

Factsheet final findings Applied Research Fund Call 3



Strategic diffusion and marketing of promising varieties of plantain in Benin Republic

Summary

The big challenge targeted by this project is how to bring plantain derived products of quality to consumers at an affordable price in order to allow the use of plantain as a staple food. The aim of this project is to promote plantain production and processing to ensure food security and generate income of practitioners. This project endeavours to bring together actors from various knowledge backgrounds, including practitioners and scientists, to: select promising plantain varieties and produce healthy planting material; design a mechanism for strategic dissemination of materials; develop appropriate processing technologies to deliver plantain-derived products that meet the requirements of national and international markets and; explore markets for new plantain-derived products. Ultimately, this project will ensure an intensive production and marketing of promising varieties of plantain through the development of best agricultural practices that support the rapid diffusion of three selected varieties of banana/plantain, and the development of new plantain-product markets with a special empowerment of women and youth along the value chains. The remaining works are related to factsheets development, publication drafting, and the diffusion of knowledge regarding plantain intensive production and processing, as well as capacity building of actors in the chain and impact assessment. Some lab tests and analyses are still ongoing.

Research findings

Exploratory and diagnosis studies revealed that currently there is a dominance of mixed cultivation of plantain and other banana varieties. Further, private and public structures in production of propagating materials are missing, as well as a distribution and supply system of these materials. There are very few processing units, which are not well developed and without equipment. Also, through a census, 3300 plantain growers were identified in the project area growing 1500 ha of plantain (0.4 ha on average per farmer).

A set of trainings are ongoing, targeting women, youth and plantain growers:

- 120 growers including 16 women have been involved in intensive plantain production around high density and fertilization experiments;
- 160 women have been trained in practical sessions to diversify their income generating means through the processing of plantain derived products. They were also trained in leadership, negotiation, saving strategies and financial management;
- 25 plantain nursery based youth enterprises emerged. Plantain growers now have close access to planting materials at an affordable price;
- New plantain derived products such as chips of ripened plantain, “ahayoe”, flour of plantain, “futu”, with renewed packaging materials have been made available in supermarkets.

Outcomes achieved

It was reported by technicians of various project areas that several growers who formerly relied on friends and old plantations to collect suckers, are now making demand of healthy planting materials from the newly established plantain nursery enterprises. Currently, those farmers specialised in producing planting materials are more solicited in their various areas, their income is increasing with some change in livelihoods (to be documented).

Based on the training farmers went through, many other farmers have adopted some good agricultural practices including staking, hole making before planting, and early application of organic fertilizers. Training related to Good Agricultural Practices is still ongoing.

In addition, after the reinforcement of their capacity in processing derived products and training in leadership, negotiation, and financial management, processors and traders are more engaged to share their knowledge with their neighbours.

Project messages to

A) Actors from private sector:

- Invest in production and processing of plantain in Benin have become possible, because of the availability of healthy planting materials due to networks of nurserymen put in place and Good Agricultural Practices in diffusion in the project intervention areas;
- Investors should invest in opportunities to inputs trading such as organic and specific fertilizers.

B) Civil society and practitioners organizations:

- To target food security and poverty alleviation, actors in civils society and NGOs can advertise and sensitize for more integration of plantain derived products in people's daily consumption.

C) Policy makers:

- Enlistment of plantain among strategic crops targeted by strategic policy documents for agricultural promotion in Benin Republic.
- Promoting crop diversification by investing in intensive production of plantain through:
 - Selecting productive plantain varieties well adapted to local climate conditions;
 - Nursery enterprises establishment for mass production of propagating materials;
 - Production and promotion of inputs such as organic and specific fertilizers;
 - Empowering women to take more advantage of income generating activities along the value chains;
 - Supporting the development of new markets outlets.

Knowledge products

News items

- "[Projet AVLANTO-BENIN: Pour la promotion des chaînes de valeur banane plantain](#)" By Anicet Semassa, Zoom Agro (June 2019).
- "[PROJET AVLANTO-BENIN La multiplication massive des rejets de bananiers plantain par la méthode PIF](#)" By Joachim Saisonou, Zoom Agro (March 2019).
- "[PROJET AVLANTO-BENIN La collection des accessions de bananiers plantain de la station de recherche de Sékou](#)" By Joachim Saisonou, Zoom Agro (March 2019).

Project posters

- "[Les bonnes pratiques d'hygiène et fabrication](#)", Zoom Agro (Sept 2019).
- "[Composition nutritionnelle et conservation des bananes plantains](#)", Zoom Agro (Sept 2019).
- "[Transformation de la banane plantain non mûre et mûre](#)", Zoom Agro (Sept 2019).
- "[Strategic diffusion and marketing of promising varieties of plantain–Republic of Benin](#)", Third ARF international workshop in Ethiopia, (Feb 2018).

Knowledge networks

This research project is part of Zoom Agro, a platform specialized in marketing and communication of agricultural products.

Knowledge co-creation

Knowledge is developed and shared continuously between the consortium partners during regularly organized workshops, to inform everyone about the level of implementation of the project. Collaboration within the consortium is enhanced through regular meetings and by presenting research proposals and sharing preliminary results. A very light structure with two major governance bodies was established to ensure the good functioning of the project:

- The coordination team is in charge of the overall coordination of the project, addressing administrative issues, and ensuring decision making and project representativeness.
- The scientific team is coordinating the research agenda and plans, implements, reviews and decides on the following steps.

This mechanism offers a room for co-development of the research agenda and planning, decision making and implementation of the project activities in the field.

Overall, eight workshops and meetings were organized through the above described mechanism. In addition, ToRs are developed before each activity is being carried out. Those ToRs are shared through e-mail where each member has the opportunity to make comments and remarks. In the field, CITE DES BANANES and GERME, both partners of the consortium AVLANTO, are playing an active role in mobilizing farmers and other stakeholders toward the success of field activities.

Consortium Partners

- Faculty of Agronomic Sciences / University of Abomey-Calavi (Benin)
- [WUR – Centre for Crop Systems Analysis](#) (Netherlands)
- Cité des Bananes (Benin)
- GERME (Groupe d'appui, d'Encadrement et de Recherche en Milieu rural) (Benin)

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Project website

[F&BKP Research Project page](#)