

RRIN TABLOID

LATEST

Vol. 3. Issue 11 Nov., 2024



Historical Milestone: ASURI-RRIN Branch Hosts Innovative Strategy Retreat

The **ASURI-RRIN Branch** held its 1st edition of Innovative Strategy Retreat on the 13th November, 2024, at RRIN conference hall. The programme which kicked off at 11 am, featured presentations by Heads of the Non-Technical Departments and Units in the Institute.

Mr. V.O. Ilumah, Director/Head of the Administration Department – Administration Ethics for Research Scientists in a Public Sector".

Mr. A.O. Iyalekhuosa, Head, Finance and Accounts – "Nitty-Gritty of Finance and Accounts to Research and Development".

Mr. F.A. Ojuloge, Head, Procurement Unit – "Connectivity of Research Proposal Preparation and Procurement".

Mrs. A.N. Anusike, Head, Internal Audit Unit – "Audit Importance to Research and Development in the Public Sector"

Dr. P. Ogwuche, Head, Security – "Emerging Security Challenges in RRIN"

Dr. (Mrs.) Esohe Ehis-Iyoha – Gender Issues

Dr. T. U. Esekade – Advancing Agriculture: The vital role of research scientists in sustainable development – RRIN in focus

In his opening remarks, the **ASURI-RRIN Branch** Chairman, Dr. Joe Ogbebor, warmly welcomed Research Officers and guests to the event. He highlighted the retreat's objective: To chart a new course for RRIN through research re-engineering, innovative ideas, and tangible development. Dr. Ogbebor expressed the Union's aspiration for the next 50 years, envisioning practical innovations, adoption of modern technological tools, collaboration between academic and non-academic staff, enhanced teamwork, value addition, and collective determination to propel RRIN to greater heights.



Dr. J.O. Ogbebor giving his opening remarks

The Executive Director/CEO of RRIN, Dr. L. N. Dongo, represented by the Director and Head of Research Support Services Department, Dr. Fredrick Akpobome, commended ASURI for organizing the retreat. In her address, she acknowledged the aptness of the retreat's theme and applauded RRIN scientists for their readiness to embrace genuine change. She urged them to move beyond the stagnating tendencies of civil service culture, align with the renewed hope of the current administration, and adopt innovative approaches to their work. Dr. Akpobome also stressed the importance of continuous improvement in research activities and encouraged the research scientists to organise similar retreats in the future.



Dr. A.F. Akpobome representing the Director/CEO

In his presentation, Mr. V.O. Ilumah defined the concept of Ethics as being derived from Philosophy and is the ability to separate right conduct from wrong conduct, and setting a benchmark of behaviour or attitude, which Staff should adopt in the Institute.



Mr. V.O. Ilumah during his presentation
He said the Research Officers are the drivers of the Institute and their responsibilities are to be honest,

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accountable, courteous and respectful in discharging their duties, stressing that funds diversion and disloyalty are unethical. Mr. F.A. Ojuloge in his presentation, highlighted the Public Procurement Act 2007, its scope of application, the nine essential steps in public procurement and the connectivity between research proposal preparation and procurement.



Mr. F.A. Ojuloge during his presentation

Mr. W. Efoghe, representing the Head, Finance and Accounts, said Finance is the live wire of any organization and that the Department looks at the appropriate and available funds with regards to research and other activities in the Institute. These, he said must align with the budget of the Institute. Their function entails forecasting, preparing of capital budget (which covers research funds), personnel, overhead and contingency budgets.



Mr. W. Efoghe during his presentation

Mrs. B. Akinyele, representing the Head, Internal Audit, educated the research scientists on what Imprests are, the different types, how Imprests can be applied for and retired.

Dr. P. Ogwuche, the Head, Security and Servicem, outlined the emerging security challenges in the Institute to include dearth of adequate Personnel and training for the present Security Personnel.

Dr. E. Ehis-Iyoha of the Gender Unit outlined the objective of the Unit to include an Integration of the current reflection on gender and development issues; to Increase the number of project components that benefits men and women equitably according to their specific need; Establish institutional mechanisms aimed at reducing inequality between men and women of the NARS; and Support the establishment of long-term expertise within the NARS to enhance its gender integration process.

