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The second biobusiness acceleration bootcamp

Supporting biological based innovation projects in six eastern Africa countries remains the core activity of BiInnovate Africa. The Programme funds 20 projects that are collaboratively implemented by scientists, businesspeople and government officers to transform biological-based ideas and inventions into commercially viable enterprises.

On 22-26 July 2019, the Programme held its second biobusiness acceleration bootcamp in Nairobi, which targeted its implementing partners for projects running for period 2019-2021. The week-long event streamlined expectations from scientists and business executives in project implementation and strengthened capacities of participating firms to commercialise new technology. The bootcamp also enabled participants to harmonise their roles and responsibilities as co-developers with a shared goal of introducing new products into the market.

Click [here](#) to read more about the second biobusiness acceleration bootcamp.



Teams discuss their business models with guidance from Ms Kanana Mwiti-Njuguna, a consultant from GrowthAfrica.

Financial training to do the right things right

In September 2019, BiInnovate Africa organized a financial management training workshop to strengthen capacities of finance and accounts officers managing the Programme's project grants. The workshop was carried out in Kenya, and in Uganda. The two workshops were attended by finance and accounts officers from the six eastern Africa countries (Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda) where the Programme is implemented. Participants had a training experience that inspired them and sharpened their financial management skills for effective project delivery.

Mr Harold Adiga, from Uganda, attended the training and said it enabled him to understand, appreciate and adhere to the recommended financial management practices and reporting of the Programme. "I now have a better understanding of good and bad grant management practices which I will apply to better manage BiInnovate Africa project grant and others that I support in my organization," he said.

Ms Veronica Gichana, from Kenya, also attended the training and said it was timely and helpful to her day-to-day grants' management work. "The facilitators were engaging and took the time to thoroughly answer the questions raised by the participants," she said.

Read more about the financial management training workshop; click [here](#) for the training held in Kenya, and [here](#) for the training held in Uganda.



Group discussions during the financial management training held in Kenya .



Mr Harold Adiga



Ms Veronica Gichana

Regional bioeconomy strategy

BiInnovate Africa is supporting the development of a regional innovation-driven bioeconomy strategy for eastern Africa. On 30 September – 1 October 2019, the Programme organized a workshop in Nairobi on building scenarios for the strategy, in collaboration with African Technology Policy Studies (ATPS) and the East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO). The participants comprised stakeholders from eastern African countries representing academia, civil society and community based organizations, industrial and commercial firms, government and policy makers. The key outcome was identification of bioeconomy priority areas informed by national and regional needs to guide the development of the strategy. The first draft of the strategy is currently under review.



Participants of the workshop on building scenarios for a regional innovation-driven bioeconomy strategy, held in Nairobi.



Romanus Opiyo (right), Research fellow, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) Africa Centre; Shira Mukiibi (second right), BiolInnovate Africa Business Development Manager; Ingrid Peterson (third right), SEI Sweden Board member; Kerstin Niblaeus (center), Chair, SEI Sweden Board; *icipe* Director General, Dr Segenet Kelemu (third left); Andreas Carlgen (second left), Vice-Chair, SEI Sweden Board; and Emmanuel Ngui (left), Communications officer, SEI Africa Centre; during a courtesy visit to *icipe* on 18th October 2019.

Courtesy visit by SEI Board, Sweden

The Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) Board, led by its Chair, Kerstin Niblaeus, Vice-Chair Andreas Carlgen, and Ingrid Peterson, and accompanied by two representatives from SEI Africa Centre, paid a courtesy visit to BiolInnovate Africa on 18 October 2019, at *icipe* Duduville Campus in Nairobi, where the Programme is based and managed.

The visiting team met with *icipe* Director General, Dr Segenet Kelemu, and had a briefing session on governance and operations of the Centre. The team toured BiolInnovate Africa office and familiarized with the support the Programme gives to scientists and innovators in eastern Africa region to link biological based research ideas and technologies to business and the market. They also toured various research and innovation activities at the Centre.

SEI Africa Centre is an implementing partner organization of BiolInnovate Africa's project that is [developing an innovation-led bioeconomy strategy for eastern Africa](#).

The second women scientists fellowship begins

Following a successful completion of the first BiolInnovate Africa Women Scientists Fellowship initiative, the Programme is pleased to announce commencement of its second women fellowship initiative. A total of 13 fellows were selected for the second cohort which runs from October 2019 to September 2020. The fellows work with mentors in the different project implementing partner organisations supported by the Programme, outside their country, for four to six months. During this period, fellows gain experience and establish networks to advance their skills, innovation capacity and overall career progression.

Two of the selected fellows share their anticipation about the fellowship below:



Ms Diana Namanyanja

"My name is Diana Namanyanja, from Uganda, and I am an entomologist by profession. I have been posted to *icipe* in Nairobi, Kenya, where I am undertaking my fellowship research on product development from edible grasshopper (*Ruspolia differens*). I hope to gain new knowledge and skills on how to be innovative with research products,

specifically on insect science for food and feed. Coming from a country where entomophagy is real, especially with the grasshopper, new knowledge on their utilization for commercial will be of great gains."



Ms Fonda Jane Awuor

"My name is Fonda Jane Awuor, from Kenya, a socio-economist by profession. I am based at the East Africa Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO) in Kigali, Rwanda, where I am undertaking my fellowship in contributing to the development of a Bioeconomy Strategy for eastern Africa. I hope to equip myself with skills to enable my expansion of

biobased business opportunities for economic empowerment of vulnerable groups including women and youths."

