

ENABLE Youth Cameroon kicks off with signing of implementation framework

The Cameroon chapter of the Empowering Novel Agri-Business-Led Employment (ENABLE) Youth Program has now started in earnest with the signing of an agreement between the [Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development](#) (MINADER) and [IITA](#). The implementation framework was signed on 17 May at a ceremony held in Yaoundé, the Cameroonian capital. Several state dignitaries were in attendance including Minister Henri Eyebe Ayissi of MINADER, as well as representatives of the [African Development Bank](#) (AfDB) and IITA.

The agreement was signed with the understanding that IITA has the facilities and skilled personnel necessary to pursue the objectives and fulfill the requirements of this collaboration which is being implemented under the ENABLE Youth component of the [Agricultural Value Chain Development Project \(AVC-DP\)](#) [in French: [Projet de Développement de chaînes de valeur agricole \(PD_CVA\)](#)]. As part of the agreement, IITA will lead and administer 12 Youth Agribusiness Incubation Centers (YABICs) over 45 months following the IITA Youth Agripreneur business incubation model. This is expected to expand opportunities in agriculture and agribusiness to rural youth in Cameroon to advance rural livelihoods and economic development, and to serve as a model for youth-led rural transformation elsewhere across sub-Saharan Africa.

In his opening remarks, Minister Ayissi expressed the Government's appreciation to AfDB for their support in setting up the framework for this mutually beneficial collaboration. "The aim is to contribute to improving



IITA Country Representative Cargele Masso (left) and Minister Henri Eyebe Ayissi shaking hands after signing the agreement.

the well-being of the Cameroonian population in all fields, and particularly in the field of agriculture and rural development," he stated.

"Indeed, the PD_CVA is a joint initiative between the Government and the AfDB for the promotion and development of value chains of palm oil, plantain, and pineapple on the one hand; the implementation of transversal infrastructures as well as the reinforcement of related actions, such as the Youth Entrepreneurship in agriculture and agribusiness and the Credit Access Mechanism for actors in the sectors and especially young people, among others."

The Minister urged all stakeholders, and especially the technical partner (IITA), to make every effort to ensure the success of this important youth

initiative. "The Government, in all its branches, will spare no effort, to provide all its support so that the expected results are a success story in Cameroon and Africa," he concluded.

Speaking on behalf of IITA Director General [Nteranya Sanginga](#), IITA Cameroon Country Representative Cargele Masso gave an overview of the origins and activities of both IITA in Cameroon and the Youth Agribusiness program in general. "IITA's interest and commitment to the promotion of youth in agricultural entrepreneurship stems from its mission to reduce poverty through the development of agricultural value chains that create wealth and jobs," he said. "It was this commitment that compelled DG Sanginga to set up the [IITA Youth Agripreneurs](#) (IYA) in 2012 as an initiative to equip young graduates to participate productively

in the agricultural sector, especially in agribusiness.”

“Through this initiative, IITA seeks to demonstrate with examples of youth success that agriculture can be a stimulating and economically rewarding enterprise and convince stakeholders to invest in African youth,” he said. “This initiative, which has been very successfully experimented in Nigeria, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia, fits well with the ENABLE Youth program of the AfDB. The aim of the program is to strengthen the capacity of young

graduates to create businesses along agricultural value chains, through agribusiness project incubators,” he continued.

As part of the agreement to launch the ENABLE Youth Program in Cameroon, an incubation calendar in agribusiness will be established for training, which will include basic operations of the company and the development of business plans. By the end of the project, IITA will have trained 1536 Agripreneurs who will launch at least 600 new agribusinesses and employ over 6000 additional persons, including outgrowers.

The ENABLE Youth Program in African Agriculture is being championed by the AfDB in collaboration with IITA to develop the next generation of African entrepreneurs in agriculture. The program ensures that young entrepreneurs approach agriculture purely as a business, with the central objective of establishing viable and profitable enterprises.

