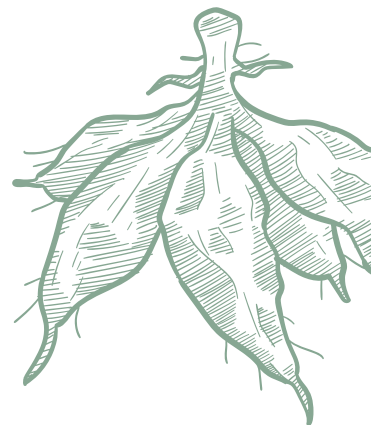




Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations



CAMEROON

## Strengthening linkages between small actors and buyers in the roots and tubers sector in Africa

Cassava is one of the most important food crops in Cameroon. Typically considered a subsistence crop and cultivated by smallholder farmers, cassava offers enormous business opportunities, including a wide range of derived products. However, the actors involved in this sector are facing issues related to organizational aspects, low productivity, access to finance and climatic risks. In order to improve the living conditions of these actors, the project aims at the following results: (i) existing national and regional strategies are aligned with initiatives that support the development of better integration of regional markets in the cassava sector; (ii) the competitiveness and viability of cassava actors are strengthened by improving inclusive business models, sustainable intensification of production, and the capacity of small and medium enterprises and farmer organizations; (iii) access to information services and finance is improved for smallholders; and (iv) small producers have access to climatic risk management instruments.

### WHAT WAS ACHIEVED

The introduction of improved varieties allowed yields to notably increase, from 10–15 m to 15–25 m, with an average of 20mt of cassava per hectare, particularly in the western and northwestern regions. By using these varieties – specifically 8034, 8017 and 8061 – producers have also increased their exploitation area by 75 percent: the area under cultivation increased from 283 hectares in 2016 to 478 ha in 2017 and to 496 ha in 2018. In terms of inclusive business models, a number of agreements between producers and buyers have been facilitated, resulting in monthly exchanges of almost 53 000 kg of cassava value-added products amounting to BEAC 16.3 million (USD 29 000) per month. In addition, two formal contracts were signed for the delivery of 2 200 cassava sticks per month. Thanks to the facilitation and the support provided by the project, two farmers' organizations and four cooperative got access to credit from three different Micro Finance Institutions

(MFIs), for a total amount of Franc Communauté Financière Africaine (FCFA) 33,6 million (USD 60 000). Among them, one producers' and processors' cooperative, COPROTRACOMA, was able to access financing for BEAC 20 million (USD 35 800). The cooperative used these funds primarily to construct of production facilities. The group SOCOOAPACE group received a loan of BEAC 7 081 000 (USD 12 640) from the MFI *Mutuelle pour la promotion et de l'épargne et du crédit d'investissement* (MUPECI) for investing in production and processing.

### HOW IT WAS ACHIEVED

The project undertook assessments of key policies, legislation and institutional arrangements that affect the domestic markets of the roots and tubers sector in Cameroon. The results show a weak synergy between the various actors in the sector and poor access to information about the cassava sector. To overcome these issues, the project helped create linkages among 53 actors in the value chain, organizing a workshop which set up an effective and sustainable system of exchange and coordination among cassava stakeholders in Cameroon. The creation of platforms of cassava producers will enable them actors to promote the sector at national and regional levels.

In addition, a diagnostic study was conducted to identify buyers with the potential and willingness to become active business partners for smallholder suppliers and to drive inclusive growth in the value chain. The study led to the identification of key actors in the cassava value chain in Cameroon and four business models related to these products.

The project organized a training on inclusive business models for 39 actors in the sector, preparing them to seek for business opportunities. In collaboration with local non-governmental organizations, the project carried out 12 business meetings between producers and buyers. More than 290 members of producer/processor organizations and buyers involved in these meetings have identified their common priority actions

for first partnership agreements. Moreover, the capacities of 276 cassava farmers, including at least 60 women, have been strengthened in cooperative governance, financial and accounting management, operations management and relations with buyers. Although the implementation of the business plans has encountered some organizational and financial difficulties, these farmers developed their business skills and are working to expand their operations.

After identifying information gaps in financial service provision in the cassava sector, the project organized a national training on Agricultural Value Chain Finance. The event targeted 59 managers and professional staff in the banking and financial services industry who are involved in the design and delivery of financial services products for agricultural finance, value chain actors and government officials. Six financial institutions – MUPECI, *Coopératives d'Epargne et de Crédit des Promotrices* (CEC-PROM MATURE), Rural Investment Credit (RIC), *Nouvelle*

*Finance Africaine* (NOFIA), *Coopérative d'Epargne et de Crédit des Artisans du Wouri* (CECAW), les *Mutuelles Communautaires de Croissance* (MC2) – were accompanied in the development of three financial products specifically adapted to agriculture: group credit, micro-leasing and warrantage. The project also coached farmers to facilitate their access to credit and improve their performance in business management.

Lastly, to address the issues of climate variability and change in the country, the project developed a country analysis on the impact of such variability on production and prices of cassava, as well as on the current status and challenges related to climate information services. The study was developed after the project held a regional training workshop on Climate Risk Management, which improved the capacity of representatives from the ministries of agriculture, the National Meteorological Services, and other experts to assess climate risk and to understand the various management tools and methods available to mitigate these risks.

Community production of cassava paste rolls in Minwowo



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## AFRICAN ROOTS AND TUBERS PROJECT

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