



INTERNATIONAL
FOUNDATION FOR
SCIENCE



RESEARCH
PROGRAM ON
Policies,
Institutions
and Markets



RESEARCH PROGRAM ON
Climate Change,
Agriculture and
Food Security



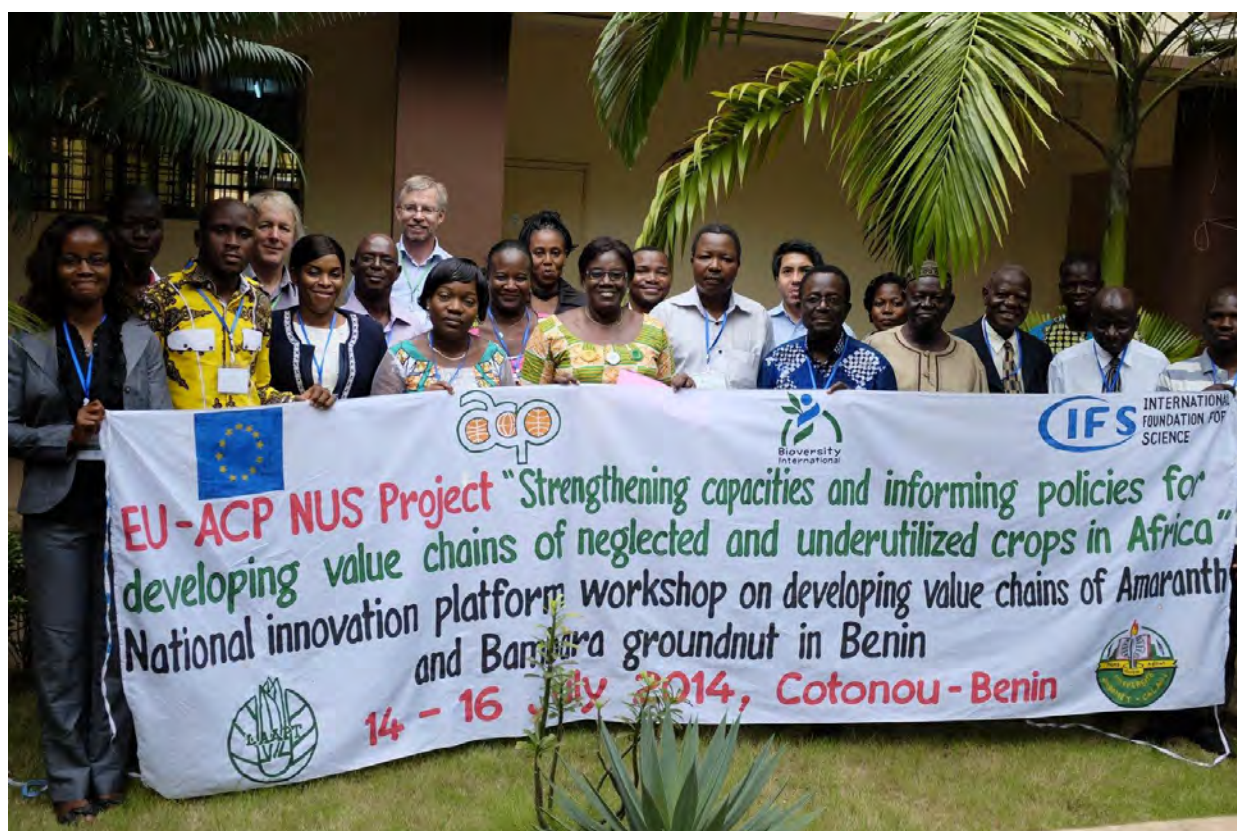
Strengthening capacities and informing policies for developing value chains of neglected and underutilized crops in Africa

