



# WAAPP REGIONAL IMPACT e-NEWSLETTER

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## Here is What Transformation Looks like

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**WAAPP, the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme**, transforms West African agriculture by boosting productivity and sustainability, reducing hunger and improving nutrition, creating jobs and supporting collaboration across borders. The West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development, CORAF, implements the program. In 2016, WAAPP was rated as the second best project in Africa funded by the World Bank.



# INSPIRING STORIES OF CHANGE

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*Experts agree that girls and women are central to agricultural transformation in West and Central Africa.*

**F**armers in Mali adopt a rice farming method known as the System of Rice Intensification. This opens the possibility of two harvest periods in a year and the chances to cultivate more. With increased income, the farmers can purchase food supplements and invest in education and health. Elsewhere in nearby Cote d'Ivoire, an empowered woman expands cassava production to over 30 hectares of land and hires many more youths in her community. With increased revenue, she takes on the lead role in providing for her family. These are real stories of not only hardworking men and women in West Africa but also one that is now commonly associated with the [West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program \(WAAPP\)](#) coordinated by [CORAF](#).

In this edition of the WAAPP Impact Newsletter, we let you discover for yourself, the WAAPP impact stories and how it is pulling many out of poverty. None of these would be possible, without all those working hard in fields across West and Central Africa, the political leadership of the West African Economic Community, WAAPP implementing countries and the financial support of the World Bank and our numerous partners.

Enjoy the read and please do not hesitate to share any thoughts you may have with us.

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**Dr Abdou Tenkouano**  
Executive Director

## MALI FARMER'S INCOMES ON THE INCREASE

The System of Rice Intensification (SRI) is helping bring rural farmers closer to food self-sufficiency in over 50 countries with the help of organizations like the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF). It can potentially reduce water use, increase land productivity, and provide a buffer against the impacts of climate change while reducing reliance on artificial inputs, like pesticides and artificial fertilizer.

Mali, where rice is the staple food, imports more than 45 percent of its rice. The West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme (WAAPP), a program at CORAF, introduced SRI methods to sustainably increase rice production and lower food insecurity. SRI creates two possible harvest periods in Mali, thereby reducing the length of the lean period. With increased income, farmers are purchasing food supplements and investing in education.

“With this practice, I can feed my family and the income generated enabled me to cover health costs and school fees for my children,” says Adama Dougnon, a rice producer in the Segou Region of Mali. “Before, I used to practice the broadcast seeding method. With 120 kilograms of paddy rice seeds I can reap 3-4 tonnes per hectare. Then I switched to a regular rice-transplantation system that allowed me to get about 5 tonnes with 80 kilograms of seeds per hectare. But the introduction of the SRI by WAAPP has significantly increased my yields. Currently, my yields are estimated in the range of 8 to 8.5 tonnes per hectare with a maximum of 15 kilograms of paddy rice seed used.”

“We should not need to have food shortages in the world if we would make better use of our existing land, water, seed, labor, and capital resources,” says Norman Uphoff, Professor Emeritus of Government and International Agriculture at Cornell University and Senior Advisor, SRI International Network and Resources Center (SRI-Rice).

Rice is the most important grain for human consumption, according to the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Globally, rice provides 20 percent of all calories consumed, with up to 70 percent in some regions. Rice is grown predominantly on smallholder farms and the average global yield is approximately four tons/hectare. While rice production has stayed level for decades, rice demand is steadily increasing as populations grow.

“Meeting our food needs more adequately, more equitably, and more sustainably is not going to be possible with our current technologies and mindsets, given the growing constraints of climate change,” says Uphoff. “What we are learning about the contributions that beneficial microbes can make to crop and animal (as well as human) growth and health is itself an inspiration and impetus for multi-disciplinary, collaborative work on agricultural and rural development.”

SRI is a crop management approach developed by Fr. Henri de Laulanié in Madagascar in 1983. The goal is to create nutrient-rich soil and provide individual plants with the space to grow, allowing them to develop a stronger root system. This leads to stronger plants and larger yields.



Rice is a staple food in Mali. It imports 45 percent of rice. SRI can be a long-term solution to reversing the situation.

For irrigated rice production, farmers transplant young, single seedlings, spacing them widely in a grid pattern. They keep soils moist and fertile but not flooded, enhancing them with compost and other sources of organic nutrients. Weeding is done early and regularly, aerating the soil, with weeds added back to the soil to decompose. These practices can be adapted to local conditions, such as water availability, soil conditions, weather, labor availability, and access to seeds.

