



## PAO organizes training for partners on grant management

IITA's Project Administration Office (PAO) held a two-day training workshop for partners on project administration, contracts, and grants management with a view to enhancing efficient service delivery.

The training, the first of its kind, was declared open by the Deputy Director, Partnerships & Capacity Development, Dr Kenton Dashiell.

Dr Dashiell said the training was for partners to understand donor requirements tied to grants for timely execution of projects. "For us to get the job done, we need skills to meet the different donor requirements," he said.

The DDG also commended PAO for organizing the workshop, especially when food security is at the top of the donor community's agenda.

According to PAO Head, Hilde Koper, the specific objectives of the workshop were to build the capacity-for-development of participating institutions; enhance participants' understanding of interconnected elements



Participants and resource persons in the 2-day training workshop on project administration, contracts, and grants management held at IITA this week. Photo by O. Adebayo, IITA.

of grants management; expand participants' knowledge on contracts negotiation, rules, administration and compliance; and gain better insights on reporting requirements and the relationship with fund release and financial justifications.

The workshop also aimed to make participants understand the importance and

functions of project database and record keeping; provide networking opportunities to participants; and promote better rapport and more effective communication among the participating institutions.

Apart from Koper, other resource persons for the workshop were Kayode Awobajo, Ovegho Okome, and Kenneth Oraegbunam.

## IITA and local council sign MOU, inspired by IITA Agripreneurs

IITA and Akinyele Local Government—the host local council to IITA—have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU), paving the way for a closer partnership towards developing the capacities of youths in the council.

The signing of the MoU was inspired by the successes recorded by the IITA Agripreneur project that has engaged more than 20 young graduates in agriculture.

The Chair of the Local Government, Mr Abiola Mukaila, explained that he was impressed by the IITA youth model when he visited IITA last August, which is drawing youths back to agriculture, the reason why his government called for collaboration with the Institute.

Under the MoU, IITA and the Council will partner to:

- organize training for 250 youths in agribusiness on sustainable agricultural practices, including livestock production
- train the youths to become independent and employed thus boosting their self-esteem
- train young women/men in agribusiness development and management to establish individual or group enterprises
- help develop the entrepreneurial mind-set of the youths in agriculture
- provide technical business workforce training with entrepreneurship focus.

DDG Kenton Dashiell said the partnership was a significant milestone, and a step in the right direction. He was represented by Dr Chrys Akem, who reiterated IITA's commitment with a view to developing the youths, enhancing food security, and reducing poverty.

He said that the focus on the youths was an institutional policy initiated by Dr Nteranya Sanginga, IITA DG, to use agriculture as a means to address the menace of unemployment.

Dr Akem explained that over the years the Institute had been providing direct jobs to

youths and also engaging several others in internship and participating in the National Youth Service Corps—a scheme that allows fresh graduates to serve a mandatory 1-year internship with organizations in Nigeria.

"The IITA Youth program is further amplifying what we have been doing before... and in this case developing the capacities of the youths so that they become employers of labor," he said.

Most youths in Akinyele find agriculture unattractive, a constraint which the signing of the MoU aims to address.



Representatives of IITA and Akinyele Local Government after the signing of the memorandum of agreement. Photo by O. Adebayo IITA.

## Workshop on Implementation of Seed Yam Quality held

The Yam Improvement for Income and Food Security in West Africa (YIIFSWA) conducted a week-long workshop on the implementation of Seed Yam Quality Management Protocol (QMP) in Nigeria and Ghana at IITA, Ibadan. Seventeen participants from government institutions and NGOs in Ghana and Nigeria reviewed existing seed yam certification standards in West Africa, specifically Nigeria and Ghana; relevance of standards to present scenarios dominated by seed yam produced by the informal seed sector; the extent to which their application is feasible, with the ultimate aim of identifying appropriate standards which can be implemented in the project for producing various types of seed yam, including quality declared planting materials.

Dr Robert Asiedu, IITA Director (Research for Development) Western Africa, in his opening remarks, recounted the slow development of vegetatively propagated crops and concerns with poor quality seed yam due to pests and diseases. He insisted that much work is needed to be done to strengthen the formal seed yam sector and urged participants to accept the challenge to implement seed yam certification to make yam a modern crop while observing its cultural significance.

Dr Lava Kumar, the organizer of the workshop, articulated the importance of and constraints in seed yam system and the relevance of QMP to improve seed yam quality.

Dr Norbert Maroya, YIIFSWA project manager, talked about YIIFSWA's purpose: "to ensure timely availability of sufficient

quantities of pest- and disease-free seed yam on a commercially viable, price competitive basis capable of increasing yam yields by at least 50%." He said the project, during the past two years, established the seed yam value chain linking key players involved in the formal and informal seed systems for rapid promotion of technologies and standards to develop the seed yam sector.

Timothy Ajiboye from the National Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology (NACGRAB) said, "The workshop has been insightful and will go a long way in stimulating the seed industry in Nigeria. Farmers don't know that they can produce seed to sell using the easiest of methods such

as mini setts. From a regulatory point of view we've been given the tools to produce, assess, and determine clean quality seeds. My organization deals with conservation, release, and registration of new varieties. The knowledge gained from this workshop can be put to use in these avenues especially with the registration and release of new varieties."

