

***BioCassava Plus* Product Development Manager
Kenya
Job Description**

BioCassava Plus is a multidisciplinary team of scientists funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation charged with the objective to develop biofortified cassava that provides complete nutrition. Over two hundred and fifty million Africans rely on the starchy root crop cassava (*Manihot esculenta*) as their staple food. Cassava roots, however, have the lowest protein:energy ratio of all the world's major staple crops. A typical cassava-based diet provides less than 30% of the minimum daily requirement for protein and only 10-20% of the required amounts of iron, zinc, vitamin A and vitamin E. *BioCassava Plus* scientists employ modern biotechnologies, including transgenic approaches to develop more nutritious cassava. Effective delivery of the biofortified cassava will be facilitated by linking optimal nutritional traits with improved post-harvest durability of the storage roots, elimination of toxic cyanogenic glycosides, and elevated resistance to viral disease; characteristics required to provide ample amounts of foodstuffs and incentives for farmers to adopt and sustain use of cassava cultivars developed within *BioCassava Plus*. Currently, proof-of-concept for target levels of vitamin A and E, iron, zinc, virus resistance, acyanogenesis and extended shelf life has been achieved.

At this juncture the *BioCassava Plus* Program is embarking on programs to survey regional cassava biodiversity and local farmer preferences in our primary target countries of Nigeria and Kenya. In order to assess the potential impact of biofortified cassava on the nutrition and health of local consumers, it is necessary to obtain baseline nutritional information on local cassava cultivars and on the nutritional status of local cassava consumers. This information will be used to set standards for the development and field trial testing of improved, transgenic cassava. In collaboration with our in-country partner, KARI, *BioCassava Plus* will identify and hire an in-country product development manager who will manage and facilitate the aforementioned tasks. In addition, the product development manager will assist the *BioCassava Plus* team members at KARI in obtaining proper field trial permits, in the management of the field trials, and in the collection and analysis of field trial and nutritional data.

The product development manager will likely be located at KARI and will report directly to the *BioCassava Plus* Program Development Manager located at the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center in St. Louis, MO, USA.

More specifically, the Nigerian Product Development Manager will be responsible for the effective implementation of all in-country activities and will work in close collaboration with local co-Principal Investigators (Co-PI). The local Co-PI and the Product Development Manager will serve as co-directors of the projects in-country, but the manager will conduct the day-to-day operations on a full-time basis. The product development manager will also take the lead in the following important areas:

Introduction of Improved Cassava:

- Management and support for all *BioCassava Plus* activities in-country.
- Represent the project at regional events.
- Interface with local government officials.
- Take a lead role in defining and implementing strategies to reach the project's milestones and goals.

Field Trial Permits:

- With the support of the regulatory team, the principle investigator (PI), and the Program oversight Committee (POC), the Product Development Manager will take the lead in pursuing and securing regulatory approvals from in-country authorities for confined field trials (CFT) of transgenic cassava.
- Collaborate with *BioCassava Plus* consortium members to develop strategies and timelines for the successful acquisition of permits.
- Attention to all activities required to build understanding and confidence for the project, including visits, meetings, discussions, follow-up responses, and documents.

Field Trial Preparation and Implementation:

- In collaboration with partner institutions, the Product Development Manager will ensure that the necessary infrastructure (i.e. Biosafely level II screenhouses and CFT sites that meet local biosafety requirements) is in place.
- Provide planning, procurement and financial management support to the scientific teams implementing the trials at KARI.
- The Product Development Manager will oversee the upgrade and expansion of existing facilities at KARI.

Local Cultivar Assessment:

- Organize a participatory assessment to identify the local farmer-preferred cultivars of cassava that are most widely grown and therefore the best candidates for nutritional enhancement.
- Pursue the involvement of experts from local universities in the assessment activities.
- Insure close coordination with the nutritional study team lead by Dr. Mark Manary.

Nutritional Impact Assessment:

- Support and coordinate with the nutritional assessment team to evaluate the anticipated health benefits of nutrient-enhanced cassava.
- Coordinate the study of local cultivars with the assessment of their nutritional qualities and consumption patterns.

Assessment of Distribution Options for Improved Planting Materials:

- Drawing on the expertise from local universities and KARI, the Product Development Manager will organize and implement studies of existing systems to distribute planting materials for improve varieties of cassava.

Support for Increased African Scientific Engagement:

- Day-to-day follow-up with the in-country PI to identify potential candidates for scientific trainees.
- Support the candidates in all pre-training, training and post-training activities, i.e. assistance in registration at local universities, provision of supplies and small equipment, and guidance to ensure effective completion of duties.
- Identification of needed equipment.
- Assist in planning the remodeling of facilities as required for the performance of cassava biotechnology in local institutions.

Qualifications and Experience

- MSc degree in an agriculturally relevant discipline.
- Minimum of 5 years experience in commercial development of agricultural products.
- Experience leading research, product development and project teams.
- Ability to dialogue with scientists and lay persons on a broad variety of plant/agricultural biotechnology genetic modifications of crops topics, as well as issues related to the biosafety and regulation of genetically modified crops.
- Exceptional written and oral communication skills, including culturally sensitive communication with broad and diverse audiences.
- Willing to relocate to Kenya.

Please submit by email a resume and the names and contact information (email addresses) for three references to;

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We anticipate filling the position by July 1, 2008.