

IITA to have 200 scientists, lift 200 million out of poverty by 2020 -- DG Sanginga

Under its revised 10-year strategy, IITA targets to improve the livelihoods of 200 million farmers in sub-Saharan Africa and pull them out of poverty, while at the same time increasing its annual budget to US\$ 100 million to support 200 multidisciplinary scientists operating from its four regional hubs.

This was disclosed by Nteranya Sanginga, IITA Director General, during briefings with international and local staff at IITA's East Africa Hub in Dar es Salaam on 14 May on new developments and plans of the institute. He was in the Tanzanian capital for the launch of the COMPRO-II project (*see related story in IITA Bulletin Issue 2120*).

He said that all staff had a role to play in realizing this vision, which they should all know by heart. He added that this "revitalized" strategy was all-inclusive with inputs from all sectors of the institute and not just the scientists or management.

Sanginga also reported that during the recent IITA Board meeting in Belgium, members of the BoT commended the management on its fundraising efforts which had increased the financial resources of the institute from US\$ 53 million to US\$ 64 million as of December 2011. However, he reiterated that with increased funding also comes the heavy responsibility of ensuring proper and efficient delivery of outputs it had pledged to investors.

Speaking about the hubs, he said IITA would continue to strengthen capacity in these locations. Under the new strategy, each hub would have around 50 scientists representing all the key disciplines of the institute in the next 10 years. He also reported that the Board had approved the

upgrading of IITA's research facilities to ensure that staff had the proper tools at their disposal.

He also commended national staff for their contribution to the success of IITA, particularly in the region. He said IITA is a donor-driven organization and its success is pegged on how well it delivers on its projects. He also urged them to make use of the opportunities available in the institute to grow professionally.

Also present during the briefings was John Griffith, Vice Chair of the BoT, who was invited by the DG to Tanzania to check on the construction of the science building and report back to the Board.

Griffith, who is a civil engineer by profession, said he was happy with the progress and was honored to be a board member of such a dedicated institution.



(Top) Sanginga also inspected progress on the hub's science building. John Griffith explaining a detail on the building. Looking on (L-R) are Ross Dunkerley, construction consultant, Arman Mohammad, and Victor Manyong; (middle) The DG meeting with local staff at the East Africa Hub; (bottom) The EA Hub team with the DG and Griffith.

Initiative to ensure safe vegetables in Tanzania launched

A project was launched in Morogoro on 10-12 May to determine the prevalence of harmful vegetable contaminants in Tanzania.

For the first time quantitative data will be collected on pesticide residues, heavy metals, human diseases and plant pathogens on samples of tomato and eggplant being sold in markets and from farmers fields.

Significant anecdotal evidence suggests that contamination with inappropriate doses and types of pesticides is widespread. Farm and market visits are planned to determine which pests and pathogens are plaguing farmers fields and leading to the misuse of pesticides.

Based on these findings targeted control interventions will be developed and disseminated that rely on improved cultural and IPM practices. Field visits will show where dirty water or municipal waste is being used to combat drought and fertility problems but instead are causing poisoning of

vegetables with heavy metals, while visits to the markets will point where dirty water for washing and poor sanitation practices of vendors are directly leading to contamination of vegetables with human diseases.

Transfer of human diseases from vegetables is becoming of critical importance now that more vegetables are being eaten raw.

Fen Beed, IITA Pathologist, stated that "this innovative project will benefit from several strategic partnerships and will provide information to drive awareness campaigns of the need to produce and sell vegetables using methods that safeguard consumer safety".

Profit will drive the acceptance of recommended control interventions and this domain will be characterised by a thorough value chain analysis of vegetables and consumption patterns in rural and urban households. These baseline studies will also characterise rice production systems in order

to identify mechanisms to intensify production of vegetables through integration with rice-based systems.

This unique project is funded by the USAID under the Africa Rising project of the Feed the Future initiative in Tanzania.

It is being led by the World Vegetable Centre

New systems agronomist joins IITA

Dr Mateete Bekunda has joined IITA as a Consultant Systems Agronomist for the USAID funded project on Sustainable Intensification of Key African Farming Systems.



His more than 30 years of research and outreach interests have been directed at improving smallholder livelihoods through application of sustainable crop nutrient management initiatives, mainly as professor at Makerere University, and as visiting scientist with TSBF and IAEA.

He voluntarily coordinates the pan- African nitrogen (INI) and nutrient management (GPNM) platforms that target informing and influencing the public at global level.

Bekunda was Dean of Agriculture at Makerere University, is a Fellow of the Uganda National Academy of Sciences, and was recognized as World Professor by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Iowa State University, USA. He is a Ugandan, married, and with five children.

and supported by IITA, Tropical Pesticides Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Cooperatives; Crop Research, Sokoine University of Agriculture, The Ohio State University and the Africa Rice Centre.



Members of the project implementing team pose for a group photograph during a break in the planning meeting in Morogoro, Tanzania.

Learning Center completes first staff training on Office apps

The Learning Center is pleased to announce the successful completion of the first group training on "Basic Computer Operation" which was organized to improve nominated staff's skills in the use of Microsoft Office 2007 applications.

The training is part of efforts by the newly formed Learning Center under the Directorate for Partnerships and Capacity Building to enhance work-related skills and knowledge of IITA

staff to increase job efficiency and effectiveness.

Fifteen staff successfully completed the 8-week training course which started mid-March and ended in May.

Speaking at the close of the training, Ms Lola Idowu, the training coordinator, thanked the participants for their determination to acquire skills for better job performance, and assured them that this training would no doubt boost their competency rating in the

next performance appraisal.

The participants expressed their appreciation to the management for providing them with the unique opportunity to upgrade their knowledge and ability and look forward to applying the new skills to their daily activities.

This training is scheduled to run continuously throughout the year, with the second installment of the training course kicking-off in early June 2012.