WP6 Synthesis for Period 1

Activities Conducted, Key Research Findings & Perspectives

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This synthesis refers to the following teams

	Partner Institution(s)	*Country*	*RTB crop(s) of interest for RTBfoods*	*Processed/ Food Product(s) of interest for RTBfoods*	*Names of people involved in the team for this WP*
Team 1 PMU	Cirad	France	All	All	Dominique DUFOUR Eglantine FAUVELLE Cathy MEJEAN Philippe VERNIER
Team 2 Finance	Cirad	France	NR	NR	Delphine MARCIANO Anne-Laure PERIGNON
Team 3 Contracting officers	Cirad	France	NR	NR	Marion MILLE Ghislaine VOLLE

Key achievements

Monitoring Evaluation & Learning

During the RTBfoods Inception Meeting, a whole day was dedicated to Monitoring and Evaluation. Partners organized in workpackages (WPs) were asked to revise the list of outputs they will produce and outcomes they will contribute to within RTBfoods project. This lists of outcomes and outputs produced during the inception meeting were re-worked during Period 1 by the PMU after reception of WP work plans. It was necessary to check the alignment between workplans and the RTBfoods Results-Tracker against which Cirad committed to report annually to the Foundation. The PMU worked closely with R. Ofei to revise the Results-Framework and Results-Tracker that were submitted for approval to the Foundation. Each proposed change was explicitly justified and documented. Most of the changes that were submitted for validation were rewording (i.e. better formulation for outputs and outcomes, most of them were initially phrased activities or deliverables in the first version from July 2017 attached to the Project Narrative). Milestones that were missing in the first version of the Results-Tracker were defined with clear qualitative and quantitative indicators for monitoring and evaluation purposes. The new versions of the Results-Framework and Results-Tracker were agreed upon by the Foundation on 16 November 2018. Reporting for Period 1 will then be done on these versions.

In parallel, a survey on breeders practices was designed by the PMU to inform the initial situation prior to RTBfoods project. This survey is to be used at the beginning and at the end of the project with the objective of assessing the progress towards achieving outcomes. Partner breeders will be first interviewed during the Period 1 Annual meeting before targeting a broader RTB breeding community.

For monitoring purposes, the PMU also developed a panel of monitoring tools to ensure a weekly tracking of the progress of each WP toward the completion of the activities listed in the workplan and the production of deliverables. Regular coordination meetings were organized between the project manager and WP leaders and co-leaders, with a timeframe that differs between WPs according to coordination specific needs. Some cross-WP calls were also organized especially between WP1 & 2, WP1 & 5.

Finally, an online MEL platform was set up to be used during the project lifespan for reporting purposes and to provide open access to its products and results. This platform is already used by the CGIAR to store and give access to deliverables produced by its different programs. The RTBfoods PMU together with the PMU of the CGIAR program CRP RTB took the decision to map the RTBfoods project to 2 flagships of the CRP RTB. More precisely, 11 out of the 17 project outputs are mapped to flagship 4 and cluster CC4.1 and the 6 other outputs are mapped to flagship 1, cluster D1.1. This configuration shown the best consistency with the RTBfoods Results-Framework as a whole. Once uploaded on the MEL platform, each RTBfoods deliverable is made open access and downloadable through a unique hyperlink.

Project Coordination

The project leader visited partners and targeted countries during missions in Nigeria, Uganda, Benin and Colombia. In parallel to visits of laboratory facilities, fields and experimental trials, RTBfoods coordination meetings were organized to follow-up on partners' progress and address challenges faced in the development of activities. Most of the time, all partners based in the country participated to these coordination meetings. These events allowed the project leader to identify gaps and risks in coordination

of activities between teams, partners and/or WPs. These missions to partner countries were key moments for the PMU to develop strategies, methods and tools to mitigate risks to effective collaborative work.

