



Systems Agronomist, West Africa (Ref: DDG-R4D/SA/WA/11/18)

Background: The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) invites applications for the internationally recruited position of **System Agronomist**.

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) is a not-for-profit institution that generates agricultural innovations to meet Africa's most pressing challenges of hunger, malnutrition, poverty, and natural resource degradation. Working with various partners across sub-Saharan Africa, we improve livelihoods, enhance food and nutrition security, increase employment, and preserve natural resource integrity. IITA 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.

Project

CocoaSoils aims to build the knowledge base for sustainable intensification of cocoa production through a large public-private partnership that spans all cocoa growing regions of the tropics. Enhancing cocoa productivity and nutrient use efficiency requires a deeper understanding of the nutrient requirements of the cocoa tree and the roles and physiological responses to different nutrients. Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) recommendations will be developed based on medium- and long-term data from carefully planned and consistently managed nutrient response trials following agreed protocols and resource commitments. Specific ISFM and other productivity-enhancing recommendations will be delivered towards the sustainable intensification of cocoa production. CocoaSoils will be implemented through public-private partnerships with leading partners IITA and WUR in collaboration with CIAT, ICRAF, UNEP-WCMC, NARS (including CNRA, CRIG, CRIN, IRAD, and Universities), cocoa authorities, fertilizer industry partners, cocoa industry partners and IDH. A global network of long-term cocoa fertilizer trials across different environments and systems will be established by companies participating in the CocoaSoils consortium. The main objective of these trials is to collectively design and adopt fertilizer recommendations for cocoa growers, guidelines for recycling of cocoa husks, as well as guidelines to manage the risk of spreading diseases; and to develop a database on the efficacy and availability of organic resources.

Position Responsibilities

The System Agronomist will undertake the following activities:

- Responsible for designing and implementing protocols to measure system efficiency of cocoa and/or coffee-based farming systems at plot level, but also at farm and landscape level.
- Develop models that can prioritize sustainable intensification practices based on site specific constraints.
- Design a decision support framework based on a stepwise approach to support the implementation of recommendations derived from the CocoaSoils experimental trials in smallholder cocoa plantations in Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria.
- Lead participatory and inclusive decision support tool design, validation and testing with research and development partners.
- Lead work on integrating new knowledge into existing extension materials of the different countries and develop tools and processes that enable continuous updating of the existing extension package.
- Actively entertain good working relationships with the partners under CocoaSoils and create new relationships with stakeholders in the cocoa sector.
- Manage the cocoa research team responsible for implementing the stepwise program.
- Leading the development of research publications.
- Supervise PhD and MSc students with international universities.

- Link with the communication team to develop material that can be shared with the sector.

Educational Qualifications

The candidate should have a finalised PhD in Agronomy, Tropical soil fertility management, System analysis or related fields in agriculture with expertise in cocoa-based systems or other perennial systems seen as an advantage.

Core Competencies

- Good knowledge of perennial based agricultural systems, preferably cocoa and/or coffee.
- Good understanding of Integrated Soil Fertility Management.
- Excellent track record of research in agronomy, soil science or crop physiology, preferably with perennial crops.
- Systems thinker with broad understanding from agricultural systems from plant to policy.
- Experience in the use of mixed methods in systems research.
- Experience in engaging with a multitude of stakeholders including local and national level public sector as well as private sector.
- Good track record in management of international teams, including scientists.
- Excellent publication record in recognized journals.
- Good understanding of the priorities of high-level discussions in the cocoa sector around sustainability.

Duty Station: Accra, Ghana

General information: The contract will be for an initial period of three years. IITA offers an internationally 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: 31st May 2019

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

Please note that only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.