

2016 Golden Edition of Annual Board Awards for Excellence revisited

The Annual Board Awards for Excellence recognize and reward the outstanding achievements of deserving individuals and teams working in IITA. The awards also aim to provide incentives to staff and motivate them to excel at work. During the Golden Jubilee celebration last November, special awards were given for outstanding scientist, outstanding support staff, outstanding publication, outstanding team, and most promising young scientist. As 2017 was a special year—an additional award for outstanding general staff—was added.

All staff had the opportunity to be involved in the process, as many nominated colleagues in the different categories of the award. The nominations were thoroughly checked for completeness and eligibility and were then forwarded to the awards committees.

The awards committees comprised staff from all sections of IITA as well as Board members. In this issue, we feature the winners for the 2016 Excellence Awards.

Outstanding Scientist

This recognizes the outstanding scientific impact of an IITA scientist and was based on a single achievement in 2016 or an accumulation of outputs over a period of time.

All scientists who got an “outstanding” rating during the performance appraisal in 2016 automatically

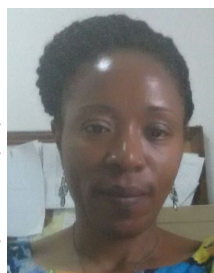


qualified. The hub directors analyzed the results of the performance appraisals of the outstanding scientists and recommended the top three to an independent panel that reviewed and made the selection.

The award for Outstanding Scientist went to **James Legg**, Plant Health Scientist based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Outstanding support staff

This award recognizes outstanding service by a support staff member in achieving IITA's goals. The award was based on performance and delivery on workplans, dedication to IITA's goals, respect of fellow staff members, customer orientation, consideration of others, and integrity



The award for Outstanding Support Staff was given to **Rose Ndango**, **POSITION?** from IITA Cameroon.

Most promising young scientist

This recognizes a young scientist who has shown great potential in his/her field of expertise; is receptive to all learning opportunities, and is already making a significant contribution to IITA's research agenda.



The award went to **Laurence Jassogne**, Project Coordinator-Systems Agronomist of IITA Uganda.

Outstanding Publication

This award recognizes an IITA publication which has the potential for significant impact. Only peer-reviewed and published articles were considered with the selected publications coming from the different thematic areas.



The award was given to: R. Bandyopadhyay, A. Ortega-Beltran, A. Akande, C. Mutegei, J. Atehnkeng, L. Kaptoge, A.L. Senghor, B.N. Adhikari, and P. Cotty. 2016. Biological control of aflatoxins in Africa: Current status and potential challenges. *World Mycotoxin Journal* 9(5): 771–789.

Outstanding general staff

This is a new award, introduced to mark the 50th anniversary and its objective is to recognize a hard-working staff member who worked selflessly beyond the call of duty, has been able to influence or impact on how IITA performs, exceeded performance targets, was highly praised by co-workers, and has demonstrated commitment and dedication to IITA.



The award was given to Sunday **Ebere** of Bioscience Center.

Outstanding Team

This award recognized the contributions of an outstanding IITA team, evaluated based on impact or potential impact on IITA's audience. The award was based on a single significant achievement or on achievements over a period of time.

The award was given to **Communication Unit**.



Internal Audit Holds Team Workshop

The IITA-Internal Audit had a 1-week workshop, 5-9 February at the IITA-Cotonou Station in the Republic of Benin. Declaring the training open, the Head of Internal Audit (IA), Takawira Fumhe emphasized the need to ensure consistency in the performance of internal audit work.

The workshop centered on the Internal Audit Unit's strategy, manual, and IA standards. Discussions focused on teamwork, adding value, and improving the quality of work performed by the team. All these will require a change in approach by each team member. The way forward will involve greater interaction and better communication with stakeholders.

The team used the opportunity to interact with Station Management and

paid a visit to the Insect Museum headed by Dr Georg Goergen.



IITA's Internal Audit in a group photo with Dr Manu Tamo, IITA Benin Country Representative.

IITA trains Kano station staff on importance of positive safety and security



Participant demonstration at the training

In ensuring uninterrupted safety among staff and its properties, the Security Unit, in collaboration with the Capacity Development Office in Ibadan, organized a security awareness training on 14-15 February at IITA Kano station. The meeting aimed to develop a positive safety and security culture, and reduce workplace safety and security-related accidents and incidents among staff members.

