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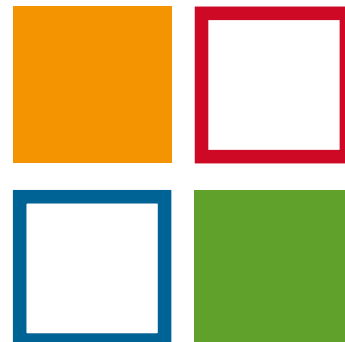
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GREEN INNOVATION CENTRES FOR THE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECTOR



CONTENT OF THE WINTER EDITION

REPORT

CASSANOVAS: TEMPTING SNACKS
"MADE IN NIGERIA"

1

PARTNER IN FOKUS

ALL ABOARD

2

THE LATEST FROM THE COUNTRIES

INNOVATIONS FROM TWO CONTINENTS
3-6

HIGHLIGHTS

GAME CHANGERS:
THE CREEPING REVOLUTION
7-8

CASSANOVAS: TEMPTING SNACKS "MADE IN NIGERIA"

Photo © GIZ / Roqan Ojomo

"In business, planning means success," says Thomas Hirsch, CEO of the Nigerian company Pacific Ring West Africa, "especially in uncertain times – and particularly in any developing economy." In a fragile economy like Nigeria's, which is constantly struggling with problems, this more or less means political unrest, financial crises, global competition, environmental disasters – or even the pandemic. Under these circumstances, planning long-term business is difficult; and including Covid-19 in the calculations is almost impossible.

Corona initially caused production delays, then losses of 50 % in May and June for Pacific Ring West Africa, because the company was only able to sell to nearby customers due to restricted transport routes. The 22 full-time employees agreed to a monthly income of only 65 % of their usual salary during this difficult period.

However, planning makes perfect! The manufacturer of the "Cassanovas" cassava chips had worked out a detailed strategic plan for the first ten years, even before

the company was founded. This really helped during the fateful year of 2020. And as a producer of food, Pacific Ring West Africa never had to stop production. Employees are familiar with high standards of hygiene in food production, and mouth-nose covering was already mandatory before the pandemic arrived. This is why Pacific Ring West Africa is not doing too badly, despite the rising inflation rate and hugely increased logistics costs. The company management was able to return the temporarily withheld 35 % wages to its employees in the form of a bonus paid in summer.

Pacific Ring West Africa was founded in 2017. Since the end of 2019, it has been hosting a strategic partnership together with the German develoPPP.de programme. The partnership links smallholders trained in good agricultural practice and entrepreneurial skills by the Green Innovation Centre with Pacific Ring West Africa. The reasoning behind this is that the company depends on a constant supply of the raw material cassava and even wants to expand its production in the future.

Smallholders also benefit from fixed sales markets and fair prices. The healthy snacks are made from locally grown cassava and are mainly marketed locally, but they are also exported to Europe, where they are sold in Edeka supermarkets or on Amazon, for instance. This enables smallholders to participate in the world market. "We believe our greatest contribution to the country is to show everyone that 'Made in Nigeria' is possible. You could say that we're ambassadors in goodwill creation for Nigeria in the world", explains Thomas Hirsch.

The motivation is promising. At the beginning of December, the media agency AgroNigeria has honored the company with the award "Agro-Brand of the Year", as part of the Nigeria Agriculture Awards 2020.

Corona at least doesn't seem to be able to hamper the success of Pacific Ring West Africa. The CEO tells us why, using a simple formula for success that worked in his case: "1. Make a plan, 2. start and 3. don't stop."

Author: Mwanlong Dashen, GIZ Nigeria



In March, the Green Innovation Centre in India commissioned a study on gaps in the power supply – and the finding was that decentralised solutions could provide long-term security for needy farmers. The study also promised an increase in the value of the tomato and potato value chains through renewable energies. This is why the Green Innovation Centre has launched a new partnership with the SELCO Foundation. Co-founder Harish Hande was kind enough to explain the concept that drives the company.

Mr. Hande, there are many ideas for improving agricultural processes. Why is investment in decentralised renewable energy the right motor for India's agriculture?

Exceptional situations such as the Covid-19 pandemic and climatic disasters are rapidly affecting the central supply chains on which many low-income farmers in rural India depend. On the other hand, if decentralised renewable energy sources are used in a targeted manner, such as in crucial stages of the rice and millet value chains, farmers can increase the value of their harvests themselves and will become less dependent on external factors.

What is your vision of the role of renewable energies in agriculture?

Decentralised renewable energies will become the standard along the entire value chain – from the preparation of arable land to the processing of harvests. There are essential stages in this process. For example, solar-powered seed drills provide some relief from heavy fieldwork – and solar-powered pumps for drip irrigation contribute to more efficient water consumption. Systems for the cold storage of perishable products or drying processes are also possible with decentralised renewable energies. With this vision in mind, the SELCO Foundation is active in more than ten value chains – and more than 30,000 farmers in Odisha and Northeast India have already benefited from our work.

