



# USAID-backed agricultural intensification project in East & Southern Africa launched

A multi-stakeholder research initiative aimed at developing and promoting sustainable means of intensifying cereal-based farming systems in East and Southern Africa was officially launched with an inception workshop in Dar es Salaam,

Agriculture, Food Security, and Cooperatives, officially opened the gathering. He lauded the initiative saying that Tanzania has the biggest potential for cereal production in the region and hoped to double its production in the next 10 years.

for development. He cited that the institute is currently constructing a state-of-the-art science building to catalyze research in the country and in the region. He invited scientists from international and national research institutions and universities to use the facility once it is completed.

Also speaking at the workshop's opening, Julie Howard, Chief Scientist of USAID's Bureau for Food Security, said the research initiative is part of the US government's Feed the Future Initiative (FtF), which aims at tackling global food security challenges through research and development. FtF was created in response to the global food crisis of 2007 – 2008.

The initiative is one of three under the USAID/FtF, which are targeted at intensification of key African farming systems. IITA is taking the lead on two: one on sustainable intensification of cereal-based systems in Eastern and Southern Africa, and the other in the Sudano-Sahelian Zone of West Africa. The International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) is spearheading the third on intensifying crop-livestock systems in the Ethiopian highlands.

According to Irmgard Hoeschle-Zeledon, IITA project coordinator, the workshop achieved great milestones in setting the roadmap of this research program. She cited, among other outputs of the workshop, the establishment of a Management Committee, identification of the initial research site, and the development of an action plan for the first year of the project.

She added that the implementation of the West Africa program, which IITA also coordinates, was on-course. A similar workshop for this project was held in Tamale, Ghana in January this year.



*Tanzania's Minister for Agriculture, Hon Jumanne Maghembe, speaking at the opening of the East & Southern Africa agricultural intensification project workshop in Dar es Salaam. Looking on are Julie Howard of USAID, IITA DG Nteranya Sanginga, and a delegate of a partner agency in Tanzania.*

Tanzania on 6-9 February. The kick-off conference brought together project partners drawn from eight CGIAR centers, agricultural research institutes, NGOs, universities, and the private sector. The project is funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and led by IITA.

During the four-day workshop, project stakeholders worked out the specifics of implementing the ambitious five-year project. The goal of the research is to develop and promote improved integrated farming systems that will sustainably increase production and profitability while preserving the natural resource base.

Honorable Prof Jumanne Maghembe, Tanzanian Minister for

“Currently, our annual production is 5.4 million metric tons of maize, 1.4 million metric tons of rice. Our target is to produce 10 million tons of maize, 1.4 million tons of rice, 2.0 million tons of wheat and 2.0 million tons of other cereals,” the Minister said.

“Therefore, we do not take the holding of this conference in Tanzania lightly. We want all of you to see what niche you can fit in, what role you can play to help Tanzanian farmers and farmers in Eastern and Southern Africa attain their aspirations,” he added.

Nteranya Sanginga, IITA Director General, in welcoming the Minister and workshop participants, said IITA is investing a lot in Tanzania in the area of agricultural research

# Building staff capacity in proposal writing

A capacity building workshop on proposal writing was held in Ibadan as part of the institute's strategy to engage its various units towards resource mobilization, especially in the light of the changes happening within the institute in connection with the CGIAR reforms.

The workshop, which was coordinated by the Training Unit of the Human Resources Service (HRS), was facilitated by Dr. Sam Ajala, IITA Maize Breeder, and Mr. Kayode Awobajo of the Contracts and Grants Office (CGO).

Ajala, the lead facilitator, provided tips on how to write winning proposals including formulation of an effective title, project description, goal, objectives, implementation strategy, outputs, and impact. He emphasized the appropriate use of language in crafting proposals.

Awobajo, on the other hand, spoke on budgeting and other financial aspects of proposals. He urged participants to contact the CGO for guidance in this respect.



*Ajala giving pointers on preparing a project proposal during the training workshop.*

Participants to the workshop were drawn from the Communication Office, HRS, Facilities Management Services, Hotel and Catering, Security Unit, and Supply Chain, among others.

At the end of the workshop, participants expressed confidence in taking up challenges in proposal writing. The workshop also unveiled opportunities that could be tapped by the various units for resource mobilization.

## IITA looks forward to welcoming new staff

In the next few months, the IITA community will be welcoming new staff to shore-up the institute's R4D expertise in headquarters and the regional hubs.

### **Dr. Hesham Agrama**

Dr. Hesham Agrama, formerly a consultant with the Agricultural Research Center will join IITA as a Soybean Breeder. Dr. Agrama, an Egyptian-American, will join IITA-Zambia this February.

He has conducted research combining genomic, quantitative genetics and agronomic performance information to improve the efficiency of plant breeding. He earned his experience from different laboratories worldwide which reflects his ability in forming interactive networks with other researchers working with genetics and breeding.

### **Naomi Kamanga**

Naomi Kamanga, a Malawian, has been appointed as the Project

Coordinator for the US government's Feed the Future Initiative (FtF), which supports the Zambia's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP). She has over 10 years senior management experience in leading the development and ensuring the delivery of country program strategies.

Mrs Kamanga was formerly the Country Director of World Hope International - Zambia. She is expected to assume duty mid-February and will join the IITA-Zambia team.

### **Dr. Kenton Dashiell**

Dr. Kenton Dashiell is currently the leader of a project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on "Putting Nitrogen Fixation to work for Smallholder Farmers of Africa" (N2Africa). He will join IITA as Deputy Director General for Partnerships and Capacity Building. Dr. Dashiell has been leading and conducting agricultural research for

development for 27 years.

Dr. Dashiell, an American, has previously worked at IITA in Ibadan for 18 years in different capacities. He "comes home" to IITA-Ibadan in March.

### **Dr. Bernard Vanlauwe**

Dr. Bernard Vanlauwe, a Belgian, will assume duty as the R4D Director for Central Africa and Natural Resource Management starting this March. He will be based at IITA-Kenya in Nairobi. Dr. Vanlauwe possesses over 15 years of experience in providing scientific leadership within multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional research for development teams in West, East, and Central Africa.

He is a principal scientist and presently the program leader of the ISM program and leader of the East and Central Africa hub of TSBF-CIAT.