A video presentation was shown detailing the activities of the ENABLE Youth initiative. The full video can be accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8PHNvDDftY>

Donors express confidence in IITA projects in DRC

A delegation of representatives from [Food for the Hungry](#) (FH), a donor to the [Tuendelee Pamoja II](#) (TP II) project, gave a glowing commendation of the IITA-implemented initiatives in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Led by the FH director for food security and livelihoods Dr Claude Nankam, the team visited the Centre of Agribusiness and Agro-Service (CAAS) at Katana village, one of business centers established by the Crop-Livestock Integration Project (CLiP) in Eastern DRC, South Kivu Province, as part of their monitoring trip to see some of the technologies introduced by IITA in the region that can be scaled up.

Under the funding of [United States Agency for International Development](#) (USAID), FH is implementing TP II in partnership with CGIAR centers including the [International Livestock Research Institute](#) (ILRI) and [World Agroforestry Centre](#) (ICRAF), and led by IITA. The project aims to improve food and nutrition security and economic well-being of vulnerable households in South-Kivu and Tanganyika provinces.

Part of the TP II project implementation is to scale some of the activities and initiatives that were started by previous projects and that have proven sustainability and created transformation within the beneficiary communities.

CLiP—funded by [International Fund for Agricultural Development](#) (IFAD)—is one of such projects that was led by IITA and has registered such remarkable success in creating sustainable sources of income, nutrition, food security, and successfully engaging the government at the policy level.



Mrs Charlotte Sanginga and Dr Claude Nankam in a group photo with IITA scientists, piggy and poultry business group farmers at CAAS office in Katana.

The team was accompanied by [Paul Dontsop-Nguezet](#) of IITA, who leads the TP II project on the CGIAR side. They visited different enterprises including the piggy farming owned by 20 women, the poultry farm owned by 15 youth, the cassava processing facilities (inherited from closed AfDB-sponsored cassava projects owned by 5 businessmen, the veterinary office (call center and veterinary drug shop) operated by 20 veterinary technicians, the vegetable garden for demonstration of mushroom and vegetable production for household consumption and sales as well as for feeding livestock with the residues, and the information and communication technology (ICT) network facility that connect CAAS enterprises to input and output market and other service providers.

Speaking after the visit Nankam said he was impressed with the success of the activities at the center showcasing IITA's

ability to successfully implement such complex and multisectoral projects.

“From what we have seen today (at Katana) I am confident that IITA will contribute immensely to the implementation of TP II and the efforts will bear fruits for the beneficiaries where we are intervening especially through the youth program that will also play a crucial role under the aquaculture component of the project,” said Nankam.

Madame Charlotte Sanginga, the wife of Director General N. Sanginga, accompanied the delegation on the trip and was exuberant about the milestones accomplished at Katana especially on empowering the women and youth.

TP II is being implemented as one of the Climate Smart Agriculture projects under the Natural Resource Management research theme.

IITA Rwanda's new agenda: Country strategy for impact through partnerships and innovation

[IITA](#) Rwanda held a retreat in April to develop a new country strategy and set the agenda that will guide IITA's transformative research work and innovation in the country. The four-day event included activities by IITA staff focused on teambuilding, sharing personal and team strengths and ambitions, and identifying ways to build on these strengths to articulate a clear vision for IITA Rwanda.

Country Representative [Marc Schut](#) led the team in discussing how the Rwanda station should adapt to the changing status of the organization in the country.

"We are a new team, with new projects and new ambitions," Schut stated. "The development of a country strategy will help us to develop synergies between the projects and to focus on the tasks ahead of us."

Staff members gave presentations and workshops on professionalism, improved specialized skills including writing and communication, social media, and general etiquette in conducting relevant work in Rwanda.

The team developed a new vision statement and mandate in the context of the research activities in the country relative to Rwanda's agricultural development agenda.

- Vision: Contributing to transforming Rwandan agriculture through innovative research and partnerships.
- Our mandate: To advance science and strengthen capacity in Rwandan banana-, cassava-, soybean- and maize-based systems by collaborating and co-investing with governmental, development, and private sector organizations.

