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*iAGRI continued to pursue its original objectives during the past two months giving special emphasis to placement of students of Cohort V, supervision of research projects under Phase I of its Collaborative Research Program, and management of the 21 organizational experiments that represent its institutional transformation thrust at SUA. These activities involved close coordination of major participants, especially the Office of International Programs in Agriculture at Ohio State University - the primary Management Entity, the Project Management Unit in Morogoro, Tanzania, and iAGRI's collaborative partners in the U.S., Africa, and India. Highlights are found in the text that follows. We especially appreciate the support we continue to receive from our Tanzanian partners, the USAID Mission in Tanzania, and partner universities in the U.S. as well as USAID/Washington. It is essential to ensuring the success of iAGRI. We look forward to continued collaboration with all of you during the months to come. Asante sana!*

### **Update on Activities March-April, 2015**

**Long Term Training** – We have been able to place all members of Cohort V by the end of April. Student placements are spread across training institutions as shown in the following table:

| <b>Training Institution</b> | <b>Degree Level</b> | <b>Number</b> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| OSUC Member                 | M.Sc.               | 2             |
|                             | Ph.D.               | 2             |
| SUA                         | M.Sc.               | 5             |
| RUFORUM Member              | M.Sc.               | 1             |
|                             | Ph.D.               | 1             |

Including them, iAGRI will have placed 137 students for graduate degree training during the life of the project, thus surpassing the target of 135 found in the current amended Cooperative Agreement. And over 50% of the placements made by iAGRI will have been women, thus also meeting this training objective. The two M.Sc. students from Cohort II, who had not submitted their theses to their respective graduate schools by the end of fall semester have done so and will graduate this spring. Thus, all 18 M.Sc. students from Cohorts I and II who were placed at OSUC institutions will have graduated by the end of June. Additionally, 8 Cohort II students placed at African institutions have completed their degree programs. The total number of iAGRI-funded students who have graduated from the program now stands at 26.

**iAGRI Collaborative Research Program** – The iAGRI Project Management Unit and the OSU Management Entity continued to monitor progress being made by the eight iAGRI-funded Collaborative Research projects. These research projects are at different phases of completion. Most of them have already inquired about the possibility of receiving no cost extensions. Tentative plans are being made for several PI's from Tanzania to visit their counterparts in the U.S. during the coming months. Visits will help consolidate collaboration initiated through this research. While in the U.S. they

will discuss manuscripts to be drawn from their research, next steps to complete their research projects, and future potential collaborative projects. Plans are also being made for several of them to attend major disciplinary national meetings. The ME program manager and PMU Deputy Project Director met with the Tanzanian PI's during April to discuss further progress being made on individual projects and plans for project extensions.

Progress was also made in defining additional projects to be realized under Phase II of this program.

- ❖ The Iowa State University/MAFC project on maize continue to implement its activities. Based at the Mikocheni Agricultural Research Institute in Tanzania, this project focuses on maize lethal necrosis disease, drought tolerance and striga, and incorporates both breeding and management strategies to address these constraints. These problems were raised by NAFKA, a collaborative Feed the Future project in Tanzania.
- ❖ A project proposal on climate change and agricultural risk management through crop insurance involving Ohio State and Sokoine scientists was further refined. The project under consideration proposed to test how weather indexed crop insurance can mitigate the impacts of climate change by (1) reducing the systemic risk assumed by agricultural lenders, (2) raising credit market participation by smallholder, (3) increasing investments by smallholders in improved agricultural production technologies, and (4) encouraging informal risk-sharing among smallholders participating in joint liability group loans. The researchers propose to use data from formal field experiments and focus group studies involving Tanzanian smallholders and agricultural lenders to test this hypothesis.
- ❖ A third project involving scientists from Virginia Tech, Sokoine and a local watershed board is ready to be initiated. This project will focus on comprehensive watershed management designed to better utilize and protect surface and ground water resources and to address broader land use and natural resource management issues concerning ecosystem services, productivity, and sustainability of agriculture.
- ❖ The PMU continues to work on identification of a follow on research project on rice demand in Tanzania. It is currently exploring a study of consumer preferences based on aroma and taste.

**iAGRI Students Meeting with Ambassador Tony Hall** – Five iAGRI students at Ohio State met with Tony Hall, former Ambassador to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Executive Director Emeritus of The Alliance to End Hunger, during his March visit to Ohio State's campus. During the meeting, iAGRI students shared their areas of study and many of the major food security challenges currently facing Tanzania with him. Students described their research interests and learned from him about past and present NGO efforts to combat WORLD hunger.

**OSUC Partners Meeting** – The fourth annual meeting of iAGRI U.S. university consortium member representatives was held at OSU in April. Participants included staff from the iAGRI Management Entity and the Project Management Unit in Tanzania. The meeting focused on current project activities, issues and opportunities. Attendees from Tanzania participated through video conference. Major topics of discussion were long-term degree training, collaborative Feed the Future research, institutional capacity building activities at SUA, and project finances.

