



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHAN GING
LIVES

Republic of Congo at a glance

South – South and Triangular Cooperation
(SSTC) Country Project

Supported by the Ministry of Agriculture
and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China

May 2023

Djone is a member of a cassava processing cooperative in Kayes, Bouenza department, headed by his father who received training from CERFAM and cassava processing equipment in 2021.

"I will make sure that the cooperative goes forward; being chosen to be trained and equipped comes with responsibilities. We are not going to give up".

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Strengthening the capacity of smallholder farmers to produce cassava-derived products and reduce banana post-harvest losses in the Republic of Congo

OBJECTIVE

To strengthen the cassava and banana value chains as well as to improve the quality and variety of the menus offered to school children, while contributing to improving rural cassava and banana value chain actors' livelihood and boosting local economy. This South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) pilot will inform WFP's scaling up strategy for the Home-Grown School Feeding (HGFS) programme, as well as WFP's food assistance operations in the country.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Congo
Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Congo

PHASE OF THE INITIATIVE

III (January – December 2022)

SPeX

THEMATIC AREAS



Value Chain Development for Smallholder Farmers



Post-harvest Loss Management and Food Systems



Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Resilience

SSTC MODALITIES



Online/offline training courses (webinar and Training of Trainers)

256 PEOPLE ENGAGED



250 smallholder farmers (138 men; 112 women)



3 representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture (2 men; 1 women)



3 representatives from research institutions: 1 (man) from IRA - Institut de recherche agronomique and 2 (men) from INRSIIT - Institut national de recherche en sciences de l'ingénieur, innovation et technologie

TECHNICAL PARTNERS INVOLVED IN THE SSTC ACTIVITY

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China

WFP's Centre of Excellence for Rural Transformation in the People's Republic of China



Agricultural Technique Demonstration Center (CDTA)

Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS)

Heads of the Agricultural Sector

Development challenge and the SSTC solution

Despite being a middle-income country, the Republic of Congo (RoC) faces consistent food security and nutrition challenges. The latest national food and nutrition security assessment found that 33.3 percent of the population is food insecure (29.3 percent moderately and 4 percent severely).

It revealed a significant deterioration between 2014 and 2021: the number of people with an acceptable food consumption score dropped from 90.7 to 60.1 percent. Among children under the age of 5, global acute malnutrition is estimated at 5.2 percent and chronic malnutrition at 19.6 percent.

Domestic food production covers only 30 percent of the needs, making the country heavily dependent on imports. Artisanal food processing techniques and inadequate storage and transformation practices often lead to loss of produce and nutrients.

In RoC's National Development Plans (NDP) 2018-2022, 2022-2026, the Government of RoC identified enhancing the cassava value chain, as its main staple food, a national priority to tackle high dependence on imports and malnutrition, and create food availability and affordability.

In addition to cassava, Congo's NDP also places high importance to the development of the fruit sector, notably the production and transformation of bananas. Bananas' year-round availability, affordability, taste, and nutritional value make them an essential fruit crop in RoC.

The WFP-MARA SSTC project in RoC is supporting the Government in its endeavor to enhance the availability of affordable, nutritious, and high-quality cassava and banana products to improve food security and nutrition.



"Gari was made by hand, the work was difficult, it was reserved for men. With the knowledge and equipment, we can work easily and produce larger quantities of gari to sell in Dolisie, Pointe-Noire and Brazzaville".



Producer-processor tasting a banana chip she made during the training provided by agro-food experts from Benin and Côte d'Ivoire.

Georgette, President of "Notre Avenir" cooperative in Yamba, Bouenza department, learned how to transform cassava and bananas into derived products from agro-food experts from Benin and Côte d'Ivoire.

SSTC partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China (MARA)

The WFP's Global Field Pilot Initiative on SSTC in RoC started in 2019, with the support of WFP's Global SSTC Team in the Programme Humanitarian and Development (PRO-T) Division and WFP's Centre of Excellence for Rural Transformation in the People's Republic of China (China CoE).

The project in RoC marks the beginning of the financial SSTC partnership with MARA aimed at leveraging the SSTC mechanism to create benefits for the most vulnerable rural populations.

The initiative in the past three phases of implementation focused on strengthening the capacity of smallholder farmers to supply cassava derived products to local markets in RoC.

Since 2019, WFP has partnered with the Agricultural Technique Demonstration Centre (CDTA) and the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS) to mobilize international expertise and foster SSTC funded by MARA. Through the first two pilots, the Government of Congo, CATAS, CDTA, and WFP trained and equipped more than 313 smallholder farmers and artisanal processors in the Bouenza and Pool Departments to enhance the production and transformation of cassava products.

WFP also purchased and distributed some of these products to 5 schools in Mindouli (Pool department), reaching 3,653 school children.

