



Tools for understanding the agricultural production systems  
and their socio-economic context  
in target regions for the introduction of new banana cultivars

Trait preferences for banana products & varieties focus group discussion

Developed for the project  
“Improvement of banana for smallholder farmers in the Great Lakes region of Africa”

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The choice of tools to use in this baseline research was inspired by the publication:

Christinck, A., Weltzien, E., and Hoffmann, V. 2005. Setting breeding objectives and developing seed systems with farmers: a handbook for practical use in participatory plant breeding projects. Margraf Verlag, Weikersheim.

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### **Ethics**

This research protocol, IRB Proposal No. 2014-089, was approved by the Human Subjects Committee of Clark University on 19/06/2015.

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## BACKGROUND

Within the framework of the IITA-led project “Improvement of banana for smallholder farmers in the Great Lakes region of Africa” (also known as the “Breeding Better Bananas” project, <http://breedingbetterbananas.org>), Bioversity International and partners conducted baseline research in the target regions of Luweero and Mbarara in Uganda, and Bukoba, Meru, Moshi and Rungwe in Tanzania during 2015-2016, prior to conducting on-station and on-farm evaluations of new NARITA banana cultivars (<http://www.promusa.org/NARITA+hybrids>).

Five tools were used to characterise the banana and agricultural production systems, and the socioeconomic context of these systems, in the target regions. The research used a mixed-methods, participatory and sex-disaggregated approach to ensure that the knowledge, experiences and opinions of as many people as possible were obtained.

The understanding gained from the baseline research will:

- be fed into the banana breeding pipeline at multiple entry points to assist with breeding banana cultivars that better meet the requirements of the users. Some of these entry points are: setting of breeding targets; selection of parent material; evaluation in regional on-station and on-farm trials; participatory varietal selection taking into account the criteria (or ‘trait preferences’) that are important to multiple and different users; facilitating access to and adoption of the new cultivars by farmers and other end-users through scaling up the supply of clean planting materials and ensuring equitable distribution of these through the ‘seed’ systems;
- inform the ongoing adaptive management of the project activities to ensure fair participation and decision-making by people in the affected communities;
- provide the baseline to evaluate, in conjunction with the endline, the impact of adoption of the new cultivars on households, and individuals within, in the target regions.

The five tools developed and/or adapted from existing tools for the baseline research were:

- 1. Baseline intra-household survey**  
English version; Kiswahili version; XForms version for mobile data collection
- 2. Trait preferences for banana products and varieties focus group discussion**  
English version; Kiswahili version
- 3. Seasonal calendar focus group discussion**  
English version; Kiswahili version
- 4. Weekly and daily calendar focus group discussion**  
English version; Kiswahili version
- 5. Community wealth ranking focus group discussion**  
English version; Kiswahili version

# TRAIT PREFERENCES FOR BANANA PRODUCTS & VARIETIES

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

### SECTION A: EXERCISE INFORMATION

A1. Date of interview (dd/mm/yyyy) \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

A2. Start time (hh:mm) \_\_\_\_\_

A3. End time (hh:mm) \_\_\_\_\_

A4. Name of enumerator 1 (facilitator) \_\_\_\_\_

A5. Name of enumerator 2 (note taker) \_\_\_\_\_

A6. Name of enumerator 3 (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

A7. Country \_\_\_\_\_

A8. Region (UG only) \_\_\_\_\_

A9. Region (TZ)/District (UG) \_\_\_\_\_

A10. District (TZ)/Sub-county (UG) \_\_\_\_\_

A11. Ward (TZ)/Parish (UG) \_\_\_\_\_

A12. Village \_\_\_\_\_

A13. Please indicate the category of respondents for this focus group (*W = women; M = men, B = both women and men*) \_\_\_\_\_

A14. Tool use number (the number of times the tool has been conducted) \_\_\_\_\_

A15. Exercise code<sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> The exercise code is designated by combining: the first three letters from **A9**, e.g. 'LUW'; the first three letters from **A10**, e.g. 'MAK'; the first three letters from **A12**, e.g. 'KAB'; the code of the tool being used, e.g. 'BTP'; **A13**, e.g. 'M'; **A14**, e.g. '001' = LUWMAKKABBTPM001.

## SECTION B: INTRODUCTION AND INDIVIDUAL INFORMED CONSENT

*~\*\*~ Please read this script to each and every participant as you greet them when they arrive, before you add their details to the roster of participants (Section C).*

“Thank you for coming today to participate in the **trait preferences for banana products & varieties** exercise where we will discuss all about bananas. We are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, and we work on behalf of Bioversity International on a project where new matooke/ndizi (banana) hybrids, produced by NARO and IITA, will be tested for their performance in different regions of Uganda and Tanzania. If any of the varieties perform well, they will be recommended for official release and made available to farmers. Before we start this project, however, we would like to ask farmers in different regions about their banana production systems, banana varieties, banana products, households and communities – and that is why we are in your village at the moment to conduct household surveys and a number of different focus group discussions.

