



Training course packages targeting food operators on the adoption and management of the technological innovations

SMART STORAGE SYSTEMS

Cold storage of mangoes

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1. FoodLAND technical innovation for local food supply chains: concepts and approaches

The FoodLAND project has the ambition to impact on a large number of supply chains and communities, hence the process of food operators' capacity development has to be tailored and as much participative as possible. Accordingly, one of the assumptions of FoodLAND is that sustainable and nutrition-responsive farming systems can be achieved basically by strengthening the capacity development, and specifically by **a)** empowering farmers and processors through the implementation of capacity building processes and concrete opportunities; **b)** creating or consolidating cooperation and shared knowledge to overcome the lack of coordination among food operators; **c)** addressing the inefficient use of resources; **d)** trying to address and build resiliency to the high vulnerability of food systems to climate change; **e)** enhancing the integration of supply chains by creating commercial and stakeholders' networks; **f)** improving the responsiveness of the production sector to the market demand.

To implement these elements of capacity development, FoodLAND proposed the adoption of specific innovations, among which the organizational ones, to create strong and responsive links between producers and encompassing all the intermediate actors along the food value chain, such as researchers, SMEs, NGOs, local and national authorities. In order to ease the creation of those links and guarantee the sustainability over time of the results, 14 Food Hubs will be created in 6 countries as part of the organizational innovations. Food Hubs are conceived as multi-actors centers of innovation where to develop or enhance the organizational and operational conditions enabling local food supply chains (D3.6).

Functional to the implementation of the Food Hubs and of the innovations, the training courses were designed – in form of capacity development activities – as a two-phase process. Firstly, a training session focused on general, preparatory



topics was provided to farmers as described and reported in D3.5 (“Group Introductory Training”, GIT). According to the project GA, GIT broad set of goals were: to enhance the knowledge of consumers’ nutritional needs and market opportunities, and to boost the notions about climate change, sustainability, resilience, and food culture. Secondly, a specific training session were organized to provide food operators with practical information on the adoption and management of the innovations tested at lab / small scale level and to contribute to validating them at appropriate scale.

However, as the whole approach has been designed by FoodLAND to ensure the inclusion of the local actors from the first moment, both the training sessions were set up accordingly. Indeed, yet in the inception phase of the project, an assessment on participatory methods has been run and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approach has been eventually assessed as the best one to ensure the inclusion of multiple perspectives. The main purpose of PLA is to support people within communities to analyze their own situation, rather than have it analyzed by outsiders, and to ensure that any learning is then translated into action (Gosling and Edwards 2003). In addition, a gender-sensitive approach has been applied to the trainings that have been designed considering gender roles and power relations; they have provided equal opportunities to participate in the process by caring to times, venues and use of local languages.

The GITs have been conceived as the first step towards the innovation validation and aim at involving the producers, yet from the inception phase. They are just the first step in a sequence of 6, summed up in **Table 1**. After the GITs, where farmers and processors meet and share their vision and goals for the Food Hubs and exchange information about specific topics, the Food Hubs were created and the innovation tested (first in pre-test, then in pilot phase). The constant iteration between researchers and local actors is a key feature of the project: specifically, the practical trainings focused the single innovations (step 5) are aimed at validating the innovations at adequate scale and planned to trigger feedback loops of control and improvement involving developers and adopters.



Table 1. Activities with farmers and food processors (SMEs) and participatory approach

Step	1	2	3	4	5	6
Task	T3.3	T3.3	T3.4	T4.1, T4.5	T5.1, T5.5	T5.1, T5.5
Activity	Group introductory training	Food Hubs creation	Innovation undertaking	Innovation tests	Individual and group practical training	Innovation pilot and validation

2. FoodLAND practical training: aims and scope

According to the project bottom-up and participatory approaches, following the courses on introductory topics GIT organized in the early project phase (T3.3), and as component creating / strengthening the Food Hubs as local innovation centres, FoodLAND has organized a second set of training activities with food operators based on active learning methods and gender equality principle (Task 5.1-5.9). In this regard, specific mechanisms (being aware of the gender roles and power relations; providing equal opportunities to participate in the process by putting attention to the times, venues, use of local languages, etc.) will be lifted to ensure women’s participation. These training packages are aimed at providing the local farmers and food processors with operational instructions on the adoption and management of the validated innovations.

