as “Wamini” in Mozambique and “Tikolore” in Malawi.

On the other hand, TGx1937-1F or “Kafue” has vigorous seedling establishment. It is medium to late maturing and has high biomass

production and nodulation. It is tolerant and/or resistant to purple seed stain, common soybean fly, thrips, pod-sucking bug, and the pod borer.

Gondwe envisions that the release of these two IITA-developed varieties will boost the availability of soybean seeds in Zambia. She is also optimistic that with the adoption of these varieties by farmers, the soil health of the mainly maize-based smallholder farms will also be vastly improved as the most common soybean variety currently rotated with maize—“Lukanga”—is non-self-nodulating.

## SARD-SC Cassava value chain team in Tanzania holds annual review meeting

The cassava value chain group of the [Support to Agricultural Research for Development of Strategic Crops in Africa \(SARD-SC\)](#) project team, Tanzania, met at IITA’s regional hub for East Africa in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to discuss the project’s progress and plan for the effective implementation of activities including strengthening of innovation platforms (IPs). The meeting, which was held on 16 October, also provided a platform to plan and prepare for the regional SARD-SC cassava planning and review meeting in Abuja, Nigeria.



A group photo of the SARD-SC Tanzania Cassava value chain team at their review meeting.

The participants were welcomed to the hub by IITA regional hub Director for East Africa, [Victor Manyong](#). He lauded the project's efforts and contribution to IITA's goal of reducing hunger, malnutrition, and poverty among the small-scale farming community by addressing the major challenges in cassava production. He further assured the team of the support of IITA's management team to ensure the success of the project.

"SARD-SC deals with important food commodities that are staples for the majority of small-scale farmers in Africa. The project has made steady progress in its implementation, giving

a good indication that it will be successful in meeting its objectives", he said.

[Veronica Uzokwe](#), SARD-SC Country Project Coordinator, thanked the team for their dedication and commitment which have enabled the project to be on track in achieving its objectives. However, she said there was still a lot of work to be done to ensure impact on the lives of cassava-dependent households and the community at large.

The team also planned for project activities in the coming year ahead of the regional SARD-SC cassava annual

meeting in Abuja. One of the activities is to impart knowledge to farmers on cassava postharvest processing and management to reduce postharvest losses which accounted for a substantial proportion of the farmers' harvest.

The meeting participants included project partners from the [Lake Zone Agriculture Research and Development Institute \(LZARDI\)](#), the Mikocheni Agriculture Research Institute (MARI), [Intermech Engineering Ltd.](#), [Sokoine University of Agriculture/Combusto Tanzania Ltd \(SUA/Combusto Ltd\)](#), the Sugarcane Research Institute (SRI), and IITA.

## IITA cassava weed management project organizes gender workshop for staff and partners

Gender mainstreaming in project, policy, and program implementation was one of the key areas highlighted during a 2-day gender training workshop recently organized for staff and partners of the IITA [Cassava Weed Management Project](#) on 21–22 October, during the 4<sup>th</sup> Joint Quarterly Review Meeting at the National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI), Umudike.

The importance of understanding gender roles and rural livelihoods within the Project activities while developing gender-sensitive indicators for monitoring and evaluation was addressed in some of the sessions.

During breakout sessions, participants were put into four groups representing the states in which the Project is carrying out its activities. Experience sharing and discussions on gender mainstreaming attempts were evaluated and each group presented an activity paper at the end of the session.

[Friday Ekeleme](#), the Project Principal Investigator, said that the training organized at this stage is essential to the progress of the IITA Cassava Weed Management Project objectives.

Moses Okwusi, Project Communication focal person for NRCRI, expressed

delight at the benefits of attending a workshop on gender issues. "It has been an eye-opening experience for me; some of the misconceptions I had in the past about gender have been changed and I can now talk about some areas on gender issues," he stated.

Speaking on the significance of the workshop to the Project, Janice Olawoye, facilitator and gender expert from the University of Ibadan, concluded that the Project can now adopt tangible ways to become more gender sensitive while carrying out activities in rural areas among smallholder farmers.

### Help conserve electricity!

Before leaving your workplace at the end of the day, make sure that you have:

1. Powered off all unnecessary electrical office/ lab equipment;
2. Turned off air conditioners; and
3. Switched off all lights.



Janice Olawoye of the University of Ibadan addressing participants during the workshop.

## German envoy visits IITA

The German Consul General to Nigeria, Ingo Herbert, accompanied by Jan Christoph Steckel (Scientist / Mercator Research Institute, Germany) and René Marco Siebenhaar (German Commercial, Cultural and Political Attaché to Nigeria) visited IITA-Ibadan this week.

The German diplomats and visitors were received by Deputy Directors General Kenton Dashiell and Kwame Akuffo-Akoto and some key headquarters staff. During the briefing, the discussion centered on the German government's support for agricultural research and how research organizations like IITA could work with the private sector. Funding from Germany had mainly focused on supporting research on cassava production, diseases, and nutrition; banana, legumes, and cocoa; aflatoxin management and food safety; soil fertility management and climate change; and genetic resources management.

The German Consul General said: "Agriculture in Europe is big. There is plenty of money for agriculture in Europe." He encouraged IITA to submit more proposals for funding to the European Commission/Union. The German envoy also said that many German corporations are now investing in Nigeria and that when any of them need advice on agriculture he would ask them to contact IITA.

Consul General Herbert was given a tour of IITA facilities which included the Genetic Resources Center, the Business Incubation Platform (BIP) aflasafe plant, AgriServe/IITA Youth Agripreneurs, and the lake environs.



The German Consul visit the aflasafe plant at the Business Incubation Platform in Ibadan (above) and talk to the Agripreneurs below.



German Consul General Ingo Herbert with IITA staff.

## Announcements

- **2015 Open Day, IITA Ibadan, Nigeria, 14 November**
- **R4D Week, IITA Ibadan, 22-28 November.**
- **7th International Conference of the Africa Soil Science Society;** Theme: Critical soil solutions for sustainable

development in Africa. 2 to 8 December, Salle de Banquets in Ouaga 2000, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

- **Joint World Cowpea and Pan-African Grain Legume Research Conference 2016,** co-organized by IITA

and the Feed-the-Future Legume Innovation Lab, Livingstone, Zambia, 28 February to 4 March 2016. For more information, visit the conference [website](#) or download the conference [announcement](#).

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