



Product Manager for Clonal Crops (Ref. No: DDG-R4D/PM/CC/12/19)

Background: The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) invites applications for the internationally recruited position of **Product Manager for Clonal Crops**.

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.

IITA has successful breeding programs on six very important crops in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA): cassava, yam, banana/plantain, maize, soybean and cowpea. In recent years, these have been reviewed based on the Breeding Program Assessment Tool (BPAT) (<https://plantbreedingassessment.org/>). The programs have also had extensive interaction with the CGIAR Excellence in Breeding (EiB) platform during which crop specific and cross cutting (institutional) improvement plans have been developed along with product profiles and market segmentation analyses. Implementing these plans will require a strong focus on step changes to improve efficiency of breeding and delivery of increased rates of variety turnover and genetic gain. This has been identified as a high priority by IITA. To achieve this, IITA seeks an experienced product development manager (product placement lead) with expertise in strategic product decision-making, including market analysis and the development of product concepts that deliver unique value based on customer demands. Through effective communication and dissemination of product and market information between clients and the product design teams, this position is a key component of the IITA/NARS breeding program and will ensure a continuous improvement process. It will also contribute to better targeting of variety development and supply of high quality planting materials in a timely and effective manner. The appointee will report to the Head of Breeding and work closely with leaders of the crop breeding teams.

Position Responsibilities

The Product Manager will play a cross-functional leadership role, most notably between breeding teams, clients and market stakeholders. S/he will also be part of a network with other product managers inside and outside IITA (coordinated by the CGIAR Excellence in Breeding platform).

The Product Manager will:

- Serve as a liaison between the IITA and NARS or commercial breeding teams, overseeing strategic decision making in the product development and delivery process.
- Provide market intelligence and help with prioritization of breeding objectives to meet market needs.
- Set the roadmap for product design and delivery, in addition to the overall product strategy.

- Work with seed system partners (in the public and private sectors) to develop a strong and streamlined route to market for new varieties of cassava, yam, banana/plantain.
- Coordinate product design activities between IITA and NARS to confirm clear product concepts.
- Work to properly position products for greatest impact and uptake after release.
- Provide feedback to the breeders as to how closely products will satisfy market demand.
- Establish a continuous improvement cycle in order to better focus the breeding product design on the needs of the market.
- Contribute to resource mobilization to support crop breeding.

Educational Qualifications

The candidate should have a finalised MBA or agri-business related degree with proven product development and marketing focus OR MS/Ph.D. degree in agricultural sciences with knowledge of product development and/or seed systems.

Core Competencies

This is a high-level specialist appointment requiring knowledge of breeding, seed systems and the market context for clonal crops (especially cassava, yam and plantain/banana) in sub-Saharan Africa.

The appointee will have:

- At least 10 years of experience in a similar position
- Private sector or government seed system knowledge and a proven ability to collaborate
- Demonstrated ability in product design, management, marketing, seed scaling and dissemination
- Ability to manage a cross-functional team as part of the product design process and the development of product profile contracts
- Demonstrated successful delivery of product management strategies and the development of a plan of multiple product pipelines across a multi-cultural and multi-country environment
- Excellent interpersonal, communication and organizational skills
- Skills and experience of markets and seed systems for clonal crops to complement the breeding and research expertise currently in place
- Experience in working with breeding programs

Duty Station: IITA Headquarters, Ibadan, Nigeria

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: The position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.

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

Please note that only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.