

## Technical Report

### Training of IFAD-VCDP Farmers on Cassava Production Technologies held at Moor Plantation, Ibadan, Oyo State from 14<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> July 2025



*Group photograph of IFAD-VCDP trainees, APOs and facilitators*

## **Background of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)**

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is a specialized agency of the United Nations established in 1977 with the primary goal of eradicating poverty and hunger in rural areas of developing countries. IFAD focuses on empowering marginalized groups, including smallholder farmers, rural women, and youth, to improve their livelihoods and food security. It provides financial support, technical assistance, and policy advocacy to enhance agricultural productivity and promote sustainable rural development. Over the years, IFAD has been instrumental in advancing rural transformation by funding numerous projects globally, including initiatives in Nigeria.

## **Overview of the Value Chain Development Program (VCDP)**

The Value Chain Development Program (VCDP) is an initiative of the Federal Government of Nigeria, implemented in collaboration with IFAD, to enhance agricultural value chains and improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers. Launched in 2014, VCDP focuses on developing the rice and cassava value chains in selected states which are critical for food security and rural livelihoods in Nigeria. The program aims to boost productivity, strengthen market linkages, and promote income generation through targeted interventions. Key components of the VCDP include capacity building, infrastructure development, and financial inclusion, with a strong emphasis on youth engagement and gender equality.

## **Mission and Strategic Focus of IFAD-VCDP in Nigeria**

The core mission of IFAD-VCDP in Nigeria is to improve the livelihoods and living conditions of poor rural households by increasing their incomes and enhancing their resilience through inclusive and sustainable agricultural value chain development. The programme specifically targets smallholder farmers, youth, and women, focusing on two major staple crops: cassava and rice.

## **Impact orientation**

IFAD-VCDP adopts a value chain approach, addressing bottlenecks from production to processing and marketing. The programme is designed not only to increase agricultural output but also to improve market access, reduce post-harvest losses, and enable farmers to operate more efficiently as agribusiness actors. This integrated approach has contributed significantly to Nigeria's goals for rural transformation, food security, economic diversification, and poverty reduction.

Through training, infrastructure support, financial services, and market development, IFAD-VCDP continues to make a measurable impact on rural communities, promoting sustainable livelihoods and fostering inclusive growth in the agricultural sector.

## **Objectives**

The major objectives of the training program on cassava production technologies were to:

- To enhance knowledge on best agronomic practices for cassava cultivation
- To equip farmers with skills in cassava stem multiplication and certified seed production
- To promote climate-smart and market-driven Cassava production systems
- To empower youth and women in cassava-based seed enterprises
- To support sustainable seed system development for quality cassava planting materials
- Strengthen the cassava and rice value chains for increased rural incomes
- Improve farmers' access to inputs, technologies, infrastructure, and markets
- Build capacities of farmers and value chain actors in production, processing, and marketing
- Develop sustainable seed systems to ensure availability and access to quality planting materials
- Empower youth and women for inclusive agribusiness development

### **Purpose of the training**

The training aimed to build the capacity of farmers, extension agents, and seed entrepreneurs on improved cassava production practices and seed systems. It was targeted at strengthening the technical knowledge and agribusiness skills of participants to enhance cassava productivity and ensure the sustainability of seed value chains in the participating IFAD-VCDP states.



*Registration of trainees*

## Participants

A total of 40 IFAD-VCDP-supported cassava farmers from the eight participating States attended the training. These included:

- IFAD-VCDP-supported cassava farmers from the eight participating States: Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Kogi, Nasarawa, Niger, Ogun, and Taraba.
- A total of 8 VCDP staff State-level Agricultural Production Officers.
- A total of 10 AFPI Technical resource persons and facilitators from national and international research institutes and private seed companies.

