

## BoT commends IITA's leadership in agricultural research under Sanginga

The IITA Board of Trustees (BoT) has lauded the Institute's leadership and proven record of accomplishment in agricultural research during the spring board meeting, which took place recently. During the virtual meeting, BoT Chair Dr Amos Namanga Ngongi stated that the Institute, under the leadership of Director General Nteranya Sanginga, has achieved excellent results in several areas, both financially and programmatically, with a doubling of the Institute's budget and the expansion of its programs to scale up delivery.

**to page 2**



*BoT Chair Amos Namanga Ngongi.*

## South Kivu Provincial Minister of Agriculture praises IITA contribution to food security amidst COVID-19 crisis

The city of Bukavu will produce 20 tons of tilapia per week by the end of 2020. This will be done through the Tilapia Production in Cages Project implemented by [IITA](#) and partners, financially supported by the FPI (Fond de la Promotion de l'Industrie) as part of the 100 Days program of the Democratic Republic of Congo President, Felix Tshisekedi.

On 24 April, the South Kivu provincial Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Livestock, H.E. [Marcelin Amani Bahaya](#), embarked on a tour of the different sites of the fish project activities along Lake Kivu to assess the level of implementation of the project by IITA and its partners. The tour was concluded at the IITA Olusegun Obasanjo Research Campus in Bukavu.

The minister was accompanied by the IITA project coordinator, [Paul M. Dontsop Nguezet](#), the provincial head of office for FPI, Mrs Chantal Tawaba, and other IITA staff involved in implementing the project.

Under IITA's lead, the Pilot Project of Tilapia Production in Cages/South Kivu [Projet Pilote des Tilapias en Cages/Sud Kivu (PPTC/SK)] aims to improve tilapia production in Lake Kivu through the cage system in the Province. The successful implementation will lead to the reversal of the trend of more than 80% fish importation in the province and reduce unemployment among the youth.



*Dr Paul Dontsop Nguezet, the coordinator of the fish project, being interviewed by the press.*

The tour included a visit to the 50 floating cages already installed with a capacity of producing 3.5 tons of Marchan fish each week, and to a youth group in an advanced stage, supported by the project, which is already producing and selling fish in Bukavu. The delegation also visited the cold room, before going to the hatchery at the fish feed manufacturing unit installed at the IITA Olusegun Obasanjo Research Campus.

Responding to media, Dontsop-Nguezet said that this project also aims to support the entrepreneurship of young people gathered in different aquaculture associations. He confirmed that the project has received needed equipment including floating cages, a unit for fish feed manufacturing, a cold room, a flake ice machine, and a refrigerated truck to be able to produce an average of 20 tons of fish per week by the end of 2020.

"IITA is working with the High Institute of Pedagogy (ISP) and the High Institute of Rural Development (ISDR), both government institutions, along with youth groups, key actors in the private sector, and community-based and smallholder organizations/associations, to enhance aquaculture in South Kivu Province in upscaling the fish cage method to reduce poverty, improve household nutrition and youth unemployment," added Dontsop-Nguezet.

Minister Bahaya was very satisfied with the level of implementation and reassured the implementing partners of government support in addressing the different challenges on ground. He used the opportunity to reassure the population of government efforts to ensure food self-sufficiency in the Province. "I believe that with this kind of delivery, South Kivu will no longer import

fish from China, Rwanda...in the days to come," said the Minister.

Further to this, the FPI representative, Madam Tawaba, mentioned that they are already working with microfinance institutions to enable the project beneficiaries to have access to loans for sustaining their businesses across all the stages of the fish value chain.

During the stopover at the IITA station, Acting Officer in Charge, [Kokou Kintche](#), along with IITA researchers and other staff, welcomed the delegation and gave an overview of IITA's activities in South Kivu.

The visit ended with a quote from Minister Bahaya: "We were dazzled by the work done by our implementing partners for this Project, namely FPI and IITA. We encourage them to do more for food self-sufficiency in our dear province of South Kivu."

