

# Book of Abstracts

11<sup>th</sup> IFDC PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOP IV

*Biodiversity for improved nutrition and health: The critical role of food composition in decision making for agriculture and nutrition programming and policy*

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# Abstracts

Session I

Country Case Studies Using Food Composition Data for Nutrition and Agriculture Programming and Policy

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## **Nutritional Data for Effective Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Policy and Programmes: Opportunities for the BFN Project in Kenya**

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Biodiversity is often considered by local communities in Kenya as an option for the provision of food, feed, medicines and to meet other cultural needs. Yet information on its nutritional content is seldom available or widely shared. While policy makers often refer to indigenous biodiversity as “rich,” “healthy,” “superior” or “tasty”, data to support such statements is scant. This has limited effective mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation and use into relevant supportive policies and programmes in Kenya. The Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition (BFN) project in Kenya has prioritized 20 commonly consumed species or varieties in Busia County, Kenya. Some varieties of these species have been analyzed for nutrient composition in ISO approved laboratories in Turkey. This data and other supportive information is being used to raise awareness on the nutritional value of indigenous biodiversity in the country. This information has afforded the BFN-Kenya project a major opportunity for embedding biodiversity into already established national coordination/collaboration mechanisms such as the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) process, as well as for influencing policy, advocacy and cross-learning. Data is also reinforcing an already increasing recognition among stakeholders of the (potential) contribution of agricultural biodiversity to achieve nutritional outcomes in communities. The express pronouncement, informed by nutritional data, by policy makers that there is an urgent need for agriculture and nutrition to work together for effective delivery of nutritional outcomes is key.

This paper will share experiences on how BFN Kenya is using analytical nutritional data to influence nutritional outcomes in the Busia County. Dissemination of this information to County stakeholders will continue to assist in the promotion of best practices for incorporating indigenous species, promote dietary diversity, conservation of plant and animal genetic resources, marketing of indigenous biodiversity, creating and raising awareness on the value of indigenous biodiversity. It will also help better inform policy at the County level with Busia set to be the first County out of the 57 in Kenya to realize a biodiversity policy. A policy which will recognize and highlight the value of biodiversity in health care systems and school feeding programmes in the county and in Kenya in general.