

IITA and partners commended for EU-AU project by donors

[IITA](#) and other Long-term EU-AU Research and Innovation Partnership for Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture ([LEAP4FNSSA](#)) project partners—the [Association of Commonwealth University](#) (ACU) and [Greenwich University Natural Resource Institute](#), UK—conducted an impact and value-addition assessment study in Belgium, France, Germany, Kenya, and Uganda between June and July 2022. [to page 3](#)



The team at the Dairy Cooperative in Bomet.

State Secretary of the Ministry of International Development for Norway visits the BSF project



The State Secretary of the Ministry of International Development for Norway, Bjorg Sandkjaer, paid a working visit to the Accra office of the [IITA](#) to engage with scientists and the team working on the Black Soldier Fly (BSF) project.

The BSF project, funded by the government of Norway through the [Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation](#) (NORAD), aims to develop and provide protein meals for fish and chicken farmers and organic fertilizers for smallholder crop farmers through recycled organic waste.

Accompanied by the Norwegian Ambassador to Ghana, Ingrid Mollestad, the State Secretary, Ingrid Mollestad, toured the “Black Soldier Fly village,” which was set up by the [IITA](#)-Ghana team to enable the State Secretary to familiarize herself with the project’s objectives and activities.

Dr Rousseau Djouaka shows the State Secretary live BSF larvae.

During the visit, Dr Rousseau Djouaka, the coordinator of the BSF project, acknowledged the technical support provided by Professor Michael Abberton, Director of IITA West Africa Hub, and Dr Tahirou Abdoulaye, Director of IITA Sahel Hub, towards making the State Secretary's visit possible. He said that the BSF larvae technology is a cost-effective and self-sustained way to process biowaste.

BSF larvae help break down organic matter and is thus used in composting agricultural waste products or food scraps. They are also used as an alternative source of protein for feeds.

Djouaka explained that the project is working towards constructing three BSF mass production units in Ghana, Mali, and Niger to breed and transform dried BSF larvae into pelleted animal feeds. The units will also produce quality organic fertilizers—BSF frass—to boost plant production in the three countries.

"The units will serve as training centers for young people who want to venture into the BSF waste recycling business," he added.

Addressing the project team, the State Secretary expressed her excitement about the project. She emphasized that the project's objectives align with Norway's commitment to sustainable food production and food security. *Contributed by Reginald Kyere*



Top: Dr Rousseau Djouaka (right) and the State Secretary pose in front of the "BSF village". Bottom: The State Secretary in a group picture with the Norwegian ambassador and project coordinators of the BSF project, CocoaSoils Project, and the Sustainable Soyabean Production in Northern Ghana (SSPING) project.

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Take responsibility! Stop the spread of COVID-19!

Always clean your hands; practice physical and social distancing; wear face masks properly; avoid crowds and public places; keep a 2-meter distance from the next person; and practice general sanitation and hygiene.

The study documented the impact of using research, science, and innovation generated by the partnership between African and European research and academic institutions on improving livelihoods and development outcomes of beneficiaries, including farmers, farmers' networks and associations, NGOs, and the organized private sector. The study also supported the overall objective of the LEAP4FNSSA project and delivered a sustainable structure or "Platform."

The activity involved developing impact pathway timelines for 11 projects in countries visited and data gathering from farmers, and the private sector, including manufacturers' associations, NGOs, and farmer groups and associations. The 11 projects selected were ServInno, Innofood Africa, Entoeconomy, ATM4FS, MUSBCEA, UPSCALE, Tuta Absoluta, AFRICA Milk, CASSANRDA, SmallFish Food, and Mung4FE, across the five countries. These beneficiaries and multi-stakeholder actors/committees were involved in various research initiatives.

During the exercise, the study team visited five districts (Wakiso, Jinja, Soroti, Lira, Kampala), and 10 villages/parishes in Uganda; three counties (Kisumu, Kiambu, Bomet) and sub-counties in Kenya, and two organizations in Montpellier. Eleven principal investigators, two co-investigators, and several work package leads were interviewed in several departments at [Makerere University](#), Uganda, [University of](#)

[Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology](#), Nairobi, [icipe](#), and [Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation](#) (KARLO), [Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute](#), and [Lake Victoria Basin Commission](#).

The team interacted with several government officials from the [National Agricultural Research Organisation](#) (NARO), Uganda, and its several associated agencies, such as National Semi-Arid Research Institute in Serere, National Cereal Crops Research Institute in Namulonge, National Fisheries Resources Research Institute in Jinja, National Agricultural Research Laboratories (NARL), Uganda. In Kenya, the team attended a field day in Juja sub-county, Kisumu, and Bomet, visited a milk collection center owned by a dairy cooperative, interacted with officials of Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Services (KEPHIS), and county and district agricultural/animal health extension officers in Kenya and Uganda.

In Montpellier and Paris, the team attended the Africa Milk project workshop and interviewed the former coordinator of the LEAP4FNSSA project from CIRAD, the coordinator of the LEAP Agric and FOSC projects at Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR), and European counterparts of the 11 projects for Bonn, Hannover Hohenheim, Göttingen in Germany; Liege, Leuven in Belgium; Montpellier, Avignon-INREA in France, and EU and AU focal persons for LEAP4FNSSA.

Moreover, they participated in writing the preliminary report presented at the LEAP4FNSSA stakeholders' engagement workshop in Brussels.

The focus of the impact assessment was to provide descriptions of FNSSA Partnership outcomes, causal factors, and pathways of contributions developed through 12 in-depth case studies of the FNSSA Partnership project impact in five countries.

