

Highlights
IITA Board of Trustees Meeting
23, 25 & 26 November 2016
IITA Ibadan

- The IITA Board of Trustees held its 2016 Annual Board meeting in Ibadan in conjunction with Partnership for Delivery Week.
- The Board welcomed five new Trustees at this meeting, two ex-officio members representing our host country—the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Shehu Ahmad, and Professor Emmanuel Kucha, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Agriculture, Makurdi. The three at-large Trustees attending for the first time were Christian Borgemeister, Director of the Center for Development Research at the University of Bonn in Germany, Bill Cunningham from Ireland, formerly a senior Deputy Partner at PrivateWaterhouseCoopers, now retired, and Victoria Salin, Professor of Agricultural Economics at the Texas A & M University in the United States.
- Over the weekend before formal activities began, IITA organized a Board Orientation Program for new Trustees to provide them with background information on IITA and on the main issues facing the Institute to enable them to contribute right away to the discussions. They also received an overview on the CGIAR and on their roles and responsibilities as members of the IITA Board. The Orientation Program was conducted by the Board Chair, the Director General and the Deputy Directors General R4D and P4D.
- On November 21 and 22, the Board participated in the Partnerships for Delivery program. From the 23 to the 26 the Board met to carry out its mandate to oversee operations, programs and finances of the Institute. The Board reviewed and discussed presentations and reports on human resources finance and audit and on the scientific programs of IITA.
- The Board Chair presented an overview of the new CGIAR that came into effect on July 1, 2016. The new governance arrangements in place are expected to result in significantly more interaction between centers and donors, centers will have more control over the systems management office and overall the new arrangements are expected to serve the centers better.
- The DG reported on accomplishments during his first five-year term and on directions for the future taking into consideration current trends both in the donor community and among national governments and their populations. To respond to the growing trend among policy makers to reduce the continent's food importation bill estimated at \$35 billion annually with the consequent loss of valuable foreign exchange and to create employment for its millions of qualified youth, IITA will assist governments to transform economies by targeting agriculture as a source of wealth and job creation. During the next 5 years, IITA will focus its attention on the delivery of best bet technologies generated by IITA's research. Aligning

- with the priorities of national governments, IITA will engage with the private sector to scale out its technologies, it will undertake capacity building to fill the missing links between research and delivery and train the youth agribusinesses to become the farmers of the future and engage in agribusiness. This position calls for a mindset change across IITA where research is targeted towards developing technologies that have the potential for impact and contribute to transforming African agriculture with the TAAT and ENABLE project as entry points. The change is primarily tactical. IITA will maintain its research in its competency areas and fill the pipeline with the research for impact and play an integrating role, between discovery research (working with ARIs), adaptive research (working with NARS, NGOs) and delivery (working with governments and the private sector).
- The Board was informed of the implementation of organizational change at IITA which will strengthen the delivery capacity for IITA's technologies, address operational efficiencies to improve delivery of support services and research for development in order to position IITA to manage the TAAT and new mega projects that IITA will be executing. Given the additional and expansive financial responsibilities that IITA will be undertaking in the future, the Board emphasized the importance of putting a reliable control systems in place, training staff in systems control and inculcating a culture of control across all IITA locations.
 - The Board also discussed IITA's delivery strategy and agreed that in order to meet the delivery objectives IITA will have to recruit a new group of staff with delivery expertise and with a commercial orientation. There is also the need to have processes for engagement with its partners across the different sectors in place and countries where the delivery is targeted selected on the basis of the enabling environment, available opportunities and readiness for agricultural transformation.
 - The Board discussed the role IITA plans to play in system and site integration in the context of the CGIAR where it has a leadership role for some countries and is a partner in others. It is a key element of IITA's 2012-2020 strategy, a concept that is being promoted by donors and an instrument for integration of R4D and P4D dimensions of the institution's research and delivery work at selected sites.
 - The Board reviewed the progress on HR goals and concluded that the HR team continues to improve HR processes and services to staff. Six dignity advisors were appointed at headquarters and will be extended to the hubs in 2017. A revised HR Policy document and a Code of Conduct for employees were completed in 2016 and posted on the website. The maternity leave policy was updated to allow full annual leave to be taken and accrued during the maternity leave. A new staff satisfaction survey is planned for 2017 in conjunction with a CGIAR employee engagement survey.
 - The board reviewed reports from the IITA Internal Audit Unit and documents related to risk management. In addition, the CGIAR internal audit group also conducted some audits in 2016. The audits covered not only financial aspects, but also support services, programs and stations. Plans have been elaborated to address a number of potential risks identified by the audits.
 - The Director of Finance reported on the 2016 finances to date and presented a budget for 2017, which was approved by the board. The 2017 budget, which amounted to \$139 million, was approved on the basis of signed agreements. This is similar to the budget approved in 2016. The Board is aware of the possibility of IITA receiving considerable

- additional funding in 2017 through the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) and ENABLE Youth programs, and if that funding is received, the board will approve a larger budget at our spring meeting next year. IITA will continue to receive the majority of its funds through bilateral or Windows 3 CGIAR funding. The CGIAR core funding (W1/W2) has been decreasing over the past three years and is not expected to increase in 2017, when the new CRPs become operational. Again, the fundraising efforts of the DG and the quality and relevance of IITA's research have led to excellent support from major donors.
- On the program side, the board heard updates on the latest progress on the goal of lifting 11 million Africans out of poverty and restoring 7.5 million ha to sustainable land use by 2020. Progress has been made in the achievement of both of these goals. It is also important to note that the methodologies used to measure progress on these goals, developed by IITA scientists, are unique and will be useful for other research institutes. The Board also heard excellent presentations from early career scientists and summaries of the progress of IITA is three CRPs in which the institute played an important role. The second phase of CGIAR Research Programs (CRPs) will start in January of 2017. Eleven CRPs and three platforms were approved by the CGIAR System Council in September of this year. IITA will be engaged in five of the CRPs and the three platforms, but will not be a lead center of a CRP. The proposed CRP on Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals was not approved. IITA had considerable research on cowpea and soybean in this CRP. It is hoped that a revised CRP will be prepared and approved in 2017 and it is expected that bilateral funding for these projects will continue.
 - The BIP CEO gave an update on the increasing production of Aflasafe and a description of new financial management system for the unit which will be instituted in 2017.
 - Plans for the 50th anniversary celebration to be held throughout 2017 giving extensive visibility to IITA and its role in developing new technologies that are sustainable, deal with climate change and focus on resource poor farmers, were discussed and endorsed by the Board.
 - The Board said farewell to Tom Medlycott who was ending his term on the Board and expressed its appreciation to Tom for his dedicated service to the Institute and for his leadership of the Audit & Finance Committee at a very critical time in IITA's history.
 - Finally, the Board thanked the DG and all staff for their superb hospitality and the research staff for their excellent work. The Board is proud to be involved in a dynamic institute and is committed to work with management and staff to ensure that IITA continues to be the leading agricultural research institute in Africa.