

## Innovative Agricultural Research Initiative (iAGRI)

**Purpose:** The Innovative Agricultural Research Initiative (iAGRI) aims to strengthen training and research capacities of Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security, and Cooperatives.

**Goal:** The goal is to improve food security and agricultural productivity in Tanzania.

**Feed-the-Future:** The iAGRI purpose is aligned with the themes of USAID's *Feed the Future* (FtF) and the Government of Tanzania's (GoT) Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme Compact (CAADP) and Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP).

### Objectives:

- Provide advanced-degree training in agriculture and nutrition for 135 Tanzanian graduate students;
- Establish a program of collaborative research on agriculture and nutrition;
- Strengthen capacity of SUA to develop and implement instructional, internship, and outreach programs;
- Promote cooperation between SUA, U.S. universities, and Global South universities.

**Major Tanzania Partners:** Sokoine University of Agriculture, Faculty of Agriculture and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives (MAFC).

**Project Administration:** The Ohio State University, through the Office of International Program in Agriculture (IPA), is the **management entity** (ME) responsible for administering the iAGRI project. The ME is led by the IPA Director, Dr. Mark Erbaugh and the Project Coordinator, Dr. David Hansen. The **project management unit** (PMU) is located on the campus of Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro, Tanzania, and is led by the Project Director, Dr. David Kraybill (OSU) and the Deputy Project Director, Isaac Minde (MSU).

**Institutional Partners:** iAGRI is a partnership of Tanzanian institutions; The Ohio State University Consortium (OSUC), which includes five other U.S. universities: Michigan State University, Virginia Tech, University of Florida, Tuskegee University, and Iowa State University; and the Regional University Forum for Agricultural Capacity Building (RUFORUM).

**Project Initiation:** A needs assessment conducted at the onset of iAGRI identified future trends and constraints in the Tanzanian food system. This assessment identified eight priority areas for research, development and training that informed long-term degree training and collaborative research programs.

**Long-Term Graduate Degree Training:** The goal of iAGRI's long-term training component is to equip the next generation of Tanzanian researchers and managers with skills and knowledge for achieving food security. As of October, 2014, iAGRI had placed 128 trainees (20 PhD, 108 MSc), 48.4% are female and 30 MSc will have graduated by December, 2014. 67 students have been placed at

OSUC partner institutions, 30 at nine RUFORUM partner institutions in East and Southern Africa, 25 at SUA, and 6 at the Punjab Agricultural University in India.

**Collaborative Research:** Through eight collaborative research projects, iAGRI is building bridges between U.S. and Tanzanian scientists that will enable them to take advantage of technological advances. Important policy-related issues in agriculture and nutrition are being addressed through four agricultural policy research projects.

- **Collaborative Process:** 8 research themes were identified through the needs assessment process and vetted with Tanzanian stakeholders: crop improvement, climate change, gender and agricultural productivity, water resources management, agricultural policy, extension systems, and nutrition and food science. 8 research background papers were prepared by teams of Tanzania and US researchers; A Competitive Grants Program for teams of Tanzanian and OSUC scientists was released; 8 awarded and completed or nearing completion.
- **Research Project Leadership:** Five out of eight projects led by women; five led by SUA researchers; one led by MAFC researcher; and two led by OSUC researchers.
- **Round 2 Research Topics:** Maize breeding and cultural practices; rice demand; agricultural risk management; and drip irrigation.

**Institutional Capacity Building at Sokoine University:** iAGRI is building capacity building at the institutional level by assisting SUA to implement its strategic plan. The *Leadership for Change Management* initiative seeks to transform SUA into a 21<sup>st</sup> century university where teaching, research and outreach are demand-driven. With iAGRI's assistance, SUA's Quality Assurance and Promotion Bureau has revitalized the University Teaching and Learning Improvement program for instructors, launched a pilot program for Teaching Assistants, equipped classrooms with audio-visual equipment, and launched a Classroom Services Unit to monitor and maintain classroom equipment and facilities.

Other capacity-building activities iAGRI is supporting at SUA include a mentoring program for faculty and students, strategic planning for SUA's alumni association, a web portal for accessing academic journals through the Sokoine National Agricultural Library, development of a statistics laboratory to advise students and academic staff on research design and analysis, curricular and equipment improvements for a remedial English language program, and short courses on various topics.

**Private Sector Linkages at SUA:** iAGRI has been working with SUA to create capacity for building productive relationships with the private sector. This requires changing mindsets within the organization and long-term investments in coaching, mentoring, and institutional capacity building. iAGRI has helped the Sokoine University Graduate Entrepreneurs' Cooperative (SUGECO) to develop a strategic plan and hire an executive director for improving its agribusiness incubation efforts. iAGRI is also facilitating private sector investor visits to the SUA campus.