**Staff Changes** – Several staff assignments have changed at the PMU. Asia Barnabas has taken on responsibilities as a program manager for several organizational experiments at SUA. Shangwe Bujiku, Administrative Assistant to the Project Management Unit in Morogoro remained on leave for the past two months. Her responsibilities were assigned to Rehema Kiwanga. Mary Celestine has been promoted to Assistant Project Coordinator.

**Visits by OSUC Advisors** – During the past two months several iAGRI students were visited by OSUC advisors:

Mpoki Shimwela, University of Florida, was visited by **Dr. Jeffrey Jones**, Department of Plant Pathology, who worked with him and his local supervisors, Fen Beed of the World Vegetable Organization on field research related to his Ph.D. dissertation.

Innocent Ritte, Tuskegee University, was visited by **Dr. Marceline Engin**, Department of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. While at SUA she presented a seminar, "An Insight into Sweet Potato Biotechnology and Genomics Research at Tuskegee University."

**Visits by SUA Supervisor** – Abel Kaaya, SUA, is co-advisor to Boniface Massawe. He visited OSU in April, collaborating with Massawe and his principal advisor, Brian Slater. They discussed the final version of Massawe’s dissertation, publications to emanate from his work, and additional future collaboration.

**SUA Capacity Building** – Capacity building efforts continued to receive considerable attention during this period. Several highlights for the months of March-April are:

- ❖ **Leadership** – Leadership activities were undertaken at several levels during the past two months. Monthly leadership forums were held in March and April for deans, directors, department heads, and top administration. The purpose of this forum is to provide a “safe space” for university leaders to engage in open and frank discussion about challenges, to jointly seek solutions, and to strengthen leadership by sharing ideas and obtaining training on management approaches and techniques. In addition, several webinar-based courses on leadership were held for iAGRI-sponsored students, including one on leadership habits, based on the book, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, by Steven Covey, and one on organizational leadership based on the book, The Leadership Challenge, by James Kouzes and Barry Posner.
- ❖ **Strengthening of SUA’s English Language Program** – A team led by Elsie Paredes, Virginia Tech Language and Culture Institute, worked with counterparts at SUA to improve its English language program. Topics addressed were communicative language teaching, teaching research, writing, listening and speaking, grammar and vocabulary teaching skills, testing and evaluation of learning, and integration of technology in teaching, especially e-learning and online resources for teaching.
- ❖ **Quality Management Training Program (QMTP)** – Kilimanjaro International initiated a QMTP at SUA in response to recommendations made by Deloitte that were based on a risk assessment of SUA administrative practices. Training focuses on (a) accounting and auditing; (b) asset management; (c) human resource management; (d) procurement; and e) project management. Gerald Monela, SUA Vice-Chancellor, chaired a related inception workshop that was also attended by his Deputy Vice-Chancellors.
- ❖ **Public/Private Sector Partnerships** – Partnerships have been pursued as part of the iAGRI Innovation Portfolio whose goal is to commercialize the research of iAGRI students and collaborative researchers and to attract new and non-traditional funding sources for research at SUA. Several contracts were signed to support research including one with MEDA for \$23,000 and several with food processing firms to utilize infant formulas developed by iAGRI graduate students. Another important iAGRI initiated activity was a SUA delegation visit to three universities in Kenya where delegation members observed how they have diversified their revenue streams. Led by Prof. Yonika Ngaga, SUA Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Administration and Finance, the team observed how these institutions have done so. The team prepared a report that will be discussed internally at SUA.
- ❖ **SUA Restructuring** – SUA has initiated its process of restructuring. To support this process, iAGRI funded a visit by SUA administrators to Makerere University to review and discuss its restructuring process for the Faculty of Agriculture. The focus was on restructuring the Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness at SUA. The team learned much from the visit and summarized this learning in a report that discussed lessons learned from the Makerere University experience. The lessons learned will support restructuring deliberations at SUA.
- ❖ **Statistical Collaboration Laboratory**. This lab, which has been created with support from Virginia Tech, continued to provide consulting services to SUA research staff and graduate students. Services are provided on a “walk-in” basis, when clients go to the lab for consultation. Advisory inputs are provided on research design, questionnaire preparation, clarification on analytical models, and use of statistical software.

**Student Program Review – Punjab Agricultural University** – A Training Management team, consisting of staff from the ME and PMU, visited the six iAGRI students currently placed at Punjab Agricultural University. They met with the students, their academic advisors and university leadership. Students are all performing well in their respective programs. The PMU anticipates preparing stories surrounding the experiences of these students. iAGRI was congratulated by Indian counterparts for its excellent candidate selection process.