



## **Postdoctoral Fellow, Plantain Breeder (Ref No: DDG-R4D/PDF/PB/03/16)**

**Background:** The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) invites applications for the internationally recruited position of **Postdoctoral Fellow, Plantain Breeder**.

IITA is one of the world's leading research partners in finding solutions for hunger, malnutrition, and poverty. Its award-winning research-for-development (R4D) approach addresses the development needs of tropical countries. IITA works with partners to enhance crop quality and productivity, reduce producer and consumer risks, and generate wealth from agriculture. IITA is a non-profit organization founded in 1967 in Nigeria and governed by a Board of Trustees. IITA works on the following crops: cowpea, soybean, banana/plantain, yam, cassava, and maize. It is a member of CGIAR, a global agriculture research partnership for a food secure future. Please visit <http://www.iita.org/> for more information on IITA.

IITA seeks a qualified postdoctoral fellow (recent graduates encouraged to apply) to participate as a breeder in a new initiative to restart the IITA plantain breeding program at the High Rainfall Substation in Onne, Nigeria where it was previously operated and productive. The successful applicant will lay the foundation for a revived plantain breeding program as a basis for a future multi-partner plantain improvement program for Sub-Saharan Africa to enhance the livelihoods of smallholders through the development and adoption of improved plantain hybrids. The program will emphasize West and Central Africa but with global implications.

Breeding will occur concomitantly at multiple ploidy levels in an integrated scheme to obtain superior plantain cultivars with higher yield, consumer acceptability, higher levels of pest resistance and improved quality traits. In addition this initiative will accelerate and increase the efficiency of breeding through (1) a better and faster identification of prevailing pests and diseases accompanied by accelerated early stage screening of resistance; (2) molecular-based genetic studies for increased understanding of underlying genetics and development of DNA marker-based early selection; (3) better tailoring breeding products and increasing adoption of new cultivars through end-user feedback systems and participatory evaluation of improved banana germplasm; and (4) development of an open-access database and tool box for banana breeders and researchers.

The successful candidate will be expected to oversee the breeding activities in Nigeria under the supervision of a senior breeder and pathologist, and ensure that outputs are delivered according to an agreed work plan.

The postdoctoral fellow will also assist the current banana molecular biologist and the senior plantain pathologist in managing project partnerships on plantain breeding.

The successful candidate will work under the supervision of the Senior Banana Breeder and he/she will report to the Regional hub director of West Africa and the Director in charge of Crop Improvement and Biotechnology.

### **Position Responsibilities:**

The postdoctoral fellow will undertake the following activities:

- oversee breeding activities in West Africa and ensure that outputs are delivered according to the agreed work plan.
- facilitate integration of breeding efforts in Africa to support highly productive, adapted hybrids introgressing desirable traits such as better nutritive content, end user preferences, disease and pest resistance and high yield.
- apply creative approaches for the exploitation of cytogenetics, genomics and next generation sequencing methods.
- facilitate participatory breeding by partners and farmers.

- support PhD and MSc research linked to breeding.
- organize communication and dissemination undertakings, reporting and publish breeding results in international peer reviewed and open access journals.
- support resource mobilization on banana breeding.
- represent the breeding program to external stakeholders.
- support effective partnerships with CGIAR centers, National Agricultural Research and Extension Systems and Advanced Research Institutes.
- any other duties as assigned by the supervisor.

### **Educational Qualifications**

The candidate should have a PhD in plant breeding or related fields (plant physiology, post-harvest, etc.) from a highly recognized university (experience in breeding of horticultural crops is a plus).

### **Core Competencies**

- Knowledge and experience in plant breeding, preferably in banana and/or a root and tuber crop.
- Knowledge of breeding polyploid crops.
- Ability to integrate high quality phenotyping with genotyping.
- Experience with project activity implementation and monitoring.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Excellent spoken and written English.
- Demonstrated ability to write and publish articles in peer reviewed international journals.
- Ability to work independently in a multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional, and multi-cultural environment.
- Willingness to travel extensively within the region.
- Research experience in sub-Saharan Africa is an asset.

**Duty station:** Onne, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

**General information:** The contract will be for an initial period of two years. It can be renewed on the basis of performance and availability of funds. IITA offers a competitive remuneration package paid in US dollars.

**Applications:** Applications must include covering letter which should address how the candidate's background/experience relates to the specific duties of the position applied for, curriculum vitae, names and addresses of three professional referees (which **must** include either the Head of the applicant's current or previous organization or applicant's direct Supervisor/Superior at his/her present or former place of work). The application should be addressed to the Head, Human Resources Service. Please complete our online application form using this link: <http://www.iita.org/careers>

**Closing Date:** 20<sup>th</sup> April 2016

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

*Please note that only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.*