

AfDB and IITA discuss areas of collaboration

A delegation from the African Development Bank (AfDB) held a week-long meeting with IITA to cement ties that would accelerate the dissemination and adoption of improved technologies in the African region.

The discussions are part of a follow-up to an earlier meeting that was held in January this year.

IITA DG Hartmann, while welcoming the team, said that the need to feed the growing population has become critically important with new predictions on world population exceeding earlier forecasts.

According to him, the challenge is that of harnessing efforts that will increase food production, and improve the livelihoods of the people.

He expressed optimism that collaboration between AfDB and IITA would go a long way in addressing the many constraints to increased food production in Africa.

The leader of the AfDB delegation, Principal Agricultural Economist Jonas Chianu, said that the meeting was aimed at fine-tuning and clarifying areas of interests between the bank and IITA.



IITA staff and AfDB officials meet in Ibadan

He reiterated that the bank intends to build a regional system involving international agricultural centers, national agricultural research systems, and other relevant stakeholders that would advance the cause of food security in Africa.

He also said that IITA was a strategic partner in the plan to achieve the vision.

Apart from Hartmann, top management from IITA including Paula Bramel, Sholola Omoshalewa, Dave Watson and scientists attended the meeting.

IITA and CTA co-exhibit at Lagos Book Fair



IITA and CTA share a booth at the Book Fair.

IITA and the Netherlands-based CTA are participating at the 11th Nigeria International Book Fair taking place in Lagos.

The event, organized by the Nigeria Book Fair Trust, drew book publishers and other stakeholders around the world.

Selected IITA publications and materials on agricultural development were offered free of charge to the public at the exhibition booth.

Funke Ogunsola, IITA Executive Assistant, said the exhibition presented an opportunity for the public to benefit from IITA's work through

knowledge sharing.

Different stakeholders including journalists, academics, publishers, and students were among the many visitors to the booth.

Stephan Gambier, CTA's Senior Program Coordinator (Publications), said CTA was pleased to participate with IITA in the exhibition. CTA had invited IITA to share its booth and also distributed its publications to participants at the fair.

Gambier noted that as an organization with the mandate of sharing knowledge, book publication and distribution was a key activity for CTA.

Other activities at the book fair this year were seminar presentations and workshops on the future of book publishing in the new digital publishing environment in Nigeria.

Help conserve electricity!

Before leaving the workplace at day's end, 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.

Impact studies before intervention more crucial than after

IITA's Research for Development (R4D) work can be greatly enhanced by giving more priority and attention to rigorous impact studies before any intervention and not after its completion.

According to Joseph Rusike, IITA's socioeconomic/impact assessment economist, carefully done ex-ante impact analysis before initiating any research activity will help in setting the priorities to guide its agenda and to ensure that it addresses the most urgent problems.

"Ex-ante analysis focuses on clearly understanding the problems, their causes, and the social settings that help in establishing priorities to guide the technical research work," he said at a seminar in Dar es Salaam. "This then calls for a very close working relationship between the economists and the technical scientists right from the beginning and not simply at the end to measure the impact of a completed research project, the ex-post impact analysis."

He adds that they should work hand in hand during the field experimentation to test the technologies developed to solve identified problems that would guide their refinement before they are released for wider adoption and after their release.

"They also do not stop here--once released, early adoption studies should be conducted to understand the adopters, who and where they are, and the benefits they are getting. This in turn will guide further diffusion of the technologies," he said.

The ex-post impact analysis is then carried much later to determine how well the technology has been adopted, how far it has spread geographically, and the difference it has made.

Rusike says ex-post impact analysis is important not only for accountability to donors, governments, and other stakeholders but also for lesson learning and setting new research priorities.

"It's a whole cycle. We get to build our capacity in implementing R4D projects as we learn what worked well and what did not. We get to know what gives us the greatest impact per dollar invested and focus on that," he said.

For example, he says, the countries IITA is working in to promote cassava commercialization are at different stages of the crop's transformation--from a famine reserve to a food staple for rural consumption to livestock feed and raw material for industrial use and manufacturing. The needs and priorities are different for each stage and ex-ante analysis helps in their prioritization.

Giving another example, he said an ex-ante analysis was conducted within the Unleashing the Power of the Cassava (UPoCA) project to identify priorities to target research interventions in each of the 7 countries it was working in.

From the study, the priority needs for the farmers in Nigeria which is at an advanced stage of the cassava transformation process, were identified: availability of credit, markets, and labor. In other countries such as Tanzania and Malawi, availability of good planting material and pests and diseases management were identified.

The study also highlighted the plight of women-headed households as the poorest and the most neglected target group. "Any IITA research activity aimed at fighting hunger and poverty should definitely look into gender inequalities in the rural communities," he concluded.



Rusike makes a point during his R4D seminar in Dar



Braith James, UPoCA project manager (in white shirt) using a teaching method to gather qualitative data from farmers in Sierra Leone

IITA welcomes Alex Omodo, Regional Finance Officer



Alex Omodo, a chartered Accountant with 15 years of progressive and professional experience in international and national organizations in Africa and the UK, joins IITA as the Regional Finance Officer in charge of Eastern and Southern Africa. He will be based at the regional hub in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Before joining IITA, Omodo was with Crystal Ventures Ltd, an investment company in Rwanda, where he was a Finance Director in charge of two companies for the group.

He holds a Bachelor of commerce Degree (Finance) from Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, and Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Management from Emile Wolf College, London Business Institute of Financial Management, UK.

He has held top management responsibilities in reputable organizations such as the British America Tobacco and Armor Group (G4S).

He is married with 4 children, 3 girls and 1 boy.

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