

Associate Professional Officer – Agronomist (Coffee and Banana Systems) based in Kampala (Uganda) (Ref: DDG-R4D/APO/A/12/10)

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

Title of the posting:	Associate Professional Officer – Agronomist
Sector:	Coffee and Banana Systems in SSA humid highlands
Location:	Kampala, Uganda
Duration of the assignment:	Initially one year with the possibility to extend up to 3 years
Grade:	IITA offers a competitive remuneration package paid in US dollars. Starting salary scale will depend on the level of education and experience.

Note: This post is opened in the context of the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) scheme sponsored by the Government of the Netherlands and is open to **Dutch and European Union nationals or permanent residents of the Netherlands** (for criteria refer to the website of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

http://www.minbuza.nl/en/Key_topics/Development_Cooperation/Associate_Experts_Programme

II. SUPERVISION

Name of direct supervisor:	Piet van Asten
Title of supervisor:	Systems Agronomist – CIALCA project manager

Content and methodology of supervision:

The supervisor will provide scientific supervision and assist the incumbent in preparation of a three-year work with details of activities to be executed and milestones for performance monitoring. This will form the basis for regular monitoring of progress and adjustment of work plans, if necessary. The incumbent will participate in scientific meetings of IITA and its affiliated projects/programs. The candidate will undergo the formal IITA-institute wide annual performance appraisals. The incumbent will be able to liaise with researchers at advanced research institutes outside Africa for training and backstopping in research methodologies.

III. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Review and strengthen IITA's conceptual framework of research for development opportunities and constraints in banana and tree crop systems based on literature review and interactions with stakeholders.
- Develop a work plan that is complementary to, but in line with, IITA's existing research strategy and projects, based on the research questions derived from the conceptual framework and building on the APO's specific expertise and interests. The work plan will contain details on data collection, analysis, and publication, combining exploration of existing data with complementary field data collection efforts.
- Actively engage in communication with a wide range of banana and coffee stakeholders in the target areas to achieve research objectives, to ensure their research participation during the data collection phase, and to get their feedback on results obtained and the way forward.
- Apply quantitative methods to analyse trade-offs in banana and tree crop systems in African smallholder farmers, taking into account resource requirements, profitability, sustainability of the natural resource base, food security, and long-term changes in environmental conditions such as climate change and soil fertility depletion.
- Lead and assist in the writing of manuscripts for publication and assist in translating research findings into recommendations for stakeholders.

IV. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Qualifications: M.Sc. or Ph.D. in agricultural systems with a strong agronomy background and basic knowledge of applied economics and participatory research methods.

Experience: Preferably 2 years relevant working experience. Familiarity with rural institutions and rural livelihoods in both Francophone and Anglophone Africa is desirable.

Competencies:

- Fluency (oral and written) in both English and French.
- Ability to work as a member of a multi-disciplinary team in a cross-cultural environment and to interact effectively with farmers and staff from national institutions and the private sector.
- Willingness to travel regionally in challenging conditions.

V. TRAINING COMPONENTS AND LEARNING ELEMENTS

Training components:

1. Regular mentoring by the supervisor and other senior scientists during research proposal development, design of study, data collection, data analysis, and manuscript preparation.
2. Regional and country-level meetings in relevant IITA-led projects (CIALCA, LEAD)
3. Participation in the annual planning and review meetings of IITA
4. Participation in scientific conferences related to institutional development
5. Linking with collaborating scientists and professors at advance research institutes in Europe (e.g. Wageningen University), possibly supported by short-term training events at these institutes.

Learning elements:

In the first year:

1. conduct literature review;
2. improved knowledge of the agronomy of perennial-based cropping systems (with emphasis on coffee, cocoa, and bananas),
3. improved knowledge of the socio-economic context of smallholder farming systems and participatory research methods
4. develop detailed research proposal and work plan that is in line with IITA's existing strategy and projects on tree crop x banana systems

In the second and third year:

1. improved understanding of on-farm and participatory research methods,
2. improved knowledge of quantitative research methods for trade-off analysis,
3. understanding of value and knowledge chains in agricultural systems,
4. learn how to process, evaluate, publish, and present research results;
5. improved capacity to help translate research results into recommendations for stakeholders at different levels.

In all years:

1. improve skills in process monitoring;
2. improve skills on how to work effectively with local stakeholders;
3. improve skills on how to work effectively as a part of a multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural team, and
4. increase capacity to independently liaise with advanced research partners to improve the research quality.

VI. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Organisation:

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), with headquarters in Ibadan, Nigeria, is an international non-profit research-for-development (R4D) organization created in 1967, governed by a Board of Trustees, and supported primarily by the Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Our R4D is anchored on the development needs of sub-Saharan Africa. We develop agricultural solutions with our partners to tackle hunger and poverty by reducing

producer and consumer risks, enhancing crop quality and productivity, and generating wealth from agriculture. We have more than 100 internationally recruited scientists from about 35 countries and 900 nationally recruited staff based in various stations across Africa. Please visit <http://www.iita.org/> for more information on IITA.

Programme:

The candidate will join IITA's research team on perennial-based cropping systems in the humid zone of Sub-Saharan Africa. The candidate will be based in Kampala Uganda, but the field work will be conducted in the banana/coffee growing areas of the East African highlands. The work will provide additional strengthening to IITA's activities in the CIALCA project, IITA's LEAD-USAID project on coffee x banana systems in Uganda, and the new CGIAR Programs on the Humid Tropics (CRP 1.2) and Bananas (MP3-RTB). The work is thematically linked to similar work on-going on cocoa-based systems in Central and West Africa through IITA's Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP).

Bananas are a primary cash and food crop in the African Great Lakes region, and coffee is the primary source for foreign exchange. Both crops are dominantly grown by millions of smallholder farms in the region. Banana and coffee are often grown on the same farm and play a complementary role.

Most research in the African Great Lakes Region has focused on breeding and IPM in banana and coffee mono-crop systems. However, recent research by IITA provided clear indications that considerable gains in the productivity and profitability of coffee fields can be obtained through intercropping with bananas and through improved nutrient management. There is a need for site-specific recommendations on crop, soil and water management for coffee, grown as a sole crop, but particularly when intercropped with banana. The systems agronomists will identify drivers of systems productivity and explore trade-offs between productivity, profitability, vulnerability to climatic events, and sustainability. This requires an assessment of the economic viability of improved technologies in terms of resource availability, quality requirements, and organisational feasibility.

Although the project activities concentrate on the East African highlands, there is potential spill-over to other tree crop systems such as the cocoa-based systems in Central and West Africa. This gives the APO the opportunity to exchange with, and learn from, the IITA-related research community on tree crops in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Duty Station: IITA - Kampala, Uganda

The candidate will be based in Kampala, Uganda. Kampala is the capital city of Uganda with a population of approximately 2,000,000 people. Kampala has an international airport nearby (Entebbe – 40km distance) with direct flights to major cities in East Africa and Europe. Kampala has good educational, medical and recreational facilities, broad band internet and is accessible to a number of tourist attractions.

VII. HOW TO APPLY

Applications including curriculum vitae, names and addresses of three referees should be addressed to the Human Resources Manager. Please complete our online application form using this link: http://old.iita.org/cms/details/job_application.aspx

The deadline for application is 1 February 2011. Applications received after this date will not be considered. Applicants will receive an acknowledgement of receipt of their application. Thereafter only those shortlisted for interviews will be contacted.

IITA is an equal opportunity employer and particularly welcomes applications from women candidates