The study interviewed 132 agricultural stakeholders (40 females and 92 males) in Belgium, France, Germany, Kenya, and Uganda. The stakeholders interviewed include donors, researchers, farmers, NGOs, national agricultural research systems (NARS), seed producers, and processors.

The initial findings revealed how co-design and co-creation of research, science, and innovation have improved production and productivity of crops and livestock systems.

The preliminary results of the study were well received by the EU and AU and have contributed to the development of the new initiative International Research Consortium (IRC), planned by the EU and AU. Following the presentation of findings at the IRC stakeholder engagement meeting in Brussels, the EU Commission encouraged the IITA-CGIAR team and partners to continue to work on this kind of impact analysis. At the same time, they added that the findings can feed into the innovation scaling that the Commission is planning to implement. *Contributed by Oyewale Abioye*



The study team carrying out an FGD with residents of a rural community in Uganda.

Researchers assess impact of COVID-19 pandemic in DRC for intervention purposes

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, cases and deaths were concentrated in large urban centers. However, with time, rural communities also began to bear a higher burden from the virus' impact.



Front page of the published study.

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As part of efforts to find possible solutions to these burdens, researchers from [IITA](#) and [Cellule d'Analyses des Indicateurs de Développement \(CAID\)](#) conducted an in-depth [study](#) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to assess COVID-19's impact

on gender equality, youth, and social inclusion within households, during the early days of the pandemic. The researchers chose Kwilu, Kwango, Kongo Central, and Kinshasa in western DRC, areas that were more exposed to the virus and accounted

for 68% of the total 54,193 cases by 2 August 2021.

In 82.1% of households across the four communities, the household head and their spouse were interviewed, and where possible, two people within households were separately interviewed. In the remaining households, different household members were interviewed, such as the household head and their brother/sister or the spouse and her/his child.

Key findings from the study suggested that fewer job and business opportunities were available for women and youth during the early stages of the pandemic. Changes in payments received for work and people's group participation were relatively minor. Also, the ability of people to move outside of their communities was heavily constrained during the reference period, resulting in increased participation in household chores for some people while it decreased for others. There was also a decline in sexual and reproductive health care services during this period.

From the interview, almost one-third of the respondents indicated a reduced amount of food allocated to household members during the reference period primarily due to COVID-19. Also, more women than men felt they had no voice in addressing COVID-19 issues in their communities.

Generally, the responses to most of the survey questions did not differ significantly between husbands and wives. The similar responses are partly due to the restricted movement outside the community by both respondents during the reference period, as they were more often together to observe the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic at the household level.

One of the researchers, [Steven Cole](#), IITA Senior Scientist and Gender Specialist, explained that the result from the study is the first of its kind and creates a point of reference for future studies to compare if conditions from the COVID-19 pandemic changed or remained similar in rural areas.

Contributed by Favour Eleta

Tapping into the cowpea value chain in Zambia

For a country with a population of over 19 million, the existing gaps in Zambia's food system from production to consumption, especially in knowledge and output records, have a considerable effect on the agricultural value chain.

Hence, the need to incorporate a variety of crops within the food system to complement other crops such as maize. Cowpea is a vital legume crop for Zambia that can help improve nutrient intake and contribute to climate-smart and sustainable agricultural practices within local communities.

As part of efforts to assemble pertinent information on cowpea and its value chain components in Zambia, a review titled, "[Situational analyses on cowpea value chain in Zambia: the case of an untapped legume](#)" was carried out. The review analysis was done by 10 scientists from six institutes in Southern Africa, including [IITA-CGIAR's](#) Southern Africa, Research and Administration Hub (SARAH) Campus, and covered crop breeding, production, marketing, processing, and consumption as well as salient issues not often discussed on cowpea.

Cowpea, commonly known as the black-eyed pea, is a major legume crop for Zambia's urban and rural

households used as human and animal food. It is also a component of the agricultural production system, which improves the fertility of many depleted soils because of its ability to fix atmospheric nitrogen. It is relatively drought-tolerant and thrives in semi-arid regions of the tropics where other food legumes do not perform well.

Despite the valuable characteristics of cowpea, the crop's value chain in Zambia has a wide range of aspects that need to be addressed, such as delay in the release of varieties, low yield, and lack of clean seeds. To address these issues, IITA-CGIAR focuses on strengthening the cowpea value chain, addressing nutrition, and combatting food insecurity using cutting-edge research and technologies being disseminated across Africa.

According to the review, agricultural policies that promote cowpea production and use and integrating a variety of crops within the food system to improve nutrient intake, among other

relevant issues, would go a long way to improve livelihoods and well-being of millions in Zambia.

Local research tends to focus on high-yielding cowpea cultivar and germplasm development. The review recommends further studies on other important traits and improved methods of variety development that are vital to cowpea research programs. Breeding efforts should focus on climate resilience, pests, diseases, water (drought tolerance), and nutrient-use efficiency. In addition, end-user preferences should be a basis for variety selection to meet their needs and other industrial uses of cowpea. Similarly, potential markets need to be identified as these are potential production, consumption, and use boosters.

About 390,000 tons of cowpea is consumed in Africa. It is a crop worth investing and promoting in Zambia, hence public-private partnerships, especially with research institutes, should develop appropriate, affordable, and simple cowpea farming and utilization technologies. The accessibility and use of these simple technologies would significantly strengthen the cowpea value chain in the country. *Contributed by Timilehin Osunde.*



Left: Women threshers with dried cowpea in pods. Right: Different cowpea varieties on display in a market.