## BoT commends IITA's leadership .... [Continued from page 1](#)

While highlighting the critical period the Institute is going through with the COVID-19 pandemic, Namanga Ngongi added that IITA's key funders have recognized the Institute's leadership in areas such as breeding, agronomy, roots and tubers, legumes, and sustainable intensification. He reiterated the need to protect IITA's staff and assets as a top priority in the Board's decisions.

Sanginga's presentation on the remaining one and half years of his tenure as DG focused on the structures put in place to ensure that the Institute is positioned to address the needs of the continent over the next 10 years while making sure that staff confidence is maintained throughout the transition to a new leadership without disruption.

The presentation highlighted key areas being addressed within the Institute's system and programs such as full alignment with the unified system of governance and business plan of the One-CGIAR as it relates to research, country and regional alignment, and partnerships for delivery. He also noted the importance of resource mobilization with a focus on development banks and country loans, securing IITA as a preferred technical assistance partner, as well as expansion to new sources of funding to include the private sector and non-traditional donors. In addition, he spoke about updating and strengthening the Institute's financial systems and procedures with automation fully implemented and phased succession planning of staff to key positions in the Institute.

Taking charge of his last meeting as an IITA Trustee, Namanga Ngongi said IITA's key funders have given strong assurance of continued support and are, without exception, fully behind the One CGIAR and its long-term vision of a unified system for effective collaboration among centers. They also expressed their support for governance under a One-CGIAR system and its vision of a unified system and governance under a centralized board.

While looking at the impact of COVID-19 on the Institute's financial and human resources in 2020 and the various scenarios for cost reduction during the Board meeting, as donor funding may be diverted to issues related to the pandemic, IITA is aggressively pursuing alternative sources of funding to address any shortfalls that may occur.

Several Committees gave presentations during the virtual meeting--on audit and finance, programs, and human resources. The Governance Committee Trustees selected Bruno Delvaux to succeed Christian Borgemeister as Program Committee Chair and Rhoda Tumusiime to succeed Josephine Okot as Human Resource Committee Chair. Christian Borgemeister will succeed Namanga Ngongi as Board Chair.

By 1 July, an Executive Management Team will be appointed to lead and be collectively responsible for managing the Transition to One-CGIAR, which will take place between 1 July 2020 and 31 December 2021. The One-CGIAR Board will be appointed by September 2020. All centers will transition to governance by the One-CGIAR Board from 1 October 2020.



*IITA's key funders have recognized IITA's leadership in areas such as breeding, agronomy, roots and tubers, legumes, and sustainable intensification.*

# Leading IITA Eastern Africa hub in times of COVID-19

Excerpts from an interview with [Victor Manyong](#), IITA-Eastern Africa Director, with Radio IITA on the COVID-19 situation in Eastern Africa and the various measures that IITA has put in place to protect staff from the viral disease as they carry out their activities.

**Q:** What is the COVID-19 situation like in Eastern Africa? What are the different measures the countries in Eastern Africa have in place to control the disease?

**A:** IITA has offices in five countries in Eastern Africa and all have reported cases of COVID-19. The countries have taken different steps to control the spread of the disease which we must respect. Some countries, such as Kenya and Uganda, have ordered a total lockdown and restriction of movement. Others, such as Madagascar, Sudan, and Tanzania, have partial lockdowns and restrictions on gatherings.

**Q:** What measures are in place at IITA EA to protect the hub staff and at the same time, keep crucial work going on, where possible?

**A:** Our measures are first and foremost in line with those set by the various governments. At IITA-Kenya, staff are working from home and going to the office one or two days a week. In Uganda, the staff are working from home except for essential field or lab activities. In Tanzania, there's a partial lockdown with only essential staff coming to the office in Dar es Salaam and Arusha. IITA has also placed necessary preventive hygiene measures including hand washing facilities and sanitizers at the entrance to all the offices and gun thermometers are being used to take the temperatures of staff before entering the offices. We have also bought masks and made it mandatory for the staff to wear them when in public places at work and when interacting with others.

**Q:** What are the challenges IITA is facing in following these measures and how are they impacting IITA research activities in the hub?