Which business models do you want to use to achieve your goals?

Our supply models are socially and financially sustainable. We work with environmentally friendly energy companies that specialise in supplying the last mile – so professional installation and maintenance are guaranteed. We also work with regional financial institutions to develop customised financial products for farmers in rural areas. For larger projects, such as solar-powered cold storage systems, we work with farmer producer organisations and farmer cooperatives to place ownership and responsibility on more shoulders.

In this way, SELCO combines sustainable electricity technologies with appropriate financial and ownership models. To what extent do the target groups benefit from this combination?

We currently work with over 30 financial institutions, including commercial banks, regional banks, banks of farmers' cooperatives or small microfinance institutions – because financing is the decisive factor for our target group, which is of financially weak agricultural enterprises. The result of our work is always a product of technical and financial cooperation. India's agriculture has already significantly benefited from this combination in the past.



THE LATEST FROM THE COUNTRIES

Photo © GIZ / Klaus Wohlmann

Ethiopia

Making farming easier with 'Lersha': The corona pandemic is making it difficult for farmers to use public transport to carry home inputs they've bought in Farm Service Centres (FSC). So, one of the FSC has now developed a digital platform that also works on smartphones: it's called 'Lersha', and its home is at www.lersha.com. Farmers use their mobile phones or Lersha agents, who are qualified in agriculture, to access resources, accurate weather forecasts and mechanisation & advisory services. Lersha founder Abrhame Endrias explains: "We want to make farming easy for everyone – and we're creating over 200 jobs for Lersha agents, IT specialists and salespersons."

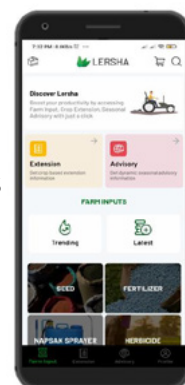


Photo © lersha.com

Benin

International SME Loop seminar: For the first time, the Green Innovation Centre in Benin, through the Competence Centre for Employment Promotion founded in early 2020, hosted an online seminar on the SME Loop approach. The focus was on the latest developments in the SME Loop approach, possible upscaling and the future roles of the Competence Centre and the master coaches. Held as a digital event due to the Covid-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, the virtual format enabled participants from many different countries to participate in the event and to discuss and co-develop the SME Loop and its new versions (e.g. E-SME Loop, Start-up Loop).



Salifou Bako is one of the trained producers and a member of the Sesame Economic Interest Group in the Boucle du Mouhoun region – and he has sown improved sesame seeds on 5 hectares of land in his first season as a seed producer.

Photo © GIZ / Larba Donald Bassimbo

Burkina Faso

Knowledge is like a sprouting seed: 30 farmers received training on production techniques for certified sesame seed, with the support of the Green Innovation Centre in Burkina Faso. The umbrella organisations of some farmers' organisations aim to use the training to help producing farms gain access to improved seed. The newly-trained farmers expect a total of 765 tonnes of the seed, a welcome relief in these corona-troubled times. A signed protocol of cooperation between the Green Innovation Centre and the National Seed Service will also ensure the control of seed production.



Head of State Alassane Ouattara announces the new cocoa price.
Photo © abidjan.net

Côte d'Ivoire

A great day for Ivorian cocoa: On October 1, the National Day for Cocoa and Chocolate (JNCC) not only opened the cocoa season 2020/21, the new cocoa price was also announced. As a direct result of the new price mechanism of the two producer countries Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, the price rose from EUR 1.26 to EUR 1.52 per kilo! This year's JNCC was focused on the promotion of deforestation-free cocoa, which is one of two core themes of the Green Innovation Centre in Côte d'Ivoire, the other being the promotion of living income through price mechanisms – so the project and its target group naturally took part in the three-day JNCC fair!

Ghana

Rice on credit: Celestine Agoha's Tasty Aromatic Ventures company received a loan of EUR 8,500 to improve the processing and packaging of rice. Helped by the SME Business Loop, Celestine secured the loan by developing a business plan and setting up an efficient record-keeping system. Her company purchases rice from over 500 producing farms in the Weta irrigation zone, and her product currently reaches over 1,500 households, contributing to food security in these uncertain times.



Entrepreneur Celestine Agoha has worked with the Green Innovation Centre in Ghana for four years now. During that period, she was trained as a private consultant.
Photo © GIZ / Angelika Jacob

India

From tree to mouth: Since October 2020, a new cooperation agreement with AllFresh Supply Management Pvt. Ltd., an Indian distribution company has been helping to promote the sale of apples produced by smallholders in the Kullu district of the state Himachal Pradesh. Sustainable relationships between farmer producer organisations and AllFresh pave the way for transparent deliveries and secure the sales market of 2,000 tonnes of apples. This provides planning security, both during the pandemic and beyond. Around 200 farmers will also be attending a series of training courses to improve their technical knowledge of the harvesting, handling and sorting of apples.



