

## Oyo State Government commits to transform agriculture

The Executive Governor of Oyo State, Seyi Makinde, joined state officials and other stakeholders in the agricultural sector at a retreat in Cotonou, Republic of Benin to chart a course for transforming agriculture in the State. The meetings, which took place from 15 to 19 August, were to design an agribusiness implementation plan for Oyo State.



L-R: Speaker of the Oyo State House of Assembly, Rt Hon. Debo Ogundoyin; Oyo State Governor, Engr Seyi Makinde; and IITA Deputy Director-General, Partnerships for Delivery, Kenton Dashiell during the three-day retreat on agribusiness in Cotonou, Republic of Benin.

The Governor promised officials of the State that the administration will give agriculture the necessary attention to play its role and transform the economic fortunes of the State.

"I want to assure all the participants that Oyo State will provide the political will needed to make the State the agribusiness hub of Nigeria," Governor Makinde said at the retreat, which [IITA](#) facilitated.

Governor Makinde also promised to attract more private investment to agriculture by providing an enabling environment. He said the State would ensure agribusiness-friendly policies that would boost investor confidence.

Since assumption of office on 29 May 2019, the Governor has pledged to transform the narrative of agriculture with the view to

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## IITA strengthens capacity of regulators to monitor scaling out of Aflasafe in Tanzania

To pave way for the mass production and market entry of Aflasafe TZ01—the all-natural, safe, and effective product for aflatoxin control in Tanzania, [IITA](#) and the Ministry of Agriculture, organized a three-day training workshop for regulators in the country to increase their knowledge on the technology, how it works, and their role in scaling it out.



Antonio Mauro walks the participants through the process of manufacturing Aflasafe TZ01 at IITA.

IITA developed Aflasafe TZ01 in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and with support from many donors including the [USAID](#) mission in Tanzania. It was officially registered in the country on 18 October 2018, and thereafter IITA and the Ministry entered into an agreement with a private company, AtoZ Textiles Limited, to manufacture and distribute Aflasafe TZ01 in Tanzania.



*A group photo at the regulators' workshop.*

AtoZ will start to produce and distribute Aflasafe TZ01 for the 2019/2020 cropping season, which starts in October and the government regulators will have a very critical role to play in monitoring and regulating its quality and safe use.

The objectives of the workshop, which took place on 20–22 August, were to enable the regulators to get a clear understanding of the product, how it was developed, and its efficacy in reducing aflatoxin contamination in maize and groundnut from trials conducted in Tanzania.

In addition, the workshop aimed to share the road map for rolling out the product in the country and the role of the regulators in effectively and efficiently monitoring the production and application of Aflasafe TZ01.

The participants were drawn from regulators in the Plant Health Services of the Ministry of Agriculture from different regions/zones in the country, the Tanzanian Bureau of Standards (TBS), which has the mandate for aflatoxin analysis and food safety issues, and the Tropical Pesticide Registration Institute, with the mandate for pesticide regulation.

Speaking at the event, Beatrice Pallagyo, a Principal Researcher at the Plant Health Services at the Ministry of Agriculture which has the mandat to regulate biocontrol products, noted, "A lot of effort and progress has been made in developing this product, getting it registered, and identifying a company that will mass produce it. We now should not allow it to remain on the shelf. Let us move fast to put the technology in the hands of farmers."

This was reiterated by [George Mahuku](#), a Plant Pathologist at IITA-Tanzania who is leading efforts to develop and scale-out Aflasafe TZ01 production. "The development of Aflasafe

TZ01 is a very clear example of a true and effective partnership, with a very clear goal of an aflatoxin-safe Tanzania. We have a very strong and dedicated private company partner, a very supportive government, a registered product, and clear roles for each partner—all components are in place—therefore let us move to get the product into the hands of the farmers," Mahuku said.

During the workshop, the participants were taken through the theory of the Aflasafe TZ01 technology and participated in hands-on practical production, quality control, and quality assurance. Julius Nyabicha, a marketing manager at AtoZ company also shared the product's distribution plans and channels in various regions in the country for easy and efficient access.

The participants were impressed with the technology and now have a better understanding and are ready to play their role as regulators and to be change agents for an aflatoxin-safe Tanzania. They proposed several follow up actions to increase the adoption and use of Aflasafe. These include the need for awareness creation for all stakeholders along the maize and groundnut value chains in Tanzania to create the demand for the product..

They also identified the need to conduct a structured country-wide survey to determine the current status of mycotoxins in the country. The last survey was conducted in 2012 and only in a few selected regions. Participants also noted the need for an update on aflatoxin prevalence in the country, especially in the face of repeated cases of Aflatoxicosis. The survey should involve multiple stakeholders drawn from MoA, IITA, NBS, TBS, the Partnership for Aflatoxin in Africa (PACA), and the private sector.

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making it the pillar of the State's economic development. The retreat provided an opportunity for the Governor to unveil his vision for agriculture.

IITA Deputy Director-General, Partnerships for Delivery, [Dr Kenton Dashiell](#), commended the Governor for demonstrating an uncommon leadership style by participating in all the sessions of the three-day retreat.

"I have never seen such a commitment from a Governor...and I believe the document coming out of this retreat will help the State to achieve the vision of an agribusiness hub for Nigeria," he added.

Dr Martin Fregene, Director for Agriculture and Agro-Allied division at the [African Development Bank](#) (AfDB), said the commitment of the State to agriculture was a step in the right direction.

Addressing the Governor he said, "Let me also commend you for organizing this very important meeting and participating fully in it to have a vision and an implementation plan for agribusiness in the State," he said via Skype. "For Oyo State to move forward in agriculture, you must treat agriculture as a business," he added.

