

## IITA-Zambia to get new modern maize seed storage facility

On 6 February, IITA-Zambia formally signed a contract with a local construction firm for the establishment of a modern maize seed storage and warehouse facility within the IITA Southern Africa Research and Administration (SARAH) campus in Kabangwe, Zambia, in the next 3 months.

The construction of the facility is being funded by the [African Development Bank](#) (AfDB) through its Support to Agriculture Research for Development of Strategic Crops ([SARD-SC](#)) project.

The contract signing was followed by a ceremonial ground-breaking at the facility's future site on-campus.

Construction work for the storage facility will begin on 15 February and is expected to be completed by mid-May. The facility is estimated to cost some 1.1 million Zambian Kwacha, or about US\$110,000.

[David Chikoye](#), IITA Regional Director for Southern Africa, indicated that the storage facility will further boost our capabilities to more efficiently deliver much needed seed-related services

to maize smallholder farmers not only in Zambia but also within the southern Africa region.

“One of the current challenges is that we lack a proper storage facility for seeds. Without proper storage, the viability of seeds suffers and consequently, lead to less-than-ideal crop productivity,” Chikoye said.

“This seed storage facility—once completed—will help catalyze our efforts to realize IITA’s mission and vision in the country and in the region,” he added. Addressing the contractor, he emphasized, “With this construction job, you are actually contributing towards addressing hunger and poverty in Zambia. So do a good job.”



*Chikoye breaking ground at the future site of the maize seed storage and warehouse facility at SARAH campus as IITA staff and construction representatives look on.*

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## IITA introduces new unit for effective data and information management

Following the institutional reforms that began last year at IITA, the Institute has established a Data and Information Management Unit (DIMU) to lead in managing the array of data and information constantly generated. DIMU will work to strengthen the information infrastructure and interact very closely with scientists to streamline the capture, processing, storage, and

retrieval of research data, information and knowledge.

Consequently, DIMU staff members comprising colleagues from Ibadan, Abuja, Cameroon, DR Congo, Malawi, and Kenya drawn from the ICT, Knowledge Center, Biometrics, GIS, Data management, E-research team, and Communication sub-units,

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converged in Ibadan on 30–31 January for a 2-day workshop to develop a strategy and a shared vision that will guide operations of the Unit going forward. The workshop participants also brainstormed on sustainability plans as well as the mandate of

institutional leadership on data and information management.

[Ylva Hillbur](#), Deputy Director General Research, said IITA management created DIMU to serve as a springboard for the modernization and transformation of information sharing in line with global changes and trends.

[Tonny Omwansa](#), Director, Research Support, who facilitated the workshop, explained that the new unit is strategic for both the scientific and administrative arms of the Institute.

"DIMU is mandated to provide institutional leadership on Data and Information Management, for both scientific and administrative data. As

such, if IITA is to be at the cutting edge of modern approaches such as Big Data and Analytics, the Unit has to lay a strong foundation on standards and best practices," Omwansa said.

A team of volunteers was formed to continue streamlining the strategy before the launch of DIMU scheduled for the middle of the year.



Group photo of members of the new Data Information and Management Unit in Ibadan.

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Chikoye also revealed plans for further strengthening the SARA research facilities in 2017.

"We moved to this campus barely a year ago, and while dealing with 'teething' issues we continue to augment our research infrastructure as expeditiously as we can with available resources," Chikoye

explained. "For example, we are just now putting the finishing touches on four screenhouses. And apart from the seed storage facility, we are also aiming to build a tissue culture laboratory within this year."

"Of course, none of these would be possible without the continuous support of our partners and donors. Specifically, I

would like to thank the AfDB for funding the construction of the seed storage facility. It's always a good feeling that we can always count on our partners to benefit our smallholder farmers."

"Indeed, exciting times are ahead for IITA-Zambia and SARA, so keep watch," he ended.



Aerial shot of new screenhouses going up at SARA campus.