Adapting SRI practices can double yields while reducing costs by a quarter and saving up to 40 percent more water. In Bihar, India, large increases in productivity and a host of socio-economic benefits were seen, especially among women. In northern Myanmar, under rainfed conditions, households' net incomes from rice production increased eight-fold. According to Oxfam, “growing more rice with less water and agrochemical inputs is essential for future food security and environmental sustainability.” More than 50 countries are applying SRI methodology and modifying practices accordingly.

“For subsistence farmers, this kind of increase can mean the difference between not having enough rice to eat and being food self-sufficient. That’s huge,” says Caryl Levine, Co-Founder and Co-Owner of Lotus Foods. “They often achieve household self-sufficiency within just one or two cycles, and after that, they have surplus to sell. Our supply chain partner in Cambodia found that the net income, after input and labor expenses, from cultivating rice was highest for farmers who are producing SRI organic rice, with income of up to US\$745; traditional farmers experienced a loss of around US\$70.”

The original article was first published on Foodtank.

## WOMEN'S LIVES IN COTE D'IVOIRE ARE CHANGING



**F**ifty-nine years old Kouamé Akissi is a mother of seven children and lives in Toumodi, in the Central part of Cote d'Ivoire. Using knowledge, new varieties, and training obtained from one of **West Africa's most successful agricultural interventions** she has not only closed the lagging income gap that now allows her to take full responsibility of her family, but also to produce more cassava on a hectare of land.

*“One day I got a phone call inviting me to a training workshop in Abidjan. No one could have imagined the outcome of the training would be a life-changing experience,” says a smiling Akissi.*

Akissi says she produces improved species of cassava, controlled and classified by Ivorian researchers. This includes bocoui and Yavo as well as Ampong, Sma, Olekanga, Brony, Brankye, Otuhia, obtained from neighboring Ghana as part of a regional exchange scheme to facilitate the free flow of improved crop species from one country to another.

With the blessing of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAPP), her species have increased yields varying between 20 and 50 tons per hectare. With experience in processing cassava, Akissi has founded Etranou, a local cooperative meaning “let's bond together” in the Baolé language spoken mostly in Central Cote d'Ivoire. The group brings together about 30 village women.

A root and tuber center based in Kumasi, Ghana is leading unprecedented research in cassava varieties in West Africa. Etranou members have also seen their revenues increase by 10 percent. Akissi is now regularly invited to join other

women groups to share her knowledge and help improve cassava production.

*“We never thought it was possible,” she says.*

But with new knowledge and her capacity improved by the WAAPP, she is now a living testimony of using cassava to improve both her livelihood and income situation. With some technologies approved by the WAAPP, processing cassava has become considerably easier than before.

They cut their cassavas. Then put them in the machine. Then push a button. Within a few minutes, the 100-liters size grounding machine delivers ground cassava, finer and cleaner than they had ever done with their hands along the green-and-brown checkerboard of fields covering a broad stretch of Man, Bouaké and Brendressous in the west and central Cote d'Ivoire.

### **Akiri's joy is hardly unique**

Tano Viviane, a 50-year-old mother of six from Bouaké in Central Cote d'Ivoire, has earned the nickname of 'Kwasio manioc meaning Cassava mama for her 25 years involvement in cassava production.

The West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF), the region's leading research institution coordinating innovative technologies in the agric sector recognized her role in the cassava business.

*“I received 3 million CFA Francs (about USD 5500) as part of the award,” says Tano.*

She invested the money into the cassava production process and handed some out as credits for village farmers. She says, the credit generated a meager 2 percent interest and a 10 percent increase in revenue for her group.

### Increasing Demand with Limited Supply

International companies including Dutch-based businesses contacted her group in 2016 for the supply of cassava. While this presents tremendous growth opportunities, assembling the capital and inputs required to produce at large scale to meet national and international demand remains a challenge for these small-scale producers in the region.

*“There is demand, but so far, we do not have enough capital and the right mechanization tools to produce enough to meet local and international demand,” says Mrs. Kouamé Akissi.*

However, in West Africa where the percentage of women in poverty is growing with the expanding population, these new technologies and crop varieties offered by the WAAPP bring with them new economic opportunities for women to experience significant changes in their livelihoods. *“I am responsible for my entire household. My husband is sick and I am today the breadwinner of the family,” adds Akissi.*

### Cassava Flour Unlocks Baking Businesses

Until recently, most small bakery businesses in Cote d’Ivoire faced significant challenges related to obtaining raw material including flour.