In the **trait preferences for banana products & varieties** exercise that we will do today, we will discuss the various products that you make from all the bananas that you grow, and then for the most important products we will discuss what makes a good product and what attributes the banana varieties need to have to make the products. We expect that this activity will take around 90 minutes. The information that we gather during the exercise will help us to understand what traits are important in the banana products you make and in the banana varieties that you grow. This will help us to understand what traits you might look for in a new variety and why you may, or may not, adopt new varieties.

We would like to record what is said today so that we can make notes later, and we may take some photographs. Also, as some sensitive information might be shared within the group that could cause disharmony in the wider community, we ask you not share any information discussed here outside of this group.

Your participation today is entirely voluntary and you are free to leave now before we start, or at any time during the discussion.”

\*\*\*\*\*

**B1. Do you have any questions for us?**

**B2. Having heard all of this information, are you still happy to participate in the trait preferences for banana products & varieties exercise?**

\*\*\*\*\*

“Thank you.

Now I’d like to get a few details about you before we start.”

## SECTION C: ROSTER OF PARTICIPANTS

\*\*\*~ All participants must consent to be interviewed if they wish to take part in the exercise (C1). If a participant does not consent to being photographed (C2), please inform the supervisor and ensure that no photographs are taken during the exercise.

	<b>C1. Does the participant consent to participate in the exercise? (Yes/No)</b>	<b>C2. Does the participant consent to being photographed? (Yes/No)</b>	<b>C3. Name of participant</b>	<b>C4. Age of participant? (Years)</b>	<b>C5. Marital status of participant? (See code #1)</b>	<b>C6. Level of education of participant? (See code #2)</b>	<b>C7. Main occupation of participant? (See code #3)</b>
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							

**Codes: #1:** 1 = single, 2 = cohabitating, 3 = married (monogamous), 4 = married (polygamous), 5 = divorced, 6 = widowed, 7 = don't know, 8 = other, please specify.

**#2:** 1 = no formal education, 2 = nursery, 3 = primary, 4 = secondary, 5 = post-secondary, 6 = don't know, 7 = other, please specify.

**#3:** 1 = agriculture, 2 = livestock, 3 = business, self-employed, 4 = construction, bricklaying, 5 = transportation, 6 = timber, charcoal, wood products, 7 = non-timber forest products, 8 = housework, 9 = salaried professional, 10 = casual temporary labour, 11 = studying, 12 = no occupation (adult), 13 = don't know, 14 = other, please specify.

## **SECTION D: TRAIT PREFERENCES FOR BANANA PRODUCTS & VARIETIES EXERCISE – QUESTIONS & PROBES**

“Let us start by introducing ourselves - please say your name and any other information that you want to share about yourself.”

### **D1. Does anyone have any questions or comments before we begin?**

*\*\*\* Address any issues before starting the exercise.*

~~~~~

“Now, let us begin the banana products, trait preferences and varieties exercise. To gain a better understanding of your trait preferences for banana varieties and their products, we are going to start by listing what types of bananas you grow in this village and what products you make out of them.”

### **D2. Which banana types do you grow in this village?**

*\*\*\* Let the respondents first tell you which types they grow in the village.*

*\*\*\* Once the conversation appears to be finished, or if it is not flowing very well, then use the following prompts to include other types that may have been forgotten:*

- *cooking bananas*
- *roasting bananas*
- *dessert bananas*
- *beer bananas*

*\*\*\* Facilitator records the responses on the flip chart.*

### **D3. Which products do you make out of them?**

*\*\*\* Let the respondents first tell you which products they make in the village.*

*\*\*\* Once the conversation appears to be finished, or if it is not flowing very well, then use the following prompts to include other products that may have been forgotten:*

- *matooke*
- *gonja*
- *raw sweet banana*
- *beer, juice*
- *wine*
- *waragi*

~~~~~

“Now, let’s see which of these products are most important in this village.”

**D4. Which of these products is the most important to you? Why would say it is the most important? Is it for home consumption or sale?**

**D5. Which of these products is the second most important to you? Why? Is it for home consumption or sale?**

~\*\*~ Repeat question D5 as required until all products have been ranked in order of importance.

~\*\*~ Facilitator notes down the ranking of the products in order of importance.

~~~~~

“We will now look at the **most important product**, and describe it in more detail.”

**D6. What are the quality characteristics of a good product? How do you like the product to be?**

~\*\*~ Use the following probes to consider what is important for all senses:

- colour
- feel in the hands
- feel in the mouth
- taste
- smell

~\*\*~ Remember to distinguish both the trait and the preference for that trait, e.g. “colour” is important, specifically a “yellow colour when cooked”.

**D7. What are the characteristics of a bad product? How don’t you like the product to be?**

~\*\*~ Use the same probes as above.

~~~~~

**D8. What are the steps required to make the product? Describe the specific activities in each of these steps.**

~\*\*~ Facilitator notes down the different steps, in the order that they need to happen.