Dr. T.U. Esekade, the immediate past Head of the Research Support Service Department, in his presentation on Advancing Agriculture: The vital role of Research Scientists in Sustainable Development-RRIN in Focus, harped on:

- Crucial roles played by Research Scientists in the development of rubber crops and agriculture in general
- The relationship between research scientist in agriculture with various stakeholders and resources essential for their work
- Ways Research Officers can enhance their efficiency and productivity
- Efficient data collection and management by Research Officers
- The Role of Internet of Things (IoT) in agricultural research
- The role of collaboration in research studies
- Research focus in sustainable rubber development

Thereafter, there was a review and discussion of the retreat by some of the senior Directors present.

The retreat was well attended by scientists from RRIN headquarters and was live-streamed to ensure participation by those in the RRIN substations.



Representative of the Director/CEO and some of the resource persons

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Cross section of some of the Research Scientists present

RRIN holds November edition of her Monthly Seminar Series (MSS)

The November edition of the RRIN Monthly Seminar Series (MSS) took place on the Monday, 25th of November, 2024.

The first presenter, Mrs. E.J. Omozusi examined the *Analysis of Trend of Natural Rubber price in Nigeria, Malaysia, India, Europe and USA 2010–2019*. In her presentation, Mrs. E. Omozusi of the Knowledge Sharing and Management Department said Natural rubber is an important agricultural commodity which is indispensably used as raw material in various industries and that the increasing trend in Natural Rubber (NR) prices over the past several years is due to the world's steady NR demand and persistent NR supply tightness. This supply tightness, she said is mainly due to highly variable and unpredictable climatic disfavours. Today, the Natural Rubber (NR) industry is one of the largest in the world and is an indispensable sub-sector in the modern technology. However, there seems to be fluctuations in the global prices of Natural Rubber in the recent past, resulting in the analysis of a ten-year (2010 – 2019) data. Findings showed a steady decline in the price of natural rubber over time, a situation which can dissuade prospective rubber farmers from embarking on its cultivation. Further studies however need to be carried out, to guide rubber farmers in forecasting and address challenges like price volatility.



Mrs. E.J. Omozusi during her presentation

The second presentation by Dr. H.I. Ifijen discussed the *Phytochemical Profiling of Hevea brasiliensis Seed Shell and Leaf Extracts and their Role in the Synthesis of Magnesium Oxide Nanoparticles for Enhanced Antibacterial Applications*. In his presentation, Dr. H.I. Ifijen defined Nanoscience as the study of nanoparticles while Nanotechnology is the use of nanoparticles in technology. He said due to their very minute size of 10^{-9} m (a billion times smaller than a meter), nanoparticles have numerous uses in the various aspects of life. In this study, Magnesium Oxide Nanoparticles (MgONPs) were synthesized from *Hevea brasiliensis* Seed Shell and Leaf Extracts, after which, it was profiled and characterised. The MgONPs obtained from the rubber leaf extracts were of a better quality than those obtained from the rubber seed shells and also had a higher zone of inhibition in their antimicrobial properties using *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Escherichia coli*. He concluded that the study emphasized on the benefits of plant-mediated synthesis of magnesium oxide nanoparticles (MgO NPs) using extracts from rubber seed shells (RSS) and rubber leaves (RL) of *Hevea brasiliensis*. Findings from the phytochemical analysis showed that RL was rich in reducing sugars, flavonoids, and phenolics; in addition it exhibited superior bioreducing and capping abilities compared to RSS. This, he said, is reflected in the smaller size, more uniform morphology, and greater antibacterial efficacy of RL-derived MgO NPs. The FTIR, DLS, XRD, and SEM analyses confirmed the successful synthesis and quality of both nanoparticle types, with RL-based NPs consistently outperforming RSS-based ones. These results highlight RL as a more effective, eco-friendly, and cost-efficient agent for green nanoparticle synthesis with enhanced antibacterial properties.



