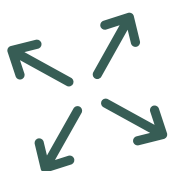


# CO-CREATION OF INNOVATIONS TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURIAL PRODUCTION IN AFRICA

GÖTZ UCKERT, STEFAN SIEBER



In addition to mango, almost all farmers in Kitui district grew maize and beans, followed by pigeon pea, cowpea and the passion fruit shown here.



The project STEP-UP used a participatory multi-stakeholder approach where new technologies in cultivation, processing and packaging were implemented and assessed in mango and banana FVC in Kenya and Uganda, respectively. The project was part

of the EU LEAP-Agri initiative to establish partnership networks in the EU and Africa. Within this programme, African partners can be funded from their own national ministries and receive co-funding from the EU.

STEP-UP recognizes the diversity of smallholder farmers and aims to identify different strategies for smallholders to »step-up« along the value chain. Together with farmers, STEP-UP developed new farm characterization and typologies that contribute to an improved understanding of current mango and banana cultivation. Almost all crops were cultivated in intercropping. The majority of (mango) farmers in Kitui Central and Mwingi West grew grafted mango trees, or a combination of grafted and indigenous trees. More farmers consumed their produced mangoes rather than selling them. Due to the low shelf-life of mangoes and the high post-harvest losses (> 40 %), STEP-UP focused on value addition via processing of dried fruits.

The project built up capacities of young scientists as well as stakeholders at communal, regional and national levels across the banana and mango FVC, designed as training of trainers. Capacity gaps (technical, technological, operational and financial) and capacity building priorities were identified during

Rural food value chains (FVC) in sub-Saharan Africa experience various challenges with respect to the implementation of food securing innovations. Through sustainable intensification and market linkage strategies, the STEP-UP project enabled small farm enterprises to step up towards food and nutrition security, sustainable development and income generation at farm and community levels. New technologies along mango and banana FVC in Kenya and Uganda were implemented and their impacts were assessed through a participatory multi-stakeholder approach. The productivity increase of the crop production and the related market access were a major focus of the sustainable intensification strategies.

participatory baseline/feasibility studies and capacity needs assessments. In Uganda, consultations with farmers and other stakeholders in two districts identified three entry points: (i) integrated soil fertility management, (ii) value addition focusing on banana-based beverages, and (iii) farmer organizations such as cooperatives. Trainings were tailored to meet the identified stakeholder needs. The trained actors along the banana value chain in the Isingiro and Bunyangabo districts will serve as future multipliers for knowledge, skills, and tools.

Subsequent to the participatory selection of interventions by researchers and stakeholders, the STEP-UP project included a series of workshops to analyse the perceptions of identified key regional actors. The FoPIA methodology was used prior to and after their implementation to assess possible impacts on the local economic, social and ecological systems as well on food security. Understanding the differences between the participants' perspectives was key to further developing interventions to stabilise and enhance food security while strengthening gender and generational equity.

---

**Project:** Sustainable Transition to Entrepreneurial Production in Agriculture through Upgrading (STEP-UP) **Term:** 2018–2022 **Funding agency:** EU, BLE **Lead at ZALF:** Götz Uckert (uckert@zalf.de) **Partners:** WUR, JKUAT, NETFUND, EA, NARO, Solidaridad, IITA  
<http://envalert.org/step-up/>  
<https://susland.zalf.de/step-up/>