

## IITA signs a \$3.3 million agreement with Gabon to support the cassava and plantain seed system

On 7 November, [IITA](#) signed an agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in Gabon to provide Technical Assistance to the Graine Phase 1 Support Project (PAPG1). Cabinet Director Ndoutoumou Charles Theodore of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, representing the minister, presided over the ceremony. to page 3



Cabinet Director of the Ministry of Agriculture, Ndoutoumou Charles Theodore, addressing participants at the signing ceremony.

## EiA Nigeria Project holds workshop to modernize agronomy to benefit farmers



Project Lead Christine Kreye discussing with other participants during the field day.

The Excellence in Agronomy SAA-Use case Nigeria project held a workshop between 24 and 26 October at IITA Kano Station. The theme was the "SAA-Use Case Mid-season workshop and field day".

The workshop started with a field day, with participants giving feedback from the field on the second day. Attendees were from [IITA-CGIAR](#) and partner organizations: Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA), AfricaRice, and the Centre for Dryland Agriculture (CDA-BUK). Other national collaborating participants were the Institute for Agricultural Research (IAR), the National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS), the Kaduna State Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (KNARDA), the Kaduna State Agricultural Development Agency (KADA), and Benue Agricultural and Rural Development Authority (BNARDA). Participants from fertilizer companies—OCP, Indorama, and Notore—also attended.

Project Lead [Christine Kreye](#) said the EiA project aims to modernize agronomy and deliver good agronomic practices (GAP) to benefit farmers. She also mentioned

that partners' demands drive the agenda for the EiA Research for Development (R4D). According to her, the SAA-Use Case was developed based on specific demand by Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) for improved fertilizer and seed agronomy extension services for maize, rice, and cassava crops. As Use-Case implementing partners, AfricaRice, CDA-BUK, and IITA provide technical support for the project. The project seeks to combine three existing fertilizer recommendation tools (AKILIMO, Nutrients Expert, and RiceAdvice) into one platform, with additional features of advice on safe planting windows and a choice of variety.

Dr Ali Ibrahim, a Systems Agronomist who supports the rice advisory technical component of the project, highlighted the workshop's objective: to get feedback from the various stakeholders in the Use-case. He added that when the three nutrient management tools are fully developed and validated, yields of the three focal crops—rice, maize, and cassava, should be enhanced.

The field day session at Kura LGA was witnessed by the Chief Imam, the ward Head, and representatives of farmers' cooperatives. Alhaji Idris Garko from SAA delivered the welcome address, where he stressed the purpose of the field day. The field day demonstrated two fertilizer management technologies: the regional or blanket recommendation and the site-specific recommendation on rice. He also appreciated the extension agents and the host farmer, Aliyu Rabi'u, for their cooperation in making the calibration trial successful.

Rabi'u thanked the stakeholders for selecting him to host the field day. He then summarized his experiences and learnings from the two fertilizer plots installed on his farm. Rabi'u particularly commended the extension agent of Kura, who enrolled him in the project, for his diligence and politeness, which attracted him to accept the experiment on his farm. Finally, the farmer showed his readiness to adopt and extend the technology to his peers in the community.

Dr Ibrahim further mentioned that there are no significant constraints and all the participants were happy about the activities being conducted. They considered the workshop outcome positive as they achieved its objectives.

IITA-Kano Station Head [Alpha Kamara](#) spoke about the important technologies and interventions developed through IITA's research, including disease and pest management technologies and their dissemination alongside GAPs. He added that the bottom line is getting those technologies to the farmers as quickly as possible, using the traditional extension services, which have become expensive over the years. He concluded that, with the advent of digital agriculture, "we want to go further by using digital tools to disseminate these technologies."

EiA is one of the "new" CGIAR initiatives, with IITA playing a leading role along with other CGIAR centers. EiA is considering how agronomy can scale with various components involved, thereby developing some agronomic products that farmers can take up for use in different countries and regions, including Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Latin America, and other Use-Cases involved. *Contributed by Sarah Sallau*



*Top: Host farmer, Aliyu Rabi'u, summarizing the learnings from his experiences on his farm. Bottom: Stakeholders after the EiA workshop.*

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IITA Central Africa Hub Director [Zoumana Bamba](#) represented the Institute at the ceremony. He was accompanied by Deputy Director [Komi Fiaboe](#) and IITA Specialists [Apollin Fotso Kuate](#) and Rachel Zozo.

IITA's technical assistance to the PAPG1 project is based on two main axes: seed system and capacity building. For the seed system, IITA is expected to provide 5 million healthy cassava cuttings and 667 thousand plantain tissue culture plants to the Gabon government.

In turn, they will multiply these seeds further through Société de Transformation Agricole et de Développement Rural (SOTRADER), a national structure promoting annual crops for further multiplication and distribution to the farmers by December 2023.

Proven technologies such as semi-autotrophic hydroponics (SAH) propagation will be established at the national agriculture and forest research institute IRAF (Institut de Recherches Agronomiques et Forestières) and the national institute for agriculture and biotechnology INSAB (Institut National Supérieur d'Agronomie et de Biotechnologies).

Capacity building activities will be organized for field technicians, and scientific collaboration with IRAF scientists will be established to select and evaluate new cassava varieties, among others.