Dr. H.I. Ifijen during his presentation

There were deliberations after the presentations after which some announcements were made by the Chairperson of the RPRC, Dr. (Mrs) O.A. Emuedo



Cross section of members of Staff, during the Seminar

RRIN participates in the 46th National Council on Agriculture and Food Security

The Director/CEO of RRIN, Dr. L.N. Dongo was part of the nine hundred and twenty-five (925) participants at the 46th National Council on Agriculture and Food Security, which took place in Calabar, Cross River State between the 11th and 15th of November, 2024. In her address to the Council, she presented one memorandum:

Development of early maturing rubber cultivars (EMRC) through advanced genomics and CRISPR/CAS9-gene editing technology.



Dr. L.N. Dongo giving her presentation

A second Memorandum on "Establishment of 30,000 hectares of rubber-based agroforestry plantation - RBAP by smallholders' rubber farmers in 15 rubber growing states of Nigeria" from the Rubber Research Institute of Nigeria was presented by Dr. C. Okwu.



Dr. C. Okwu giving her presentation

Both Memoranda, were considered and approved by the National Council.

There was also an exhibition by the attending Ministries and MDAs

At the end of the Council Meeting, it was unanimously resolved that Kaduna State will host the 47th NCAFS if the laid down criteria are met.



Dr. L.N. Dongo interacting with visitors at the RRIN Exhibition Stand

Speaking with Journalists after the Council Meeting, Dr. L.N. Dongo called on the Federal Government to prioritize the natural rubber sub-sector, if food sufficiency must be realized. She said she felt saddened by the neglect of rubber; she made

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an appeal for Agricultural Sector to support research on the development of rubber to attract more investors to the industry to enhance foreign exchange earnings of the country. She intimated the Pressmen on the Memorandum that was presented which has been approved by the Council and that the long gestation (7 years) period of the Rubber tree has deterred many farmers from cultivating rubber, stressing on the importance of reducing the gestation period to three years to encourage many more farmers to go into rubber cultivation to increase productivity.

Failure to do this, she said, will impact negatively on the present Administration's efforts to increase rubber cultivation at a growth rate of 5.7% annually. This she said is achievable through molecular breeding as was done in cocoa.

"Nigeria, she said should tap into the huge potentials of natural rubber as it is the only commodity that has over 50 products in more than 400,000 applications. There is virtually no sector of life that does not require rubber be it in automobile, medical, clothing etc. It is time we develop a rubber policy to drive the sector like other countries".

"Ivory Coast produces over 1.8m tons of rubber annually and currently ranks number three in the world whereas Nigeria which was a leading nation in Africa before the discovery of crude oil now ranks a distant 13th, producing a mere 167,000 tons annually. In 2018, the exchange earnings from rubber was US\$42.8m which significantly increased to US\$102.5m in 2023".

"This is even as the country has not paid the desired attention to rubber and its allied products in the value chain".

"Another memorandum which was presented to the National Council on Agriculture and Food Security is the establishment of 30,000 of rubber-based agroforestry plantations to empower youths through job creation and enhance food security in the nation. This was again approved by the council for financial intervention", she stated.

RRIN participates in the 2024 IRC (International Rubber Conference)

The International Rubber Conference, 2024, held at the Royal Ambarrukmo Hotel in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from the 19TH – 21ST November 2024, with the theme "Embracing Circular Thinking: A New Paradigm for Sustainable Natural Rubber Industry." The event saw participation from 22 countries and 200 attendees, including Heads of Rubber Research Institutes and global stakeholders. RRIN was duly represented by its Director/CEO, Dr. L.N Dongo and Mrs. Faithfulness O. Oseghale – one of the Fellowship Trainees.

Representatives of
RRIN Dr. Lelia Dongo
and Mrs. F. O. Oseghale



Datuk Seri Dr. Abdul Aziz SA Kadir, Secretary General of the International Rubber Research and Development Board (IRRDB), emphasized the need for research institutes to collaborate and address the impacts of climate change on rubber cultivation. He also advocated for influencing policymakers, particularly regarding the European Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), and securing adequate funding for research.



Dr. Abdul Aziz presenting the welcome speech

During the first two days, speakers discussed the effects of *Pestalotiopsis* (leaf fall disease) and control measures, including chemical treatments and disease-resistant clones. The first day concluded with a gala dinner, where fellowship trainees were honoured as full-fledged IRRDB fellows.



