



SOILS4LIBERIA PROJECT

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NEWSLETTER

Edition 2

IITA and MATE Boost Expertise in Soil Mapping and Data Collection in Liberia



The European Union-funded Soils4Liberia Project officially launched the second phase of its field campaign-training workshop, which took place from April 16 to 22, 2026, at the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) in Suakoko, Bong County. This phase marked a critical step in strengthening Liberia's soil data collection systems and advancing evidence-based agricultural planning and decision-making nationwide.

Organized by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and facilitated by the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences (MATE), the training brought together technical experts, researchers, and practitioners from key national institutions, including CARI, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the University of Liberia. The workshop equipped participants with the tools and knowledge needed for the conduct of the nationwide soil inventory and mapping activities.

Setting the tone for the training, the opening session emphasized collaboration, shared expertise, and the collective responsibility of stakeholders in achieving the project's objectives. Delivering an overview of the project, Soil Scientist Dr. Samuel Mesele highlighted the implementation plan and underscored the importance of the training in equipping field teams with the skills to understand soil formation, accurately describe soil profiles, and apply standardized classification systems.



In his opening remarks, CARI Director General Dr. Arthur Karnuah stressed the urgent need to strengthen Liberia's agricultural data systems. He noted that the country's agricultural transformation depends on reliable, field-based data and encouraged participants to approach the training with dedication and commitment.

The technical sessions were being led by MATE scientists Dr. Csorba Ádám and Dr. Gelsleichter Yuri Andrei, who provided both theoretical and practical insights aligned with international best practices. Each day concludes with interactive feedback sessions, allowing participants to reflect, engage, and strengthen their understanding.

The successful completion of this training signaled a transition from planning to full-scale field implementation. Through sustained collaboration and capacity building, IITA-CGIAR and its partners are contributing to Liberia's agricultural transformation by laying the groundwork for a resilient, data-driven system capable of addressing the country's food security and development needs.



Strengthening Liberia's Food Systems: The Critical Link Between Seed and Soil

Liberia continues to face a significant agricultural challenge, spending nearly US\$200 million annually on rice imports as domestic production and productivity are not at scale. This gap underscores a deeper systemic issue.

For decades, farmers have relied on recycled, low-quality seeds while cultivating their farmlands without access to reliable data and information on sustainable soil and land management practices. The results have been limited yields, reduced incomes, and constrained resilience across farming communities.

Addressing this challenge requires a holistic approach. Improved seed and soil resources are key to agricultural and food systems transformation in Liberia. The relationship between seed and soil is inseparable: even the highest-quality seed cannot perform optimally in degraded soil, just as fertile soil cannot reach its full potential without improved, certified planting materials.

Access to improved seeds, for example rice varieties with shorter-duration, offer promising opportunities,



A. Mesele, and Dr. Michael Edet, participated in the Roundtable event, reflecting the growing alignment between seed and soil systems development in Liberia.



The message emerging from these engagements is clear: investing in seed systems, while critical, is not sufficient on its own. Sustainable agricultural growth requires integrated investments in both seed and soil systems.

including multiple harvests annually, increase food availability and farmers' income. However, maximizing these benefits depends on a clear understanding of soil health, fertility, and suitability. Integrating improved seed systems with reliable soil data and information is therefore essential to increasing productivity, enhancing farmer incomes, and strengthening national food security.

Liberia's path to food security and agricultural resilience lies in this integrated approach, ensuring that what is planted is improved, and the soil in which it grows is well understood and sustainably managed.

These issues were central to discussions at the Liberia Seed Sector Investment Roundtable held in Monrovia on April 30, 2026. The event brought together key stakeholders committed to advancing Liberia's agricultural agenda.

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) Liberia Country Office staff from the Seeds4Liberia and Soils4Liberia initiatives, including Dr. Shiferaw Abebe Dakka, Dr. Samuel

IITA Launches Soils4Liberia Field Campaign and Handover Field Materials at CARI

Arthur Bob Karnuah highlighted the national importance of generating reliable soil data to guide policy and boost productivity.



The launch also featured a practical soil sampling exercise, signaling the transition from training to full field implementation.

The Soils4Liberia Project aims to strengthen Liberia's soil information system, enabling better decisions for farmers, policymakers, and partners to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability.

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA-CGIAR) has launched the Soils4Liberia field campaign at the Central Agricultural Research Institute (CARI) in Suakoko, marking a key step toward improving soil data to inform agricultural planning and decision-making in Liberia.

Soils4Liberia Holds First Steering Committee Meeting and EU Delegation Visits UL Lab



The Soils4Liberia Project held its first Steering Committee Meeting on April 29, 2026, at the Ministry of Agriculture, bringing together national and international partners to strengthen coordination and oversight.

Held on April 22, 2026, the event brought together stakeholders, experts, and trained field campaign surveyors. IITA also handed over essential field campaign equipment, tools, and materials, including motorbikes, tablets, soil augers, and soil sampling rings, to support nationwide soil inventory and mapping exercises. CARI will lead the field implementation, with technical support from IITA.

Chaired by Agriculture Minister Dr. J. Alexander Nuetah, the meeting reviewed project progress and the 2026 work plan, presented by Project Manager Dr. Shiferaw Abebe Dakka. Partners reaffirmed their commitment to advancing sustainable soil management in Liberia.

Following the meeting, stakeholders visited the University of Liberia's Soil Laboratory in Fendell, where ongoing efforts to strengthen national laboratory capacities for the analysis of field-collected soil samples, were showcased.

Project Manager Dr. Shiferaw Abebe Dakka emphasized accountability in using the tools, while CARI Director General Dr.