Thanks to the WAAPP, many of the hurdles in the pastry market are now falling. Pastry and bread are now produced

with inexpensive, more nutritive and easy-to-produce cassava flour.

The manager of Top’Pain, an Abidjan-based leading pastry firm, Louis Kakou agrees that thanks to WAAPP-generated cassava, they now have enough flour to grow their businesses and meet local demand.

*“Before the training workshops organized by the WAAPP, women bakers did not know one can use local flour to bake and obtain good results,” says the manager of Top’Pain.*

WAAPP has trained 500 firms, of which 350 bakers and 150 pastries. *Solange Mundi, a baker and bakery teacher at an Abidjan institute, says “I can now save more money because local flour is less expensive, and that impacts on the entire cycle of production and sales.”*

With the World bank investing in the WAAPP, West Africa is emerging as a laboratory for testing new approaches to boosting food production. Experts agree that women hold the future of agricultural transformation in the region. *“What we have seen with this innovative project is that research and development are critical to creating new opportunities for those involved in the agriculture economy of Cote d’Ivoire and West Africa in general,” says Dr. Abdou Tenkouano, Executive Director of the Dakar-based research organization, CORAF.*

*“This is an exciting time in agriculture in West Africa. Our primary goal is to leverage these women, youths, and climate-smart technologies to transform the agro-food system in West Africa in the decade ahead.”*



*Akissi (standing) employs women and youths on a permanent and seasonal basis.*

© WAAPP Cote d’Ivoire.

## BENIN RELIES ON WAAPP TO INCREASE AGRI PRODUCTION

**B**enin depends largely on agriculture to stimulate its economy. One of the programs it hopes will help achieve this ambition is the West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP).

In 2017, Benin got an additional **USD 13 million** loan to further develop the agriculture sector from the [World Bank](#) under the WAAPP implemented by [CORAF](#),

Actors of the program met recently in Cotonou to launch the new phase which runs for three years.

The new program seeks to further develop a regional market for quality seeds and the transfer of technologies. It is also hoped that through the program, the National Center of Specialization on Maize will be upgraded to a Regional Center of Specialization.

By so doing, the program will contribute to building the resilience of communities across Benin and further tackle

critical food and livelihood security challenges facing the country.

Sixteen technologies were generated under the earlier phase of the WAAPP in Benin and contributed to at least a 15 percent increase in productivity.

According to the country's Agriculture Minister, Gaston Dossouhoui, WAAPP will continue to facilitate access to technologies to farmers and markets, improve agriculture inputs and infrastructure.

Benin's National Plan for Agricultural Investments and Food and Nutrition Security seeks not only to increase production but also to add value to its primary commodities, improve market and build the resilience of the agriculture system.

The WAAPP has been instrumental in adding value to key crops such as maize, pineapple, cashew, and fish.



*Thanks to polyethylene film, Benin has been able to double the yield of pineapples.*

## A SUCCESSFUL BET FOR A YOUNG GUINEAN



Ousmane Diallo

**W**ith most youths continuing to view agriculture unfavorably, it is uncommon to see young people venturing into the farming sector.

But in Guinea, the case is different for Ousmane Diallo. He lived abroad, but one day, he decided to return home and settled in agriculture.

«At first, it was not easy. Returning to the fields after living abroad was difficult. But today, I can achieve my goals as a farmer,» he says.

About 80 percent of Guineans are engaged in the agriculture sector. Though Ousmane has been in agriculture for a while, he always longed to be involved in a business activity further up in the agriculture value chain.

Ousmane developed eight hectares of land, going from rice production to banana and cashew. Proceeds from these activities have now enabled him to open an ice cream shop.

The West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP) equipped him with the required knowledge, varieties, and technologies.

«The WAAPP approach convinced me.»

Ousmane employs six people permanently and about 15 seasonal workers. About ten other people work in his new ice cream shop.

Despite the progress made, Ousmane still dreams of more startups in the agriculture value chain.

The original article was published on the website of [WAAPP Guinea](#).

## WAAPP CREDITED FOR TOGO'S AGRICULTURE

**T**ogolese Agriculture Minister has attributed the country's growth in agriculture production to the [West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program \(WAAPP\)](#) implemented by CORAF.

