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Capacity Building in Agriculture

Scaling up African baobab food products valuation through enhancement of their safety and value chains for food and nutritional security in Benin

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Project ID: RU/2018/CARP+/01

Project duration:
48 months

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1st March 2018

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USD 349,966

Project partners:

- Laboratoire de Biomathématiques
et d'Estimations Forestières
(LABEF/FSA/UAC)

- Laboratory of Food Sciences
(LSA/FSA/UAC)

- CIDEV-NGO

- Oe-Benin

- Jura-Afrique NGO

- UAC Start-up Valley

- TVETs (Lycée Agricole de
Sékou and Lycée Agricole de
Natitingou)

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Summary

The African Baobab is a strategic indigenous tree species of sub-Sahara Africa. Its pulp is highly nutraceutical and is used as food ingredient and dietary supplement in Africa, EU and America. Locally, the pulp is used for several products. Leaves are also highly nutritious and nutraceutical with increasing demand too. As a result, pulp and leaves are overharvested in the wild, jeopardizing the species natural stands. Domestication of baobab has become urgent and several researches have been carried out to speed this process, though several aspects are still uncovered. With the growing local/ global market around baobab products it becomes imperative to structure/ upgrade its value chain (VC) which yet has been so far disregarded in national state agenda, in spite of its demonstrated potential to promote pro-poor growth, especially women who are specialized in baobab products related activities. Taking advantage root on technical evidences and knowledge products generated by two recent (2015-2017) RUFORUM-GRG projects (125 & 135) in Benin, this project aims to develop a sustainable and competitive baobab VC in Benin. The project is built around six work-packages and will facilitate university-TVET (Technical Vocational Education Training) institutions and community linkages to upgrade baobab products VC while contributing to improve farmers' livelihoods and baobab conservation.

The overall goal of this action is to combine both participatory research and capacity building activities to set a long lasting valorization scheme for the African baobab at a national scale in Benin. Specifically, the project aims to:
(i)   Diagnose baobab leaves and fruit pulp value chains,
(ii)   organize actors involved in baobab leaves and fruit pulp value chains (VC into a platform and networks to ensure long lasting connections,
(iii) develop market driven technological packages for baobab leaves and fruit pulp and derived-products to allow baobab cultivation and supply the market with safety and quality baobab derived-products,
(iv) establish pilot incubators for baobab leaves and fruit pulp valorization in the project areas,
(v)   scale-up added-value novel technologies at country level, and
(vi) develop an advocacy plan for better integration of baobab products in food and nutrition security strategies but also as agro-business opportunity at national level.

Target groups
The target groups in this action are young, women, farmers' associations, TVETs, NGOs, students and researchers. The project envisages to directly impact 300 farmers, 60 small and medium-sized enterprises involved in baobab leaves and fruit pulp and derived-products value chains, and 36 students through a better organization of the value chains while contributing to food security and conservation of the species.

Results area

Seven main outputs will be delivered from the action:

Result Area 1: Baobab leaves and fruit pulp value chains are diagnosed and mapped in Benin.

Result Area 2: Operating platform and networks actors of baobab leaves and fruit pulp value chains is set up.

Result Area 3 : Market driven technological packages are developed for baobab leaves and fruit pulp and derived-products, and stakeholders are capacitated on these technologies.

Result Area 4: Operating pilot start-up incubators for baobab products valorization in the project areas are developed.

Result Area 5: Added-value novel technologies for baobab leaves and fruit pulp and derived-products are scaled up at country level.

Result Area 6: 1 PhD, 5 M.Sc. and 30 TVET students are trained for impact-oriented research

Result Area 7: Collaborative working relations are maintained among researchers, farmers, market actors, national agricultural research and advocacy institutions, and government, TVETs.

General Activities

Activities of the project are organized in six work packages (WP):

WP1- Diagnosis and mapping of the baobab value chains;

WP2 - Participative organization of actors involved in baobab value chains: Based on the detailed knowledge of the VC from WP1, this WP through participative approach, will organize actors involved in baobab value chains with the ultimate goal of creating a platform of actors and a strong network.

WP3- Capacity building on market driven technological packages;

WP4 - Establishment of pilot incubators for baobab products valorization in each project zones;

WP5- Assessment of farmers' perceptions and adoption of the market driven technological packages and the impact on household welfare (income, food security) and establishment of baobab garden/plantation, and

WP6- Scaling-up the novel technologies at country level through an advocacy plan for better integration of baobab products in food and nutrition security strategies at national scale.

The activities will be implemented in a capacity building and research-oriented scheme so that stakeholders along the baobab value chains in Benin will be strengthened for a long lasting valorization of the species.