High on the agenda for the team was also to deliberate on ways of creating and maintaining strong partnerships with government agencies, local and international organizations, and various foreign government development agencies represented in Rwanda. As part of the efforts, IITA Rwanda invited representatives from



IITA Country Representative Marc Schut giving a presentation.

main partner organizations including [Rwanda Agricultural Board](#) (RAB), [University of Rwanda](#), [Ministry of Agriculture](#) (MINAGRI), ENABEL, Belgian Embassy, [Food for the Hungry](#), [Caritas](#), [One Acre Fund](#), and the Agricultural Chamber of Commerce to join the team on the two final days of the retreat.

The high-level interaction with representatives from partner organizations provided feedback on IITA's new mandate and opinions on the organization's positioning within the research community in Rwanda.

The Head of the Cassava Program in RAB, Dr Athanase Nduwumuremyi, congratulated IITA on its vision and mandate, which he felt are "fully aligned with the main agricultural strategies and policies in the country."

The partners further provided input on their specific interests in main themes that IITA Rwanda is working on including ICT4RAG, Scaling of innovation, Capacity development, Seed systems, and Youth and agribusiness as well as on the main value chains for cassava, banana, soybean, and maize. Dr Charles Murekezi of MINAGRI highlighted potential linkages and entry points for IITA to contribute to projects

including aflatoxin mitigation in maize and seed multiplication in soybean.

According to Schut, the retreat was significant in helping identify potential areas of collaboration and focus to develop concrete work plans for the next five years of innovative research and partnerships for transforming Rwandan agriculture.

IITA in Rwanda has a decorated history contributing to agricultural research and development work that dates back to the 1980s. The success achieved is directly attributed to strong partnership with RAB and overarching collaboration with several government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and international research partners.

In the last three years, the country office has seen a rapid expansion in the research activities and engagements, and staff numbers with several major projects intensifying work in Rwanda.

In 2018, IITA in Rwanda boasts of four major projects including CIALCA, [BMZ](#)-funded ICT4BXW, the Roots, Tubers and Bananas Scaling Fund, and the [IFAD](#)-funded Cassava Brown Streak Disease Control Project.

IITA Forest Center plants the Ibadan Malimbe Grove

Birds play important ecological roles by acting as agents of pollination, seed dispersal, and pest control. They also help to indicate the health of the environment. Despite this, habitat destruction due to illegal logging and unsustainable farming continues to be a major threat to bird conservation.

The [IITA Forest Center](#), Ibadan, which is funded by the [A.G. Leventis Foundation](#), aims to plant bird-friendly trees to stem the effects of habitat destruction. As a way of flagging off this project, a special tree planting event was organized at the 6-ha Tree Heritage Park on 7 May. Phil Hall of the A.G. Leventis Foundation, [Hilde Koper-Limboung](#), IITA Deputy Director General for Corporate Services, and Forest Center staff planted 13 seedlings of native tree species, including *Albizia zygia*, *Antiaris toxicaria*, *Brachystegia eurycoma*, *Ceiba pentandra*, *Cola gigantea*, *Cynometra megalophylla*, *Daniellia ogea*, *Elaeis guineensis*, *Lonchocarpus sericeus*, *Markhamia tomentosa*, *Parkia biglobosa*, *Pouteria alnifolia*, and *Triplochiton scleroxylon*.

Adewale Awoyemi, Manager of the Forest Center, explained that the 13 planted seedlings were different species of native trees on which the Ibadan Malimbe (*Malimbus ibadanensis*) was recorded by P. Hall, A.P. Leventis, S. Manu, and A. Awoyemi. He added that



Phil Hall of the A.G. Leventis Foundation (center right) and Hilde Koper, IITA DDC, Corporate Services (4th from left) with the Forest Center staff.

the Ibadan Malimbe is a small-medium sized forest weaver, which is restricted to a small area in southwestern Nigeria. According to him, the endemic bird is classified as endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species due to declining populations. The IITA Forest Reserve is one of the few sites where the species can be found in the area.