**A:** The pandemic is slowing down everything. As an agricultural research organization, our activities rely on natural conditions like the rainy season. We cannot control this, and we may lose a whole planting season. Due to restrictions in our movements, we also cannot travel to the rural areas to collect samples and bring them to

the laboratory. We cannot interact with our partners freely. Capacity building is a big element of our work. We cannot conduct or attend training workshops. Another challenge is the budgetary implications. The Institute has fixed costs which it will continue to incur such as maintenance costs for its facilities and payment of staff salaries. The Institute is also concerned about a reduction in funding as donors and donor countries focus inward to deal with the impact of COVID-19 on their population rather than on international aid.

**Q:** How are you trying to cope with these challenges?

**A:** To cope with the current situation, we have made changes in our mode of operation with work now becoming more virtual. With reduced travel, the staff are catching up on data analysis and spending time identifying new opportunities for fundraising and developing proposals. We are also trying to minimize the losses in our research operations by keeping essential experiments and fieldwork going.

**Q:** What are you doing to support efforts to reduce COVID-19 on agriculture and food security in the region?

**A:** In eastern Africa, the disease is adding to other shocks existing in the region. One such shock is the invasion by locusts. So



*Victor Manyong in his office during the interview.*

we are looking at the double impact of a pandemic and locusts. We're offering our expertise to help respond to and minimize the impact of these two phenomena on agriculture and food security.

**Q:** As the head of IITA Eastern Africa, what is your biggest worry concerning COVID-19?

**A:** The safety of our staff is my priority. Therefore, currently, my biggest worry is to one day wake up and hear that one of our staff has contracted the coronavirus. It should not happen. That is why we are doing everything we can to ensure everyone is taking the necessary precautions.

**Q:** Any words of advice to staff as they try to cope with COVID-19 in their professional and personal life?

**A:** If we listen to experts, we do not know when the disease will end. We should remain vigilant and observe all these preventive measures for as long as necessary. So, for all our staff in the hub and their families, the word is prevention! Prevention! Prevention!



*An IITA staff washing his hands before entering the office. This is one of the measures put in place to protect staff from getting COVID-19.*

# IITA saves the day in controlling aflatoxin in Tanzania for this growing season

IITA has come to the rescue in efforts to reduce aflatoxin contamination in maize and groundnut in Tanzania to enhance the country's food safety and security during this challenging time for the agriculture sector due to the coronavirus disease outbreak.



Staff at IITA preparing and packing AflasafeTZ for shipping to A to Z Company.

IITA, through its office in Tanzania, produced 10 tons of AflasafeTZ, the natural and safe product that reduces aflatoxin contamination by over 90% in maize and groundnut for use in the country this cropping season.

This was after the company contracted to commercialize and mass produce the product in Tanzania. A to Z was unable to get its factory up and running on time due to delayed arrival of crucial equipment. The delay was as a result of interruptions in logistics brought about by the COVID-19 outbreak and the measures put in place by various governments to control its spread.

The company was therefore not able to roll out its first batch of produce on time for customers who had ordered the product for this year's growing season. AflasafeTZ needs to be added to maize 2–3 weeks after flowering and 40 days for groundnut.

"We were expecting a Biosafety Cabinet the first week of April, but we have

not received it until now. We cannot commence production without it. So we were glad we could order and get 10 tons of the product from IITA to supply our customers. We had placed another order of 5 tons in February but we had sold all of it," says Bhubhinder Singh, A to Z's group Sales and Marketing Manager.

Singh was happy to note that the awareness of the dangers of aflatoxin was increasing and so was the demand for AflasafeTZ. This was mostly for farmers supplying industries such as breweries and millers and exporting to neighboring Tanzania.

Aflasafe was shipped to the A to Z plant in Arusha, Tanzania, on 28 April from IITA's offices in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The Aflasafe technology was developed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and together with IITA, country-specific products for African countries have been developed.

In Tanzania, the product AflasafeTZ was developed in partnership with the

country's Ministry of Agriculture and other partners.