In addition to the regular coordination meetings between the project manager and the WP leaders and co-leaders, the PMU organized - first monthly, then bimestrial - virtual coordination meetings with WP leaders and co-leaders. These coordination meetings allowed PMU and WP coordinators to follow-up on activities carried-out by each teams in the targeted countries, inform partners in a consistent and uniform way (e.g. on project strategies and deadlines), to get their feedback on strategic orientations or adjustments to be made at project and/or in a specific WP. Missions to partner countries, coordination meetings are the main methods used by PMU to continuously adapt its coordination and to ensure an efficient flow of information.

As project coordinator, CIRAD PMU was responsible for the development of the project Global Access Strategy. This document required by the Foundation details the principles and the process by which the results produced will be made publically available. Long term storage of data produced on secured on-access repositories and the compliance with the current international regulations (e.g., the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) were addressed in specific sections. Global Access Strategy was shared with partners and approved by all of them prior to validation by the Foundation.

Administrative Support & Logistics

The project assistant daily supported CIRAD staff involved in RTBfoods in the organization of their mission to partner countries. During Period 1, she also actively supported the logistical and administrative organization of the WP2 Sensory Training workshop which took place in Uganda and was hosted by NARL. The project assistant and the project manager were also implicated in the development of the RTBfoods sharing and collaborative platform used by partners to securely store their working documents, protocols and literature references. In the perspective of the development of a secured RTBfoods dataverse repository for the storage of socioeconomic, physicochemical and spectral data on the long-term, the PMU attended a 2-day training organized internally at CIRAD.

During the first months of Period 1 The Finance team was actively involved in money transfer to partners. At the end of Period 1, the finance team has leaded the interim financial report, they were responsible of checking the alignment of expenses reported by partners with the budget initially planned on the one hand and the narrative on activities carried-out by staff involved on the second hand.

Benchmarking & Strengthening links with partner programs & institutions

The project leader was invited to participate in meetings and visits organized by partner projects, members of the RTBfoods Advisory Committee and partner institutes. Among others, he attended the AfricaYam, Nextgen and Sasha 2018 annual meetings and was invited to the discussions prior to BBB phase 2, by the BBB project leader Rony Sweenen. The project manager and the project leader also participated in the Symposium of the International Society of International Root Crops in Cali, Colombia. These meetings with the RTB breeding community of practice were the opportunity to remind the complementarities between the partner RTB breeding programs and to identify opportunities for joint activities and/or new collaborations.

The project leader was also invited by Hans van Doorn, who is a member of the RTBfoods Advisory Committee, for a 2-day visit of HZPC laboratories. The PMU also received a delegation of Nestlé, member of the Advisory Committee, at CIRAD offices, in Montpellier. Among other topics discussed the parties reminded their willingness to collaborate within RTBfoods framework.

Team Coordination

Successful collaborations on some activities and/or for some food products among WP6 teams?

RTBfoods Steering Committee

WP6 teams, i.e. PMU, Finance and Contracting officers teams met regularly during either bilateral meetings or during the regular meetings of the RTBfoods Steering Committee. This committee was set up internally at CIRAD level specifically for RTBfoods project. The Directors of the 3 scientific CIRAD departments are part of this committee, as well as the Director of the newly created Department of Marketing of Science and Impact, and the members of RTBfoods WP6 listed in the table above. During Period 1, this committee met every two months and helped WP6 teams address coordination issues and develop risk mitigation strategies.

Need-oriented intra-WP6 meetings

Bilateral meetings between PMU and Finance or Contracting officers teams are not planned in advance and are set up at the initiative of one of the parties when specific needs appear or specific questions have to be addressed jointly. WP6 Teams worked closely at the beginning of Period 1 and successfully managed to solve subcontracting and financial issues. During Period 1, the PMU and the Contracting officers teams met 3 times to prepare the Consortium Agreement to precise rules and responsibilities of project parties (i.e. partners and coordinator).

During Period 1, PMU and the Finance team met in average once per month; face-to-face meetings were a lot more frequent at the end of the Period to plan financial reporting to the Foundation. At the beginning of Period 1, money transfer to partners was an issue that was very well addressed by close and nearly continuous discussions between the PMU and the Finance team. Similarly, at the end of Period 1, these two teams met nearly once a week in December and January, to consolidate RTBfoods budget and be sure that financial reports received from partners are aligned with their narrative.

