

## Role of the public sector in building innovation ecosystems for a sustainable economy

BioInnovate Africa, in partnership with The Uganda Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation held a Policy Seminar in Kampala, Uganda on March 28th 2019. *"This seminar will be an opportunity to learn cost-effective ways of accelerating innovation adoption, creating competitive products and exploring new markets. We are happy that BioInnovate Africa is using the open innovation model which we in the Ministry hope to learn from their experience"* emphasised the Minister, Hon. Dr. Elioda Tumwesigye, in his opening remarks.

The policy seminar brought together policy experts, private firms, academia, research organizations, media and partners from Uganda and abroad to deliberate on the role of the public sector in building innovation ecosystems for a sustainable economy. The seminar explored how to use open innovation to build a sustainable economy in Uganda and Eastern Africa in general. It also identified opportunities for public-sector interventions and potential linkages with BioInnovate Africa.

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Left: Participants of the high-level policy seminar representing government, private companies, academia and research institutions  
Centre: Panelists - Dr. Gudula Basaza (R & G Investments Ltd); Prof. Samuel Kyamanywa (Makerere University) and Ms. Getrude Ngabirano (East Africa Commission for Science and Technology)  
Right: Dr. Elioda Tumwesigye, Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Uganda with Prof. Diran Makinde, (BioInnovate Advisory Committee)  
Photos: MoSTI, Uganda

## Advisory Committee visits BioInnovate Africa projects

The Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) participated in site visits in for BioInnovate-funded projects in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The PAC met the different project implementing partners and discussed their work in context.



PAC members during the site visits with project teams in Makerere University, Uganda and icipe, Kenya. Photos: Prof. Måns Nilsson

The PAC also assessed implementation progress of the teams. They also had the opportunity to interact with the different BioInnovate Africa project teams and witnessed the progress they are making in developing products that relate to improved nutrition, increased agricultural productivity, control of plant, animal and human pests and diseases, management of organic waste from domestic use and industries and managing post-harvest losses.

## BioInnovate Africa to spearhead Global Bioeconomy Summit preparations in Africa

BioInnovate Africa has been identified as a key platform to spearhead the Africa region pre conferences and workshops in preparation for the Global Bioeconomy Summit 2020. Additionally, Dr Julius Ecuru, BioInnovate Africa Programme Manager, will serve on the International Advisory Council (IAC) of the Summit. This was announced during the second meeting of the IAC took place in March 2019 in Beijing, China, co-sponsored and hosted by the CAS-TWAS Centre of Excellence for Biotechnology, Institute of Microbiology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, China. One of the key resolutions from the IAC Beijing meeting was to hold pre-GBS 2020 bioeconomy symposia, conferences and workshops in each of the global regions.

### Business incubation to commercialise bioinnovations

In March 2019, researchers and scientists from the recently selected projects convened in Arusha, Tanzania for a Business Incubation workshop, organised by BioInnovate Africa in collaboration with the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST). The workshop aimed to strengthen the teams' capacities for professional business incubation using modern business development processes based on the lean startup framework used by BioInnovate Africa. The teams had the opportunity to jointly develop roadmaps for their projects to incubate business enterprises through which biobased innovations are commercialized. The participants had the opportunity to learn from a practical example of an incubated business enterprise, BIOCON, a project supported through BioInnovate Africa. The project leader, Prof. Karoli Njau and Dr. Herb Rhee, the partner from the business Incubator (Innovative Technology and Energy Centre, ITEC) shared their experiences.

Additionally, the participants visited one of the pilot treatment plants at Banana Investments Limited in Arusha which was constructed by the project team during Phase I of the BioInnovate Africa Programme (2010-2015). The plant, and other similar ones constructed in the other participating countries, are being referred to as selling entry points to acquire customers. The participants were able to relate well with a practical example of a successfully deployed biobased innovation used by agroprocess private sector to solve a challenge and the intent to develop a business enterprise to scale the technology.



Left: Team members developing project road maps  
Right: Participants visit Banana Investments Ltd

### Women scientists share their experience as BioInnovate Africa Fellows

Women's equality and empowerment is integral to all dimensions of inclusive and sustainable development especially in Africa as they are the custodians of biological resources in most of the African communities. Increasing women's involvement in bioeconomy initiatives is an important step towards an inclusive and sustainable African economy. Through the 'BioInnovate Africa Fellowship for Women Scientists', different partner organisations in Eastern Africa are currently hosting women fellows from neighbouring countries. The first three fellows, Nadege from Burundi, Diana and Zainah both from Uganda recently completed their four - month fellowship. Read more on their experiences [here](#).



*"As a female engineer from Burundi, living in Kampala, Uganda and working at Makerere University, this has been an enriching experience. With guidance from my mentors and my engineering experience, I have developed a logical framework for a research proposal for a solar water heating system to be used as a power generation system for a fruit and vegetable dryer in areas with no access to electricity". Nadege Mugisha, Burundi*



*"I was privileged to participate in the fellowship and I have loved the constant interaction with my mentor and other insect science researchers. This has been an eye-opening experience on the potential of insects as an alternative protein source for both livestock and people. This has inspired me to continue working on insects as food and feed in collaboration with my mentor and eventually pursue a PhD in insect science." Zainah Nampijja, Uganda*



*"My experience living and working in a different country and organization has been very interesting. I have had to learn to adapt to a different organizational and social culture. My fellowship work has given me exposure to different forms of fruit preservation. It has inspired me to think of business ideas in food preservation that I can implement. The next few months are going to be used to develop a PhD concept paper motivated by my experiences" Diana Asero, Uganda*

BioInnovate Africa Programme is supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and is based at the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (icipe) in Nairobi, Kenya.

