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