Sixth Programme Advisory Committee meeting

The 6th BiolInnovate Africa Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting was held in Bujumbura, Burundi, on 7 – 8 November 2019. The meeting was preceded by a high-level policy seminar on the role of the public sector in building innovation ecosystems for a sustainable economy, that was jointly organized by the University of Burundi and the Burundian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. A key recommendation from the seminar was the need for enhanced collaboration between universities, industry and government and for greater regional engagement.

After the seminar, the PAC participated in a ground-breaking event for the construction of a factory that will supply eastern Africa region with value-added malaria repellent products made from plant extracts. The event was organized by implementing partner organizations for the Programme's project on [Plant Extracts to prevent Malaria in eastern Africa](#). The PAC interacted with the project implementing team and witnessed the progress they are making in developing value-added malaria repellent products. The PAC also paid a courtesy visit to the Minister for Higher Education and Scientific Research in Burundi, Hon. Prof Gaspard Banyankimbona, and discussed ways to strengthen scientific cooperation with Burundi.



Pictured above: Dr Ir Théodomir Rishirumuhirwa, Agrobiotech Burundi Director General, gives a keynote address on the role of universities, public sector science-based institutions and private businesses in fostering the growth of bio-based enterprises, at the BiolInnovate Africa high-level policy seminar held in Bujumbura, Burundi.

The PAC pictured with other network partners during ground-breaking event for the construction of a factory for value-added malaria repellent products.



Dr Ignace Gatere, Principal, College of Science and Technology, University of Rwanda, and member of BiInnovate Africa Programme Advisory Committee, gives a keynote address on the development context of innovation in eastern Africa, at a workshop held by the Programme in Zanzibar, Tanzania.



Innovation in the Development Context of eastern Africa

On 27– 29 November 2019, BiInnovate Africa convened a workshop on Innovation in the Development Context of Eastern Africa, in Zanzibar, Tanzania, to identify and address bottlenecks to innovation in the region.

The forum brought together project leaders of 20 initiatives currently being funded by the Programme, and a variety of experts, to map out strategies for strengthening innovation ecosystems for moving biological based ideas and inventions to market.

Key outcomes of the workshop include: collaborative partnerships strengthened among project team members; consensus on matrices for measuring the development outcomes of innovations supported through BiInnovate Africa; and agreements models for managing intellectual property and revenue sharing for innovative products being developed through the programme.

Pictured left: Participants of BiInnovate Africa regional workshop on Innovation in the Development Context of eastern Africa, held in Zanzibar, Tanzania, that comprised of 20 project leaders of initiatives currently funded by the Programme, a variety of experts who made presentations at the workshop, and *icipe* staff who manage the Programme.

Success of the quarter!

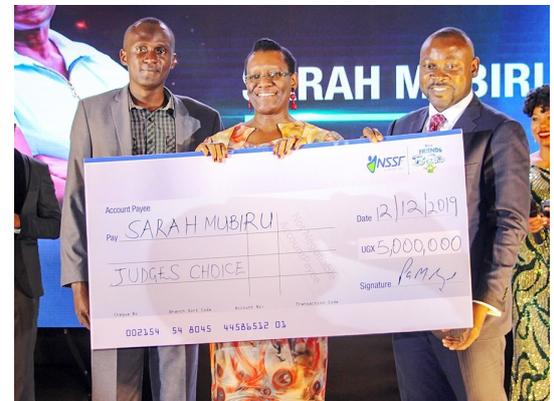
BiInnovate Africa project receives award in support of value addition for honey

On 12 December 2019, Dr Sarah Mubiru was awarded UGX 5,000,000 (USD 1,350), during the grand finale of a television show aired in Uganda dubbed, 'National Social Security Fund (NSSF) Friends with Benefits (FWB) Season 3', also referred to as NSSFFWB3.

Dr Mubiru is a BiInnovate Africa implementing partner for a project that is addressing value addition of honey by [producing high-quality Aroma Honey toffees](#) as a healthier option for the population in eastern Africa. She is the Founder and Managing Director of Aroma Honey Limited, located in Kampala, Uganda, which is a start-up business that produces the Aroma Honey toffees.

Dr Mubiru said she is pleased about the award and will use it to facilitate an ongoing construction of the Aroma Honey Toffee factory. "I won the 'Judges Choice' award mainly based on the investment I made to partly use my retirement funds to start the Aroma Honey Limited. The business was perceived by the judges of the show, as one with great impact and potential for significant growth," said Dr Mubiru.

The NSSFFWB3 show is a financial literacy campaign targeting citizens of Uganda. The show showcases people who have received their retirement funds from NSSF and have made prudent financial and investment ventures that are transforming their lives and the community around them.



Dr Sarah Mubiru receives award in support of value addition for honey, from the judge of the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) Friends with Benefits (FWB) Season 3 television show.

In memoriam

BiInnovate Africa is deeply saddened to have lost its Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) member, Prof Diran Makinde, who passed away on 1 August 2019. Prof Makinde was a committed

and reliable member of the PAC and will be remembered not only for his good scientific advice, but also a sense of humour that always lightened up PAC meetings.

May he rest in peace.

Pictured right: The late Prof Diran Makinde