ACP Science & Technology Programme

Contract number: FED/2013/330-241

Project duration: 36 months, 1/1/2014 - 31/12/2016

COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY PLAN



CONTENT

Introduction	3
General Communication Strategy	4
1. Overall communication objectives	4
2. Target groups	4
3. Specific objectives for each target group	5
Communication activities	6
4. Main activities	6
5. Communication tools	7
Indicators of achievement	9
6. Completion of communication objectives	9
7. Provisions for feedback	10
Resources	10
8. Human resources	10
9. Financial resources	10

INTRODUCTION

Neglected and underutilized species (NUS), also known as minor or 'orphan' crops, can help address global issues such as reducing hunger and poverty, and adapting to climate change. Typically, the consumption and hence production of such crops, including Bambara groundnut and amaranth, are constrained by low consumer awareness and weak policy support. Good communication and awareness among stakeholders — value chain actors from producers to consumers, as well as service providers, researchers and policy makers — is needed to successfully upgrade value chains of such crops. And to develop capacity for the longer term, the higher education system would need to pay more attention to NUS crops, alongside the main commodities and staple crops.

The project '**Strengthening capacities and informing policies for developing value chains of neglected and underutilised crops in Africa**', implemented by a European – African partnership¹ during 2014-2016, is therefore putting emphasis on communication and visibility. The project is supported by the ACP Science & Technology Programme, implemented by the ACP Secretariat and funded by the European Union, with co-financing from project partners and the CGIAR Research Programmes on Policies Institutions and Markets (PIM) and Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS).

This communication and visibility plan, developed in Year 1, to be further refined in subsequent years, contributes in particular to achieving **Project Result 4. Strategies, tools and methods for strengthening NUS research, education and policy communicated to stakeholders**. The plan is developed jointly by the project partners and will be implemented in collaboration with three associate organisations², as well as other like-minded organizations. This plan also contributes to broader EU efforts to diversify our food system sustainably.

Neglected and underutilised species (NUS) are increasingly recognized for the role they play for food and agriculture. They offer niche markets and income opportunities for resource-poor farmers. They can contribute to better nutrition and provide options for climate change adaptation. But these crops are often marginalized in agricultural research, extension, education and policy. Consumer awareness tends to be weak, partly because they are considered 'poor man's crops'. Effective communication about the role and potential of NUS can help changing society's perception of NUS crops, trees and animals, and contribute to increasing their consumption, which in turn will enhance production and processing, and as a result help diversifying agriculture and food systems.

This was also emphasized in the recommendations from the 3rd International Conference on Neglected and Underutilized Species, held in Accra, Ghana in 2013, with co-financing from EU-ACP: One of the recommendations was to '*Promote the cultivation of NUS through campaigns to*

¹ Bioversity International, Italy; African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE), Kenya; International Foundation for Science (IFS), Sweden; Laboratoire d'Agrobiodiversité et Amélioration des Plantes Tropicales (LAAPT) - Université d'Abomey-Calavi, Benin; University of Nairobi, Kenya; Africa University, Zimbabwe.

² Excel Hort Consult Ltd, Uganda, Global Horticulture Initiative (GlobalHort), Germany, and the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD). Senegal.

raise awareness of the commercial opportunities they offer and their agronomic and nutritional benefits'

With focus on **two 'model crops'** – Bambara groundnut and amaranth (grain and vegetable) – the project is working with national stakeholders in developing National Action Plans for value chain upgrading of these two crops.

The project operates in **three countries** – Benin, Kenya and Zimbabwe – which also serve as sub-regional hubs for capacity development, policy information and dialogue on higher education. Lessons learned in the focus countries will be shared in the respective sub-region: Eastern, Western and Southern Africa.

The project has **four results**:

1. National action plans for value chain upgrading of Bambara nut and amaranth
2. Strategies and tools for integrating NUS into higher agricultural education
3. Enhanced capacity in three African sub-regions to design value chain research, and to communicate results
4. Strategies, tools and methods for strengthening NUS research, education and policy communicated

This communication and visibility plan will contribute to all four results, with particular emphasis on result 4.

GENERAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

1. Overall communication objectives

The project has three communication objectives:

1. Contribute to better research, education and policy for value chain enhancement of NUS crops, in particular Bambara groundnut and amaranth.
2. Create broader awareness about the EU-ACP S&T support to agricultural diversification in general and NUS value chains in particular.
3. Keep the project stakeholders informed about the project activities, outputs and outcomes, and stimulate dialogue.

2. Target groups

The project's communication will aim at **three main target groups**, for whom activities and results of this project would be of interest and who would benefit from using specific project products:

- Value chain stakeholders: individuals and organizations involved in the value chains of amaranth and Bambara groundnut, including the private sector – supermarkets, gross retailers and restaurant chefs, in the three target countries: Benin, Kenya and Zimbabwe.

The starting point for this communication is the participants attending three national stakeholder workshops, one per country, held in Year 1. (Further precise detail on target groups and communications tools for each will be added in Version 2 of this plan, as the National Action Plans for value chain upgrading are becoming available).

- Academia: Scientists, especially young scientists, interested in NUS, including lecturers and students in agricultural universities and technical college, in the three sub-regions West Africa, Eastern Africa and Southern Africa.

A mixed set of media will be used for this target group, including both traditional and social media. The mix will be designed according to the specific nature of each event or result in need of communication.

- Policy makers and their advisers at national and regional levels.

The project partners and associate organizations will use a range of available channels, including presence at international events, and tools such as policy briefs to keep this target group aware of project results and informing them about general issues confronting NUS development.

A fourth target group is internal to the project, to facilitate communication and knowledge sharing between project partners and associates and participants directly involved in various project actions.

3. Specific objectives for each target group

Value chain stakeholders

- Continuously update project stakeholders on project activities, processes and share documents and resources developed by project partners
- Support the implement of National Action Plans for value chains development of amaranth and Bambara groundnut in project countries
- Strengthen the networks of actors, facilitators and supporting organizations
- Promote amaranth and Bambara groundnut among consumers, processors and producers

Academia

- Communicate strategies, tools and methods for strengthening NUS research and education
- Provide learning resources and curriculum guidelines for NUS value chain upgrading
- Share knowledge on global efforts and initiative related to target crops

Policy makers

- Communicate strategies, tools and methods for strengthening NUS research, education and policies

Internal

- Effectively implement the project and share its outputs and lessons learned.

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

4. Main activities

The main communication activities will focus on:

- Digital communication making contents available in formats appropriate for the selected target groups on websites and other online channels (Newsletter, publications available online, social media channels: twitter, facebook, YouTube and Flickr).
- Publicity in connection with project activities, including reaching out to relevant ministries/government units, media interaction, promotion materials, etc.
- Publication of project outputs in printed and on-line formats, and promotion of these.

The project's coordination meetings will provide a general oversight of the communication activities. Broadly, the roles and responsibilities will be divided among the project partners in the following way:

Table 1. Roles and responsibilities for communication activities

Partner	Roles and responsibilities
Bioversity International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate the project's website social media, newsletter • Link to websites of organizations mentioned in the 'other websites' section • Liaise with international organizations such as Crops For the Future Research Centre (CFFRC), Yong Professional for Agricultural Development (YPARD), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Vegetable Centre (AVDRC) and the World Agroforestry Centre • Link with the CGIAR Research Programme on Policies, Institutions and Markets
National partners: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laboratoire d'Agrobiodiversité et Amélioration des Plantes Tropicales (LAAPT), Benin • University of Nairobi, Kenya • Africa University, Zimbabwe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to own organization's websites • Inform national and regional policies (through publication of policy briefs, national action plans, conferences, etc.) • Promotion of project actions in the respective country • Develop press releases and media coverage of project events
African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education (ANAFE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to own organization's websites • Communicate with the higher agricultural education system in Africa • Communicate with Forum for Agriculture Research in Africa (FARA)
International Foundation for Science (IFS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to own organization's websites • Communicate with young scientists
Associate organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excel Hort Consult, Uganda • Global Horticulture Initiative (GlobalHort), Belgium • The West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to own organization's websites • Forward project communications products to their respective communities

5. Communication tools

National and international media

The project partners will seek to invite representatives of the national and international media to key meetings/workshops and keep them informed on the project activities and outcomes to provide coverage. Press releases will be issued at key moments of the project implementation.

