Funded by the European Union

Strengthening capacities and informing policies for developing value chains of neglected and underutilised crops in Africa (SC-CROPS)

Consortium

Implementing partners:

- International Plant Genetic Resources Institute (Biodiversity International), *Italy*
- African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE), *Kenya*
- Africa University, *Zimbabwe*
- International Foundation for Science (IFS), *Sweden*
- Laboratory of Agricultural Biodiversity and Tropical Plant Breeding (LAAPT), *Benin*
- University of Nairobi, *Kenya*

Associated partners:

- Excel Hort Consult ltd. (EHC), *Uganda*
- Global Horticulture Initiative (GlobalHort), *Tanzania*

Budget

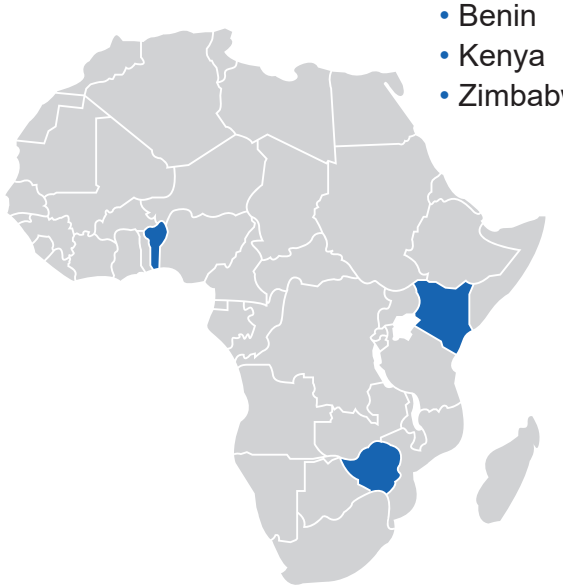
Total budget: €1,167,987.13
EU contribution: €992,789.06

Duration

January 2014 – December 2016

Countries of intervention

- Benin
- Kenya
- Zimbabwe



Development challenge

Hunger and malnutrition remain a main issue in rapidly growing population in Africa, in spite of Africa's rich diversity in neglected and underutilised species (NUS) and their nutritional properties and resilience to pests, diseases and climate change. This is due to a lack of research, extension, and education capacity, policy constraints, and a lack of consumer awareness currently limit their widespread use.

Project approach

The SC-CROPs project used a multi-stakeholder approach with a strong participatory strategy with scientists, value chain stakeholders, processors, private sector actors and farmers' organisations, senior higher education staff and policy makers as target groups and small-scale farmers, processors, traders, entrepreneurs and consumers.

Project results

Improved knowledge of young scientists, researchers and raised awareness on Neglected and Underutilised Species (NUS) in education, research and policy.

6
Training courses

70
Young scientists

♂ 40 ♀ 30

From 18 countries trained on NUS research proposal writing.

225
Value chain stakeholders were involved in national workshops, consultations and events.

74
Young scientists

♂ 43 ♀ 31

From 14 countries trained in scientific writing and communication with a focus on NUS.

320
Individuals involved in sub-regional/regional project activities of which:

- **144** young scientists
- **57** university staff

2
Training courses in each of the three subregions to early career scientist from 19 countries on NUS research, specially focused on proposal writing and scientific communication with focus on NUS plants.

23
Trainees applying for an individual "International Foundation for Science (IFS)" research grant benefitted from constructive feedback from and networking opportunities with IFS advisers.

Improved capacity building of scientists and policy makers by promoting.

3
National Action Plans (NAPs) for value chain upgrading of amaranth and Bambara groundnut were developed and promoted at national and regional levels in:

- **Benin**
- **Kenya**
- **Zimbabwe**

1
National report on status and priorities for research and value chain upgrading of Neglected and Underutilised Species (NUS) in Zimbabwe.

3
Policy briefs (English and French):

- Upgrading grain amaranth value chains in Africa.
- Bambara groundnut, a legume of choice for food security and industry.
- Improving education on Neglected and Underutilised Species (NUS) plants and animal species.