## Classroom PowerPoint presentations and field practical sessions

### 1. Classroom Training

- **Objective:** To convey theoretical and practical knowledge gaps in Cassava production technologies.
- **Approach:** Structured PowerPoint presentations are delivered by agricultural experts and scientists. Eleven training modules covered include introduction to cassava production and value chains, site selection and land preparation techniques, improved cassava varieties and planting techniques, soil fertility management and fertilizer application, weed and pest control management, pest and disease management, seed systems: foundation and certified quality declared planting materials etc.
- **Materials:** Training manuals are used to enhance understanding and engagement, and each trainee receives the training manual as future guide. The PowerPoint presentations are interactive, allowing participants to ask questions and discuss real-life challenges and progress cassava production.





*Trainees in classroom session during PowerPoint presentations*



*Trainees in classroom session during PowerPoint presentations, and Q & A.*



*APOs in classroom session during PowerPoint presentations, and Q & A.*



*Display of cassava of selected cassava stem and stem cuttings and herbicides*



*Facilitators and IFAD-VCDP APOs*



*Trainees during tea break*



*Trainees during tea break*

## **Training Modules and Methodology**

Training modules covered

1. Introduction to cassava value chain and economic importance
2. Site selection and land preparation techniques
3. Improved cassava varieties and planting techniques
4. Soil fertility management and fertilizer application
5. Weed and pest control management
6. Cassava seed systems: foundation, certified, and quality declared planting materials
7. Cassava stem multiplication and nursery management
8. Climate-Smart Cassava Farming Practices
9. Harvesting, post-harvest handling and storage
10. Seed quality assurance and certification processes
11. Return on investment (ROI) and for cassava seed entrepreneurs

## **Methodology used**

- Classroom lectures and presentations
- Field demonstrations and practical sessions
- Group work and role plays
- Experience sharing and peer learning by individual and group contribution
- Distribution of training materials and manuals
- Evaluation and review of feedback sessions by IFAD-VCDP APOs from different States that participated in the training program

## Field tours and activities



*Trainees, IFAD-VCDP APOs, Facilitators on field tours to cassava-maize intercropping system*



*Trainees, IFAD-VCDP APOs, Facilitators on field tours to cassava seed system & multiplication plots*



*Trainees on field practical stem cuttings and transplanting*



*Trainees' visits to cassava processing machines fabrication (automated gari fryer, press, cassava Piller)*



*Distribution of cassava stems to trainees*

## Key outcomes and results

- Participants gained practical and theoretical knowledge in improved cassava production techniques using improved cassava production technologies
- Farmers were trained in seed quality control, stem selection, and multiplication methods
- Strengthened collaboration between farmers, extension officers, and seed regulatory bodies
- Increased awareness of climate-smart and sustainable cassava farming
- Youth and women participants expressed readiness to engage in seed entrepreneurship
- Participants were linked to seed certification agencies and potential input providers

- Participants trained on return on investment (ROI) and benefit cost ratio (BCR) to develop their business plans for establishing cassava seed enterprises or related cassava value chain business enterprises

## **Impact of cassava production training for IFAD-VCDP farmers from 8-IFAD-VCDP State in Nigeria**

- 1. Promote Sustainable agricultural productivity**
  - Increase yields and profitability of smallholder cassava farmers
  - Improve access to quality inputs such as certified seeds and planting materials
  - Encourage climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable practices
- 2. Strengthening agricultural market linkages**
  - Facilitate integration of smallholders into profitable and structured value chains
  - Support agribusiness partnerships between farmers and private sector off-takers
  - Improve access to infrastructure such as aggregation centers, roads, and storage facilities
- 3. Developing functional seed and input systems**
  - The trained youths will establish sustainable seed multiplication and distribution systems for cassava production
  - Support the development of farmer-led seed enterprises
  - Ensure availability and accessibility of quality planting materials
- 4. Empower women and youth in agribusiness**
  - The program provided targeted support and training to women and youth-led enterprises
  - The program will enhance access to finance, equipment, and market opportunities
  - The training will promote inclusive policies and participation in decision-making
- 5. Enhance capacity and institutional strengthening**
  - Build the technical, business, and organizational skills of farmers and farmer groups
  - Strengthening extension services and linkages with research institutions
  - Support local farmers in planning and managing different agricultural value chains for income generation