Mrs. Faithfulness O. Oseghale - the new IRRDB fellow from Nigeria receiving her certificate.

The final day included a field trip to rubber industries and estates, such as the Getas Rubber Estate and factory in Central Java, as well as a visit to a ribbed smoked sheet factory. The conference ended with a Ramayana Ballet performance at Prambanan Temple, Yogyakarta.

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November edition of general prayer meeting

The November, 2024 edition of the RRIN prayer meeting took place as usual, on Monday the 4th of November, 2024. It commenced with the usual praise and worship which was led by Mrs. P. Ifahi.

The prayer session which was led by Engr. G. Izevbigie centered on brethren to continuously pray for themselves and their leaders. Taking his bible text from 2nd Tessalonians 3: 1, he admonished all present to always ask God Almighty for His wisdom to fulfil all our visions. He also used the opportunity to pray for God's protection and guidance for the Director/CEO, Dr. L.N. Dongo and all Management Staff of the Institute, as they pilot the affairs of the Institute.



Cross section of members of Staff, during the prayer session.

Know your PSR

SERIOUS MISCONDUCT

030401 - DEFINITION: Serious misconduct is a specific act of very serious wrongdoing and improper behaviour which is inimical to the image of the service and which can be investigated and if proven, may lead to dismissal.

030402 - SERIOUS ACTS OF MISCONDUCT INCLUDE:

Example

- (a) Falsification of records;
- (b) Suppression of records;
- (c) Withholding of Files;
- (d) Conviction on a criminal charge (other than a minor traffic or sanitary offence or the like);
- (e) Absence from duty without leave;
- (f) False claims against Government Officials;
- (g) Engaging in partisan political activities;
- (h) Bankruptcy / serious financial embarrassment;
- (i) Unauthorized disclosure of official information;
- (j) Bribery;
- (k) Corruption;
- (l) Embezzlement;

- (m) Misappropriation;
- (n) Violation of Oath of Secrecy;
- (o) Action prejudicial to the security of the State;
- (p) Advance Fee Fraud (Criminal Code 419)
- (q) Holding more than one full-time paid job;
- (r) Nepotism or any other form of preferential treatment;
- (s) Divided loyalty;
- (t) Sabotage;
- (u) Wilful damage to Public property.
- (v) Sexual Harassment; and
- (w) Any other act unbecoming of a Public Officer.

030403 - Disciplinary procedure for serious misconduct shall be in accordance with Rules 030302 to 030306.

030404 - (i) When a serious case that may lead to dismissal has been instituted against an officer, the Permanent Secretary/Head of Extra-Ministerial Office may interdict him/her on not more than half pay pending the determination of the case.

(i) Recommendations to the Commission for interdiction shall be made only if it is against the public interest that the officer should continue to perform any of the duties of his/her rank. When the charge against him/her is such that the continued performance of his/her present duties is against the public interest or prejudicial to the investigation of the charge against him/her, consideration shall be given to putting him/her on alternative duties. Interdiction shall only be resorted to when this is not possible.

(ii) When an officer is interdicted, he/she shall cease to report for duty. In the letter informing the officer of his/her interdiction it shall be indicated that the proportion of emoluments he/she is to receive while on interdiction shall be 50% of his/her emoluments.

(iii) If proceedings under Rule 030404 (i) reveal that he/she is not guilty of the charge made against him/her, the officer shall immediately be reinstated and shall receive the full amount of his/her emoluments denied him/her while he/she was interdicted.

(iv) If the officer is found guilty but is not dismissed, he/she may be refunded such portion of the emoluments denied him/her as the Commission may determine.

030405 - (a) An officer who is under interdiction or suspension shall notify his/her Permanent Secretary/Head of Extra-Ministerial Office of his/her intention to leave his/her station. He/she shall however not leave the country without the specific approval of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation.

(b) An officer under interdiction is also responsible for keeping his/her Ministry/Extra-Ministerial Office informed of the address at which instructions to him/her can be delivered.

(c) If he/she fails to comply with the instructions delivered to him/her at such address within seven days of such delivery, he/she will be regarded as absent from duty without leave.