The workshop included lectures on seed yam production and assessing quality standards, and hands-on training on implementation of certification standards. It concluded with the development of a QMP accepted for implementation in YIIFSWA target regions.



*Dr Norbert Maroya (YIIFSWA Project Manager) gives an overview on YIIFSWA objectives and achievements to training participants. Photo by O. Odihi, IITA.*

## DDG-CS visits IITA-Malawi, urges staff to help attain Vision 2020

"IITA will be proud to see that it reaches its 2012-2020 strategic goals and even beyond, but that takes teamwork and hard work by all staff," said Kwame Akuffo-Akoto, IITA

Deputy Director General for Corporate Services.

Kwame aired this appeal during a visit to IITA-Malawi on 17 August, emphasizing the

importance of supporting research work. He said efforts staff make should help to bring about 11 million households out of poverty and help bring food security in Africa. Kwame added he was proud to be one of the people who authorized IITA to build in Malawi when he was working for ICRISAT and was "impressed with the quick growth the station has registered in infrastructure and human development".

He noted that IITA has a responsibility to take care of its staff and make sure they have a suitable working environment in the country where they are operating, mindful that countries differ politically as well as economically; "what matters is for everybody to be responsible and hardworking."

Kwame also recognized the good working relationship IITA enjoys with other CGIAR centers in Malawi saying "this must be commended and encouraged."

Country Representative for Malawi Dr Arega Alene thanked Kwame for the quick transformation and noticeable changes he has already brought to IITA. He also assured the DDG that IITA-Malawi staff would always fully support Corporate Services.



*DDG Kwame Akuffo-Akoto with IITA Malawi staff. Photo by E. Mwale, IITA-Malawi.*

## IITA trains partners on controlling soybean pests

Diseases and pests are becoming a major impediment to the efforts being put together by different development partners to improve soybean productivity in Tanzania. IITA conducted a training in Songea, Tanzania on integrated pest management (IPM) of soybean for “Soya ni Pesa” (Soybean is Money), a USAID-funded project which aims to increase the production of soybean in Tanzania’s Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor (SAGCOT) region.

The workshop, organized by the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) on 2 to 10 September, targeted field officers who were trained on integrated crop management for soybean to attain maximum crop productivity. The participants were retrained to identify pests and diseases in the field, the damage they cause, and available control measures as well as identifying various soybean developmental stages and the pests and diseases associated with each stage. Scouting for diseases and pests was emphasized as the best means for early identification to recommend timely application of appropriate control measures.

“Legume productivity cannot be achieved unless the challenge of diseases and pests is dealt with,” said IITA’s Harun Murithi, a plant pathologist based in Tanzania, at the training. “The IPM training encompassed various pest and disease control technologies to give farmers options that include cultural, biological, and chemical control.”

According to Murithi, the major soybean insect pests in the region are cutworms,

termites, soybean leaf miner, and pod borers. The major soybean diseases included bacterial blight, bacterial pustule, Asian soybean rust, and frogeye leaf spot.

Asian soybean rust was highlighted as one of the major devastating diseases in the region. There are no resistant cultivars identified yet although efforts are underway to identify rust populations in the region to deploy resistant cultivars. IITA scientists are also working on developing early and rapid diagnostic methods to identify the disease

before it establishes in the field to reduce the overuse of fungicide.

The training brought together 17 field officers from the action sites in Songea, Namtumbo, and Morogoro and five facilitators from CRS, CIAT, ARI-Uyole, and IITA. The training was conducted a few months before the start of the planting season to arm the field officers with skills in site selection and establishment, integrated soil fertility management (ISFM), integrated crop management (ICM), and IPM.



*Training participants exchange notes during the soybean rust training. Photo by C. Njuguna, IITA-Tanzania.*

## Training on the latest “Genotyping-by-Sequencing” techniques conducted

Students and technicians from IITA-Nairobi and the ILRI-BecA hub received training on genotyping-by-sequencing (GBS), the latest high-density fingerprinting technology that is being used by IITA and its partners for diversity assessments, molecular breeding approaches such as genomic selection, and for dissecting the genetic basis of various traits.

The technology is based on the detection on single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs), which are single nucleotide differences within or among individuals.

The training was conducted by Dr Jessica Lyons of the University of California, Berkeley, 9 to 20 September.

The trainees constructed “libraries” for quality check sequencing on the Illumina “Mi-Seq”, a DNA sequencing machine, recently installed at BecA, and subsequent high-throughput sequencing on an Illumina “Hi-Seq” at UC Berkeley.

“The training will go a long way in supporting us in our research efforts to provide farmers with cassava varieties that are resistant to the deadly Cassava Brown Streak Disease threatening the crop’s



*Dr Jessica Lyons of the University of California, Berkeley, conducts training for IITA-Nairobi and ILRI-BecA, 19 to 20 September.*

production in the region,” says Morag Ferguson, IITA’s Molecular Scientist. “We are therefore grateful to Jessica for the training.”

