

ESJ Manuscript Evaluation Form

This form is designed to summarize the manuscript review that you have completed and to ensure that you have considered all appropriate criteria in your review. Your review should provide a clear statement, to the authors and editors, of the modifications necessary before the paper can be published or the specific reasons for rejection.

Please respond within the appointed time so that we can give the authors timely responses and feedback.

NOTE: ESJ promotes review procedure based on scientific validity and technical quality of the paper (not perceived the impact). You are also not required to do proofreading of the paper. It could be recommend as part of the revision.

ESJ editorial office would like to express its special gratitude for your time and efforts. Our editorial team is a substantial reason that stands ESJ out from the crowd!

Date Manuscript Received:	Date Manuscript Review Submitted:
Manuscript Title: <i>Participatory Varietal Selection and Agronomic Evaluation of African Eggplant and Roselle Varieties in Mali</i>	
ESJ Manuscript Number: <i>75-08-2017</i>	

Evaluation Criteria:

Please give each evaluation item a numeric rating on a 5-point scale, along with a brief explanation for each 3-less point rating.

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Rating Result</i> [Poor] 1-5 [Excellent]
1. The title is clear and it is adequate to the content of the article.	4
<p><i>(a brief explanation is recommendable)</i></p> <p><i>In principle, participatory selection is essentially based on the examination of identification and agronomic characteristics by the stakeholders. But the repetition (of agronomic) is educational.</i></p> <p><i>Author's answers : OK</i></p>	
2. The abstract clearly presents objects, methods and results.	3

<p><i>(a brief explanation is recommendable)</i></p> <p><i>The objective is clearly presented in the abstract, i.e. facilitate the adoption of new varieties, through participatory selection, which in fact is the rationale of the method. The method is more or less well-described. The RCBD has no relation with the participatory selection, per se, as presented by the authors. Nevertheless, the best statistical method, as far as yield is concerned, is a dispersed randomized complete block design (one farmer, one block), to consider the farming system. The sociological aspects of the adoption have not been enough highlighted and is the main issue on using the method. The key words are not very helpful.</i></p> <p>Author's answers :</p> <p>dispersed randomized complete block design could be use if the participatory varietal session was conducted at farmer level. It is not the case, the PVS was conducted at the research station of AVRDC at Bamako, Mali.</p>	
<p>3. There are few grammatical errors and spelling mistakes in this article.</p>	<p>3</p>
<p><i>(a brief explanation is recommendable)</i></p> <p><i>While English is not the mother language of authors, the article is quite understandable.</i></p>	
<p>4. The study methods are explained clearly.</p>	<p>2</p>
<p><i>(a brief explanation is recommendable)</i></p> <p><i>It is a pity that the authors are not referring to Procedures for Variety Release, which are regionally agreed, to reflect the statistical method, while including the adoption method, i.e. participatory selection. Mali is a Member State of ECOWAS region.</i></p> <p><i>The number of 22 participants needs to be better described. Are they representatives of the stakeholders of African Eggplant vs Roselle Value Chain? If it is the case, it is excellent.</i></p> <p>Author's answers : Bamako as Mali's Capital has great diversity in socio-cultural, ethnical and habit consumption aspects. These traditional vegetable as grown in peri-urban area of Bamamko. The 22 farmers are well selected group who are enough representatives of the stakeholders of African Eggplant vs Roselle Value Chain.</p>	
<p>5. The body of the paper is clear and does not contain errors.</p>	<p>2,5</p>
<p><i>(a brief explanation is recommendable)</i></p> <p><i>Some expressions used are not appropriate: ex.: "When conventional methods of breeding are used for African eggplant and Roselle, farmers have been slow to adopt new improved varieties". The concept of "Conventional methods" is only in opposition to biotechnology methods. The participatory selection method is therefore included in conventional methods.</i></p> <p><i>The statement sounds as only new varieties obtained through the participatory selection method are adopted, which is false. The participatory selection could be used to facilitate the adoption of a GM variety. The method is just an approach in the process of screening candidate varieties, in which Value Chain Stakeholders are involved.</i></p> <p>Author's answers :</p> <p><u>conventional methods of breeding</u> can be replaced by traditional breeding method. I can add that The participatory selection is not the only way for variety adoption but it can increase adoption rates of new varieties.</p>	
<p>6. The conclusions or summary are accurate and supported by the content.</p>	<p>3</p>

(a brief explanation is recommendable)
The conclusion is in line with the content. The minor changes proposed need to be considered in the revised conclusion, in particular; the type of stakeholders targeted in the study and the determinants of technology adoption. A reference to the regional agreed procedure will be strongly appreciated and constitute a learning example, for Vegetable Breeders.