The 2-day seminar was attended by staff and students from different units within the station and sought to instill

a better understanding on maintaining a safe, accident-free, healthy environment as well as equipping staff members with the capacity to cope with emergency situations within and outside the station.

IITA is committed to providing a safe, accident-free, and healthy work environment for everyone. However, excellent safe and healthy conditions do not occur by chance. They are the result of diligent work and careful attention to all the institute's policies by everyone. The safety and security of the Institute demands cooperation

on everyone's part. Supervisors and management at all levels must address safety and security concerns and take corrective action when necessary.

The event was facilitated by James Adedayo, IITA Security Superintendent, who counseled all the participants and encouraged them to perform their work with maximum regard for the safety and security of themselves and co-workers. "It is the duty of all employees to work in a safe and secure environment, which would ensure that staff stay safe and healthy and are able to work towards the fulfillment of IITA's mandate," he added.

During the plenary session, participants were taught how to respond to safety and security emergencies like fire and robberies, official vehicle rules and accident reporting, identify workplace hazards, use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) properly, fire safety at the workplace, how to prevent fire outbreaks and its consequences for a business, comply with safety instructions, and use first aid at the workplace.

The fully packed module which included practical sessions, theory, and videos, ended with a demonstration on how to use a fire extinguisher

Tanzania team trained on cassava virus disease identification



The Virus and Vector Ecology Group in a training program in Tanzania

The Virus and Vector Ecology Group in Tanzania, led by Senior Scientist James Legg, took part in a one-day training to sharpen their skills in identifying cassava diseases while in the field by observing plant symptoms.

During the training, the participants were shown images of cassava plants infected by different diseases such as cassava mosaic disease (CMD) and cassava brown streak disease (CBSD) and attacked by pests such as cassava green mites as well as a

healthy plant and asked to identify the diseases by the symptoms and score the severity of the disease.

The training was facilitated by Latifa Mrisho, an IITA PhD research fellow and a member of the team. She is also part of the team in Tanzania that is supporting Penn State University to develop a mobile app to diagnose cassava diseases in the field by taking photos of cassava leaves. Currently the app is being refined to identify and differentiate between CMD and CBSD in cassava.

The training brought together Research Technician, Interns, and PhD and Master's students under the CGIAR Research Program on Roots, Tubers and Bananas (RTB).

For more information on the new app for crop disease diagnosis, visit <http://www.iita.org/news-item/new-app-diagnoses-crop-diseases-field-alerts-rural-farmers/>.

HR hold 2018 business retreat

The HR team held its 2018 business retreat with the theme: "Enhancing HR delivery through continuous improvement and innovation". The 2-day retreat was held at Vigna room 15 -16 February. In attendance was Hilde Koper-Limbourg, DDG-Corporate Services. During her brief opening remarks, she commended the HR team for working hard and encouraged the team to endeavor to work smart owing to dwindling resources. She further assured the team that Management is committed to automation of work processes.

Melaku Gedil was also invited to the HR retreat. He gave an overview of the Bioscience Center. He commended the HR team for this excellent collaboration and hoped that other units could take a cue from HR's initiative in inviting its internal clients to such a gathering as it will aid better integration of purpose. He enlightened the HR team about Bioscience activities, such as:

- Developing tools for people working in the field (breeders).
- Crossing plants to get many seeds.
- Developing tools to accelerate the work of the breeders in the field.
- Developing tools for indirect selection of good progeny.



HR Team in group photograph

- Molecular tools help to characterize gene bank work.

He emphasized that to achieve the above, good reliable technicians are required as well as passionate people that have long-term goals—this is where HR's role is critical.

The Head of HR, Ms Lilian Mendoza, appreciated her team for a job well done in 2017 and encouraged them to "dive deep" to accomplish more using more innovative ways with the little resources available.

During the 2-day business retreat the HR team shared its 2017 achievements and milestones; the HR Strategy 2017–2021; Status updates; 2018 HR Priority Areas; Updates on specific HR Interventions such as casual labor optimization, managing attendance and punctuality, diversity in

recruitment talent identification, and updates, oversight of HR management in the hubs; strategic HR deliverables; and embracing HR analytics.

Quotable quote

"Striving for success without hard work is like trying to harvest where you haven't planted."

– David Bly

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