The training was jointly organized by IITA-Nairobi and BecA as part of a project titled “Biotechnology Applications to Combat Cassava Brown Streak Disease”.

# Welcome!

**Dr Ayoni Ogunbayo** has assumed duty as the new Liberia WAAPP Cassava Breeder at IITA-Liberia. Dr Ogunbayo, from Nigeria, has vast experience in plant breeding, seed production, and genetic resources management. He has over 20 years of working experience in international agricultural research organizations. He obtained his PhD in Plant Breeding, MSc in Plant Breeding, and Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) in Plant Breeding and Seed Technology from the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria.



Prior to his appointment, he was a Research Associate, Plant Breeder/Seed Production Specialist of the Rice Sector Development Program at the Africa Rice Center (AfricaRice) in Suakoko, Bong County, Liberia (2012-2013). He also worked as Research Assistant, Lowland Breeding Unit, AfricaRice in Cotonou, Benin Republic (2005-2012). He was a Senior Research Supervisor, Genetic Resources Unit/International Network for Genetic Evaluation of Rice in Africa (INGER-Africa), AfricaRice, Ibadan, Nigeria (2002-2005); Research Technician at GRU/INGER-Africa, AfricaRice, Côte d'Ivoire (1997-2002); and Research Technician (1995-1997) and Laboratory/Field Assistant (1989-1995) at IITA, Ibadan.

He is married and has children. His e-mail address is [a.ogunbayo@cgiar.org](mailto:a.ogunbayo@cgiar.org) and he can be reached through telephone number at +231 888 229 322. The office address is IITA, Gbarnga, Bong County, Liberia.

**Dr Nicholas Garber**, a US citizen, has joined the Pathology Unit at IITA-Ibadan, Nigeria as a Visiting Scientist (Plant Pathologist). He will be participating in research related to aflatoxin contamination of maize and groundnut and the implementation of aflasafe™ biocontrol with Dr Ranajit Bandyopadhyay.

He studied Plant Biology (BS) at Arizona State University (1996-2000) and obtained his PhD in Plant Pathology from the University of Arizona in 2013. He has worked as a Research Technician in the Department of Plant Pathology of the University of Arizona (2004-2006).



His office is in Building 400 (Room 33) with telephone extension 2844. He can also be contacted by e-mail at [n.garber@cgiar.org](mailto:n.garber@cgiar.org).

**Dr Latifou Idrissou**, a Beninese, has assumed duty as the Humidtropics Action Area Coordinator of the African Western Humid Lowland Action Area at IITA-Ibadan. He will be based in Ibadan for an initial period of one year after which he would relocate to Accra, Ghana. Dr Idrissou obtained his PhD in Social Sciences (2012) with a major in Communication and Innovation Studies from Wageningen University and Research Centre, the Netherlands, and an Engineering degree in Agronomy Sciences (2002) with a major in Economics, Socio-Anthropology and Communication from the Faculty of Agronomic Sciences of the University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin Republic. He has a Diploma in General Agronomy and another university degree in Sciences and Technics from the University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin Republic.



He started his career as a Research Assistant with the Benin Organization for Organic Agriculture (OBEPAB) (2003-2004) and joined the Faculty of Agronomy of the University of Parakou, Benin, where he became a Researcher (2004-2012), Assistant Professor since March 2012; head of the professional training division of the Center of Improvement on Agronomic Sciences from March to September 2013; Facilitator for the building of

Benin Country Forum (CF) on Agricultural Advisory Services; and a Project Gender Expert in the Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa (DTMA) project Benin Team from April 2013 until he took this new appointment.

He is accompanied by his wife, Ella and their son Fayçal Cees. His office is located in Building 401 (Room 24) with telephone extension 2239. He lives at Apartment 4D on IITA Campus with home telephone number 2439. His e-mail address is [l.idrissou@cgiar.org](mailto:l.idrissou@cgiar.org).

**Dr Brigitte Uwimana**, a Rwandan national, has joined the IITA-Tanzania team in Arusha as a Postdoctoral Fellow-Banana Breeder. Brigitte was formerly a Research Associate at Wageningen University and Research Centre in the Netherlands. Prior to this she had worked as a Research Assistant at the Rwanda Agricultural Research Institute (2005-2011) and a Focal Point Technician at ISAR/USAID/CIAT/Agricultural Technology Development and Transfer Project, Eastern Zone, Rwanda (April-October 2003). Her research experience focused on applying molecular and statistical tools to support breeding in plants.



She obtained her PhD in Plant Breeding (2011) and MSc in Plant Sciences (2007) with specialization in Plant Breeding and Genetic Resources from Wageningen University, the Netherlands. She received her BSc degree in Agriculture from Allahabad Agricultural Institute-Deemed University, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, India in 2002.

She can be contacted at IITA-Tanzania, c/o AVRDC-The World Vegetable Center, PO Box 10 Duluti, Arusha, Tanzania; tel. +255 767330594, [b.uwimana@cgiar.org](mailto:b.uwimana@cgiar.org).