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“Filling gaps and removing traps  
for sustainable resource management”

## Participatory and Collaborative Strategies for Out-, Up- and Deep Scaling of Post-Harvest Innovations in West Africa

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### Abstract

Participatory methods, sustainable use and replicability of developed innovations, and capacity development are core concepts within UPGRADE Plus .

The project’s scaling out strategy builds on participatory approaches to involve key stakeholders throughout the process of co-development and -assessment of innovations, and the development of outreach materials. The continuous engagement of key stakeholders strongly depends on a mutually perceived value of activities and effective trust-building. Due to associated resource and time constraints, the necessary depth of engagement requires a careful stakeholder selection process, while simultaneously ensuring that applicability and relevance for a broader set of stakeholders are guaranteed.

Participatory methods and the resulting mutual learning serve as a key pillar for capacity development among target groups and building knowledge and insight among local researchers and institutions. Knowledge on nutrition and local plant species was identified as one of the most critical barriers towards a sustainable shift in perceptions and behaviour. In response, UPGRADE Plus has devised local partnerships with NGOs and foundations with a focus on health and education, to more effectively address existing knowledge gaps and raise awareness, capitalize on multiplier effects and support deep scaling of innovations.

Collaborations are also a key element of the project’s scaling-up strategy. Influencing political and regulatory framework conditions is a challenge for research projects, especially considering the competition for policymakers’ attention that exists among agricultural development initiatives and projects in the target countries. Thus, the project has taken a strongly collaborative stance, focused on issue-based networking. Visibility of project content and results, as well as awareness raising are achieved largely through a conscious effort on knowledge management knowledge sharing with interested parties. This has enabled the project to successfully initiate formal collaborations with NGOs and the FruVaSe project, in addition to the non-formalized knowledge exchange with many other organisations and projects active in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**Keywords:** Issue-based networks, knowledge management, knowledge sharing, participatory methods