

Highlights
IITA Board of Trustees Meeting
18 to 22 November 2019

1. The IITA Board of Trustees met in Ibadan from 18 to 22 November in conjunction with Research for Development Week (R4D Week), held biannually. The Board welcomed H.E. Rhoda Tumusiime, Former African Union Commissioner of Agriculture & Rural Development, to her first meeting as an IITA Trustee. Ms. Tumusiime replaces Dr. Amos Ngongi who will end his term as an IITA Trustee after the May 2020 Board meeting. Trustees also welcomed Eng. Mr. O.B. Jatto, Director of Farm Input Support Services, representing the Permanent Secretary of Nigeria Federal Ministry of Agriculture. The Vice Chancellor of Michael Okpara University, Dr. Francis Otunta was unable to attend due to a conflicting engagement and Dr. Shuichi Asanuma and Trustee Emeritus, Dr. Bruce Coulman were unable to attend for health reasons.
2. Trustees participated in the first day and a half of R4D activities for the presentations and discussions on the One-CGIAR and on IITA's four science programs. They also received a delegation from the Sasakawa Africa Association and signed a memorandum of understanding to further strengthen the collaboration between IITA and the Sasakawa Africa Association.
3. Trustees appreciated the revised format of R4D week. With condensed presentations, based on the Japanese storytelling format "PechaKucha", and considerably less redundancies, it was a major step forward in communicating the quality of IITA research, and engaging the R4D meeting participants. Trustees encouraged management, with some minor adjustments, to maintain the format for future R4D and P4D annual planning meetings.
4. In the opening session of the Board meeting, the Board Chair shared his views on the May Board meeting in Arusha, saying it was a great pleasure for the Board to see the work being carried out in the region, particularly on banana, and commended the collaborative relationships that had been forged between IITA and the Tanzanian Government, and IITA and Nelson Mandela University.

Referring to R4D Week, the Chair expressed appreciation for the excellent presentations on IITA's science and the wide range of activities IITA is engaged in and very pleased that the excellent presentations came largely from early to mid-career scientists. He found the rigorous studies on impact conducted by IITA's very own socioeconomic staff to be most impressive and was hopeful that IITA would be close to reaching its metric of lifting 11 million out of poverty.

As a member of the Systems Management Board (SMB) and the Systems Reference Group (SRG), the Board Chair is a strong proponent of One-CGIAR. He is convinced that the CGIAR is moving in the right direction to ensuring it is fit for purpose and more impactful and relevant to the community, environmental and economic challenges of the 21st century, especially as they relate to Africa. Well before the July 2019 meeting of the Systems Reference Group, IITA had spelled out its vision for how Research and Delivery in Africa, might be structured and a likely possibility that IITA's end-to-end, Research-to-Delivery model, will be adopted by the CGIAR.

The Board Chair and the Program Committee (PC) Chair, Christian Borgemeister, together with former Board Member, Roel Merckx, attended the inauguration and naming the IITA research campus in Kalambo, Bukavu, the "President Olusegun Obasanjo Research Campus". In his view, it was electrifying to see the new center and the combination of players led by President Tshisekedi with different factions of his government, representatives of countries from the Great Lakes Region and Dr. Akin Adesina, President of the African Development Bank, come together to lend support to

the event and raise IITA's profile in the region, including with the youth.

5. In his opening remarks, the Director General expressed his appreciation to the Board, the management team, the hub directors and their staff for their dedication to IITA. Focusing his report on the key strategic issues, the DG confirmed that IITA is fully behind the ongoing CGIAR reform as Africa and IITA stand to benefit from "One-CGIAR" successful implementation. The reform emphasizes the Research-for-Delivery (P4D) paradigm which replicates the IITA framework. The vision of a \$2.0 billion system and the >\$10 m collaborative projects replacing the CRPs are exciting, new developments and IITA is considering Excellence in Agronomy and Circular (Bio)economy as potential large projects led by IITA. Under P4D, IITA aims to institutionalize TAAT—partnerships are critical for transforming agriculture with the Sub Regional Organizations (SROs), country governments, National Research Organizations (NROs), the private sector and CGIAR centers. IITA will pursue a twin funding strategy of working with governments and multilateral development banks to access country loans and working with bilateral donors on grants. Further, it will continue to strengthen the hubs and position them to play a key role in institutional integration under One CGIAR, at both the country and regional levels establishing IITA as the coordinating arm of the CGIAR in Africa, below the Sahara (SSA). The Gates Foundation has awarded IITA a \$6.0 m grant to consolidate CGIAR scaling. Consolidating IITA's research projects with a component allocated for research support is another area that the Gates Foundation has indicated willingness to support.

