

Domestication and promotion of ackee in West Africa (Junior Fellowship: Dr. Marius Ekue)

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Ackee (*Blighia sapida*) is a woody perennial multipurpose fruit tree species native to the Guinean forests of West Africa and candidate food tree species for domestication. Despite its high potential, the species was neglected and little formal research has been carried out in the region. But recently, key knowledge necessary for the elaboration of a clear domestication strategy have been addressed for Benin. The next steps to move forward with that strategy is the collection, evaluation and deployment of germplasm, the development of low cost vegetative propagation techniques as well as the improvement of the processing, storage and packaging of arils in order to improve both market values and revenues. Additionally, a widely untapped gene pool exists in different countries with considerable variation in potential commercially important traits. In light of the rapidly eroding germplasm, the latter has to be collected, conserved and utilized in tree improvement programmes. The current study will address the challenges mentioned above to move forward with the domestication of ackee in Benin and its three neighbouring countries Togo, Burkina Faso and Nigeria.

Projektbeteiligte

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