



Improving marketing strategies in Western and Central Africa

Cassava is one of the world's most important food crops. Throughout the tropics, the plant's root and leaves serve as an essential source of calories and income. About 600 million people in Africa, Asia and Latin America depend on the cassava crop for their food and incomes.

In Africa cassava production has more than tripled since 1961 from 33 million tonnes per year to 101 million tonnes. In countries like Nigeria and Ghana, wide adoption of high-yielding varieties and better pest management have resulted in a sharp rise in production. Marketing cassava presents some unique challenges. Cassava is a year-round crop, with production levels that are steady but small. It is also a perishable and bulky product, which makes it very costly to transport without some initial processing.

Poor subsistence farmers are the main growers of cassava, and women are largely responsible for the work of processing it to make gari, fufu, tapioca and other products. The uses of cassava are expanding, as further processing can produce chips, pellets, flour, alcohol and starch. A wide range of industries use cassava in the production of livestock feed, textiles, confections, plywood and soft drinks.

Many rural development efforts in Western and Central Africa have focused on how to improve poor farmers' yields. But better yields have not always translated into greater incomes. As the use of cassava has grown, the role of efficient markets and a better coordinated cassava chain have become increasingly important to producers and processors who depend on a stable cassava sector for income.

IFAD has made consistent efforts to:

- increase the focus of its cassava initiatives to determine the best ways to link supply and demand
- strengthen the integration of participants operating within the cassava chains
- increase the added value of processed cassava roots
- open up new market outlets for cassava derivatives

IFAD has invested a total amount of about US\$110.0 million in the cassava value chains in the four major producer countries in Western and Central Africa: Benin, Cameroon, Ghana and Nigeria. IFAD also launched a US\$1.3 million regional initiative on cassava processing and marketing that was financed through Italian Supplementary Funds. Under the initiative, IFAD set up a number of partnerships with regional and national research institutions and the private sector, and has organized several learning events, such as study tours within and outside of the region, as well as workshops and training exercises.

IFAD roots and tubers programmes in Western and Central Africa

Total number of projects and initiatives: 5

Total financing: US\$106.0 million

Total financing from IFAD: US\$69.3 million

Directly benefiting: about 1,646,000 households

BENIN

Roots and Tubers Development Programme

Roots and tubers account for two thirds of the country's annual food output, and cassava accounts for more than 50 per cent of the crop in the four agro-ecological areas of the country where farmers cultivate roots and tubers. The overall objective of this IFAD-initiated programme is to increase the incomes of the most vulnerable rural people by improving the production, processing and marketing of roots and tubers. The programme gives special attention to the activities of women, who constitute more than 90 per cent of all processors. The people who benefit directly from programme include approximately 15,000 small farmers, 10,000 women processors and 1,600 school dropouts in 312 villages. Women have a major role in the subsector. They do more than 85 per cent of the processing at the village level, and they also dominate trade. The programme strengthens women's organizations and facilitates their access to labour-saving technologies, training and credit.

Lack of the information and knowledge necessary for decision-making and lack of access to needed services are root causes of poverty. The programme addresses these constraints through a focus on market knowledge, animation, information, education and communication. Other innovative features include emphasis on enhancing security of access to land as an incentive for recommended soil fertility and protection investments, and adoption of an advisory services approach as an alternative to public services. The programme also works through memoranda of understanding, networking and exchange visits to develop linkages to other roots and tubers programmes developed by IFAD in Nigeria and Ghana. It has undertaken a regional market study on cassava and has organized workshops. The programme has established strong partnerships with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) through linkages with an IFAD grant-financed programme for the dissemination of improved cassava and yam technologies.

Up to now, a year before the programme closes, efforts to improve productivity have led to an important increase in cassava and yam production, which has contributed to food security and a sustainable increase in poor rural people's incomes. Despite significant progress in processing and marketing, some problems remain, principally because of insufficient access to medium-term credit. Support to grass-roots institutions has had an important role in laying the foundation for capacity building and sustainable reinforcement both of grass-roots institutions and local public entities. Key assets for sustainable development of the chain are the adoption of a national policy for roots and tubers promotion, the establishment of apex organizations and the beginnings of industrial processing for some cassava by-products such as alcohol, biofuel and bread flour.

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Total cost: US\$19.3 million

IFAD loan: US\$13.1 million

Duration: 2001-2008

Geographical area: nationwide

**Directly benefiting:
40,000 households**

**Cofinancing: West African
Development Bank (BOAD)**

CAMEROON

Roots and Tubers Market-Driven Development Programme

In Cameroon, roots and tubers account for 70 per cent of the total cultivated area and 46 per cent of food crop production. Women represent 90 per cent of the country's roots and tubers producers and small-scale processors. Eighty per cent of urban households consume cassava products on a daily basis, and about 90 per cent of small-scale producers market at least a small part of their production.

The aim of the programme is to support the organization of roots and tubers farmers at the village and regional levels. The programme provides financial assistance for activities that build and strengthen the capacities of farmers and processors to enhance their access to markets, by establishing a market information system owned and managed by them and by improving processing technologies and farming systems. The programme provides resources for constructing and maintaining rural roads and markets, for setting up a sustainable seed production and distribution system, and for supporting the development of micro-enterprises. It has also put in place a roots and tubers development fund to enable programme participants to tap into technical assistance for training and for designing business plans.