Succession planning, increasing the role of women in science and leadership positions, strengthening and modernizing the research infrastructure, training particularly in soft skills, expanding IITA's expertise in human nutrition and soil, and protecting the research initiated under the A4NH CRP, expanding IITA's coverage of the continent, particularly in Southern Africa, including the issues of youth in the new CGIAR are all areas that the DG plans to focus on during his remaining years at IITA.

6. The Audit and Finance Committee covered a range of issues from the automation project to risk management, a presentation on the audit approach by the newly appointed External Auditors, Deloitte and Touche, and reports by the Internal Audit Head and the Director of Finance. The Committee was pleased to note the good progress by the Risk Management Committee to establish the links between the risk register, risk appetite statement and mitigation plans and to ensure risk management is incorporated in all hubs/stations. The Board was also pleased to learn from Internal Audit that controls were operating satisfactorily and there were no significant issues to report. The Board was concerned that the automation project is significantly behind schedule and asked management to re-evaluate the adequacy of support and come up with a plan that ensures completion before 1 July 2020, when the transition to One-CGIAR formally begins. A concern in the finance area continues to be the unpredictable cash flow situation largely the result of delays in funding by major donors and a key issue to be resolved at the CG system level as centers transition to the One-CGIAR operating framework. On the Committee's recommendation the Board approved the 2020 revenue budget at \$116 m with a net surplus of \$750,000 and a board budget of \$361,700.
7. In the Program Committee (PC), Trustees received a very comprehensive report from the DDG (R4D) on activities undertaken since the Arusha Board meeting, an update on the KPIs presented by Bernard Vanlauwe on behalf of the KPI team and lessons learned from the CRPs by James Legg on behalf of the CRP teams. The Sahel initiative was considered a very important initiative based on the many needs for research and delivery in the region albeit with many challenges to working given the difficult security situation. The PC was pleased to note the newly recruited Gender and M & E specialist in the R4D directorate, and IITA's participation in the gender platform led by ILRI. They congratulated the KPI team for developing the tools to measure progress that are now in use throughout the system which is making impact estimates solid and trustworthy. Beyond the

numbers these are significant achievements which will be attributed to IITA and utilized widely to measure impact. Most important from the presentation on the lessons learned from the participation in CRPs is that it provides IITA with the prior knowledge and experience to assist in designing the new mega projects under One CGIAR. Avoiding the dominance of the lead center over funding allocations and sharing resources equitably will be a major accomplishment in operationalizing the One CGIAR framework.

8. The highlights of the Partnerships for Delivery (P4D) Committee were the composition and responsibilities of the management team, the importance of gender balance and the key areas of emphasis such as, mentoring, backstopping, leveraging and partnerships at the highest levels. The Committee congratulated TAAT on its first annual report and urged management to consider and refine the program taking lessons learned from two years of operation into consideration. In the discussion of the Business Incubation Platform (BIP), the Committee requested management to develop robust business plans for technologies in the pipeline and to ensure that the projected cash flow position undergoes close scrutiny. Finally, they congratulated ENABLE TAAT's IITA Youth Agripreneurs, as the recipient of the 2019 International Innovation Award for Sustainable Food and Agriculture and for its success in winning grants.
9. The Human Resources (HR) Committee covered a range of topics from review of HR goals and metrics, to policy changes, The key recommendations from the HR Committee discussions were the importance of ensuring that (1) IITA had the right infrastructure in place for people with all abilities to be employed and be productive contributors, (2) IITA must be aligned with respect to gender, diversity and inclusion with the practices of the CGIAR, and advocate for recruitment, retention and career advancement of female scientists into leadership positions—while noting that currently, IITA is well below the CGIAR average. The Committee recommended establishment of a sabbatical leave policy to allow long-serving employees to upgrade their skills and add value to IITA through exploring funded, exchange relationships with universities and the private sector.
10. With the establishment of the Business Incubation Platform (BIP-Nigeria, llc) as a separate legal entity and IITA as the only shareholder, the Board approved the capitalization of funds invested in BIP by IITA as its share capital. A BIP Board will be established with an IITA Board member, the DDG (R4D) and DDG (P4D) and the BIP CEO and three non-executive, independent members from within Nigeria's business community. The Ad Hoc Committee who finalized the BIP-Nigeria, llc, chaired by Bill Cunningham, will immediately launch the search for identifying the three non-executive, independent members.
11. By unanimous vote, as a recommendation of the Governance Committee (GC), the Board elected Christian Borgemeister to be Chair of the Board to succeed Amos Ngongi Namanga after the May 2020 Board meeting.
12. As its last item of business through the recommendation of the Governance Committee (GC), the Board decided on a process and a timeline for recruitment of the 8th Director General to succeed Dr. Sanginga in November 2021.
13. The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for 27th April to 1 May in Yaoundé.
14. The formal meeting of the Board was followed by a video conference call with the Chair of the System Management Board and the Executive Director of the System Office to share views on the recent recommendations of the System Council on the One-CGIAR and their implications for IITA.