

# The Africa Biosciences Challenge Fund Program



**Wellington Ekaya**  
ILRI Institute Planning Meeting  
4-7 October 2016

# What the ABCF Program is responding to



- **Needs of NARS to build a critical mass of skilled scientists undertaking bioscience research for agricultural development**
- **Needs of NARS to effectively leverage advances in biosciences and biotechnology for agricultural development**
- **The weak capacity (in relevant disciplines and with skills) to develop and assess technologies**
- **Weak and ineffective local and international links and partnerships**
- **The lack of well equipped laboratory facilities with adequate and sustainable financial resources**

# Who articulates these issues?



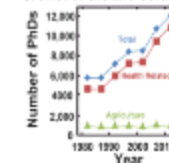
## Opinion: The Planet Needs More Plant Scientists

Academia is not producing sufficient PhDs in the plant sciences to solve the crop production challenges facing a rapidly growing population.

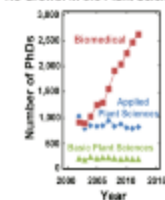
By Alan N. Jones | October 1, 2014

### TheScientist

Growth of the Life Sciences



No Growth in the Plant Sciences



BecA-ILRI Hub  
Business Plan 2013 - 2018

May 2013

Building scientists for Africa's development  
Kujiteka umuho w'ubwiza buri umuho w'ubwiza  
mbukuranye ibikorwa by'ubwiza mu bukorwa by'ubwiza



...and many more

# ABCF Program Objectives



- Strengthen capacity of individuals and institutions to harness the latest biosciences technologies for research for development to improve agriculture in Africa
- Support African scientists efforts to lead and sustain biosciences research for development in Africa
- Promote access to world-class research and training facilities at the BecA–ILRI Hub
- Mobilize capacities in African NARS and beyond for joint actions geared toward improving agriculture in Africa

# ABCF Program Components



1. **Research fellowships – *hosting and accelerating NARS-led research***
2. **Training workshops - Strengthening skills and knowledge of NARS researchers for improved response to national demands**
3. **Catalysing linkages and partnership – broker and magnet**

# 4. Institutional Capacity Building: *Gulu University*



## **Starting 2009:**

- Laboratory design & proposal development (**2009**)
- Lab set up and equipment installation, commissioning (**2014**), technical training and BecA annual workshops

## **Achievements:**

Grants: BMGF, Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM), Seeding lab Program