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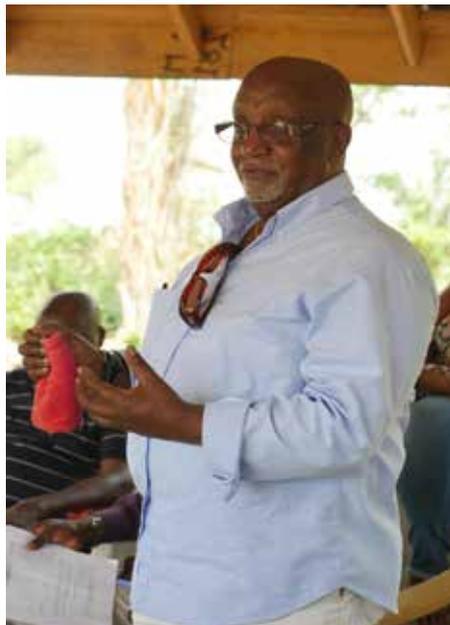
## Maize value chain holds gender mainstreaming workshop for partners in Nigeria

A three-day workshop on gender mainstreaming in the [SARD-SC](#) maize value chain was conducted at the Kaduna State Agricultural Development Project (KADP) Headquarters, Kaduna, Nigeria, during the last quarter of 2016 with key stakeholders in attendance.

The workshop aimed to enhance gender-sensitive technology development and dissemination to boost productivity and income of a broad segment of targeted maize farmers, particularly women.

It was organized in four sessions, with the opening ceremony attended by the state Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry, Manzo Daniel Maigari, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary, M. Kassim. Also present at the opening ceremony were the Program Manager, KADP, Mal Ashafa Dauda; President of Maize Association of Nigeria (MAAN), Tunji Adenola; President of Seed Entrepreneurs Development Association of Nigeria (SEEDAN), Richard Olafare; and John Onyisi Onyibe, maize value chain coordinator in Nigeria and the Managing Director of Goldagric Nigeria Limited, Kaduna.

Amare Tegbaru, SARD-SC Gender Specialist, assisted by Hyeladi Gaya, gave a talk on how to mainstream gender into the maize value chain activities during the interactive workshop. This was followed by a brainstorming group session during



*Amare Tegbaru*

which a tool was developed to conduct focus group discussions (FGD) on gender norms within various communities. The participants were later organized into three groups, and each group developed and presented the tool they intended to use for their FGDs. One group worked on a women's group, another group on a men's group, and the third on a mixed group.

Field practical/analytical exercise on day 2 using the tools earlier developed to interact with the three stratified gender-focused groups formed the third session.

The field work was held 250 km away from Kaduna, within the SARD-SC IP located in Taure, Samaru Kataf in Zango Kataf Local Government Area Council of Kaduna State covering Kaduna-Nasarawa States. The visit enabled the participants to understand and identify the prevailing gender dynamics within the community. The results from each of the three FGDs were later analyzed to tease out the gender norms influencing both male and female decisions on what to grow. Special focus was on the dynamics within the community that female farmers faced when accessing the three factors of production: land, labor, and capital.

After the presentation of group reports, an action plan was developed to support the efforts of women in the community to produce more green maize, an enterprise that had been identified as the focus of the female farmers. The lecture and discussion guide presentations used by the lead resource person were circulated among the workshop participants.

The workshop ended with a range of feedback from participants during a wrap-up session.

The SARD-SC Maize value chain is executed in over 60 communities across 6 states of Nigeria as well as in 5 (Cameroon, DR Congo, Ghana, Zambia and Mali) other countries.

## Scientist says cocoa farmers are the focus of new research

[Richard Asare](#), Regional Cocoa Agroforester, IITA Ghana, disclosed during his seminar presentation on 3 February, at IITA, Ibadan, that cocoa scientists are now brainstorming on the cash crop that is essential to the livelihoods of 40-50 million people worldwide. He also expressed optimism that the effort will result in a better working condition for farmers, enhanced productivity in the cocoa landscape as well as improvement in farmers' livelihoods.

The presentation, titled "Cocoa: a strategic crop for food security and forest conservation in IITA's portfolio," detailed how Asare and his team are focusing on cocoa as a crop for food security and forest conservation. To achieve these, the team tried monoculture, agroforestry, and intensified cocoa agroforestry, (quantifying cocoa shade in cocoa system to see how it affects yield), and found that increased shade increases cocoa yield.

"We are working to improve the livelihoods of farmers, and develop scenarios for cocoa agroforestry based farming systems, to increase productivity and forest conservation. This will have a positive impact on the lives of farmers because they will have increased productivity per unit area in terms of cocoa and other food crops like cassava," Asare said. He also mentioned that his work will increase the quantity of valuable timber trees used in cocoa systems for shade, which will go a long way to help tree diversity in the cocoa landscape.

Cocoa is grown on millions of small (1-2 ha) and medium-sized (4-5 ha) family-run farms worldwide. It is a highly labor-intensive crop and an important cash crop providing income to more than 4.5 million families worldwide, including over 5 million smallholder cocoa farmers who grow this valuable crop.



*Cocoa farmers breaking pods*