Social media

The project will build on the existing social media channels of the NUS Community:

- Twitter @NUS_Community
- Flickr account for photographs
- Youtube channel for videos
- RSS feed

For information and updates on activities related to capacity development, the twitter channel @BioversityLearn will also be used.

Newsletter and mass-mailing

A project newsletter will be published at least twice a year for electronic mass-distribution.

Following the third International Conference on Neglected and Underutilized Species (NUS 2013) in Ghana, a mailing list of over 800 contacts was gathered. This database is being expanded with new contacts established in the current project, including applicants and participants of training courses and other events. Information on all relevant events and products of the project will be sent to this mailing list, using MailChimp. A subscription form is also available on the website.

Project webpage

A project webpage is launched in Jan 2015, hosted at the NUS community website www.nuscommunity.org, a wider platform for information on NUS research and development, managed by Bioversity International.

This hosting arrangement ensures that: a) project activities and outputs reach a broad audience; b) the scope of the project is put into a wider context of research, development, capacity development and policy action on neglected and underutilized species that has been carried out over 20 years, and ; c) the content remains visible beyond the life-span of the project, and; d) website management is more efficient, making a better use of the project's communications budget.

The project website will feature the following sections: 1) Main project landing page which includes a general description of the scope and objectives, plus navigation functions; 2) Partner page which distinguishes between donors, implementing partners and associated organizations; 3) Value chains page which briefly describes the main activities in that area of work; 4) NUS in higher education page; 5) Enhanced capacity and training courses page; 6) Policy advocacy and awareness page which includes our communication and visibility plan, and links to public awareness resources and mentions in media; 6) Bambara groundnut page; 7) Amaranth page.

Project partners' and associate organizations websites

Project activities and results will also be reported on the websites of the project partners and associate organizations:

- [Africa University](#), Zimbabwe
- [African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education \(ANAFE\)](#), Kenya
- [Bioversity International](#), Rome
- [CORAF/WECARD](#)
- [Exel Hort Consult Ltd.](#)
- [Global Horticulture Initiative](#)
- [International Foundation for Science](#) (IFS), Sweden
- Laboratory of Agricultural Biodiversity and Tropical Plant Breeding (LAAPT), Benin
- [University of Nairobi](#), Kenya

Other websites

We also collaborate with the communications offices of a number of like-minded organizations with an interest in diversifying agricultural and food systems and in upgrading value chains of underutilised crops, including:

- African Orphan Crops Initiative
- [Crops For the Future Research Centre](#) (CFFRC), Malaysia, including its BamNetwork, a research community website for Bambara groundnut research www.bambaragroundnut.org
- The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), regarding value chain upgrading strategies
- The European Union
- The ACP Group of States
- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- The Global Forum for Agriculture Research (GFAR) and Young Professionals for Young Professionals for Agricultural Development YPARD. GFAR has access to platforms such as YPARD to spread the information to young researchers involved in agricultural development studies
- [AVRDC-The World Vegetable Center](#), including their programme on seed systems research

Conferences and meetings

The project partners will attend a range of national and international conferences and meetings, in which project-related information and products will be shared.

In particular, a side-event at an African international conference/meeting will be organized in Year 3, coordinated by ANAFE.

The list of conferences and meetings to cover will be developed on a year-to-year basis, as opportunities arise.

Graphic profile

All communication and visibility products shall include the logos of ACP Science & Technology Programme (the Programme implementer), the ACP Group of States, and the European Union (the funder). The placement of these logos should follow the programme's graphic profile:



Communications products should also include logos of project partners, as appropriated, all of whom also co-finance the project.