030406 - Suspension should not be used as a synonym for

for interdiction. It shall apply where a *prima facie* case, the nature of which is serious, has been established against an officer and it is considered necessary in the public interest that he/she should forthwith be prohibited from carrying out his/her duties. Pending investigation into the misconduct, the Federal Civil Service Commission or the Permanent Secretary/Head of Extra-Ministerial Office (if within his/her delegated powers) shall forthwith suspend him/her from the exercise of the powers and functions of his/her office and from the enjoyment of his/her emolument

030407 - The ultimate penalty for serious misconduct is dismissal. An officer who is dismissed forfeits all claims to retiring benefits, leave or transport grant etc subject to the provisions of the Pension Reform Act 2004.

030408 - When an officer is dismissed, no notice or emolument in lieu shall be given to him/her and his/her dismissal shall take effect from the date on which he/she is notified thereof. This date shall be notified by the Permanent Secretary/Head of Extra-Ministerial Office concerned to the Federal Civil Service Commission and to the Office of Establishments and Pension, as soon as possible. Where the officer concerned seeks to evade this official notification, the effective date shall be:

(a) that on which he/she is served with the notification, even though he/she may refuse to acknowledge receipt; or
(b) the date on which the notification is delivered by messenger to his/her recorded address, even though the officer concerned does not himself/herself acknowledge receipt of such delivery; or
(c) the date on which the notification is sent by post to his/her last known or normal address in accordance with the definition of "service by post" in Section 26 of the Interpretation Act (Cap. 192).

030409 - An officer must, under pain of disciplinary action, promptly report to his/her Permanent Secretary/Head of Extra-Ministerial Office whenever he/she is charged of criminal offence, and must report the outcome of the charge.

030410 - If an officer is convicted on a criminal charge, the Commission shall consider the proceedings of the court and if it is of the opinion that the officer should be dismissed or subjected to some lesser penalty on account of the offence for which he/she has been convicted, the officer may thereupon be dismissed or otherwise punished without any of the procedures prescribed in Rule 030306 being followed..

030411 - (a) Nothing shall prevent disciplinary action being taken or continued against an officer whether or not- *proceedings*.

(i) Criminal proceedings have been instituted with respect to such a person in any court of law in Nigeria or elsewhere or are about to be instituted or are contemplated; or

(ii) the grounds upon which any criminal charge is based or are to be based are substantially the same as those upon which the disciplinary proceedings were or are to be instituted;

(b) An officer acquitted of a criminal offence shall not be penalized for any charge of which he/she has been acquitted, but nothing in

this rule shall prevent him/her being dismissed or otherwise punished on any other charges arising out of his/her conduct in the matter, provided that such charges do not raise substantially the same issue as those of which he/she has been acquitted. If the Commission thinks fit, the usual procedure may be followed for the purpose.

030412 - An officer convicted of criminal offence (other than a minor traffic or sanitary offence and the like) shall be suspended with effect from the date of conviction, pending determination of his/her case by the Commission,

030413 - Any officer who absents himself/herself from duty or travels out from Nigeria without leave renders himself/herself liable to be dismissed from the service and the onus shall rest on him/her, to show that the circumstances do not justify the imposition of the full penalty.

030414 - (1) For the purpose of these rules, the expression "serious financial embarrassment" means the state of an officer's indebtedness which, having regard to the amount of debts incurred by him/her, has actually caused serious financial hardship to him/her, and, without prejudice to the general meaning of the said expression, an officer shall be deemed to be in serious financial embarrassment;

(a) if the aggregate of his/her unsecured debts and liabilities at any given time exceed the sum of three times his/her monthly emoluments.

(b) where he/she is a judgement debtor, for as long as the judgement debt remains unsettled; or

(c) where he/she is adjudged bankrupt or insolvent wage earner, for as long as he/she remains an undischarged bankrupt or as the case may be for as long as any judgement against him/her in favour of the official assignee remains unsatisfied.

(2) Serious financial embarrassment from whatever cause shall be regarded as necessarily impairing the efficiency of an officer and rendering him/her liable to disciplinary action.