Following five years of rigorous research to develop the product, AflasafeTZ was fully registered and approved for use in Tanzania. This was after it was found efficient in reducing aflatoxin contamination in maize and groundnut, and safe with no adverse effects on humans or livestock in 2018.

Last year, after another rigorous selection process, A to Z was chosen to mass produce the product and distribute it to farmers across the country with IITA providing technical backstopping. The company has invested in an Aflasafe manufacturing plant and a laboratory for quality control; the first production was anticipated for this planting season.

"We have been providing technical backstopping and quality control in the production of Aflasafe to A to Z. That is why we did not hesitate to jump in when we saw the dilemma they were in due to the delay in the arrival of important equipment. COVID-19's impact on the agriculture sector includes interruptions on the supply of inputs due to restrictions in movement and cross-border movement. Therefore, by producing Aflasafe in our mini plant in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, we are able to quickly fill in this gap in the maize and groundnut value chain in the country," said [Victor Manyong](#), IITA Director for Eastern Africa.

IITA in Tanzania has a small processing unit that produces up to 2 tons of Aflasafe per day, mostly for research in the country and the neighboring countries of Rwanda, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia. The processing unit also produced 5 tons of AflasafeTZ for A to Z in February this year for its field research and to process orders from some of its customers.

This work is also part of IITA's Business Incubation Platform, which supports private sector companies such as A to Z to commercialize technologies generated from IITA's research so they are available to farmers and applied to address challenges in the agriculture sector in Africa.

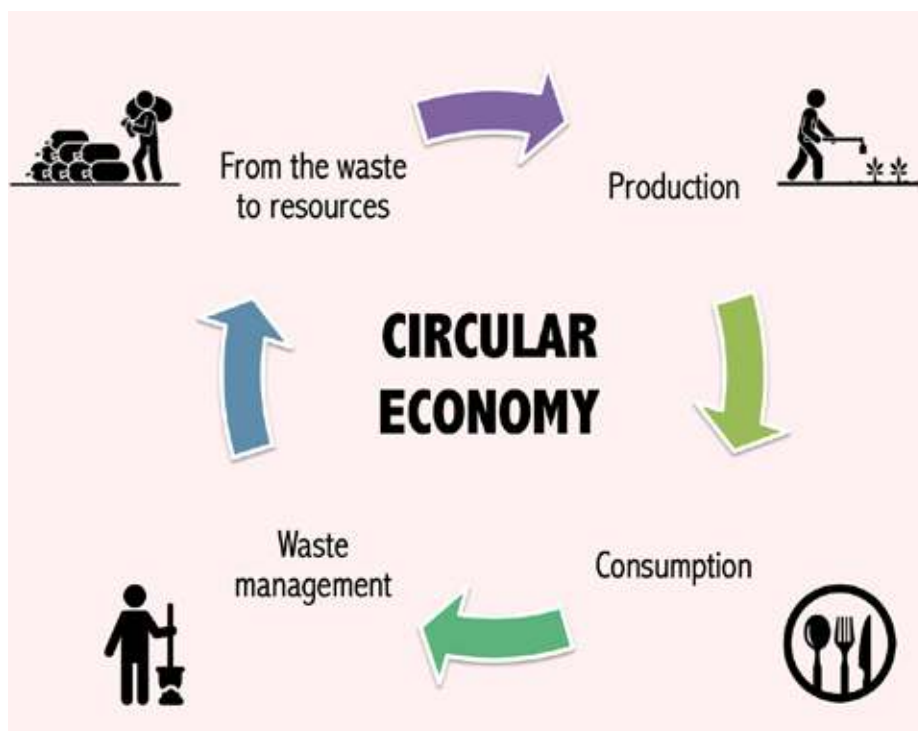
## Take responsibility! Stop the spread of COVID-19!

Wash your hands regularly with soap and water; practice physical and social distancing; wear face masks; avoid crowds and public places; keep a 2-meter distance from the next person; practice general sanitation and hygiene.