Finally, the logo of the CGIAR Research Programmes on Policies Institutions and Markets (PIM), and on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CAAFS), both of which co-finance the Action, should be included.

A 'mega logo' has been developed for this purpose, shown at the cover of this Plan.

INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

6. Completion of communication objectives

Monitoring

The implementation of the communication and visibility plan will be monitored by the project's partners. It will be a standing agenda at project co-ordination meetings, and a topic during face-to-face meetings during the second and third year.

Publications

The project plans to publish the following publications, reports and other materials.

- Report, National study in Zimbabwe (Year 1)
- Three national Action Plans on Bambara and amaranth value chains, for Benin, Kenya and Zimbabwe, respectively (Year 2)
- Three policy briefs on different topics (Year 3)
- Workshop report curriculum development workshop (Year 3)
- Curriculum guidelines for NUS education (in English and French) (Year 3)
- Learning material on NUS value chain upgrading (Year 3)
- Newsletter (yearly)

Indicators

We will be using a number of indicators to track the achievements of the communication objectives, including:

- **Quantitative indicators** of the online outreach - there are **tracking tools** in place for each of the digital communication channels (Google analytics for the website, mailchimp for email campaigns, twitter counter for twitter)
- **Number of mentions** in the media and on the other websites

- Research engagement in policy processes (**number of mentions** of NUS in the policy forums , documents and processes)
- **Qualitative feedback** from internal and external stakeholders on the impact that the project had on amaranth and Bambara groundnut research and development

7. Provisions for feedback

We will gather opinions through the website comments, responses to email campaigns and by sending out additional questionnaires that will be developed towards the end of the project.

RESOURCES

8. Human resources

All partners contribute part of their staff time towards the project's communications activities.

Bioversity International's Communication Officer will be responsible for coordinating and the plan, and managing the website and social media.

ANAFE's Communications Officer will, in particular, help developing materials for the education component, and will communicate project opportunities and results with ANAFE's network of 134 universities and technical colleges in Africa.

9. Financial resources

The following budget lines are dedicated to communication and visibility actions. In addition, all partners contribute part of their staff time to such actions.

Budget item	Cost (EUR) All years	Comment
1.1.2.10 ANAFE Communications officer 5% of time	3,821.40	
1.1.2.14 Bioversity, Communication Officer 2.44%	5,149.03	
5.1.1 Report, National study in Zimbabwe	3,000.00	
5.1.2 National Action Plan, Benin	3,000.00	
5.1.3 National Action Plan, Kenya	3,000.00	
5.1.4 National Action Plan, Zimbabwe	3,000.00	
5.1.5 Policy briefs, West Africa (Benin)	2,500.00	
5.1.6 Policy briefs, Eastern Africa (Kenya)	2,500.00	
5.1.7 Policy briefs, Southern Africa (Zimbabwe)	2,500.00	
5.1.8 Workshop report curriculum development workshop (ANAFE)	4,000.00	
5.1.9 Curriculum guide (ANAFE)	6,000.00	
5.1.10 Curriculum guide French (ANAFE)	4,000.00	
5.5.1 Curriculum guide (Translation) French (ANAFE)	2,000.00	
5.8.1 Bioversity web-based project communication	3,600.00	
5.8.2 ANAFE web-based project communication	3,600.00	
5.8.3 IFS web-based project communication	3,600.00	
5.8.4 Communication of curriculum guide, Benin ³	2,000.00	Proposed
5.8.5 Communication of curriculum guide, Kenya ³	2,000.00	Proposed
5.8.6 Communication of curriculum guide, Zimbabwe ³	2,000.00	Proposed

³ Budget adjustment agreed at the project's Inception Workshop. Funds re-allocated from budget item 5.5.2 Simultaneous interpretation courses in West Africa (Benin) (EUR 6000), which was deemed unnecessary.