FOURTH QUARTER REPORT, 2022

REGIONAL CENTRE FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIORESOURCES RESEARCH  
(RCBBR) / NABDA SOUTH-SOUTH ZONAL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE (SSCoE)

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ANNUAL REPORT OF REGIONAL CENTRE FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY AND  
BIORESOURCES RESEARCH/NABDA SOUTH-SOUTH ZONAL CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE  
Introduction  
The Department of Plant Science and Biotechnology (PSB), prior to relocation to  
Ofirima Complex in the University Park, had a poorly established Botanic Garden in  
Choba Park. This Botanic Garden was lost to Choba when the community recovered a  
major portion of it for the Olobo Community Secondary School, Choba . The  
Department, through the effort of a dedicated committee of six Academic Staff  
Chaired by the then incumbent Head of Department got a site (about 7.8 ha) at the  
forested Conservation area and Buffer zone at the University Park (of University of  
Port Harcourt) allocated to the Department in October, 2002 for use as Botanic  
Garden.  
After this approval, the Botanic Garden was reorganized into the Regional Centre for  
Bioresources and Biotechnology Research (RCBBR), which was composed of three  
main parts viz: the Botanical Garden with a Recreation Centre and the Conservation  
Area. This Centre was intended to drive hightech research in biotechnology and  
biodiversity conservation and contribute to financial and international profile and  
well-being of the Department and University of Port Harcourt.  
The Regional Centre was designed to hold a Conference Centre, a Horticultural  
Centre, Recreation Centre, Botanic garden and conservation area. It has  
swampland/forest with a network of ponds and suspended access ways running  
through the garden. The Recreation Centre was expected to hold recreation facilities  
for relaxation and fund raising. The Conservation Area (about 3.6 ha) was designated  
in the University’s Master Plan as Conservation Area, includes a swamp forest,  
rainforest and adjoining arboretum which partly constitutes a rubber estate.  
The Intended Benefits  
The Regional Centre for Bioresources and Biotechnology Research was to:  
i) Serve as a coordinating Centre for field studies in biodiversity conservation and  
biotechnology research  
ii) Generate fund for its maintenance, further development and growth into a World  
Class Centre of Excellence  
iii) Offer sites for protection and conservation of endemic and endangered species  
iv) Serve as a ready source of specimens and samples for academic work.  
v) Help staff and students of Department of Plant Science and Biotechnology, other  
relevant Departments, the University Community as well as other stakeholders to  
conduct quality research, mount collaborative and exchange programmes with other  
national and international institutions and  
vi) Provide an environment for relaxation and recreation.  
Major Objectives of Regional Centre for Bioresources and Biotechnology  
Research  
i) Have in holding, endemic and endangered species found in the Niger Delta and  
adjoining regions within the Guninea-Congolian biodiversity hotspot e.g. Lagenaria  
siceraria (Monila) Standl., Desplatsia dewevrei Bacquillon, Thaumatococcus danielli  
Bentham as well as species believed to be endemic to West Africa such as  
Clappertonia ficifolia (Willd.) Decne, etc. A unique collection of wildlife, especially,

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endemic, endangered and other relevant fauna was also to be added for research,  
conservation and esthetic purposes.  
ii) Promote research in the fields of Bioresource/Biodiversity conservation and  
Biotechnology  
iii) Serve as supportive academic infrastructure to promote national and international  
research collaboration and exchange programmes.  
iv) Offer a wide range of edaphic and biotic micro environments with high potency to  
support establishment of protection facilities for biodiversity conservation and  
attraction of international funds.  
v) Drive the initiative for attraction of research funds through relevant competitive  
research proposals, conferences, symposia, seminars and workshops.  
Achievements  
Initial Strides  
1) Soon after its establishment, the Regional Centre became adopted by National  
Biotechnology Development Agency ‘NABDA’ as a Coordinating Centre of  
Excellence for the South-South geopolitical zone.  
2) The Regional Centre, represented by Prof J.O. Osuji (myself) participated in the  
World Bank STEP-B (Science and Technology Education Programmes- Basic)  
research proposal writing twice. In the first instance, NABDA requested participation  
by its Centres in a nation-wide STEP-B proposal writing exercise. In the second  
instance, the Director, Centre for Research Management, Prof O. Akaranta requested  
and coordinated participation of the Regional Centre for Biotechnology in a national  
competition for World Bank STEP-B call for proposals. The second proposal (27 th  
July, 2009) submitted jointly with the University of Maiduguri (North East Zonal  
Biotechnology Centre ‘NEZBCE’/Centre for Arid Zone Studies ‘CAZS’), University  
of Nigeria, Nsukka (South East Zonal Biotechnology Centre ‘SEZBCE’, National  
Centre for Genetic Resources and Biotechnology ‘NACGRAB’ and National  
Biotechnology Development Agency ‘NABDA’ was successful in attracting a World  
Bank STEP-B grant of $5,600,000.00 (Five Million Six Hundred Thousand US  
Dollars only) (attachment 3). The grant provided multi-million Naira Molecular  
Genetics Research Equipment for the Regional Centre. Though a good development,  
the major benefit of this grant was missed because most of the equipment were not  
installed for deployment as appropriate.  
3) Grant from Emerald Energy Plc. and Uniport Management was used to construct  
the building that houses the Regional Centre for Biotechnology to date.  
Challenges  
The Microbial Type-Culture Centre  
A building expected to hold a Microbial Type-Culture Centre was initiated in the  
RCBBR/SSZCoE. The building, which has gone though several phases of delayed  
project implementation is yet to be completed. If completed, this facility will add  
value to the essence of the RCBBR/SSZCoE. It may also offer little space for staff  
office accommodation. Though the building has been decked, windows, doors and  
some of the structures that were earlier installed are all vandalized before this period  
covered by the report.  
Research publications/Innovations (See andover note of former Director)  
Revamping of the RCBBR/SSZCoE  
More than 80 % of the initial expectations and prospects of the CoE are presently lost.  
The Regional Centre for Biotechnology/South-South Zonal Centre of Excellence