# COVID-19 lockdown: Turn waste into wealth

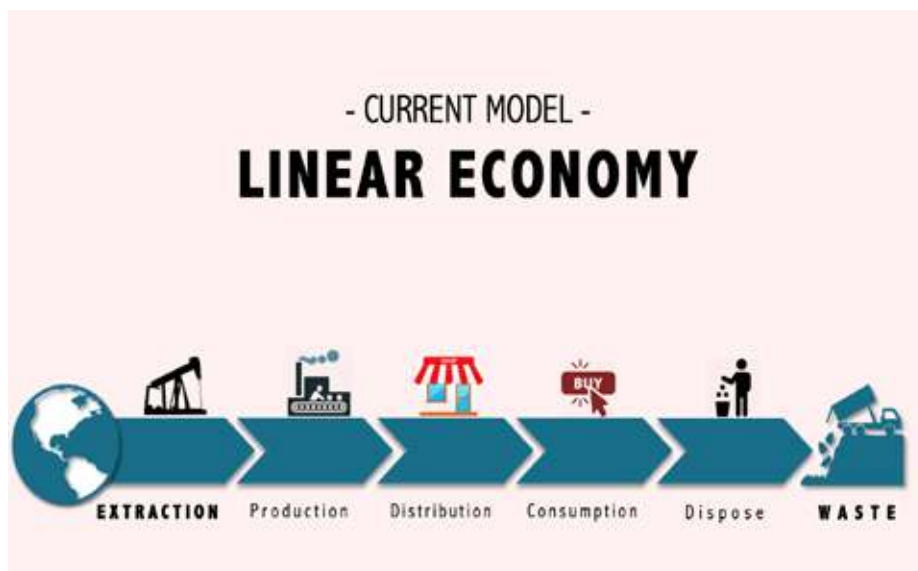
The current COVID-19 lockdown is forcing us to look within for sufficiency. At the beginning of the pandemic, people rushed to buy and stock up on essential commodities such as food and toiletries. Stocking up on essentials is one battle won; the next frontier of survival is being frugal and getting the most out of our purchases.

Most of us will immediately think of reduced consumption as the only way of getting the most from what we have, but there is more. Frugality relates to the linear production model while increased usability or turning waste into wealth is the central concept behind the circular bioeconomy.



In [this video](#), [Victor Manyong](#), CGIAR-IITA's head of Social Sciences and Agribusiness and Director of IITA East Africa hub, explains that the circular bioeconomy is what the world needs as we advance in technology, finance, and population. He describes the circular bioeconomy as a model, which "makes use of resources as much as possible, for as long as they can be used in the production system."

For the urbanite, think of it this way: If you buy sweet potato and banana, you can still get more from them other than consumption. You can use the peel as manure or mulch for your small vegetable garden that will yield more, thus saving you some of the money you would have spent on chemical fertilizer or buying vegetables. For the farmers in rural areas, the benefits are even more immense.



According to Manyong, what farmers formerly considered waste or the end of a cycle can now be the beginning of a new production cycle. In this video, he cites the example of cassava. "Previously, the farmer would benefit from only the root/pulp, and the peel would be wasted. In the circular bioeconomy, the farmer has two products—the pulp and peel. The peel is processed into animal feed." The circular bioeconomy not only extends the shelf life of resources but also ensures a clean living environment, free from waste. Watch this video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jm2dc4g5-b4>) and learn more about this model.

Top: An illustration of the circular bioeconomy loop. Bottom: The current wasteful linear economy model.

## Got a story to share?

Please send your story with photos and captions every Tuesday to [iita-news@cgiar.org](mailto:iita-news@cgiar.org) or Katherine Lopez ([k.lopez@cgiar.org](mailto:k.lopez@cgiar.org)) and Uzoma Agha ([u.gha@cgiar.org](mailto:u.gha@cgiar.org)) for headquarters and Western Africa, Catherine Njuguna ([c.njuguna@cgiar.org](mailto:c.njuguna@cgiar.org)) for Eastern and Southern Africa, and David Ngome ([d.ngome@cgiar.org](mailto:d.ngome@cgiar.org)) for Central Africa.

