Grant Title: Scaling up African baobab food products valuation through enhancement of their safety and value chains for food and nutritional security in Benin (West-Africa)

Grant ID: RU/2018/CARP+/01

Reporting period: March-August 2018

I. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED AND MAIN OUTPUTS

Objective 1: Diagnosis and mapping of the baobab value chains

Activity 1.1: Inception meeting

- Methodological adjustments for an effective implementation of the project
- An operational framework was drawn for the project by setting up sub-teams with specific actions to implement
- Recruitment of students to train in the project (1 PhD, 3 MSc and 10 TVET students)

Activity 1.2: Collaborative mapping of the baobab products value chain

- Data collection tools developed and deployed;
- Data collection in progress (80%) through the country
- By October 2018, data analyses will be completed and the collaborative map will be available

Activity 1.3: Assessment of the economic potential and environment of the baobab products VC

- Development of data collection tools (questionnaires and interview guides) in progress
- Data collection will be completed in September 2018 and outputs of this activity will be available by October 2018

Activity 1.4: Participatory assessment of opportunities & constraints for leverage points identification

Data collection tools (questionnaires and interview guides) are being developed.

Objective 2: Participative organization of actors involved in baobab value chains

The activities of this objective have not yet started but the terms of reference for the leader are currently being drafted.

Objective 3: Capacity building on market driven technological packages

Activity 3.1: Research trials (grafting and aerial marcotting) to identify best vegetative propagation methods to supply with early producing baobab tree
- Research proposal development by MSc. Student1.
- Experimentation sites identification
- Identification topics for TVETs students

Objective 4: Establishment of pilot incubators for baobab products valorisation

Although activities have not actually started, we have already get in contact with UAC Start-Up Valley (via Mr Serge ABIHONA) and agreed on how this incubation will be done. UAC Start-Up Valley is an incubator affiliated to the University of Abomey-Calavi and has recently received a Grant from RUFORUM for *"Building the capacities of agricultural students in entrepreneurship and leadership to improve their professional insertion".*

Objective 5: Assessment of the adoption of the market driven technological packages and the impact on household welfare (income, food security, conservation, etc.)

The reference study has started (Activity 5.1). In this sense, baseline data collected are being analysed. To date, diversity of baobab derived products is assessed in the 4 biggest towns (Cotonou, Abomey-Calavi, Parakou, Porto-Novo). Laboratory characterization of selected products has started and will be completed by the end of September 2018.

II- PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

Milestone / Activity	Proposed Due Date
Activity 1.2. Collaborative mapping of the baobab products value chain (continuation and completion)	September - October 2018
Activity 1.3. Assessment of the economic potential and environment of the baobab products VC (continuation and completion)	September-October 2018
Activity 1.4. Participatory assessment of opportunities & constraints for leverage points identification (continuation and completion)	September-October 2018
Activity 2.1: Co-creation of platform involving all actors	September-October 2018
Activity 2.2: Training of actors at micro, meso and macro levels involved in the baobab VC and linking actors horizontally and vertically to boost the value chain through a 3-day workshop with a baobab products fair	October 2018
Activity 3.1 Research trials (grafting and aerial marcotting) to identify best vegetative propagation methods to supply with early producing baobab tree (Proposal validation; Sites preparation and installation of research trials; Trials follow-up) Experimental production of baobab leaves and baobab grafting by TVET students	September 2018 – February 2019
Activity 5.1. Baseline data collection at the beginning of the project (continuation and completion): Consumers preferences assessment in relation with derived products; Starting product stabilization assays on selected baobab pulp and leaves derived product	September -November 2018