In 2022, the project entered its third phase, which is expected to be completed at the end of 2023. With this third pilot, WFP together with partners looks to expand cassava-related activities in the Plateaux Department and introduce banana value chain activities in the Pool Department while continuing to support the sale of cassava-based products to schools.

Building on the results of the first two phases of the SSTC field project with the People's Republic of China, the third phase will focus on geographically scaling up the training in the Plateaux Department, which is located in the centre of the country.

Over the last year, RoC experienced such challenges as the unavailability and high cost of materials for the manufacture of equipment and infrastructure (e.g., refining machines, mills, sheds) and the limited number and capacity of local suppliers, which led to delays in the procurement process.

To address these challenges, WFP fragmented the market and trained suppliers on business organization, management, and planning, and provided individual coaching as needed, which contributed to enhanced manufacture and delivery of equipment and sheds.

The remote coordination of the production of the online courses was also a challenge as it involved many stakeholders in different time zones.



Key SSTC results achieved in 2022

This document provides a quick overview of the progress of the SSTC pilot project in RoC in year 2022, building on the achievements of the previous phases. During this timeframe the following activities were carried out:



Strengthened the capacity of smallholder farmers and artisanal processors to produce cassava flour

- WFP, working closely with the district-level Heads of the Agricultural Sector (Chefs de Secteur Agricole, CSA), identified and selected 140 cassava producers from 14 local associations in the Plateaux Department. In partnership with the CSAs and the Agriculture Directorate, WFP supported all 14 local associations to structure and identify needs in capacity strengthening.
- On 22-29 June 2022, WFP organized a training for trainers in Ngo (Plateaux Department), benefitting 50 farmers from 14 local associations. The training focused on the production of high-quality cassava flour and was followed by cooking demonstrations on the use of cassava flour to produce different dishes. The training was facilitated by a technical team from CDTA and CATAS.
- To support the transformation of cassava, WFP launched the procurement of 6 refining macNGhines used for the production of cassava flour. The local artisans started the construction of these machines in 2022 and plan finalized them in 2023.

- In the meantime, WFP launched the procurement of more than 10 banana mills from local artisans. The machines will be finalized and distributed to assisted smallholder farmers in 2023 to enable the transformation of bananas into flour.



Strengthened the technical capacities of the government, implementing partners and smallholder farmer associations through online course videos and online workshops

- 9 online course videos in French were produced in 2022 by CATAS, in collaboration with the WFP China CoE. The first version of the videos was shared with the Country Office (CO) in January 2023. The videos are currently being examined by the RoC CO to ensure their relevance to the Congolese agricultural and technological context.
- In 2022, WFP launched the construction of 5 warehouses in Ngo, which will allow local farmer associations to improve the storage and conservation of cassava products.



Supported smallholder farmers from the Pool department to produce banana-derived products

- WFP, in partnership with district-level CSAs and local partners, identified and selected 100 banana producers from 10 local associations in the Pool Department. WFP and its partners supported them to structure themselves as an association and identify their needs in terms of capacity strengthening.



Facilitated knowledge sharing of SSTC technologies

In July 2022, WFP together with CATAS organized an online workshop on cassava and banana processing technologies. Participants included representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, research institutions (notably INRSIIT and IRA), entrepreneurs, farmers engaging in food transformation, and WFP staff from RoC, Madagascar, and the People's Republic of China.



Produced communication material to enhance the visibility of the project:

- 300 t-shirts and stickers with MARA logo were produced and distributed to the supported farmers and project stakeholders;
- The factsheet developed in 2021 in French, English and Chinese was updated in 2022 with the French and English versions;
- Due to conflicting availabilities, no communication content-gathering mission could be organized in 2022. In February 2023, a mission to document the training for trainers on banana post-harvesting techniques took place.



Next Steps

Building on the results of the past phases, in 2023 the team will seek to collect and consolidate evidence based on previous phases of the SSTC pilot project.

Showcasing results and lessons learned

- WFP, in collaboration with its partners, will produce a report (in French and English) with lessons learned and recommendations on opportunities for continued support to smallholder farmers through SSTC.
- This report, accompanied by multimedia materials, will be shared with national policy and decision-makers, donors, and stakeholders to inform future engagement on the sustainable development of local food value chains.

“The online technical workshops provided by WFP and partners, including the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences, are not only useful to the people who participate.”

Paul Raphaël ONGOUALA, Director General of Agriculture (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of the Republic of Congo).



South-South and Triangular Cooperation unit

wfp.org/south-south-cooperation
sstc.global@wfp.org

World Food Programme

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70,
00148 Rome, Italy
T +39 06 65131 wfp.org

Photo credits

Cover page: WFP/Célia Boumpoutou
Page 2: WFP/Célia Boumpoutou
Page 4: (left) WFP/DIGITS
Page 4: (right) WFP/Cécile Mercier
Page 5 – WFP/Célia Boumpoutou
Page 7: WFP/Célia Boumpoutou