**Collaborations:** Gent University, Belgium; Osaka University, Japan; Yale University, USA

**Visiting scientists:** London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

# Extended BecA-ILRI Hub Faculty



**Charles Masembe**  
*MUK, Uganda*



**Sagadevan Mundree**  
*QUT, Australia*



**Sekhar Udaya**  
*Bioforsk, Norway*



**Erik Bongcam**  
*SLU, Sweden*



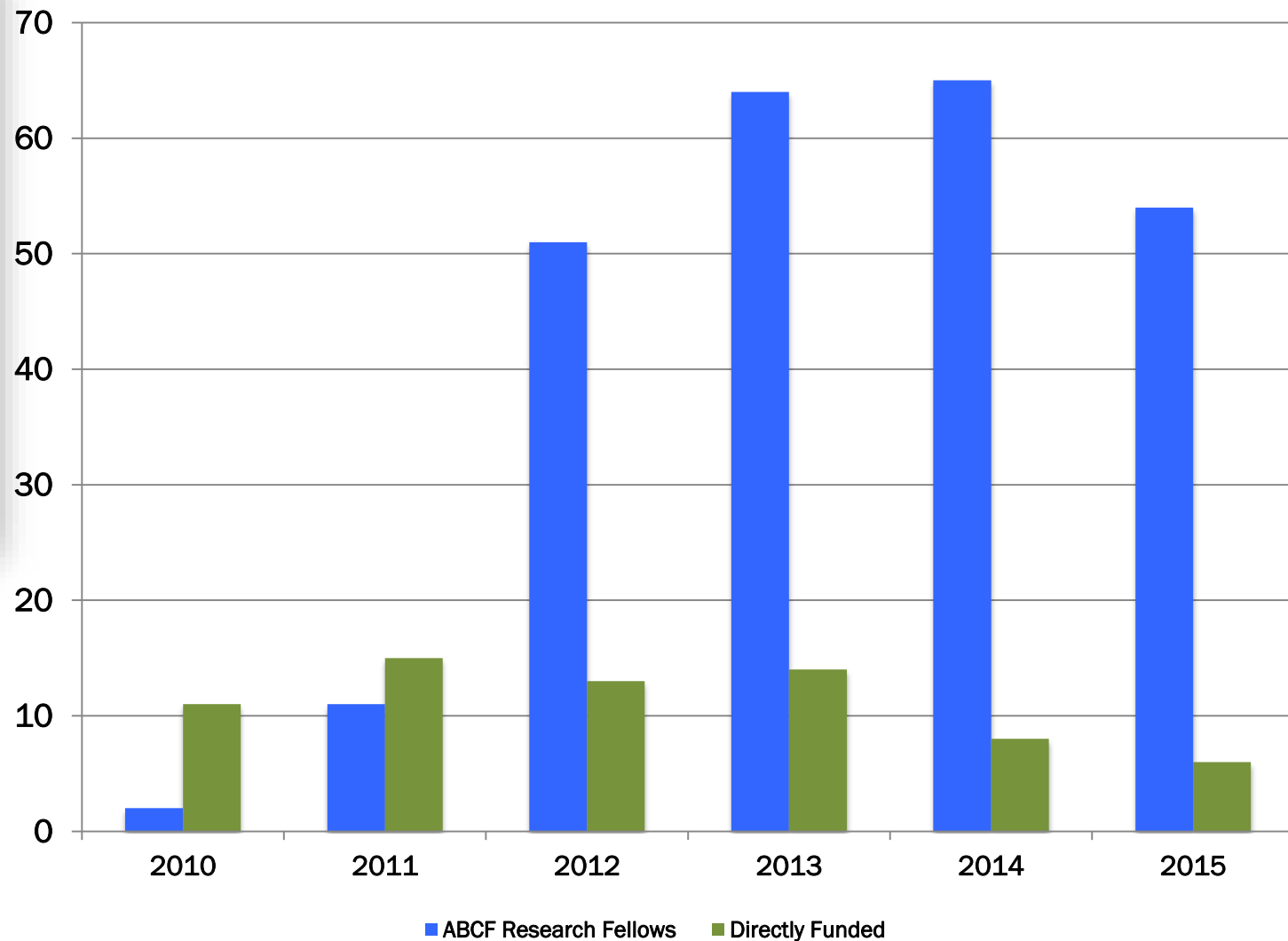
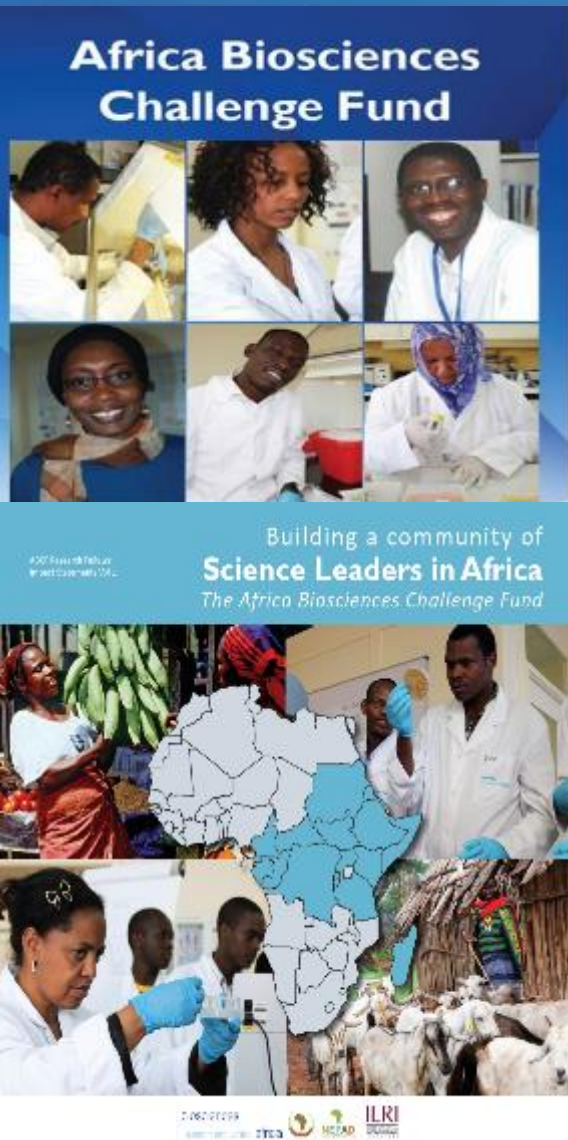
**Rebecca Nelson**  
*Cornell, USA*