Collaborative tools

In complement to face to face discussions, specific collaborative tools were developed to ensure a proper workflow within WP6 (e.g, share agendas, collective emails address, collaborative editing tools, etc.). This regular and efficient communication between WP6 teams resulted in an adaptive management of the project during Period 1 whatever the evident challenges linked to contracting with a large number of partners.

Cross-WP Coordination & Collaboration

Fill-in the table below with a brief description or bullet-point lists of interactions with other WPs (successful ones & gaps) and propositions for risk mitigation.

As they are dedicated to provide support to RTBfoods partners, WP6 were contacted for different specific issues met at WP, team, partner or individual levels. In addition to these exceptional exchanges to deal with specific topics, the PMU maintained regular exchanges with WP leaders and partner focal points in order to coordinate and monitor activities carried out in the field. Daily exchanges for coordination purposes with other WPs, gaps identified and risk mitigation strategies proposed are summarized in the table below.

	Successful Interactions/ Coordination with other WPs (specific actions concerned, frequency, tool sharing)	*Gaps in Interactions/Coordination with other WPs: What is needed from other WPs ? (NR = not relevant)*	*Risk mitigation: How to Improve (specific actions to be taken, frequency, tool sharing?)*
WP1	Project manager participating in regular (once a month in average) WP1 coordination meetings with WP leader & co-leaders (NB: the WP1 coordination team set-up weekly skype calls)	More cross WP1 & WP2 coordination meetings More communication with WP5 for the development of the methodology for new hybrids assessment	Cross-WPs meetings should be facilitated by the PMU and Project manager in particular
WP2	Project manager organizing and participating in every WP2 coordination meeting (in average 1 skype call per month and more regularly when specific topics need to be discussed or special events organized by the coordination team)	Coordination meetings to be set up on a more regular basis	Idem previous Set-up an agenda to facilitate more regular meetings with WP leader & co-leaders

WP3	Project manager organizing and participating in most of the coordination meetings (but few of them in Period 1)	More regular meetings will be needed from Period 2 and + More cross WP3 & WP2 / WP4 meetings	Cross-WPs meetings should be facilitated by the PMU and Project manager in particular Project manager to ensure that the WP3 agenda for coordination meetings (agreed upon in October 2018) is put in place and respected by WP3 coordination team
WP4	Project manager participating in all coordination meetings (few of them in Period 1)	More regular meetings will be needed from Period 2 and + Role of co-leaders (by crop) to be clarified and reinforced	Set-up an agenda to facilitate more regular meetings with WP leader & Co-leaders
WP6	Project manager organizing and participating in most of the coordination meetings or cross-WP coordination meetings (but very few of them in Period 1)	More regular coordination meetings will be needed from Period 2 and + More communication with WP1 for the development of the methodology for new hybrids assessment	Set-up an agenda to facilitate more regular meetings with WP leaders & Co-leaders Cross-WP1 & 5 meetings should be facilitated by the PMU and Project manager in particular

Challenges faced in coordination & Strategies to be reinforced/developed by WP6 partners for Risk mitigation?

Delays in Sub-grant agreements & Money transfer

It took months for the agreements to be signed by the responsible of each partner institute. The delay in signature generated a delay in money transfer to partner teams. This challenge was tackled by WP6 partners who interacted and took decisions jointly.

External Communication challenges

One of the challenges regarding the communication within RTBfoods, both internal and external communication, is due to the fact that no budget was initially dedicated to communication purposes during the budget process. Later, the PMU was asked to develop a website by the Direction of CIRAD, eager to take this opportunity to communicate widely on CIRAD activities on RTB crops. RTBfoods project was quickly pointed out to become a benchmark at the institution level. Due to the lack of specialised communication staff within the PMU, the decision was taken to first consult external communication companies to ask for quotations for the development of the RTBfoods communication strategy. After realising that this challenge was common to several Cirad projects, this topic was taken up by higher spheres within the institution. Being discussed now is the subscription to one license at CIRAD level and the development of an online platform customizable by each project PMU to fit project needs. Such a platform would serve several objectives: internal communication & knowledge management by project partners, external communication for target audiences. The tool should be developed by an external IT company and ready for RTBfoods partner use before the end of Period 2. The PMU is currently interacting with the company to refine the project needs.