**D9. Are there any steps where it is important to have specific banana quality characteristics?**

~\*\*~ For each of the steps identified in question D8, the group reflects on any specific quality characteristics that are considered important, e.g. when peeling matooke to make beer – is there a preference for the fingers to be long and spread apart, or short and compact, or something else?

~~~~~



**D10. Who does the activities in the different steps? Men or women?**

*\*\*\* Go back to the list of steps identified in question D8, and designate who does each activity – the men or the women or both. To do this we have four stars that we designate between men and women to the activity:*

- *if the men are the only ones who do that activity, then they receive all four of the stars;*
- *if the women are the only ones who do the activity, then they receive all four of the stars;*
- *if the men and women share that activity equally, then the men receive two stars and the women receive two stars;*
- *if an activity is mostly done by one group but the other group also helps a little, then the allocation of stars would be three to one.*

\*\*\*\*\*

**D11. Which banana varieties do you use to make the product? Is there a preferred variety to make the product?**

**D12. What quality characteristics does a variety need to make a good product?**

**D13. When selecting bananas to make the product, what are you looking for? What is important to the senses?**

\*\*\*\*\*

**D14. Is there anything else you would like to add to the discussion about the trait preferences for this product and the banana varieties that are used to make it?**

\*\*\*\*\*

“We will now repeat this exercise for the next most important product.”

*\*\*\* Repeat questions D6-D14.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*\*\*\* Facilitator to judge whether there is enough time or not to complete the exercise for another product.*

\*\*\*\*\*

“The exercise is now complete. Thank you for being so generous with your time today and for sharing your views and experiences!”

## SECTION E: INFORMATION FOR FACILITATOR & NOTE TAKER

### Materials you will need

- at least 5 flip chart pieces of paper to write down what is discussed during the FGD
- sticky tape to tape the flip charts on to a wall or other vertical surface that the whole group can see
- markers of different colours to write on the flip charts
- a clipboard for the note taker
- a printed copy of Section A: Exercise information
- a printed copy of Section B: Introduction and individual informed consent
- a printed copy of Section C: Roster of participants
- lined A4 paper for taking notes
- pens to take notes
- a stapler to staple Sections A, B, and C, and the notes together
- sticky labels to write the exercise code on and stick this to each of the flip chart pages used by the facilitator, and to the pile of stapled papers collated by the note taker

### Getting the space ready

- Hang 2 sheets of flip chart paper next to one another on a wall (horizontally / landscape). Make sure that the papers are firmly secured to the surface of the wall with tape.
- Off to one side, hang another sheet of flip chart paper. This sheet will be used for generating lists that group members will need to refer to or keeping other relevant information that remains to be discussed (as a 'parking space' for issues to return to).

### Points to remember

- Remember to start with the 'types' of bananas grown in the village – by types we mean 'cooking', 'roasting', 'dessert' and 'beverage' types – this might take some explaining to the group.
- Remember to use the prompts to guide the participants through the exercise. The goal is to record as much information as possible.

### Roles and responsibilities

#### During the exercise

During the exercise, the facilitator and note taker have distinct roles and responsibilities:

Facilitator: In addition to facilitating the discussion, which includes drawing information out participants, making sure that everyone has a chance to speak, and moving a constructive discussion forward, the facilitator also will write down the key information given by the participants, and in particular the banana types, products and varieties, and their preferred quality characteristics.

Note taker: The note taker makes sure that each and every participant is read the Section B: Introduction and Individual informed consent, and that the roster is completed with their details. The note taker will also take notes during the discussion. It is important to record what is said – if you can also indicate who said it that is important too. The following should be included in notes:

- Any disagreements in the group – record what is said as the disagreement is worked out.
- Any local changes that have occurred (e.g., "it used to be like X, but now it is like Y").
- Any local cultural knowledge that the group discusses.
- Body language – you might notice that as a particular person is speaking, someone else "rolls" his or her eyes – such language is telling. If such occasion arises, you may record what the body language was and what was being talked about when that particular 'body language' occurred.

- *Proverbs/adages: language is culture! If there are local sayings that people use in their local languages that express relevant cultural ideas about bananas, agriculture, weather, gender roles, etc. --- please include these. There will be NO English translation for these sayings, but you should note them down in the local vernacular language and then give what the 'gist' or the meaning of the saying is in English.*

At the end of the exercise

- *The facilitator and note taker should sit together to read, discuss together, enhance and expand upon the notes taken during the exercise. Based on what you both recall about the exercise, please add any information that is missing.*
- *Remember to put the code of the exercise on both the flip charts and the notes.*
- *Photograph the flip charts before folding them and giving to the supervisor for safe keeping.*
- *Finally, write up your assessment of the exercise – what worked well, what you would try next time to increase participation, etc.*
- *These notes are extremely important to analyzing the information at a later date. Therefore, please try to be as complete and clear as possible!*