



IITA signs agreement with AfDB formalizing US\$63M SARD-SC project

On Monday, 12 March, IITA Director General Nteranya Sanginga signed the Protocol of Agreement with the African Development Bank (AfDB) formalizing the acceptance of the institute of the US\$63.24 million multinational CGIAR project “Support to Agricultural Research for Development of Strategic Crops in Africa” (SARD-SC).

SARD-SC It is a research, science, and technology development initiative aimed at enhancing the

productivity and income derived from cassava, maize, rice, and wheat – four of the six commodities that African Heads of States, through the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program, have defined as strategic crops for Africa. It allows – for the first time ever in a single project – a continental coverage of the food security challenges in Africa.

The project will be co-implemented by three Africa-based CGIAR Centers: the International Institute

of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Africa Rice Center, and the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas. IITA will also be the project’s Executing Agency.

Another CGIAR Center – the International Food Policy Research Institute – a specialized technical agency, will support the other three Centers.

See full article about SARD-SC in the Special Issue of the IITA Bulletin on March 3.



(Right photo): IITA DG Sanginga and Abdurahman Beileh, Acting Director of the Agriculture & Agro-Industry Department, AfDB exchanging copies of the signed Protocol of Agreement; (left photo) Present during the signing were (from L-R) Dougou Keita, Manager, Agriculture & Agro-Industry Division 2, AfDB; Patrick Okecho, Consultant, Legal Division 1, AfDB; Mohammed El Mourid, Regional Coordinator, North Africa Program, ICARDA; Nteranya Sanginga; Abdurahman Beileh; Jonas N. Chianu, Principal Agricultural Economist, Agriculture & Agro-Industry Division 2, AfDB; and Eklou Attiogbevi-Somado, Principal Agronomist, Agriculture & Agro-Industry Division 2, AfDB.

Drought tolerant maize wins prestigious UK climate change prize

The United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) has won Best Technological Breakthrough at the UK Climate Week Awards for its support to the “Drought Tolerant Maize for Africa” (DTMA) Project, which is jointly implemented by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA).

The prize was announced at the

Climate Week Awards, held in London on Monday, 12 March, to celebrate the UK’s most effective and ambitious organizations, communities, and individuals and their efforts to combat climate change.

DTMA, the winning initiative, is responsible for the development and dissemination of 34 new drought-tolerant maize varieties to farmers in 13 project countries—Angola, Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi,

Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe—between 2007 and 2011. An estimated 2 million smallholder farmers are using the drought-tolerant maize varieties and have obtained higher yields, improved food security, and increased incomes.

The DTMA project is presently funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and is also receiving complementary grants from the

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Howard G. Buffet Foundation and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

"This maize is like an insurance against hunger and total crop failure, even under hot, dry conditions like those of recent years", says 79-year-old Rashid Said Mpinga, a maize farmer in Morogoro, Tanzania, who has been growing maize for almost half a century. "Without good quality maize seed, you cannot earn enough, you cannot have life."

In a continent where maize is the staple crop for over 300 million people and nearly all of it is grown without irrigation, relying solely on precipitation, drought tolerant varieties are invaluable. In 2011 alone, more than 12.5 million people suffered the effects of drought and resulting famines in the Horn of Africa, with the drought being termed the worst in 60 years.

The project uses conventional breeding, where varieties with good drought tolerance characteristics are cross-bred to get final products which are both productive and nutritious and grow well in African conditions. In particular, the DTMA provide farmers with better yields than leading commercial varieties under moderate drought conditions, while giving outstanding harvests when rains are good.

Partners in developing, marketing, or distributing seed include private companies, publicly funded agricultural research and extension systems, ministries of agriculture, NGOs, and community-based seed producers.

In addition, the efforts of DTMA build on long-term support from the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and



Rashid Said Mpinga, a Tanzanian maize farmer, inspecting one of his drought tolerant maize plants. Image courtesy of CIMMYT.

Development, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Rockefeller Foundation, USAID, UNDP, and the Eiselen Foundation.

Welcome Kenton Dashiell, DDG for Partnerships and Capacity Building



Ken Dashiell

The IITA Community welcomes to its fold Dr Kenton Dashiell as the institute's new Deputy Director General for Partnerships and Capacity Building.

Dashiell, an American, obtained his BSc in Agronomy from Purdue University in 1976, his MSc in Agronomy/Plant Breeding from the Oklahoma State University in 1979, and his PhD in Agronomy/Plant Breeding from the University of Florida in 1983. Since obtaining his doctorate degree, Dashiell has been leading and conducting agricultural research for almost 30 years.

Dashiell has previously worked at IITA-Ibadan for 18 years during which he held various responsibilities including Soybean Breeder, Leader of the Grain Legume Improvement Program, and Director of the Crop Improvement Division. From February 2001 to July 2004, he worked as an Associate Professor in Peanut/Oilseed Breeding at the Oklahoma State University.

In recent past, he worked at the USDA/ARS in South Dakota as Research Leader, Location Coordinator, and Supervisory Research Agronomist from July 2004 to February 2010. Immediately prior to becoming IITA's DDG for Partnerships, Dashiell was the Project Leader for the N2Africa Project based in Nairobi, Kenya.

He resides on the IITA-Ibadan campus at No. 12 Africa Drive. He is accompanied by his wife, Gloria. His temporary office is in Building 500, and he may be contacted at ext 2793 or through his email address at K.Dashiell@cgiar.org.

IITA Women's Group 2012 Scholarship Grants

The IITA Women's Group is happy to announce its 2012 scholarship competition for qualified candidates in:

- Junior secondary school
- Senior secondary school
- Polytechnic
- University

The criteria for the awards are:

- Applicants must be children of IITA employees in Nigeria on Pay Grades 1-6.
- Parents of such applicants must have worked at IITA for at least 2 years and must be presently employed.
- Applicants must have above average academically and must have school reports to prove this.
- Applicants must be registered in schools or must have secured admission into a recognized school.
- Applicants must perform well during the interviews (both oral and written), which will be conducted for shortlisted candidates.

Scholarship grant amounts are as follows:

- Junior Secondary = N 12, 500
- Senior Secondary = N15,000
- Post-Secondary = N17,000

Application forms are available from the Employee Services Unit of HR Services in Building 500 during working hours. Deadline for submission of completed forms is on 30 March 2012. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.