

# Quarterly Report

## Innovative Agricultural Research Initiative (iAGRI)

April 1, 2011 – June 30 31, 2011

The Annual Work Plan around which this report is prepared is found in the Appendix.<sup>1</sup> The reader will note that seven activity domains were listed in the Plan, but that activities associated with only three of them (highlighted) were to be addressed during the first six months of the project.

- I. Creation of the Project Coordination Structure and Process
- II. Conduct of the Needs Assessment
- III. Collaborative Research
- IV. Long-Term Graduate Degree Training
- V. Strengthening of SUA Capacity
- VI. Promotion of Tripartite SUA/U.S. University-Global South University Cooperation

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### I. Creation of the Project Coordination Structure and Process

- **Appoint Management Entity Staff at OSU** – The OSU management team was established. It includes Dr. Mark Erbaugh, who is the Project Director, Dr. David Hansen who is the Project Coordinator, Dr. Mary Ann Rose, who is the Training Coordinator, and Angie Brumfield-Hersey, who is the Budget Manager. They work as a team in backstopping project activities.
- **Project Director and Deputy Project Director Begin Work in Tanzania** – Dr. David Kraybill, OSU Agricultural Economist, travelled to Tanzania and took up temporary residence from the beginning of May to the middle of June, during which time he initiated field activities related to the project. This involved close interaction with the USAID Mission, Sokoine University of Agriculture, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives, other government agencies, and partner Feed-the-Future projects. It also involved beginning work on establishing a bank account and office presence in Tanzania. He returned to Tanzania to take up permanent residence beginning the middle July and has been at station since then.

Dr. Kraybill was joined by Dr. Isaac Minde as Deputy Project Director. Dr. Minde comes to the project through Michigan State University. Like Dr. Kraybill, Dr. Minde also made an initial visit to Tanzania during the month of July?? as a consultant to assist with the establishment of an Office and to undertake initial project activities in the field. He took up permanent residence in the field in August.

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<sup>1</sup> This report has been organized in accordance with draft Annual Work Plan submitted to the Mission for review. Although not officially approved yet, it forms the backdrop for our principal project activities.

- **Create Project Management Unit (PMU) in Tanzania** – Dr. Kraybill has established an Office at the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA). Marie Mullei, Virginia Tech, was also brought onto the team on a part-time basis to be in charge of monitoring and evaluating (M&E), including development of a Performance Management Plan (PMP). In addition, she was assigned responsibility for handling genders dimension of the project.
- **Register Project in Tanzania** – To open a bank account in Tanzania, a project must have legal standing in the country. The PMU, ME, and Office of Legal Affairs at OSU consulted with American attorney, Brooke Montgomery, in Dar es Salaam and concluded the best way to do this was for OSU to create an affiliated, non-profit entity in Ohio and register it as a foreign corporation doing business in Tanzania. The OSU Board of Trustees approved the creation of the company and documents were assembled for registration in Tanzania.
- **Develop Project Marking and Branding Strategy** – The iAGRI Marking and Branding Plan was developed by the ME and PMU and approved by the Mission’s Communications Specialist, Cory Brandt, in April.
- **Hire Local Staff for PMU** – The project proposal designated seven positions to be filled locally, including a Research, Education, an Extension Specialist, a Monitoring and Evaluation/Gender Specialist, an Accountant, an Administrative Assistant, and three drivers. These seven individuals are to be hired through Sokoine University of Agriculture, as specified in a yet-to-be signed subcontract with SUA. Hiring during the second quarter was not possible because the SUA subcontract was delayed due to the late release of funds by the Mission. As a temporary measure, Dr. Kraybill hired an administrative/logistics consultant, Merinah Mneo, in Dar es Salaam to handle administrative details, such as securing work permits, negotiating rates at hotels, obtaining price quotes on office equipment, providing backstopping when trainees take the GRE and TOELF examinations, etc.
- **Develop Ohio State University Consortium (OSUC) Structure** – The Ohio State University Consortium (OSUC) consists of several U.S. partner institutions, namely, Michigan State University, Virginia Tech, University of Florida, Tuskegee University, and Iowa State University. Together, they form the core of support for the project. In addition, Punjab Agricultural University (India) and EARTH University (Costa Rica) are secondary members of the OSUC. Other partners in China and elsewhere were listed in the original proposal and will be invited to participate in project-related activities as needed. Principal contacts have been identified at each participating institution. They will remain informed regarding project activities and how they might participate in their implementation. Communication with the members includes regular e-mail updates on project activities, communication with individual members regarding inputs needed from them, including technical assistance, conducting long-term training, etc. We anticipate that there will be a meeting called of institutional representatives to discuss their

potential contributions to the project once the needs assessment, which is currently in process, is completed.