Togo experienced an 11 percent growth in cereal production during the past five years. Togolese officials credit this increase to the implementation of the WAAPP and the National Agriculture Investment and Food Security Program of Togo. A revised version of this national plan was launched in late 2017 and runs until 2026.

«A remarkable increase,» said Ouro-Koura Agadazi, Togo's Minister of Agriculture while speaking at a national event in Lome to present to the public, the country's main agriculture development drivers and programs.

In the current cropping season, Togo expects a production surplus of more than 24 percent.

Agriculture represents about 30 percent of Togo's gross domestic product and is the main employment driver.

As part of CORAF's work in Togo, [young scientists](#) benefited from post-graduate training, the infrastructure of the national agricultural research system notably the [Togolese Research Institute](#) was upgraded, and research programs were supported. A three-year additional funding from the World Bank is expected to further strengthen the gains made under the program since 2011



*Transfers of technologies across borders is a major indicator of the success of the WAAPP. Togolese producers are seizing on varieties designed in Ghana to grow more and raise their livelihoods.*

# WAAPP MADE SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO WEST AFRICA RESEARCH, REPORT



A new report has recognized the substantial contribution of the WAAPP to the agro-food system of West Africa.

The West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP) contributed substantially in addressing West Africa's most acute agricultural research challenges, a new report from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has concluded.

"The program has invested extensively in the construction and rehabilitation of research infrastructure and the provision of laboratory equipment for predefined priority commodities. As such, it has strengthened the position of West African countries to perform high-quality, priority research over the coming years."

By funding postgraduate training for more than 1,000 young scientists across West, the report argues, WAAPP contributed to "offsetting impending large-scale human capacity losses due to the retirement of senior researchers." 30 percent of those who benefited from WAAPP training are women.

Under the WAAPP, nine National Centers of Excellence (NCoS) focusing on priority commodities to the region were created. Two of these centers have since met all the technical criteria to become regional centers of excellence.

"Through the establishment of NCoS, subregional research coordination, and new funding mechanisms, WAAPP has promoted cross-country research collaboration, reduced duplication of research effort, and enhanced the flow of relevant technologies across the region.

The report recommends that sustaining this regionalization approach requires identifying regional research priorities and assigning them to suitable countries. CORAF's coordination is central to this model.

"National governments must also decide how to allocate their research funding across national and regional priorities," the report adds.

"Orphan Crops"

Despite the impressive WAAPP results, the report argues that some important research priorities have been overlooked.

"Yams, for instance, are of critical economic importance in West Africa's tropical zones, but WAAPP has not focused on establishing a regional center of excellence in yam research. The same can be said for cowpeas in the Sahel."

"Farmers growing these crops need new, high-yielding varieties that are resilient to drought, floods, or extreme temperatures and are less vulnerable to pests and diseases."

"It is therefore essential that research on these orphan crops—which are also researched less extensively by CGIAR centers than rice, maize, and wheat, for example—not be ignored."

Progress Still Needed in Adoption of Technologies

"More needs to be done to scale up the adoption of improved technologies to meet the food and nutritional needs of the population and to drive economic development and poverty reduction throughout West Africa."

WAAPP actors are currently thinking through a more ambitious program intended to massively promote the adoption of existing technologies in order to transform the agriculture industry in West and Central Africa.

"The proposed West Africa Agricultural Transformation Program is set to address these challenges by scaling up the adoption of climate-smart technologies to sustainably enhance productivity, reduce postharvest losses, increase value addition, improve nutrition, promote an enabling policy environment, strengthen the regional market, and generate youth employment."

Also read: [Pivoting to a More Ambitious WAAPP](#)

The WAAPP is an initiative of the Economic Community of West African States. It is funded by the World Bank and technically coordinated by CORAF.

Gert-Jan Stads and Nienke Beintema, both of the Agriculture Science and Technology Indicators, an initiative of IFPRI authored this report.



## “WAAPP-TAAT COLLABORATION CAN RAPIDLY TRANSFORM AGRICULTURE,” IITA OFFICIAL

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*IITA's Dr. Chrysantus Akem has the responsibility of building the strategic partnerships required to advance the mission of TAAT. Dr. Akem at the WAAPP meeting in Abidjan in Nov 2017.*

**W**ith dwindling aid to tackle a growing list of problems in developing countries, working in isolation to address challenges of similar nature is no longer an option.