Total cost: US\$21.7 million

IFAD loan: US\$13.1 million

Duration: 2004-2013

**Geographical area: the northern
part of the country, Plateaux
de l'Adamaoua, Hauts Plateaux
de l'Ouest, Basses Terres
Côtieres and Plateau du Sud**

**Directly benefiting:
120,000 households**

The programme's innovative features include a market-driven approach that integrates production, processing and distribution issues into a common framework. The project also supports the development of network linkages among the three IFAD-funded roots and tubers projects in the subregion.

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GHANA

Root and Tuber Improvement and Marketing Programme

The programme's development goal is to enhance the food security and incomes of poor rural households in Ghana, with special emphasis on women and other vulnerable groups.

The specific objective of the programme is to build up competitive, market-based and inclusive commodity chains for roots and tubers, ensuring that they are supported by relevant, effective and sustainable services that are accessible to the rural poor.

The programme will support the emergence of an inclusive private sector that is deeply anchored in the realities of Ghana, and a stronger public sector capable of improving the policy and regulatory environment and delivering the required public goods.

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NIGERIA

Roots and Tubers Expansion Programme

The IFAD-initiated programme builds on the achievements of the earlier IFAD-supported Cassava Multiplication Programme. That programme contributed to a two-fold increase in cassava production in less than eight years and enhanced the potential role of cassava and other root crops in raising the country's food self-sufficiency level. The overall objectives of this programme are to enhance national food self-sufficiency and improve rural food security and the incomes of poor farmers. The project works to:

- increase production of cassava, yam and Irish potatoes
- adopt improved processing technology
- educate farmers about adequate storage methods
- increase support for and training in marketing activities

About 3.2 million farming households are estimated to be in the roots and tubers growing belt.

The programme's principal target group comprises smallholders who generally have less than 2 hectares of land per household. The smallholders live in 18 states in the southern and middle belt. The poorest farmers have households that are less than average in size, with limited labour. They have no access to fertilizer or credit, which results in low crop yields. They have no marketable surplus and a strong dependence on low-income, off-farm activities for economic survival. Women, who are the traditional processors of cassava, will particularly benefit from programme activities.

Building on the experience gained from the Cassava Multiplication Programme, the programme includes activities to:

- expand the scope of IFAD interventions to support the production of roots and tubers
- use the existing extension system to provide farmers with information relating to on-farm, off-farm and conservation-oriented technologies, while exploring alternative approaches, such as the community-based approach to dissemination of the information
- emphasize poverty-oriented packages, including measures to maintain soil fertility for smallholders who face land and labour constraints
- combine the IFAD loan with other financial resources to encourage partnerships between government agencies and civil-society organizations, such as NGOs and community-based organizations specializing in agricultural training for farmers and food processors, to work towards long-term sustainability

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Total cost: US\$27.6 million
IFAD loan: US\$18.7 million
Duration: 2006-2014
Geographical area: nationwide
Directly benefiting:
180,000 households

Total cost: US\$36.1 million
IFAD loan: US\$23.1 million
Duration: 2001-2010
Geographical area: 25 states in the roots and tubers growing belt
Directly benefiting:
560,000 households

Regional Cassava Processing and Marketing Initiative

IFAD has launched the Regional Cassava Processing and Marketing Initiative (RCPMI) for Western and Central Africa as a response to the call of African leaders, through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), to give priority to cassava in regional agricultural development strategies. The RCPMI started its activities in March 2007.

The objectives of the RCPMI, which is totally funded by the Government of Italy, are to:

- maximize cross-fertilization among IFAD projects through both loans and grants in the area of cassava processing and marketing
- develop new markets for both existing and new cassava products
- enhance policy dialogue at the national and regional level to support cassava industry development efforts

To achieve these goals, the RCPMI will implement activities to:

- develop markets for existing and new products
- identify the best processing technologies and good practices within and beyond the region, and adapt them to local environment and practices
- increase integration of participants into the cassava chain
- promote policy dialogue with regional and national policymakers, building new partnerships or consolidating existing ones
- strengthen mechanisms for exchanging cassava market and technological information through use of the Fidafrique network

Activities will be implemented in the context of and jointly with the four IFAD-funded Roots & Tubers (R&T) programmes.

The expected outputs of the regional initiative are:

- upgrading the production and trade of traditional cassava products in Western and Central Africa and developing new cassava derivatives for human and/or animal consumption
- achieving increased integration of participants into the cassava chain throughout the region
- investigating and securing new markets for cassava derivatives both at the national and regional level and at the level of export markets, such as ethnic markets within the countries of the European Union
- fostering the exchange of know-how and good practices related to cassava production, processing and marketing throughout the region
- providing guidance in the selection and development of market and trade information platforms and systems for the four roots and tubers programmes under implementation within the region
- fostering advocacy and policy dialogue on cassava-related matters among and with national and regional institutions and organizations
- organizing yearly meetings of the various IFAD-funded roots and tubers projects in Western and Central Africa.

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Total cost: US\$1.3 million

Source of funds: Government of Italy

Duration: 2007-2009

Geographical area: Western and Central Africa (WCA)



Enabling poor rural people
to overcome poverty

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