Brief Overview of Cassava Databases Workshop

Thursday 21st June, 7 – 10pm

GCP21, Kampala

The cassava community, composed of cassava breeders and researchers, are anticipating a deluge of data prompted by the arrival of relatively low cost, high-throughput next-generation sequencing (NGS). It is likely that NGS will facilitate a whole new level of data-rich research, which will lead to increased use of 'digital plant breeding'. A number of databases are evolving to manage various types of data associated with this research and its application to cassava breeding (Ayling et al. 2012). This workshop was organized to inform users in the cassava community of different database initiatives, and to discuss options for database organization, integration and population. It was unanimously agreed that there was a need for greater integration of databases, ideally from plant breeding applications through to the cassava genome sequence. It was decided that a central portal for cassava information was an initial requirement, and Cassavabase (http://cassavabase.org/) was nominated for this purpose. It was also proposed to constitute a working group to promote cassava database integration, and Dr. Lukas Mueller (Boyce Thompson Institute) agreed to develop and chair the first working group. Developers and curators of the main databases would be represented together with cassava breeders and researchers. Maintenance of several individual databases, curated by different organizations, but linked through a central portal, as opposed to the establishment of one central database, was proposed as a more sustainable model.