## **Challenges faced by IFAD-VCDP farmers during the training and recommendations**

### **Challenges**

Despite the successful execution of the training, several challenges affected the full participation and learning experience of some IFAD-VCDP farmers. These include:

1. Transportation and logistics delays
2. Weather and environmental discomfort
3. Financial constraints for future implementation

### **Recommendations**

- Continuous mentoring and monitoring of trained farmers using custom indicators through extension support to measure their contribution to the local economy

- Provision of starter kits (e.g., improved cassava stems, knapsack sprayers, herbicides) to enhance implementation
- Support youth and women with access to finance for cassava seed enterprise development
- Scale up training to reach more IFAD-VCDP beneficiaries across additional LGAs and states
- Strengthen partnerships with research institutes and seed regulatory agencies for seed certification and sustainability

### **Key achievements**

Over 40 youths, including Agricultural Production Officers and their Assistants, gained knowledge and skills essential for enhancing agricultural productivity. The APOs participation as change agents stands as future trainers in cassava and rice value chain.

1. **Farmers' technical skills enhanced in cassava production**
  - Farmers gained practical knowledge on improved cassava varieties, land preparation techniques, optimal planting density, and soil fertility management.
  - Training covered integrated pest and disease management for cassava, enabling participants to reduce yield losses and improve quality.
2. **Adoption of good agricultural practices (GAPs)**
  - Participants learned step-by-step procedures for proper stem cutting selection, treatment, and planting to ensure higher germination and uniform crop stand.
  - Emphasis was placed on sustainable farming practices, soil conservation, and nutrient management.
3. **Strengthened postharvest handling and value addition skills**
  - Farmers received hands-on demonstrations on improved harvesting techniques, cassava storage methods, and processing into high-quality cassava products such as gari, fufu, cassava chips, and high-quality cassava flour (HQCF).
  - The visits of the participants to cassava processing and fabrication of equipment's was an exposure to small-scale mechanization options reduced postharvest losses and labor burden.
4. **Improved knowledge of cassava seeds systems and certification**
  - Participants were trained in establishing and managing cassava seed multiplication plots to produce quality planting materials for commercial purposes.
  - Awareness created on the role of certified stems in boosting productivity and ensuring varietal purity.
5. **Capacity for agribusiness development**
  - Farmers gained insights into farm record keeping, return on investment (ROI), benefit cost ratio (BCR), and business planning for cassava enterprises.
  - Skills acquired will help transform cassava production from subsistence to commercial scale, increasing incomes.
6. **Promotion of gender and youth inclusion**
  - The program ensured participation of women and youth farmers, equipping them with profitable cassava production and processing skills.
  - Encouraged youth-led agribusiness start-ups in the cassava value chain.
7. **Farmer to farmer capacity strengthened**

- Participants were trained to become community resource persons who will cascade the knowledge gained to other members in their cooperatives and communities.
- This allows farmers to farmers and facilitators interactive sessions that stimulated questions and answers (Q & A), sharing ideas.

#### 8. Alignment with IFAD-VCDP Goals

- The training directly supported IFAD-VCDP's mission of improving rural incomes, enhancing food security, and promoting inclusive value chains for smallholder farmers.





*Trainees' graduation photographs with Facilitators*

## **Conclusion**

The capacity development training conducted from 14th to 28th July 2025, significantly strengthened the technical knowledge and agribusiness orientation of IFAD-VCDP farmers on cassava production and seed systems. By equipping participants with the tools, skills, and linkages needed to enhance cassava productivity and develop sustainable seed systems, the program contributes directly to the broader goals of food security, job creation, and rural development in Nigeria. Continued technical backstopping and institutional support will be essential for the replication and scaling of these outcomes. At the end of the training sessions, AFPI distributed vitamin A cassava stems to the trainees and each received two stems of the improved vitamin A cassava variety for further multiplication and increasing the seed system base.