



September 16, 2015

Alfonso Lenhardt  
Acting Administrator  
US Agency for International Development  
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20523

Dear Ambassador Lenhardt:

I am writing to you on behalf of the USAID Board for International Food and Agricultural Development to share a report stemming from a BIFAD familiarization visit to the Ohio State University led iAGRI project<sup>1</sup> at Sokoine Agricultural University in Morogoro, Tanzania. This project is funded by the USAID Tanzania Mission under the Feed the Future Initiative. In addition to myself, the BIFAD delegation included Montague Demment, Vice President of International Programs at the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities, and Susan Owens, USAID Designated Federal Officer for BIFAD.

During a several day visit to iAGRI, the team explored the university-to-university partnership model that is integral to the iAGRI project. We were impressed by the approach that Ohio State and US partners have taken in their engagement with Sokoine at all levels. The basic conceptual framework for this approach is that interventions both at the formal and informal levels will yield the highest possible returns in institutional performance. It is through functional, effective institutions that the human capital for sustained development will occur. This premise is central to the iAGRI approach. Though the project is at its mid-point, we see positive results emerging in terms of faculty development, curricular improvement, and student engagement and growth.

In our partner Feed the Future countries, tertiary agricultural education institutions must be able to deliver the skills demanded by a rapidly evolving agricultural sector. Progress in primary education alone is not enough to support and sustain the kind of modernization needed to achieve rapid sustained agricultural growth and poverty reduction. Development in the agricultural sector will be driven mainly by people with professional skills, extensive higher-level knowledge, and enhanced ability to adapt and respond to change. Investments

<sup>1</sup> IAGRI is led by Ohio State in a consortium of Michigan State, Iowa State, Virginia Tech, University of Florida and Tuskegee Universities partnering with Sokoine University, the Tanzanian Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives, and RUFORUM (representing 46 African universities in 22 countries).

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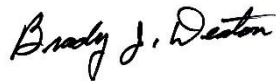
**Morgan C. Fowler**  
Special Advisor  
Global Crop Diversity Trust  
Rhinebeck, NY

by USAID Missions in producing a skilled workforce—trained at tertiary agricultural education institutions (universities but also vocational and technical schools)—will be vital to achieving sustainability of our Feed the Future investments overall, yet there is only a small handful of USAID Missions that are currently prioritizing these kinds of systemic reforms in tertiary agricultural education systems. We believe that support for agricultural tertiary educations should be more strongly encouraged and incentivized.

US university partnerships with partner country tertiary educational institutions are critical to agricultural sector growth in our Feed the Future partner countries. We urge you to consider both an extension to the iAGRI project, and replication of this project in other countries and regions. We are happy to meet with you to discuss this topic at your convenience.

I wish you the very best and look forward to meeting with you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brady J. Deaton". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Brady J. Deaton  
Chair, BIFAD

cc: BIFAD Board Members  
Susan Owens  
Montague Demment