Photo © GIZ / Laetitia Sossou

Cameroon

Better protection for the smallest: It's a stiff challenge for Cameroonian chicken breeders to protect their freshly hatched chicks from environmental influences and predators – because hardly any coops for chicks are available in rural areas. This is why August and September saw the Green Innovation Centre train

39 carpenters in how to make chicken coops and boxes for incubation, insulation and transport. The carpenters benefit from an additional source of income and the breeders from a lower mortality rate of their chicks. The next step will see 200 incubators finished and distributed together with chicks and other materials to selected chicken breeders. This will help them to recover from the decimating effects of the corona crisis.

Kenya

Agricultural Management M.Sc.: The international Master's programme of the University of Applied Sciences in Weihenstephan-Triesdorf in Germany trains young future leaders in application-oriented agricultural management. The two-year study course offers students from two Kenyan universities the opportunity to take up practical work in institutions and companies that are involved in agriculture, agribusiness and applied research, to study at universities and technical colleges and to participate in international projects. In 2020, six students from Western Kenya were selected for the Master course. The Covid-19 pandemic has meant that only the first student has so far been able to enter the country to start the practice-oriented training on a dairy farm in Bavaria – but the other participants will follow when the corona pandemic restrictions are relaxed.



The Master's programme is part of the "Africa Agribusiness Qualification" programme of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. Photo © GIZ / Markus Roskopf

Malawi

Knowledge is power: In cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, international research institutes and the private sector, the Green Innovation Centre in Malawi has produced user-friendly training material on good agricultural practices in the peanut, soya bean and cassava value chains. As a first step, the Innovation Centre organised three 'Training of Trainers' courses for partner organisations, enabling them to pass on the knowledge to farmers. A total of 54 advisers from the private and public sectors were trained.



Photo © GIZ / Kouriba Abdoulaye

propagate innovative agricultural approaches. There's no doubt that this is an approach we want to adhere to," explained Kouriba, an employee of the Green Innovation Centre Mali.

Mali

Videos create customer loyalty: A company can reach its customers quickly, easily and effectively using its own advertising videos, even during the Covid-19 pandemic. So the Green Innovation Centre in Mali cooperated with the Seminar for Rural Development in October, teaching 24 young entrepreneurs how to create advertising and educational films. "In this way, the companies can reinforce their trustworthiness and

Mozambique

Prices via the ear into the head: Just one small step for local radio stations – but a big step for farmers in the pigeon pea value chain. As a step towards creating a market information system, employees of several broadcasting stations in Sofala Province were trained to produce radio programmes that report on regional price developments. The newsroom editors' main goal is to present the complex information in an understandable way. This will reach as many people as possible, across large geographical distances and even in these times of social distancing.



The workshop included practical applications, such as interviews with farmers. Photo © GIZ / Jakob Herrmann

Nigeria

A pilot project for more rice: The problem for the Green Innovation Centre in Nigeria and the cooperative FARMNet was how to increase the productivity of smallholders who work according to the Good Agricultural Practices approach – and they found the solution with the help of modern machinery and the guidance of strong local cooperatives. Together with the state-run Nasarawa Agriculture and Development Programme, they're currently piloting an initiative to increase productivity and reduce harvest losses through piloting the Sustainable Rice Platform approach and mechanisation in Nasarawa State.



More mechanisation thanks to the promotion of service providers and farmers' cooperatives is the initiative's approach – and that could put an end to inefficient manual fieldwork. Photo © GIZ / Christoph Mohr



Photo © GIZ / Jörg Böhling

Zambia

A meeting for the future of local dairy farmers: With the support of the Green Innovation Centre in Zambia, representatives from the dairy value chain in Southern Province met in Choma in mid-October. During the two-day meeting, the Union achieved a number of milestones: finalizing by-laws, agreeing on a monetary contribution per cooperative and mandating the Union to negotiate with off takers on the price of milk that will be purchased from the member cooperatives.

Togo

Smartphone drive: Corona often puts a stop to normal field training. This is why the Green Innovation Centre in Togo first hosted training courses on how to work with smartphones, then gave 130 lead farmers across the country phones of their own! From now on, farmers in their village communities can watch videos on good farming practices, request market prices, communicate the community's seed needs – and get in touch with their Green Innovation Centre coaches.