(3) If such embarrassment is caused by imprudence or other reprehensible cause, the officer concerned shall be liable to immediate dismissal and the onus shall rest on him/her to show that the circumstances do not justify the imposition of the full penalty.

(4) It shall be the duty of the Registrars of all courts of competent jurisdiction to report to the appropriate Permanent Secretary/Head of Extra-Ministerial Office that the officer has become a judgement debtor.

(5) When the fact that an officer has become a judgement debtor or a party to accommodation bills or promissory notes is brought to the notice of his/her Permanent Secretary/Head of Extra-Ministerial Office, the latter shall call upon him/her to submit a statutory declaration in the prescribed form (Gen. 74) disclosing all his/her liabilities.

(6) Otherwise a Permanent Secretary/Head of Extra-Ministerial Office may take such action as appears to him/her necessary when an officer becomes financially embarrassed;

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and if he/she considers it undesirable that the officer should be retained in the Civil Service, he/she shall initiate the appropriate disciplinary proceedings.

(7) As long as an officer is in serious financial embarrassment, he/she shall be disqualified from promotion or acting in a higher appointment.

030415 - It shall be the duty of every Permanent Secretary/Head of *Oath of* Extra-Ministerial Office to ensure that all officers, employees and *Secrecy* temporary staff in his/her Ministry/Extra-Ministerial Office who have access to classified or restricted papers have signed the Oath of Secrecy in the appropriate form before they are granted such access and that the declarations so signed are safely preserved. To facilitate this action in respect of officers holding junior posts, the Oath of Secrecy is incorporated in the revised Form No. Gen. 75.

030416 - Every officer is subject to the Official Secrets Act, (Cap.335) (reproduced-as Appendix at the end of this Rule or Chapter) and is prohibited from disclosing to any person, except in accordance with official routine or with the special permission of Government, any article, note, document or information entrusted to him/her in confidence by any person holding office under any Government in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, or which he/she has obtained in the course of his/her official duties. Similarly, every officer shall exercise due care and diligence to prevent the knowledge of any such article, note, document or information being communicated to any person against the interest of the Government.

PENSION MATTERS

Facts About Retirement Savings Account

The meaning and what the following figures represent **0 2 6 8 10 25 50** in Pension Administration;

0 The amount of tax you will pay on your mandatory Retirement Savings Account.

2 The law allows you to have one Retirement Savings Account which automatically comes with TWO options. The first is the mandatory account while the second is the voluntary account.

6 The Multi Fund Structure for investing your Retirement Savings Account is divided into 6 Funds. The difference in each fund is based on your age, risk appetite, employment status and ethics.

***8** The minimum monthly **employee** contribution to your Retirement Savings Account is 8%

10 The minimum monthly **employer** contribution to your Retirement Savings Account is 10%

25 You can withdraw 25% of your Retirement Savings Account balance if you have been out of a job for at least 4 months

50 The golden age you have to attain in order to access your pension benefits upon retirement.

Emmanuel A. Aiwekhoe
Principal Admin Officer (Pensions)

Staff of the Month

Our Staff for the month of November is Mrs. Funmilayo Akhimien. She joined the service of RRIN in July, 1993 as a Clerical Assistant on a Temporary Appointment basis and her appointment was made Permanent in February, 1994. In May, 2001, she was advanced to Clerical Officer Grade II. In June, 2001, she was given a letter of Commendation for her diligence in carrying out her duties during the then RRIN Governing Board Meeting. In October 2001, she obtained a Certificate Programme Examination in Public and General Office Administration (CPA) from the Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Ebonyi State and was subsequently given and inter-cadre transfer to the post of Executive Officer in 2007.



Mrs. Funmilayo Akhimien

In her further quest for knowledge, she sought for and obtained a Bachelors degree in Public Administration from the University of Benin in 2008, a professional certificate on the certified Board of Administrators of Nigeria (CBAN) in 2019. She then converted from the Executive Cadre to the Administrative Cadre in 2011. She is currently an Assistant Chief Administration Officer on CONRAISS 12, with the Confidential Registry Unit of the Administration Department.

Mrs. F. Akhimien is well focused, result-oriented and always quick in executing whatever duties assigned to her