



TAAT Country Engagement Officer – West Africa Coordinator

(Ref. No: DDG-P4D/TAAT/CEO/WAC/01/23)

Background: The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) invites applications for the internationally recruited position of **TAAT Country Engagement Officer – West Africa Coordinator**.

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 the One CGIAR, a global agriculture research partnership for a food-secure future. Please visit <http://www.iita.org/> for more information on IITA.

The Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB), is a major continent-wide program designed to boost agricultural productivity across the continent by rapidly delivering proven technologies to millions of farmers. The overall goal of TAAT is to double crop, livestock, and fish productivity by expanding access to productivity-increasing technologies to more than 40 million smallholder farmers across Africa. TAAT aims to generate an additional 120 million metric tons (MT) of food while lifting 130 million people out of poverty. Getting certified seeds of the most modern varieties into the hands of tens of millions of farmers is the primary objective of TAAT.

The program supports the Feed Africa Initiative of the AfDB by providing the needed, proven agricultural and food processing technologies and implementation strategies for inclusion within the Bank's loans to Regional Member Countries (RMCs). It is implemented by the Regional Technology Delivery Infrastructure (RTDI) made up of the Commodity Technology Delivery Compacts (CTDCs); the TAAT Clearinghouse (CH); the Program Management Unit (PMU), and a Program Steering Committee (PSC). The CTDC is currently composed of eleven CGIAR centers, three Advanced regional R&D African centers, National Agricultural Research and Extension System (NARES) institutions, private sector partners and NGOs. IITA is the executing agency of TAAT.

The Clearinghouse is co-funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and AfDB and is responsible for linking TAAT Compact activities with country-level programs, positioning these countries' governments as TAAT's Primary Scaling Partners. This is achieved through the provision of technical assistance in regional and country project design, ensuring the inclusion of proven technologies and robust partnership arrangements within the resulting projects.

The program is looking for a highly qualified individual to fill the vacant position of **TAAT Country Engagement Officer – West Africa Coordinator**.

Position Responsibilities

The tasks of the TAAT Country Engagement Officer – West Africa will include:

Main Responsibilities

- Lead the Clearinghouse brokerage in countries of the West African region by effectively engaging with national and regional decision-makers in the public sector and especially governments to include TAAT-vetted technologies and catalyse their scaling by integrating them in new large scale agricultural investment programs, restructured and under-performing projects.
- Participate in and contribute to AfDB-supported projects' annual reviews, supervision and mid-term evaluations, enabling the integration of TAAT-vetted technologies.
- Effectively engage and collaborate closely with AfDB, CGIAR centres, regional organizations, development partners, NARES, NGOs, private sector and aligned institutions in the West African region so as to achieve TAAT goals and objectives, and catalyse the scaling of TAAT-promoted technologies across the RMCs.
- Provide technical assistance in strengthening the Seed Systems of RMCs to deliver certified seeds of climate-resilient crop varieties or planting material of vegetatively propagated crops (VPC) in sufficient quantity and quality to farmers using market-based models.
- Build strategic partnerships with public and private sector institutions in the West Africa region and enhance their capacities to increase the production and delivery of EGS and certified seed/ planting material of VPC-improved varieties in RMCs.

Specific Responsibilities

- Participate in AfDB country missions in the West African region and provide technical inputs to recommend the inclusion of the most appropriate TAAT-vetted technologies into project appraisal reports (PARs).
- Mobilize and engage with TAAT Compacts and CGIAR experts to participate in the design and restructuring of agricultural investment projects, which involve AfDB, and regional and national decision-makers and governments, with the aim of integrating TAAT vetted technologies into Bank-supported large-scale country agricultural investment projects.
- Ensure the participation of the National Agriculture Research and Extension System (NARES), TAAT Compacts and CGIAR experts in discussions with the Ministries of Agriculture on TAAT's technical assistance to RMCs for the successful implementation of larger AfDB-funded investment projects.
- Provide technical assistance to RMCs implementing AfDB-supported loan projects for building a robust and functional national seed system to ensure the production and delivery of certified seed of TAAT-vetted climate-resilient crop varieties or planting material of VPC sustainably.
- Gain an in-depth understanding of agriculture policies and priorities regarding the agricultural development landscapes of RMCs in the West African region to inform the Clearinghouse brokerage.

- Draft specific MoUs with national and development partners to promote collaboration for the inclusion and adoption of TAAT-vetted technologies in national and regional investment projects in the West African region.
- Build strong partnerships and networking with the CGIAR, ECOWAS, CORAF, private sector, RMCs, AfDB, other regional and national development partners, and aligned institutions in the West African region to promote the scaling and widespread adoption of TAAT-vetted technologies.
- Engage TAAT Compacts and provide technical support to governments and seed sector stakeholders for developing a functional national seed system to ensure sustainable production and delivery of certified seed or planting material of TAAT-promoted varieties to farmers in RMCs of the West African region.
- Support Compacts to strengthen the capacity of NARES in early generation seed production, and engage the private sector to enhance their skills and technical knowhow in the production and delivery of high-quality certified seed or planting material of TAAT-promoted varieties.
- Participate in resource mobilization to attract funding from potential donors and development partners to catalyse the scaling of TAAT-promoted technologies for agricultural transformation in RMCs of the West African region.
- Actively contribute to the Clearinghouse (CH) reporting and progress updates.
- Work in close collaboration with AfDB Task Managers, Country Representatives, Regional Sector Managers of the West African region; Compacts, and the TAAT Project Management Unit to build effective coordination and partnership.
- Undertake any other job-related duties as may be assigned by the Head of the Clearinghouse.

Educational Qualifications and Experience

- A post-graduate degree in Agronomy, Seed Systems, or related agriculture field from a recognized University.
- At least 10 years of work experience in the seed sector serving smallholder farmers in Africa.
- Proven work experience in seed systems for vegetatively propagated crops.
- Experience with development policy, legal and institutional frameworks, as well as the technical aspects of projects.
- Working experience with AfDB-supported projects at the national level and on the African Continent is an added advantage.

Core Competencies

- Demonstrated strong analytical and communication skills and capacity to present convincingly, discuss and negotiate with high-level country officials.
- Blend analytical, observational, organizational, and networking skills.
- Good understanding of policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks around the seed sector and public and private partnerships in African countries.
- Demonstrated knowledge of seed systems, especially for vegetatively propagated crops.
- Familiarity with the policies and procedures of multilateral and bilateral institutions.
- Demonstrated commitment to making organizational and corporate decisions.
- Proven ability to operate effectively in a multicultural team environment.

- Background in the public sector and/or government engagement on the African continent.
- Good leadership and personnel management experience to manage a large team of experts based in multiple locations.
- Experience with large-scale adoption of agricultural technologies by farmers on the African continent.
- Work experience in International or National Agricultural centres on the African continent.
- Awareness and social capital and networks with key leaders and experts working in the extension and technology transfer agencies within Africa.
- Deep team-building and people relationship-building skills for a complex project.
- Fluency in both written and spoken English and French is an important requirement for this position.

Duty Station: Cotonou, Benin Republic

General information: The contract will be for an initial period of three years based on performance and availability of funding. IITA offers internationally competitive remuneration package paid in U.S. 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: 25th January 2023

IITA is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to building a diverse workforce, particularly welcoming applications from women.

While all applications will be acknowledged, please note that only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.