7. The references are comprehensive and appropriate.	2,5
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(a brief explanation is recommendable)
UPOV did not yet drafted a Test Guideline (TG) for the Conduct of Tests for Distinctness, Uniformity and Stability (DUS) specifically for the African Eggplant, but it has developed a TG for Eggplant (Solanum melongena L.), which could be used, in addition to customized characteristics for the examination of the Value for Cultivation and Use (VCU) – as far as yield is also concerned –, by the authors while describing the candidate varieties (see UPOV TG/117/4, with in page 18, some helpful literature on eggplant and therefore for the African Eggplant).

Overall Recommendation (mark an X with your recommendation) :

Accepted, no revision needed	
Accepted, minor revisions needed	X
Return for major revision and resubmission	
Reject	

Comments and Suggestions to the Author(s):

The issue of the adoption of new plant varieties is very critical and constitutes the finality of research programs. In this context, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) drafted regionally agreed procedures for Variety Release, in harmony with UPOV procedures for the examination of identification characteristics (DUS Test). In addition to the DUS Test (where required), the ECOWAS Experts prepared procedures for the examination of the Value for Cultivation and Use (VCU), i.e. (i) the Yield and its components, (ii) the Factors affecting yield, namely biotic and abiotic constraints, and (iii) Technological (organoleptic) properties of the candidate variety. These two examination procedures are mandatory for a variety to be released in the region (as far as yield is also concerned).

In the process of Variety Release the issue of their adoption by stakeholders could be considered, through a method such as the participatory selection, which is more known by rice breeders in the region. It is an excellent method to facilitate the adoption of new plant varieties, (a method) which needs to be widely used by other plant breeders and therefore more described in a comprehensive way, highlighting sociological and economical aspects of the adoption process. Even highlighting the adoption method, the authors must refer to the regionally agreed procedures, which gives more objectivity to the outcomes of the study, reinforced by the socio-economical participatory method.

The sample of 22 participants in the study could be acceptable if it is representative of the different classes/types of African Eggplant vs Roselle Value Chain Actors. This needs to be more clearly described in the context of vegetables.

The participatory selection method is comprehensively described by AfricaRice, in the beginning of 1990-years, and more information on the method could be provided in contacting Rice Breeders in the ECOWAS region. An Agricultural Sociologist could be associated in the study, while one of the Authors, Dr. Mathieu GUEYE, an Ethno-Botanical Expert can deal with this.

Author's answers :

The PVS process runned at the research station is a important step in the adoption rate. In general the participants to a PVS are selected based on their knowledges and experiences on these vegetables. Regarding the traditional vegetables, in the past they are related to poor people or linked to a particular ethnical group. Know, the main factors in rate adoption of these vegetables is linked to habit food, medicinal and nutritives proprieties of these vegetables as reported by : [22] Guèye M et M Diouf . «Traditional leafy vegetables in Senegal: diversity and medicinal uses». AJTCAM, vol., 4(4): pp. 469-475, 2006. and [20] Diouf M, Guèye M, Faye B, Diémé O and C LO. «The commodity systems of four indigenous leafy vegetables in Senegal». Water SA, vol., 33 (3), pp. 343-348, 2007.

Comments and Suggestions to the Editors Only:

The article can be accepted subject to minor changes highlighting (in Material & Methods) the participatory selection approach with a more comprehensive description of: (i) the different classes of stakeholders of the African Eggplant vs Roselle Value Chain, and (ii) the socio-economic factors determining the adoption of new varieties of African Eggplants vs Roselle. The support of an Agricultural Sociologist is recommended for these two points.

