



Reaction RVO on SEO evaluation report

The enclosed report describes an evaluation of the Kenyan activities of the Flying Food project. The project aim was to establish a new insects-for-food value chain. This, to provide a sustainable alternative to (more expensive) meat, dairy and fish products, to stimulate better nutrition (contributing to SDG 2), to boost employment and income generation in rural areas, especially for women (contributing to SDG 8 and 5) and, to reduce the environmental footprint of protein production (SDG 13).

Worldwide, insect production for food consumption is still at its infant stage. The knowledge base for insects as food (and feed) is at the beginning of its development compared to other fields of animal husbandry (e.g. chickens, pigs, cows). In order to create a successful agri-business chain, nearly everything in this project had to be created from scratch, including finding appropriate value chain partners, organising access to finance, developing national legislation on novel food, and building knowledge on how to keep insects healthy. However, the potential benefits, both economic, social and environmental, are substantial. Interest for this new business is increasing on many continents as investments in and the establishment of insect farms is growing.

Bearing in mind the innovative nature of the project, it has been successful in providing us with valuable lessons for further developing the potential of an insects-for-food chain. The project design may have been too ambitious for setting up this completely novel value chain: a duration of 3,5 years with activities in two different countries, many partners and a low budget seemed sub-optimal. Although not all results have been accomplished as originally foreseen, many efforts have been witnessed to accomplish the agreed output and to find alternative sources of finance to overcome barriers, several of which were outside the sphere of influence of the project (such as the bacterial infection). We rank this initiative as promising with respect to relevance for income generation, job creation for women, food security and climate action. Furthermore, the project has done especially well in developing local knowledge on small-scale cricket rearing and identifying the right value chain partners.

With lessons learned from this pilot, including methods to overcome the bacterial infection, a sustainable approach in cricket rearing has been developed. The Flying Food initiative is now moving to the next stage of design and implementation: not limited to Kenya and Uganda, but also to other Sub-Saharan countries.

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