Internal Communication & Coordination

The coordination meetings organized between PMU and WP leaders should be defined on a more regular basis to ensure an even more efficient information flow and to be sure the challenges are addressed as soon as they are identified by the project manager and/or the WP leaders and that they are discussed in a collective arena. An agenda for the PMU & WP leaders coordination meetings should be defined during the first RTBfoods Annual Meeting taking place in March 2019, in Abuja. In the same way, an agenda for meetings between the PMU and the 11 product profile champions should be agreed upon in Abuja. Now all State of Knowledge reports have been produced and need to be consolidated by product profile -jointly between WP1 and WP2 teams- and now first data needs to be transferred from one WP to another (especially from WP1 to WP2), the facilitation of cross-WP interactions becomes a priority. In parallel to regular PMU/product champion meetings, the project manager should be responsible for organizing bilateral monitoring meetings with each of the product champions on a regular basis. More generally, interactions between WPs through cross-WP coordination meetings have to be facilitated by the PMU and the initiative belongs to the project manager. The process for coordination meetings between PMU/the project manager and the WP leaders or product champions will be discussed collectively and agreed upon during the Annual Meeting in Abuja.

An increased role for product champions

At the end of Period 1, the needs for more coordination in the planification of activities linked to a specific product profile have emerged. In this perspective, the roles and responsibilities of product champions will be redefined in plenary session in the next RTBfoods Annual Meeting. For Period 1, the decision was taken by the PMU to focus more on reporting at the WP level and not to require too much from the product champions' side. However, we need to agree collectively on a better definition of the responsibilities of product champions especially regarding reporting. This will be formalized in the Consortium Agreement

that is being written by WP6 members and will be shared with partners after the Annual Meeting in March, in Abuja.

Conclusion on Progress & Key Achievements

Synthesis on what worked well in Period 1 - Successful achievements – Strengths & Complementarities of WP6 teams in the different countries.

● Development of the Global Access Strategy validated by the Foundation;
● Revision of RTBfoods Results-Framework and Results-Tracker through interactions with the Foundation for a better alignment with WP and partner workplans;
● Setting-up of the MEL platform for reporting purposes with open access hyperlink for each RTBfoods deliverable;
● Development of collaborative and monitoring tools to ensure an operational workflow between teams and an efficient production of deliverables by partner teams.

Perspectives for WP6

- Completion of the RTBfoods **Consortium Agreement** report and sharing with partners for feedbacks and signature. This document will describe the roles and responsibilities (with a focus on reporting duties) of the parties at 3 different levels, tailored to RTBfoods framework (i.e. WP leaders, product champions and partner focal points).
- Development of an external **project Communication Strategy & tool/interface** that can also be used as a knowledge management system for project partners.
- Development of a RTBfoods **Data Management Plan** describing more precisely where the different types of data (i.e. socioeconomic, physicochemical, spectral, phenotypic and genotypic data) produced by the project will be securely stored on the long term, the process and the responsible person(s) for the transfer to this/these repository(ies). The topic of data management should be addressed during the next RTBfoods Annual Meeting and discussed with the Boyce Thomson Institute in charge of the existing RTB crop specific databases we committed to store RTBfoods data on (cf. RTBfoods Global Access Strategy)
- Development of a **Monitoring Plan** to ensure that activities are actually carried out in alignment with workplans and in coordination between WPs, countries and in particular between teams working on the same product profile. The Monitoring Plan should also address how to better assess and monitor the progress towards the outcomes.
- Conducting the **outcome survey on RTB breeding practices** (with RTBfoods partner breeders and RTB breeders outside of the project framework) to inform the project baseline and later being able to assess the progress toward outcome achievement as mentioned in the RTBfoods Results-Tracker.