- **Establish Sub-Contracts with SUA** – Discussions were held with SUA regarding a sub-contract to provide funds to purchase and maintain vehicles for project use as well as support for locally-hired staff, project office space on campus, graduate student support, thematic working group support, and project vehicles. It is expected that the subcontract will be finalized in the third quarter.
- **Establish Sub-Contracts with U.S. Partners** – Discussions were held with OSUC members regarding sub-contracts for activities assigned to them. These activities include long-term student training and travel by faculty members to Tanzania to support field activities.
- **Prepare Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP)** – Marie Mullei, Virginia Tech, has been contracted to prepare the PMP. She spent three weeks in Tanzania working on it and prepared a draft which is to be presented to the USAID Mission for input and approval. The iAGRI Program Performance Management Plan will also receive input from the Mission-designated M&E contractor, The Mitchell Group. The PMP focuses on major components of iAGRI, namely, (a) human and institution capacity building; (b) private sector investment in agricultural research; (c) technology development; and (d) women empowerment.
- **Implement Procedures for Gathering M&E Baseline and Performance Data** – Marie Mullei addressed baseline data gathering in her draft PMP document. Most of the baseline data will be gathering as a part of the needs assessment to be undertaken during the third quarter.

## II. Conduct of the Needs Assessment

The needs assessment, as described in the original proposal submitted to USAID, will provide basic information needed to define priority inputs to the food system of Tanzania, with a particular focus on strengthening the capacities of SUA and the National Agricultural Research System (NARS).

Michigan State University has been charged with overseeing the needs assessment for the project. Eric Crawford, MSU agricultural economist, is directing the assessment and Isaac Minde, Deputy Project Director, is handling logistics and coordination on the ground in Tanzania. The MSU team and the PMU held numerous videoconferences during the second quarter to plan the details of the needs assessment. MSU will field a team to gather data and conduct interviews in August and September.

- **Design Needs Assessment** – A workshop was held on the OSU campus in July to plan and coordinate procedures to be followed in conducting the needs assessment. Participants in the workshop included Eric Crawford from Michigan State University, members of the OSU project office led by Mark Erbaugh (Project Manager), David Kraybill (Project Director), and staff from

the OSU Center on Education and Training for employment (CETE) who specialize in needs assessments. This team completed a needs assessment plan that includes task to be performed, responsibilities for them, a timeline and expected outcomes. It assigned responsibilities for the completion of tasks to PMU members and the MSU team.

- **Review of Existing SUA Strategic Plans** – Isaac Minde, Deputy Project Director, reviewed SUA strategic planning exercises and summarized key points from them in a document, “*A Summary of SUA Corporate Strategic Plans: Formulation and Implementation.*” In this document he recommended issues needing additional study and clarification from the SUA leadership, as well as priority topics for further review, such as gender representation, governance and administration, plans to expand programs and student numbers and infrastructure. He also highlighted needs assessment topics for additional probing, such as prioritization of objectives, programs and activities and sources of funding for them.
- **Analyze Trends in Tanzania Agricultural Economy** – This is a priority activity within the needs assessment process. A staff member from MSU began this analysis during second quarter. It is anticipated that this will form a separate chapter of the final needs assessment report.
- **Describe and Evaluate Government Plans for the Agricultural Sector** – The needs assessment team began reviewing pertinent plans of the Government of Tanzania. Emphasis was given to the Agricultural Sector Development Plan (ASDP) and the Tanzania’s CAADP compact.

### III. Long-Term Graduate Degree Training

The project proposal called for long-term training to begin in Fall, 2012. However, the USAID Mission strongly encouraged iAGRI to initiate its training activities this fall, requesting that at least five students be placed in the U.S. in long-term training programs. Because of the lateness of this request and the multiple issues that need to be addressed when placing international students, the PMU and the OSU home backstopping office labored intensively to accomplish this end.

- **Create Long-Term Training Committee** – We anticipate that this committee will be formed during the coming quarter. Given the intensive nature of the last minute placement of international students in graduate degree programs in the U.S. we decided to defer on the formal structuring of this committee. It will be charged with helping us identify appropriate students for graduate training, contributing to the formulation of training policy, helping link the training program to other units working on food security in Tanzania, and advising on appropriate training activities.
- **Recruit Training Candidates** – Announcement of the iAGRI degree training opportunity for 2011 was placed in the Tanzania press in April. Twenty four applications were received, including nine from females and 16 from males.

- **Screen and Select Training Candidates** – A 2011 Training Selection Committee was created, consisting of staff members from SUA and MAFC. The committee was composed of three men and two women and was chaired by Dr. Kraybill. The committee met twice to review applications, create a short list, and conduct face-to-face interviews with the finalists. Five primary candidates and two back-up candidates were selected, including three females and four males.
- **Prepare Candidates to Take GRE and TOEFL Examinations** – Plans were made for the selected candidates to take the GRE and TOEFL examinations in Dar es Salaam in July.
- **Placement in Graduate Programs** – The OSU project team contacted OSUC member institutions to assess their interest in providing training for the graduate students identified as priority by the PMU. They were informed about the last minute nature of the placement process and asked to help expedite placement in case of interest. Applications were submitted for the five primary candidates. It was deemed important to end up with five students in degree programs, and it was also recognized that the probability was high that at least one of the primary candidates may not be able to proceed to the U.S. as planned. Therefore, applications were also submitted for the two backup candidates.

