

IPM Innovation Lab Trip Report

Names of the travelers: R. Muniappan, Director, IPM IL, Virginia Tech; Brhane Gebrekidan, IPM IL Africa Manager

Countries Visited: Ethiopia and Malawi

Duration of travel: April 15th to 24th, 2015

Sites Visited: *Ethiopia:* ILRI; *Malawi:* ICRISAT Center, LUANAR Bunda campus

Description

April 15: Muniappan left Blacksburg on 15th morning and reached Addis Ababa on 16th morning. Prepared response to the questions posed by the Ethiopia mission to the proposal submitted for the RFA-663-15-000004.

April 17: Muniappan submitted the response to the RFA to the mission.

8.30am – Brhane Gebrekidan and Muniappan went to the headquarters of the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) where the USAID Ethiopia Mission meetings on the activities of the Innovation Labs were reviewed. The meeting was opened by Gary Linden (Coordinator of Central and Bilateral Funded Projects, USAID Ethiopia) followed by presentations by Adam Silagyi and Tracy Powell on overview of FtF investments in Ethiopia. There were three case study presentations: Chickpea Innovation Lab by Doug Cook (UC Davis), Africa Rising (Ethiopia) by Kindu Mekonnen, and Digital Green (Ethiopia) by Lakshmi Iyer.

The meeting was attended by 50 participants (45 men: 5 women).

In the afternoon, representatives of the Innovation Labs met with Adam Silagyi and Tracy Powell and briefed them of different activities carried out by Innovation Labs (ILs) in Ethiopia. There are eleven ILs operating in Ethiopia, with the vast majority of them working with the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR). The desirability of developing an effective coordination mechanism involving the Mission, the ILs, and EIAR as well as other local partners was emphasized.

April 18: Saturday: Muniappan worked on various reports.

April 19: Muniappan and Gebrekidan traveled from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to Lilongwe, Malawi.

April 20 - 22: We attended the Innovation Labs meeting at the Sunbird Capital Hotel, Lilongwe. ILs working in Eastern and Southern Africa attended. Representatives from USAID Washington and Missions from Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, and Ethiopia participated. The opening speeches were made by Rob Bertram (USAID, Chief Scientist), Virginia Palmer (US Ambassador to Malawi), and Allan Chiyembekeza (Malawi Minister of Agriculture). Mission representatives briefly introduced their Missions and their respective activities. The ILs presented highlights of their activities. Muniappan presented “Highlights of IPM Innovation Lab” on the 21st.

The meetings from April 20th to 23rd were attended by 100 participants (75 men: 25 women).

On April 22, the IL Council met and discussed issues of common interest, including organizational and operational matters. In the afternoon a joint meeting between the IL Council and USAID representatives was held and consensus reached on how to work together more effectively.

April 23: 8.00 am: We went on a field trip and visited demonstration fields of groundnut and an orange-fleshed sweet potato in Chibade village, Feed the Future's Malawi Integrating Nutrition in Value Chain. Then we visited the Umodzi Care Group who presented on energy saving stoves, backyard gardening, using sweet potato and other nutritious food items in their cooking.

Later in the morning we visited Chitedze Research Station (the primary Agricultural Research Station of Malawi) and observed research plots of maize, sorghum, pigeon pea, chickpea and groundnut.

In the afternoon, we visited Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) Bunda Campus and visited seed processing laboratory and Bt cotton confined trial facility which is tightly fenced and under very strict biosafety regulations Malawi does not grow any Bt cotton yet.

April 24: We left Lilongwe early in the afternoon. Gebrekidan reached Addis Ababa early evening on the same day, and Muniappan reached Blacksburg on 25th.