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RUFORUM
Capacity Building in Agriculture



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iAGRI's managing entity in the Office of International Programs in Agriculture at The Ohio State University; the project management unit in Morogoro, Tanzania; and all of iAGRI's collaborative partners in the U.S., Africa, and India have worked collaboratively to ensure that all of iAGRI's current initiatives exceeded expectations as 2014 comes to a close. The latest achievements include all of Cohort II M.Sc. students at OSUC member institutions successfully defending their theses, the initiation of research in Phase II of the Collaborative Research Program, and the planning of a major January, 2015 workshop for researchers in Phase I. Not to mention, capacity building efforts at Sokoine University also received special attention, including leadership development training for newly appointed midlevel leadership and graduate students, and building research linkages between Sokoine and its key stakeholders. Thanks again for your continued support of iAGRI and we wish you all a very prosperous New Year!

Update on Activities November-December, 2014

Long Term Training – At the end of 2014 iAGRI will have placed 125 students for graduate degree training. All 12 M.Sc. students in Cohort II placed in the U.S. for training have now defended their theses, indicating that a total of 18 U.S. M.Sc students have completed their graduation requirements, with an **average reported GPA of 3.5**. Students completing in Autumn were:

- Edith Lazaro, Ohio State University
- Nafeti Mheni, Ohio State University
- Mariam Marianda, University of Florida
- Elizabeth Isaya, Ohio State University
- Ibrahim Shabani, Tuskegee University
- Alunas Mwamakimbula, Iowa State University
- Kabura Philip, Iowa State University

Most of the 17 Cohort II M.Sc. students pursuing their degrees at Sokoine and RUFORUM member institutions also completed their theses and are awaiting reviews by their external examiners. Two (2) have graduated from RUFORUM and four (4) have graduated from SUA. Cohort III students continued to pursue their thesis research in Tanzania and Cohort IV students continued their studies at their host institutions. Beginning in early 2015, we anticipate placing an additional limited number of students for long-term, degree training, primarily in the U.S.

Wendi Howell, the OSU ME long-term degree training coordinator, traveled to meet with iAGRI-funded degree students and their advisors at the University of Florida, and Tuskegee University. While there she consulted with them about individual student programs as well as program parameters dealing with the conduct of anticipated field thesis and dissertation research in Tanzania. At OSU she discussed research proposal preparation with 14 iAGRI students at a lunch time meeting. The ME is compiling additional funding opportunities for iAGRI students, such as the Borlaug LEAP program.

The iAGRI project was made possible by the United State Agency for International Development (USAID) with support from the American people. The contents do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government. iAGRI, a major Feed the Future initiative in Tanzania managed by The Ohio State University, seeks to prepare the next generation of agricultural scientists, leaders and food system institutions in Tanzania.

iAGRI Collaborative Research Program – Researchers funded under Phase I of this program continued their field studies. They submitted their 18 month progress reports to the PMU in December. Plans continued to be made for a Phase I workshop to be held in Morogoro on January 15. Project PIs will be expected to review progress on their research and discuss next steps, including publication alternatives for their research once the projects end in 2015. Most OSUC participants have confirmed their participation at the workshop. It will be an opportunity for them to jointly define contributions to their respective projects in 2015, including joint publication of research results.

Phase II of this program was initiated as the Iowa State University/MAFC project on maize was initiated. Based at the Mikocheni Agricultural Research Institute in Tanzania, this project will focus on maize lethal necrosis disease, drought tolerance and striga and incorporate both breeding and management strategies to address these constraints. These problems were raised by NAFKA, a collaborative Feed the Future project in Tanzania. A concept note on agricultural risk management involving OSU and Sokoine scientists has been further elaborated. It will incorporate World Bank and Syngenta inputs to the crop insurance program to be implemented. OSU and Sokoine scientists will evaluate the effectiveness of these inputs. Scientists from Virginia Tech and Sokoine have been requested to prepare a concept note on water management. This work will likely build on dissertation research of an iAGRI Ph.D. candidate currently at Virginia Tech and address issues raised by the Tanzania Horticulture Association (TAHA) and TAPP, another Feed the Future project in Tanzania. A study on “Rice Demand in Tanzania” has just been completed and results are expected to be of use to MAFC and to SERA, a Feed the Future project. Tanzania is a large producer and consumer of rice, and the study addresses important knowledge gaps regarding this economically important and politically sensitive market. We anticipate additional research on rice markets as follow up.

Staff Changes – Shangwe Bujiku, Administrative Assistant to the Project Management Unit in Morogoro, began her maternity leave in November. She has been replaced by Asia Barnabas who has been hired as a Project Assistant. Welcome to Asia! Prior to joining iAGRI, Asia worked with the USAID/Tanzania Mission in Dar. She worked under David Charles, the iAGRI AOR in the Mission.

Climate Change Conferences – Invitations are being sent to potential participants for a second conference on climate change to be held in June, 2015 at SUA under the auspices of iAGRI and several other sponsors. This conference will focus on Climate Change and Multi-Dimensional Sustainability in African Agriculture. The Steering Committee consists of representatives of SUA, OSU, the Norwegian University of Life Sciences and FAO. Papers presented at the 2014 conference have been published in a book released by Springer-Netherlands -- Sustainable Intensification to Advance Food Security and Enhance Climate Resilience in Africa. The book will be shared with major libraries throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

SUA Capacity Building – Capacity building efforts continued received considerable attention during this period. Among the more significant activities taking place were (a) a *PMU program on leadership and management* for new deans, directors and department heads which was inaugurated by SUA’s Vice Chancellor, Prof. Gerald Monela; (b) completion of a *Leadership Webinar series* for iAGRI graduate students led by agricultural educators at OSU which focused on Stephen Covey’s book, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People; (c) *strengthening of SUA’s English Language Program* through support from the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam in the form of an English Language Specialist and English Fellows Language programs; (d) Establishment of a *Commercial Horticulture Unit* involving SUA, iAGRI, TAPP, and Tanzania Horticulture Association (TAHA) within the Horticulture Section of the Department of Crop Science and Production at SUA designed to provide practical demonstration and training to the commercial horticulture sector; and (e) strengthening of the *Sokoine National Agricultural Library (SNAL) LibHub* – a program that introduces library access to electronic documents. LibHub is an online resource information tool introduced at SUA through USAID support to increase access to online information resources. iAGRI is sponsoring training, promotional events, and a remote access system that allows users to download scientific papers. iAGRI recently approved a proposal to create an online learning platform for digital librarianship that will be delivered during a week-long training at SNAL.