



**Locally-driven Co-development of Plant-based Value Chains  
Towards a More Sustainable African Food System With  
Healthier Diets and Export Potential**

**1<sup>st</sup> PRESS RELEASE: Launch of the InnoFoodAfrica Project**

August 11, 2020: *InnoFoodAfrica* – a project that will explore climate-smart African cereal, pulse and root crops in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda and develop and demonstrate optimal solutions for cultivation practices, processing and productization towards new food products, business solutions and value chains. The project supports business creation to launch diverse and healthy foods from African farms to local and export markets. The main output of the project is to demonstrate the huge potential of the African crops as healthy ingredients in combating malnutrition. The three-year project is designed by a strong multidisciplinary consortium of 18 partners, dominated by 13 African actors from all four focus countries with deep understanding of local needs and supported by 5 European partners with throughout knowledge on up-to-date food and packaging technologies and nutrition.

The VTT Technological Research Centre of Finland *led InnoFoodAfrica* will strive to fight against malnourishment by developing nutritious food products from traditional and resilient African crops. Generated side streams will be converted to food packaging materials. “Crops like sorghum, finger millet, teff, amaranth, faba bean, orange fleshed sweet potato, bambara and cowpea have a great nutritional value, but they are underutilized due to technological challenges in the preparation of food products and acceptable quality for urban consumers”, tells the project coordinator, Principal Investigator **Raija Lantto**, from VTT.

*InnoFoodAfrica* envisages deploying Afro-European co-creation power to start redefining the African food system with a focus on strengthening African plant-based food markets in Eastern and Southern Africa regions and in Europe. Novel African plant-based food

stuffs are seen to also reach the European markets thanks to new business models and value chains developed in the project.

The project's goals will be enabled by working on strategic food crops in the partner countries, and developing climate-change resilient agrofood systems, including research, development and capacity building. The goal is achieved by technology development combined with training and communication activities (with a focus on women engagement) in farming practices, nutrition, ingredient and food solutions, bio-based packaging to reduce food loss and waste, as well as related business creation.

The committed and generated excellence and targeted impact of *InnoFoodAfrica* are aimed to tackle the fundamental twin challenges of our time: increasing population and declining agricultural production, leading together to worsening food security in Africa.

The InnoFoodAfrica project will last 42 months (1 Aug 2020 – 31 Jan 2024), with a budget of €6.5 million. InnoFoodAfrica is coordinated by VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland.

For more information visit us on: [www.innofoodafrica.eu](http://www.innofoodafrica.eu)

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