**Application was made to place candidates at the following institutions in the following areas:**

➤ Asma Bilal Gharib	University of Florida	Food and Resource Economics
➤ Martin John	Tuskegee University	Plant and Soil Science
➤ Stanley Materu	University of Florida	Ag & Biological Engineering
➤ Lilian Eliah Mpinga	University of Florida	Horticulture
➤ Frida Albinusi Nyamete	Michigan State Un.	Food Science & Technology
➤ R. Martin Gababambi	Ohio State University	Rural Sociology
➤ Erick Mvati	Ohio State University	Weed Science

- **Obtaining Visas for Training** – The ME began processing visa applications for the trainees on the Trainet system with assistance on various visa-related matters from several persons in the Mission. Visas for the trainees will be obtained during the third quarter.

### **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED**

We have encountered several unforeseen problems with regard to project implementation which have impacted our ability to meet all of the terms of the Cooperative Agreement as reflected in the first Annual Work Plan.

- (1) **Legal Standing in Tanzania** – The requirement that Tanzanian banks cannot open an account for a project without it having legal standing in the country posed a major challenge for smooth

launching of the project. By the end of the second quarter, the project was still not legally registered. Consequently, all projects expenses had to be handled on a cash basis.

- (2) Work Permit for Chief-of-Party** – Obtaining a work permit is an arduous process in Tanzania. The Project Director, Dr. Kraybill, applied for his work permit (exemption certificate) in May but by end of the second quarter still had not received it despite considerable effort on the part of the Executive Office in the Mission and the iAGRI logistics person in Dar.
- (3) Delays in receipt of full funding for Year I** – An initial obligation of \$500,000 was made for Year I with the understanding that another \$2,000,000 would become available. The preparation of sub-contracts for SUA and for OSUC partners was delayed by the fact that the full amount for Year I was not obligated in a timely fashion. Fortunately, funding did become available in time for sub-contracts to be issued before students arrived for training and individuals from Michigan State and Virginia Tech arrived to participate in project activities.
- (4) Placement of Students** – The normal cycle for placement of graduate students in programs in the U.S. is for applications to be submitted prior to the end of the calendar year for admission the following autumn. Typically, applications are then reviewed by academic programs early in the new year and notification of admission occurs in winter or spring. The decision to place at least five students occurred very late, in relation to the ordinary application cycle, and presented major challenges in admission and placement. Fortunately, with great assistance from the USAID Mission, TraiNet personnel, and admissions at our consortium members, we were able to complete placement in time for students to begin in August and September (depending on the program).

## **ACTIVITIES FOR SUCCEEDNG QUARTER**

### **I. Create Project Coordination Structure and Process – Priorities will be to:**

- (1) Hire additional needed staff for the PMU
- (2) Appoint Project Advisory Board and hold initial meeting
- (3) Continue to work on Performance Monitoring Plan
- (4) Work on gathering baseline and performance data for M&E

### **II. Needs Assessment**

- (1) Complete analysis of trends in Tanzanian agricultural economy
- (2) Complete evaluation of government plans for agricultural sector
- (3) Analyze training/research/instructional needs at Sokoine University
- (4) Analyze training needs of MAFC
- (5) Analyze linkages between SUA, MAFC and other GOT entities
- (6) Analyze SUA linkages to extension

- (7) Complete priority option paper
- (8) Hold inception and priority-setting workshop based on needs assessment
- (9) Assemble comprehensive needs assessment report

### **III. Collaborative Research**

- (1) Begin to form Thematic Research Working groups, based on needs assessment priorities
- (2) Begin to develop detailed Collaborative Research Grants (CRG) Plan
- (3) Conduct workshop related to CRG Plan
- (4) Prepare materials to call for competitive research proposals
- (5) Establish an Agricultural Policy Seminar Series at SUA (with SERA)

### **IV. Long Term Degree Training**

- (1) Create Training Committee in Tanzania
- (2) Develop Training Plan for both Long-Term and short-term Training
- (3) Begin recruiting 2012 pool of candidates for training
- (4) Begin screening and selecting candidates for training
- (5) Begin to prepare top candidates for GRE and TOEFL examinations
- (6) Oversee and monitor programs of students currently placed in degree programs

### **V. Strengthen SUA Programs**

- (1) Work on identifying technical skill gaps based on needs assessment
- (2) Work on a staff development plan for iAGRI investments
- (3) Begin to assess SUA Extension Education program
- (4) Work on integrating SAU staff and programs into national collaborative research activities