This second set of training activities has been organised – triggering PLA approach – as individual and group practical (demonstration/capacity building) activities to be conducted in parallel to the implementation of the technological research (where relevant) and of the innovation pilots and validation. These technology-centred trainings aim at strengthening the participants’ understanding of novel production and post-harvest techniques, innovative tools and systems (e.g., climate smart/precision agriculture, hydroponics, and integrated aquaculture), new technologies for primary and secondary processing, and supply chain management. Thus they aim at fostering knowledge and operational



capacity to deploy, manage, and maintain the validated technological innovations – documented by the released guidelines D4.1 ÷ D4.11 (e.g., training pamphlets, user manuals, flow diagrams, and operational recommendations) and practice abstracts D6.5 – validated jointly at appropriate scale.

3. Second training packages on the adoption and management of the tested innovations: an overview

The second training course aimed at consolidating the food operators' knowledge and practical skills to adopt, manage and validate the project innovations and complement the related guidelines. Specifically, the realized training materials provide local farmers and food operators with a set of notions and concrete information on a series of innovative tools and systems as per the following **Table 2**. It is clear that both the contents and formats of the learning packages widely differ across technologies as well as Food Hubs (when the same type of innovation must be validated in different contexts). The diversity that emerges from the proposed solutions reflects the different needs highlighted by farmers and stakeholders as well as the conditions and opportunities characterizing the local communities. Nevertheless, in order to take into due account the existing heterogeneity inside the local communities, the developed learning materials have been let available on the project intranet so as to be used for further training initiatives across the network of Food Hubs.



4. Second training packages on practical information on the adoption and management of the tested innovations

Smart storage systems

Cold storage of mangoes





TRAINING ON COLD STORAGE OF MANGOES



FoodLAND Workshop

Introduction

- Mangoes are grown in most parts of Kenya
- They are delicious when ripe and are very much liked by consumers
- They are high in sugars, vitamin A, vitamin C, minerals and other phytochemicals



Introduction

- They are perishable and postharvest losses are high
- Preserving them after harvesting is a big challenge for most farmers
- Mangoes are seasonal fruits and are not available in some seasons
- There is therefore need for storing them between harvesting and market processing

Introduction Cont..

- Storage in manner that preserves its fresh quality and wholesome state
- Mangoes have limited life after harvest if held at normal harvesting temperatures
- Smart innovative cold storage systems are hence of essence in achieving this objective and providing farmers with market flexibility

Benefits of postharvest storage cooling of mangoes

- Provides marketing flexibility by allowing the farmers to sell harvested at the most appropriate time when they can fetch maximum value.
- Cold stored mangoes have a long shelf-life and are therefore available for use when the fresh mango are out of season
- Cold storage of mangoes reduces post-harvest losses

Benefits of postharvest storage cooling of mangoes Cont.

- Cold Storage of mangoes rapidly removes field heat, allowing longer storage periods
- Inhibit the growth of spoilage microorganisms and
- Reduce the production of the natural ripening agent

Description of the cold storage unit

- involves placing charcoal in the folds created using gunny bags.
- The charcoal loaded bag is then wrapped around a crate containing vegetables.
- Water is then poured on the bag and is absorbed by the charcoal.
- During the hot parts of the day, the water evaporates from the charcoal and creates an evaporative cooling effect inside the crate to prolong the shelf life of the produce.

Description of the cold storage unit



Cold Storage of mangoes

- The smart storage prototype should be up-scaled to accommodate the quantity of produce to be cooled; this may involve having a bigger size of each individual unit and/or installing as many units as required. Skilled tailors are required to cut and sew the sack cloth that holds charcoal.
- The fruits and vegetables being cooled and maintained at the desired low temperature should be loaded in plastic crates that are placed in the space at the centre of the cooling unit.

Cold Storage of mangoes Cont.

- The selected perishable produce must not contain bruised, damaged or diseased units/parts.
- Incompatible product mixes should not be stored in same containers; however, produce stored together should be able to tolerate the same temperature and relative humidity in the storage environment.
- The storage units should be placed/installed in a shaded area or in a shed with open sides that allow natural air circulation.
- The sack cloth and the charcoal it holds should always be adequately wetted with water during storage.

Three mangoes are arranged horizontally. The leftmost mango is green with a yellowish-orange base. The middle mango is a deep red. The rightmost mango is a light brown or tan color. The text "THANK YOU FOR LISTENING" is overlaid in a green, cursive font across the center of the mangoes.

*THANK YOU FOR
LISTENING*