

CAPACITY4FOOD – Integrated Soil Fertility Management for Food Security: matching capacities in Anglophone West African Nation HEIs with local needs



Demonstration plot as a powerful tool to raise awareness on sustainable land management in farmer's adoption of Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) in Njala, Sierra Leone (July 2015).

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Awareness and knowledge has been enhanced on Integrated Soil Fertility Management for food security at west African universities. The capacity and skills of teachers and trainers to deliver Integrated Soil Fertility Management principles and practices to students and wider stakeholders has been increased.

BACKGROUND

Despite the fact that the west African region has large amounts of land, labour and biodiversity, high levels of hunger, malnutrition and environmental degradation persist. Food security is a global concern and challenge for human welfare and economic growth and particularly so in sub-Saharan Africa. Soil fertility has been described as the single most important constraint to food security in Africa, and its decline is not just a problem of nutrient deficiency. Decline in soil fertility is a result of physical and biological degradation, inappropriate cropping systems and the uncontrolled impacts of pests and diseases.

CAPACITY4FOOD has responded to this situation by integrating Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM) for food security into the university curricula of the partner Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with the intention of increasing the number of ISFM experts to improve agricultural practices throughout the region. The establishment of a regional network in ISFM includes the establishment of regional centres of excellence and creating capacities to deliver targeted activities at both local and regional levels. The project also aimed at improving regional links between the partner HEIs in order to exploit the specific specialisations and comparative advantages of each HEI.

METHODOLOGY

Needs analysis

Analysis of the ISFM and food security situation in each partner HEI, and HEI links with local smallholders and government authorities.

Regional network of centres of excellence for ISFM

Each partner country developed its own centre of excellence to develop and share ISFM technologies to help increase agricultural productivity, income and stimulate business to help ensure food security in west Africa.

Trainings

Trainings were delivered by the University of Alicante and the courses were implemented in the centres of excellence for university staff and the academic community, as well as for other stakeholders such as local smallholders and local government actors.

Networking

CAPACITY4FOOD forged links between the HEIs and with other relevant stakeholders such as smallholders and government authorities. National matching events had the purpose of bringing HEI staff and students together with local farmers and promote graduate employability through direct meetings with farmers and local recruiters. Regional round tables focused on regional co-operation to influence future priorities for national/regional legislation in agriculture.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

October 2013 – October 2016

CONSORTIUM

- Universidad de Alicante, Spain
- University of Dschang, Cameroon
- University of The Gambia, Gambia
- University of Ghana, College of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences, Ghana
- Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA), Nigeria
- University of Njala, Sierra Leone

PROJECT CONTACT

University of Alicante
International Project Management office
Tel: + 34 965 909718
E-mail: project.management@ua.es

PROJECT WEBSITE

www.capacity4food-project.eu



CAPACITY4FOOD



Universitat d'Alacant
Universidad de Alicante



RESULTS

→ Outputs

Capacity building

- 250 trainer-of-trainers, lecturers, technicians and students trained in 4 training programmes:
 - ISFM.
 - Biophysical and socio-economic analysis of farmer fields and livelihoods.
 - Maximising stakeholder engagement.
 - Hands-on learning.
- 900 students trained in ISFM and engaged in networking activities with local communities and stakeholders.

- 90 local authority officials trained in ISFM and networking with stakeholders.
- 5 academic modules.
- 20 trainings replicated.

Networking

- 5 centres of excellence at each partner university: providing assistance to the academic and professional community in ISFM; mandated to establish and maintain relationships with local farmers and

- authorities; and raising awareness of ISFM.
- Regional network of centres of excellence in ISFM for food security.

Documents

- Needs analysis report.

Visibility

- Website.
- 3 regional stakeholder round tables.
- 2 international conferences.

↑ Outcomes

- University staff, local communities and community and authorities aware of ISFM principles and practices.
- Trainers (farmers) able to deliver trainings and disseminate information on ISFM principles and practices.
- HEIs capable of delivering quality learning in sustainable land management.

🎯 Impacts

Usage

- The centres of excellence at the partner HEIs are key resources for training in sustainable land management and offer services that respond to the needs of the universities and local stakeholders.

Policy implications

- Increased regional integration has increased the available human and material resources and has provided access to a larger pool of knowledge and teaching materials.
- A pool of trained professionals will be able to advocate on the benefits and needs of the local farmers for effective ISFM practices.
- FUTA has mainstreamed the ISFM principles in the undergraduate and postgraduate

curricula in the Department of Crop, Soil and Pest Management.

Sustainability

- In July 2017, FUTA's centre of excellence has trained 100 youth and women farmers in ISFM practices for cassava and other crop production under the Third National Fadama Development Project (World Bank).
- In 2018, FUTA's centre of excellence submitted proposals for the conduct of land validation for the Sugarcane Fuel Ethanol project in Kaduna, Kogi and Kebbi states (Nigeria) to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC).



Integrated soil fertility management (ISFM) techniques at demonstration plots with local farmers in Dschang, Cameroon (September 2015).



Improving soil fertility through ISFM practices in Akure, Nigeria (July 2015).

TESTIMONIAL



Prof. Fritz Oben,
University of Dschang,
Cameroon

“The University of Dschang is recognised in Central Africa for its expertise in training agronomists, thus the project has significant importance to the university because of its priorities in researching soil fertility manage-

ment. Farmers are willing to come for training if the opportunity arises and the requests by farmers via our centre of excellence attest to the positive impact trainings have had.”

ACP-EU Co-Operation Programmes in the fields of Higher Education and Science, Technology and Research

<http://www.acp-hestr.eu/>

© ACP Secretariat 2018

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the ACP Secretariat and the European Union. The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the ACP Secretariat or the European Union.



Implemented by the ACP Secretariat



Financed by the European Union