In an earlier interview, Hall spoke extensively about the importance of birds to mankind. He said “The IITA-Ibadan campus is one of the best protected areas in Nigeria and is a

safe haven for birds as over 270 bird species have been recorded, including 67 species that are restricted to the Guinea-Congo Forest Biome, qualifying the 360-ha IITA Forest Reserve as an Important Bird Area.” Hall said the campus had attracted the attention of bird watchers and ornithologists, especially the A.G. Leventis Foundation for over 40 years. He expressed satisfaction about the ongoing bird and forest conservation project at IITA and said that the A.G. Leventis Foundation will keep supporting conservation initiatives of the IITA Forest Center.

Workshop held on “Validation of the revised and harmonized standards for seed system in DRC”

IITA organized on 4 April a workshop on “Validation of the revised and harmonized standards for healthy cassava planting materials production, control, and certification,” within the framework of the project [Action to control the Cassava Brown Streak in Democratic Republic of Congo \(CBSD-DRC\)](#).

The workshop was chaired by the General Secretary for the Ministry of Agriculture who officially opened the session. It registered the participation of several institutions involved in seed regulation, including the National Seed Service (SENASEM), the National Agricultural Research Institute (INERA), and IITA as well as donors such as [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#),



L-R: Dr Nzola Mahungu, IITA DRC Country Representative; Ir Augustin Kadima, delegate of USAID; Evariste Bushabu, General Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture; Clement Kandu, Coordinator of SENASEM.

[United States Agency for International Development](#) (USAID) and the West Growth Pole Development Project (PDPC).

In his opening speech, the General Secretary of Agricultural Ministry, Mr Evariste Bushabu Bopeming, welcomed the efforts of IITA, INERA, and SENAEM, not only for the updating of standards for the production of healthy cassava stem, but also for the implementation of a strong seed system sector with the aim of agricultural production improvement in DRC. He pointed out that at the moment only seeds from registered varieties in the national catalog can be multiplied and marketed through the country. He also thanked the donors for their support throughout the years in providing the tools for good management of the cassava plant subsector in DRC.

Welcoming the participants, the Country Representative of IITA-DRC and Coordinator of the CBSD project, [Nzola-Meso Mahungu](#), noted that for good productivity in the agricultural sector, Africa and in particular DRC need to produce quality seeds for the development of value chains. Hence, it



Workshop participants.

was important to review and harmonize the national seed system standards for regulating healthy cassava plant production to allow the plant material producers to contribute more in fighting the brown streak disease, which is mainly spread by stem cutting exchanges, as well as other diseases.

Mahungu also used the opportunity to welcome the support of USAID in funding the promotion of cassava in Africa and particularly in DRC.

Delegates from USAID, IITA, INERA, [University of Kinshasa](#), FAO, [HarvestPlus](#), Ministry of Agriculture, SENAEM, National Service of Popularization (SNV), private sector, and youth were involved in this workshop.

The workshop was officially brought to a close by the Secretary General of Agriculture after the validation of the harmonized standards for seed system by the participants.

Events

- **N2Africa Advisory Committee meeting**, 15–18 May, Kigali, Rwanda.
- **ENABLE Youth Agreement signing**, 17 May, Yaounde, Cameroon.
- **Enhancing Results-Based Management in RTB and program participants by harmonizing and strengthening ME&L systems**, 22-25 May, Ibadan, Nigeria.
- **N2Africa Annual Review and Planning Meeting**, 24–25 May, Kano, Nigeria.
- **GCP21 IVth International Cassava Conference: Cassava Transformation in Africa**, 11–15 June, Cotonou, Benin.
- **Africa RISING West Africa Project Review and Planning Meeting**, 6–8 June, Accra, Ghana.

Got a story to share?

Please email it with photos and captions every Wednesday to iita-news@cgiar.org or Katherine Lopez (k.lopez@cgiar.org) and Uzoma Agha (u.agha@cgiar.org) for headquarters and Western Africa, Jeffrey T. Oliver (j.oliver@cgiar.org) for Southern Africa, Catherine Njuguna (c.njuguna@cgiar.org) for Eastern Africa, and David Ngome (d.ngome@cgiar.org) for Central Africa.