



Product Manager for Crop Variety Development (Ref. No: DDG-R4D/PM/CVD/R/04/20)

Background: The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) with headquarters in Ibadan, Nigeria invites applications for the post of **Product Manager for Crop Variety Development**.

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 to guide demand-led breeding. Implementing these plans will require a strong focus on step changes to improve the 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 manager 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 will ensure a continuous improvement process with a better focus of breeding product design on the needs of the market. 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:

- 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.
- Serve as a liaison between IITA, national program, or commercial breeding teams, overseeing strategic decision making in the product development and delivery process.
- Coordinate product design activities between IITA and national programs to confirm clear product concepts.
- Work to properly position products for greatest impact and uptake after release.
- Provide feedback to breeders as to how closely products will satisfy market demand.

Educational Qualifications

The candidate should have MBA or agri-business related degree with product development and marketing focus or MSc./Ph.D. degree in agricultural sciences.

Core Competencies

This is a senior level appointment requiring knowledge of breeding, seed systems and the market context for crop varieties.

The appointee will have:

- Experience in product development related to crop varieties.
- Knowledge of private and/or public sector seed systems.
- Demonstrated ability in product design, management, marketing, scaling, and dissemination.
- Ability to manage a cross-functional team as part of the product design and development process.
- Successful implementation of product management strategies.
- Excellent interpersonal, communication, collaboration and organizational skills.
- Experience in working with breeding programs.

Having the following will be advantageous:

- Skills and experience of markets and seed systems for clonal crops (e.g. cassava, yam and plantain/banana).
- Experience working in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Experience working in multi-cultural and multi-country environments.

Duty Station: IITA Headquarters, Ibadan, Nigeria

General Information: The initial appointment will be for three years. 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: 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.