IITA has always wanted to establish a partnership with the Gabonese government to strengthen the capacities of researchers. IITA will provide technical support and advice in areas such as improving the

seed system, integrated soil fertility management, integrated pest and disease management, improving the technical route for multiple food and commercial crops, and postharvest management and product processing. Several missions have been conducted since 2018 with the Gabon authorities, particularly the TAAT mission conducted in July 2021, which initiated the agreement that was signed. The present agreement marks the concretization of these efforts and represents a significant cornerstone in the partnership between IITA and the Gabon Government.

In his speech, the Director of the Cabinet emphasized the high trust bestowed on this partnership by the Gabon Government to transform agriculture and decrease dependency on food importation. *Contributed by Apollin Fotso*



Members of the IITA and Government of Gabon teams at the signing ceremony.

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# IITA Abuja Station chief awarded distinguished IAFoST fellowship

The Head of [IITA](#) Abuja Station and BASICS Project Manager, Professor Lateef Sanni, has been inducted as a Fellow of the International Academy of Food Science and Technology (IAFoST). He was awarded the distinguished fellowship at the 21st World Congress of Food Science and Technology on 2 November in Singapore.

A former Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Development) of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Sanni was among the 13th class of outstanding food scientists and technologists inducted as new Fellows of IAFoST. He was recognized as the second-best researcher in FUNAAB and the 43rd-best researcher in Nigeria with 2023 AD Scientific Rankings of 5,193, h-index of 37, publication of 122 journal articles, 30 books, 30 conference

proceedings, and one patent. He also recorded the highest citation in Google Scholar (5,294, h-index of 37), Scopus (1526, h-index of 20), and Research Gate (3365, h-index of 33.15).

The celebrated Food Science and Technology professor earned a BSc from the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, in 1990. He received his MSc in 1993 and a PhD in 1999 from the Department of Food Technology at the University of Ibadan.

Prof Sanni began as an Assistant Lecturer at the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (UNAAB) in 1993 and was promoted to Professor of Food Science and Technology in 2008. He rose through the ranks and became Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Development) from 2017 to 2019. He is also a Fellow of the

Nigerian Academy of Science and the Nigerian Institute of Food Science and Technology, among others.

He received the 2008 CGIAR Award for Regional Technology Development in sub-Saharan Africa; the FUNAAB Research Productivity Award (Senior Academic Category) in January 2011; and Most Outstanding International Ambassador in January 2012.

Among those in attendance were his teachers and mentors, Prof Olugbenga Ogunmoyela (retired from Bells University), Prof Charles Aworh (retired from UI), and Prof Folake Henshaw (FUNAAB).

Prof Sanni was the only Fellow from an African institution among 27 scientists from 20 countries who were honored at the event. *Contributed by Temgu Abur*



*Top: Head of IITA Abuja Station Professor Lateef Sanni on stage (left), accepting the IAFoST fellowship. Bottom: Newly inducted Fellow, Professor Lateef Sanni (front row, second right), with other fellowship awardees.*

# SAPZ initiative launches in Nigeria with significant IITA participation

Representatives of [IITA-CGIAR](#) from Ibadan and Abuja participated in the launch of the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) program held in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, in October.

The Nigeria SAPZ program, a government-enabled and private sector-led initiative, will mobilize private-sector investment to develop the value chain for selected strategic crops and livestock in seven participating states and the FCT for phase 1. These states are Cross River, Imo, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara, Ogun, and Oyo.

The Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Yemi Osinbajo, officially launched the event, co-financed by the African Development Bank (AfDB), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Islamic Development Bank.

Representatives of the financing organizations provided the rationale for supporting the program's implementation in Nigeria and advised

the stakeholders to ensure that SAPZ is instrumental in creating jobs for the teeming unemployed young people in Nigeria, and reducing poverty and hunger.

Highlights of the event included IITA showcasing the impact it has created through the Youth in Agribusiness initiative. Over the years, the co-financiers of SAPZ--AfDB and IFAD, have supported various projects within the Youth in Agribusiness Office, creating jobs for the youth.

Beneficiaries from ENABLE-TAAT and I-Youth projects, supported by AfDB and Mastercard Foundation Young Africa Works, respectively, displayed how the various in-cash and in-kind support received from IITA through the projects mentioned have improved their livelihoods and those of others. These beneficiaries include Kollab Agrotech CEO Alabi Samuel, F-Step Cassava Enterprise CEO Seun Ogidan, Leah Tari Samuel of PALMSAED farm, and Amina Ado of Innovative Youth in the Horticultural hub.

The beneficiaries explained the impact of the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) in starting their agribusiness journeys and how they are engaged in profitable enterprises that employ other youth. They concluded their speeches with highlights of the positive impacts that the SAPZ program will have on Nigerian youth in terms of job creation and hunger eradication. The audience, including the Vice President, applauded their testimonies and efforts.

Other presenters, including Youth Employment in Agribusiness and Sustainable Agriculture (YEASA) Project Coordinator Oluyemi Adunoye and I-Youth State Administrator Zaccheaus Isuwa, explained how they train and mentor youth to retain their interest in their chosen agriculture enterprise.

The event, attended by representatives of the public and private sectors, also served as a platform to create public awareness of the SAPZ program and enhance understanding of key actors' roles in the implementation process. Contributed by Adetola Adenmosun



The Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Yemi Osinbajo, at the launch ceremony.