1
Work plan for Neglected and Underutilised Species (NUS)development in Southern Africa with short- and long-term impact.

Project results (2)

Integrating NUS in higher agricultural and education curricula.

- A curriculum guide on neglected and underutilised species was published and distributed to agricultural universities and technical colleges in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Results were shared at three sub-regional workshops involving 23 African and 3 European countries, and at an international conference in Kenya.
- An expert meeting outlined the way forward for mainstreaming neglected and underutilised species in agricultural development in sub-Saharan Africa.

14 articles/research publication from 2014 to 2016 give account of the quality research carried out.

Impact

The project has significantly impacted the education level of the target countries, with NUS being part of the University and Technical colleges' courses and programmes. Also, the project has positively influenced on other sectors in such as:

• LAAPT (Benin) led a group of young scientists involved in value chain upgrading work and support to local entrepreneurs.

• In Kenya, the project linked up with the Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), involved in a national initiative on NUS, and part of the NAP implementation.

12 approved individual research grants out of 35 trainees submitted proposals to “International Foundation for Science (IFS)”, plus some trainees funded their research proposal from other sources.

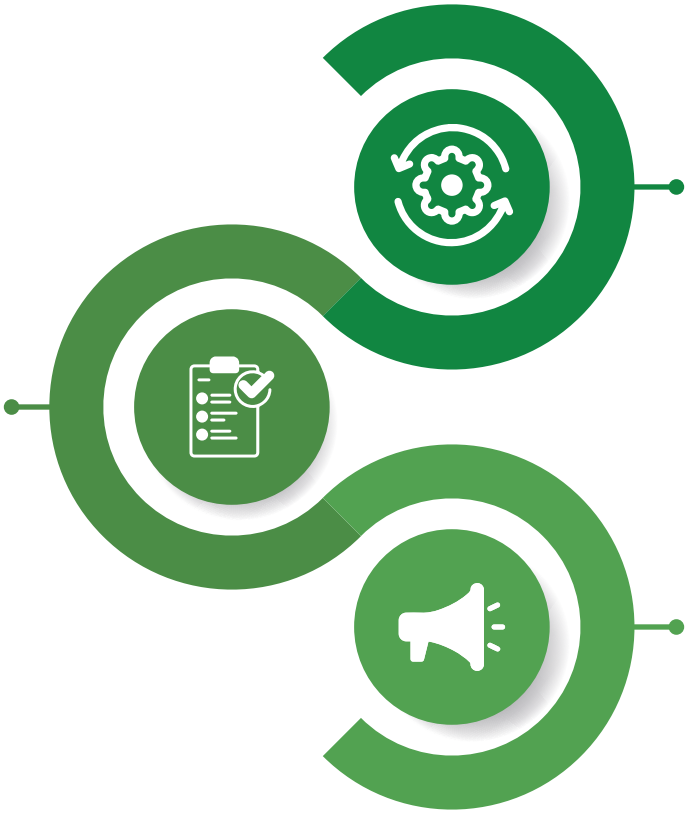
The project has contributed to an ongoing policy dialogue on the role of NUS in contributing to the Agenda 2030. As example, the Commission on World Food Security featured several talks on NUS in its 45th session on 15-19 October 2018, FAO, Rome, Italy.

Sustained Impact

The inclusion of NUS into courses and programmes in universities and technical colleges has allowed the offer of thesis research on NUS and link to the private sector in promoting NUS value chains.

Project results have been supporting the implementation of the NAPs in Benin, Kenya and Zimbabwe, and other countries in the three sub-regions are following this model.

Key lessons learned and best practices



Streamline NUS into existing training programmes has been supported through the curriculum guide on neglected and underutilised species.

The importance of outlining the way forward for mainstreaming neglected and underutilised species in agricultural development in sub-Saharan Africa.

Potential and effectiveness of dissemination channel.