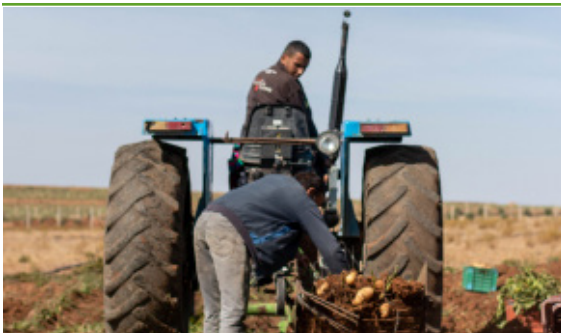


Photo © GIZ / Mohamed Zarrouki

Tunisia

Mechanical potato harvest: The Tunisian Green Innovation Centre is pushing ahead with modernisation and mechanisation in the potato value chain. The project has introduced harvesting machines in two potato producing companies in the highlands. The lion's share of harvesting work falls on the shoulders of the women in Tunisia, so for them, it means less time and effort spent on manual labour in the fields.

Vietnam

Made in Vietnam: European consumers have been able to buy high quality, fragrant rice from Vietnam since the Free Trade Agreement between Vietnam and the EU came into force in June of this year. The Green Innovation Centre supports processing companies and retailers who buy fragrant rice from the Mekong Delta produced in accordance with the quality standards of the Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP). This creates direct sustainability incentives for farmers. The SRP standard guarantees lower greenhouse gas emissions, reduced water consumption and compliance with social and environmental standards.

HIGHLIGHTS



GAME CHANGERS: THE CREEPING REVOLUTION

Photo © GIZ / Klaus Wohlmann

Women can achieve a great deal: their commitment, sense of responsibility, and energy have inexhaustible potential. Countless women bring daily progress and change to their families, villages, regions and the minds of their fellow human beings. Forty-eight of them were nominated for the “Game Changers – Women in Agriculture” award of the Federal German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. Seven of them received the award, and four of these are well known to our local colleagues – because they work with the Green Innovation Centres.

TOMATOES FROM BENIN



Photo © GIZ / Pierre Adannon

[Euphrasie Dassoundo Assogba](#) is a successful businesswoman. Her company Agro Express can process a ton of tomatoes a day into fruit pulp and powdered products, saving the fruit from spoiling. Her determination and leadership have not only created 150 jobs; she also motivates other women in her environment to become entrepreneurs. Euphrasie is driving long-term change for Benin’s rural communities, creating more female entrepreneurship, more food security and more employment for women and young persons.

RICE FROM GHANA

Janet Adades' speciality is rice: In Eastern Ghana, her women's cooperative MADOWOFA is at the forefront when it comes to parboiling and other processing methods. Janet is committed to the processing and marketing of locally produced rice to counteract imports – and to ensuring that more and more women learn about entrepreneurship in the rice value chain. She has already trained more than 1,000 women and enabled them to become Game Changers themselves!



Photo © GIZ / Screenshot / Simon Hedeka

CASHEWS FROM TOGO

Pyalo Sebou, known as Juliette, opened the first small modern factory for the manual processing of raw cashews in Kara, North Togo – and did so as a young woman! Juliette's cashews go to the local market, strengthening the local food supply. But that's not all, because Juliette actively passes on her knowledge and trains mainly women from her rural home country. She has made sure that the market in the local cashew, peanut and ginger value chains will remain stable, thanks to her commitment and the dissemination of her business model. What an achievement!



Photo © GIZ / Kossi Mawuli Husunukpe

VEGETABLES FROM INDIA

Krishna Radha did it! Despite strong opposition, she became president of the M-Tomato Producer Company in Andra Pradesh, which made her a perfect role model for many women farmers in her region. Thanks to her determination and commitment, many women have plucked up the courage to take on entrepreneurial activities themselves in this male-dominated agricultural sector. Krishna also fully accepts the responsibility given to her – the cooperation between agricultural enterprises initiated by her and the increasing professionalisation of the vegetable value chains have already made the work of over 8,000 farmers much easier.



Photo © GIZ / M. Bhavya

AND FINALLY...

Photo © GIZ / Angelika Jakob



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Click here for the newsletters of the Green Innovation Centres in Ethiopia and India:



The newsletter of the Green Innovation Centre in India emphasises the important role that women play in agriculture and sustainable development – in our projects, in India and all over the world.



The latest issue of the Green Innovation Newsletter from Ethiopia presents an invention born out of a COVID-19 necessity, and progresses farmers made despite the influence of corona. Subscribe [here](#).

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Location of the company
Bonn and Eschborn

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 32 + 36
53113 Bonn, Deutschland
T +49 228 44 60-0
F +49 228 44 60-17 66
E info@giz.de
I www.giz.de

Editorial team:
Thomas Heinen
Hanna Mathias

The GIZ is responsible for the content
of the present publication.

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