According to the AfDB director, the Bank would be willing to support the State in its quest to transform agriculture.

The retreat had four sessions comprising: Developing a vision for the State in agriculture, Identifying the obstacles to the vision, Developing strategic actions to deal with the obstacles to the vision, and Developing an implementation plan.

Adebowale Akande, Executive Adviser to the Governor on Agriculture gave a thumbs up to the retreat, adding that recommendations from the retreat would help the State to achieve its vision of becoming an agribusiness hub.

# FMARD and World Bank's APPEALS project seeks IITA collaboration

A team from the [Agro-processing Productivity Enhancement and Livelihood Improvement Support](#) (APPEALS) project's National Coordinating Office (NCO) and Lagos Project Office, visited the [IITA](#) Headquarters in Ibadan on 28 August. The purpose of the visit was to explore possible areas of collaboration with IITA.

APPEALS is a project of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture funded by World Bank. It is a six-year project from 2016 to 2023 and currently operating in six states of Nigeria: Cross-River, Enugu, Kaduna, Kano, Kogi, and Lagos. The project has five components: Productivity enhancement, primary processing and value addition, technical support, project management, and infrastructure support to agribusiness.

The project aims to empower 60,000 people across the six states (10,000 from each state), particularly women and youth, and 5% for persons with disabilities and special needs. The APPEALS project is the only project presently handling empowerment of the disabled. APPEALS decided to work

with IITA because, as a World Bank funded project, professionals are being engaged and IITA is recognized as having high professional standards in the agricultural sector.

Heather Akanni, the National Women and Youth Livelihood Specialist of APPEALS, who led the team said, "I was excited when I heard of IITA facilities such as the Business Incubation Platform and Youth in Agribusiness. We are looking at IITA assisting us with capacity building, financial support, and mentorship in helping the beneficiaries sustain the value chain they have chosen."

Hassan Aliyu Hayat, Head Livelihood Development, APPEALS National Coordinating Office also said, "I believe if we partner with IITA, our beneficiaries will get the best."

After a tour of IITA facilities and technologies, the team expressed their interest in partnering with IITA in areas such as Women and Youth Empowerment as well as technical support.



*Kenton Dashiell discussing with Heather Akanni.*

[Kenton Dashiell](#), IITA Deputy Director General, Partnerships for Delivery expressed satisfaction with the idea of collaboration. "IITA will greatly like to partner with the APPEALS project. The youth program can tailor-make programs that suit your objectives," he said.

The management of APPEALS confirmed it will meet to finalize the decision.

## IITA takes part in annual national farmers' exhibition in Tanzania

From 1 August, [IITA](#) joined tens of hundreds of stakeholders in the agriculture sector in Tanzania that took part in this year's annual farmers' exhibition dubbed Nane Nane, which means "Eight Eight".

IITA exhibited its technologies and innovations at both the national event, which was held in Simiyu District, Northern Eastern Tanzania and at regional exhibitions in areas in which the institute is active.

IITA's exhibitions comprised its various innovations to boost agricultural production in Tanzania. These included various mobile and web-based applications to address some of the challenges the sector is facing.



*Top: IITA exhibitors explaining the various innovations developed by the Institute including apps.. Bottom: IITA staff explaining how the all natural Aflasafe TZ01 works.*



## Web and mobile apps for agriculture displayed

IITA exhibited NURU, the mobile application to detect diseases and pests of plant. IITA partnered with Penn State University to develop the app to detect cassava pests and diseases. The IITA team also exhibited the Akilimo application developed by the [Africa Cassava Agronomy Initiative](#) (ACAI) to support cassava farmers in making informed agronomy decisions. The App gives site-specific advice on fertilizer use, best planting date, weed control, intercropping, how to improve the quality of cassava root starch, and how to ensure a year-round supply of cassava—the latter are particularly important for cassava processing industries.

The team also demonstrated the Seedtracker app, the web-based platform for tracking cassava seed production in real time. The platform is active in Tanzania following a series of trainings for the [Tanzania Official Seed Certification Institute](#) (TOSCI) by IITA and currently has over one hundred certified cassava seed producers registered.

## Aflasafe TZ01

### Aflasafe TZ01

Another innovation IITA displayed was Aflasafe TZ01, the safe and effective natural product developed by IITA and the agriculture ministry to make food safe by controlling aflatoxin contamination in the country. The product has been fully registered in the country with a private sector company, AtoZ, selected to mass-produce the product, which is expected to be in the market for the beginning of the 2019/2020 growing season in October.

### Tanzania Youth Agripreneurs

Tanzania Youth Agripreneurs also took part in the national exhibition at Simiyu and showcased various products made from processing agricultural crops. These include high-quality cassava flour and products made from the flour, soymilk and yoghurt, and poultry feed.

The Institute participated in the regional exhibitions in Zanzibar, Morogoro, Dodoma, Lindi, Mtwara, and Iringa. IITA has been taking part in these exhibitions every year as part of efforts to create awareness on its activities and technologies.



## Events

**International Agricultural Research Seminar, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and MAFF-JIRCAS Symposium** at the 7th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), Yokohama, Japan, 24–30 August

**First Start Them Early Program (STEP) Planning Workshop**, IITA, Ibadan, Nigeria, 10–12 September

**AgResults Nigeria Aflasafe Pilot Project Close-Out Symposium**, Abuja, Nigeria, 12 September

**Launch, Start Them Early Program (STEP)**, IITA, Kalambo, Democratic Republic of Congo, 21 September

**Commissioning of Pres. Olusegun Obasanjo Research Campus**, IITA, Kalambo, Democratic Republic of Congo, 8 October

**Board Meeting and R4D Week**, IITA headquarters, 18–22 November



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