**Richard Oduor**  
*Kenyatta University, Kenya*



# Trend in numbers of research fellows





# 2016 Research Fellows

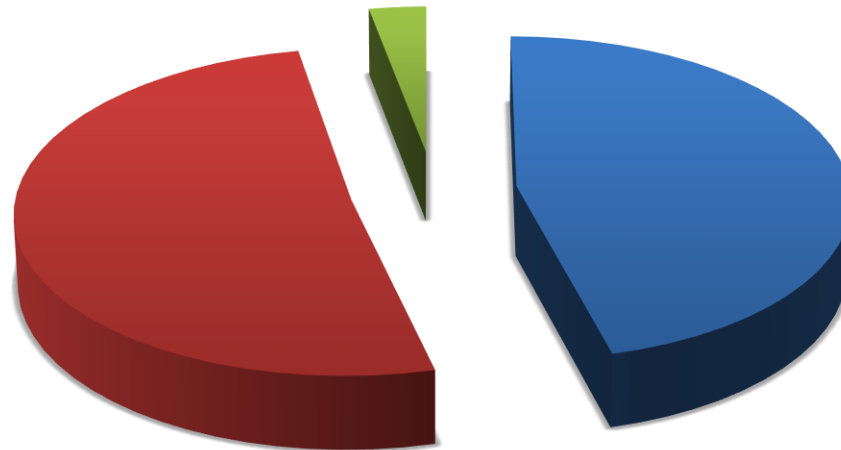


**Currently on the bench = 26**

**Incoming Oct to Dec = 25**

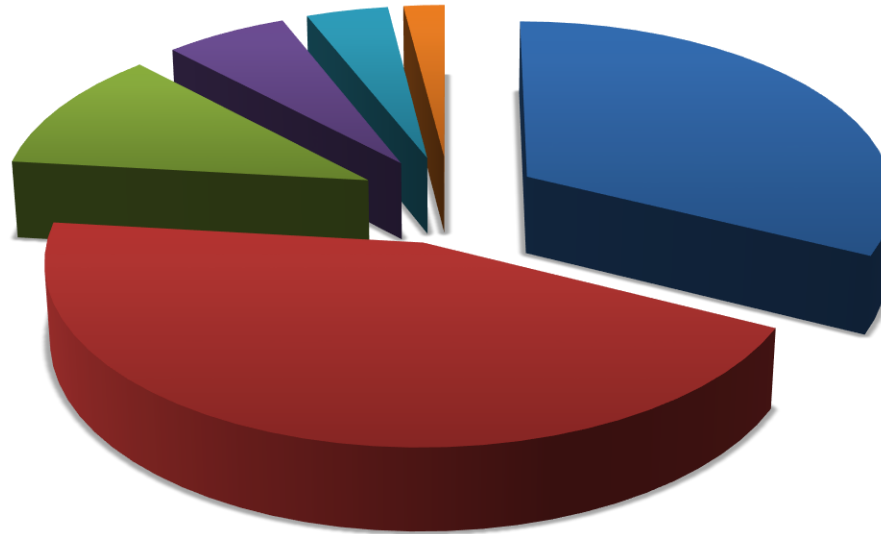
**Projected total for 2016 = 51**

# Where the research fellows come from



- National Research Institutes and Ministries (46%)
- Universities (51%)
- Others (private sector, CG...)  
(3%)

# Contribution of ABCF projects to ILRI and BecA-ILRI Hub Mission



■ Livestock Research / Improvement (32%)

■ Crops Research / Improvement (44%)

■ Food Safety and Nutrition (11%)

■ Under-utilized Species (6%)

■ Climate Change (4%)

■ Others (e.g. Medicinal Plants, Bush Meat, Bees...)(2%)



# Very strong endorsement by stakeholders of the ABCF

Figure 13: Performance of the BecA-ILRI Hub against its mission

94%

...of all stakeholders believe that BecA-ILRI promotes access to world-class research and training facilities

96%

...of all stakeholders believe that BecA-ILRI build capacity of individuals and institutions to harness the latest biosciences technologies to improve Agriculture in Africa

91%

...of all stakeholders believe that BecA-ILRI promotes the development of cutting edge research into applicable solutions for addressing food security and quality issues in Africa

*"The BecA-ILRI Hub facilities are like a laboratory in Europe but put in Africa" – ABCF Alumni*

*"The technical platform [provided by the BecA-ILRI Hub] was very useful; I was going to do research in France but it wasn't affordable. The ABCF provided both financial and technical support like lab materials and mentorship. I was doing things I would never have been able to do in Cameroon." – ABCF Alumni*

# Programme Growth/Scale out strategy

BecA-ILRI Hub Alumni have a central role to play

□ Catalyzing and facilitating CoP formation on identified themes

- *Local chicken genetics/improvement:  
(Cameroon, Ghana, CAR, DRC...)*
- *Goat genetics (Ethiopia, Cameroon,  
Tanzania, Kenya...)*

□ PAPA

# Partnerships



...and many more

# *Better capacity, better science, better livestock, better lives*



**BUILDING SCIENCE  
LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA**

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biosciences  
eastern and central africa

**ILRI**  
INTERNATIONAL  
LIVESTOCK RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE



# Thank you

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***Mobilizing biosciences for Africa's development***

*<http://hub.africabiosciences.org>*

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