

## Upscaling performed cashew planting material production in Ghana

One of the main objectives of the African Cashew initiative (ACi) is to increase the cashew production and raise thereby rural cashew farmers' income.

ACi focuses since the project start in 2009 on farmer's trainings giving presently 130,000 cashew farmers in five African countries access to knowledge about good agricultural practices (GAPs). However scientific research on model farms, knowledge exchange with experts from all over the world and simple observations in the field made clear that the application of GAPs can only increase quality and quantity for about 20 %. Improved planting material however triple or even can quadruple the impact on the productivity of West African cashew trees.

Although the tree material existing in the West African cashew plantations is resistant to draughts and other regional typical environmental factors its productivity can and has to be further improved to achieve higher yields and better quality.



Cashew seedlings in the Cocoa Research Institute in Ghana (CRIG) in Bole, Northern Region



Part one of training for grafters: Theory

**Grafting** is a horticultural technique whereby branches from one plant are inserted into those of another so that the two sets tissues may join together. The technique is most commonly used in propagation of commercially grown plants for the horticultural and agricultural trades.

In most cases, one plant is selected for its roots and this is called the stock or rootstock. The other plant is selected for its stems, leaves, flowers, or fruits and is called the **scion**. The scion contains the desired genes to be duplicated in future production by the stock/scion plant.

Yet the cashew farmers lack access to high yielding planting materials in the production zones. To accelerate the propagation and dissemination of grafted seedlings using scions from elite mothertrees (high yielding, better quality e.g. nut size, disease resistant, etc), ACi, in collaboration with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in Ghana (MOFA) and the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) has embarked on a grafting program.

This operation seeks to upscale production of high performing planting material through the training of grafters in 17 cashew districts in the country.



*Part two of training for grafters: Emelia Yeboah cutting scions from a selected cashew tree in the plantation during the training sessions in Kintampo, Brong Ahafo Region, Ghana.*

In 2011, the proposed planting material production program is expected to yield 100,000 good quality grafted seedlings by the 23 ACi-assisted nurseries in 17 project districts in the cashew region of Ghana. The seedlings will be planted to establish 150 hectares farmer-based scion gardens to be used later mainly for rehabilitation and upgrading of the low producing cashew farms. Farmers will also have the opportunity of buying grafted seedlings from these nurseries to plant 700ha of cashew plantation.



*Trainees transporting selected scions from the plantation to the hands-on grafting session.*

The 215 trainee grafters, 60 of them women were drawn from Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) in the project districts with each FBO providing ten grafters. Three trainees are undertaken further training in nursery management to enable them manage the future activities. The trained grafters will further benefit from future ACi training programs such as top-working (grafting on unproductive trees), thinning, pruning, and pest and disease control. This will enable them to further increase their income by providing services to the farmers for a fee.



*Part three of training for grafters: hands-on-training with support from CRIG.*

## Contact

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