For the **International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA)**, who have been mandated to implement an ambitious new technologies adoption program in Africa known as the **Technologies for Africa's Agriculture Transformation (TAAT)**, working collaboratively with other partners is obviously the right thing to do. When organizations bring together their comparative advantages, they can maximize impact and be more effective in the delivery of development results.

“Our expectation is basically to see how we can work together to deliver collaboratively rather than competitively,” says Dr. Chrysantus Akem, Program Manager of TAAT at IITA.

**IITA** is the main implementing agency of TAAT funded by the **African Development Bank (AfDB)** while **CORAF** is the main implementing agency of the **West Africa Agricultural Transformation Program (WAATP)**. The World Bank funds the latter and it goes operational at the end of 2018.

In mid-November, **Dr. Chrysantus Akem** participated in a meeting to develop the new **West Africa Transformation Program (WAATP)** at a workshop of major partners in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. **CORAF** communications team sat down

with the senior IITA official. In the following interview, he provides insights on how he views the potential partnership with **CORAF** and other national, regional, and international partners. Read on:

**CORAF:** First of all, what is TAAT?

**Dr. Chrysantus Akem:** TAAT is the Technologies for African Agriculture Transformation. It was formulated by the AfDB to take to scale technologies that have been designed by the CGIAR and national agricultural research centers to transform agriculture in Africa.

**CORAF:** How did IITA become a leading implementing body of this program?

**Dr. Chrysantus Akem:** Basically, IITA was approached by the AfDB to take a lead role in implementing this program. It was based on the achievements of the Support to Agricultural Research for Development of Strategic Crops in Africa (SARD-SC). This was a five-year program funded by the AfDB. The excellent results produced by the program convinced the AfDB that IITA could take on a greater role in TAAT.

**CORAF:** Excellent. We understand working on a partnership with other national and regional research institutions is central to the delivery approach of TAAT. We also understand you are looking to work together with the WAATP. Could you

tell us concretely what do you expect from the CORAF, the main implementing body of the WAATP?

**Dr. Chrysantus Akem:** After SARD-SC ended, we intended to go to phase two. Then suddenly we realized phase II was essentially about expanding the program to scale out the technologies that were created. When the AfDB decided that TAAT will be one of the pillars of Feed Africa, one of the five strategic priority areas of the AfDB, we realized that it mirrored what we intended to do in SARD-SC II. So, we obviously came on board and decided to expand the program not only to focus on four commodities but as many commodities as the national constituents wanted. This was the initial intent. Thirty-five countries who participated in the first workshop expressed interest in being part of TAAT. Eighteen value chains were selected during the workshop as primary areas of focus. After a series of meetings, we all narrowed down to what they wanted. At the same time, we realized that the World Bank-funded West Africa Productivity Program (WAAPP) was doing the same thing. The timing couldn't be more right more right. We all understood that the transformation of Africa's agriculture was our focus. This is how we started to think alike. So, the President of the AfDB approached the President of World Bank and then suggested that these two programs should work together collaboratively in other to transform agriculture in Africa. That set the scene of the collaboration between IITA, lead implementing agency of TAAT and the CORAF who are implementing the World Bank's WAAPP. That is where we started this collaboration. Our expectation is basically to work together to deliver collaboratively rather than competitively. We want to see how we can transform the silos in which we have been researching as different institutions and regions and do it together and collaboratively to transform agriculture in Africa. I believe this is a unique opportunity to change, and we have to do it, and I hope that we can do it this time around.

**CORAF:** Are there some areas of collaboration that you have already identified?

**Dr. Chrysantus Akem:** Yes. We had a couple of meetings in which areas of collaboration were identified.

**CORAF:** Can you name a few?

**Dr. Chrysantus Akem:** The one that stands out is varietal transformation. Each of the commodities has target varieties selected either because of yield or because of adaptation which they want to take to scale. This is a good opportunity because this is one technology that stands out across. The second one is mechanization. We all know that we cannot transform agriculture in Africa by using the hoe and cutlass. Some people have jokingly said, the hoe and cutlass need to belong to the museum and we need to focus on mechanization. How can we look at those mechanization options – be they production or post-harvest that we can focus on to transform agriculture in Africa? Processing is also central to what we are looking at. We want to look at it as a value chain. So, the technology that we are focusing on is from production right to the end consumers. Those are the two keys areas that we want to look at, and that happens to be the same focus of the WAATP. The WAAPP looks at technology along the value chain. At IITA and CGIAR, we have been working on selecting varieties that



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*About two hundred technologies were developed under WAAPP including the parboiled rice mill machine used to add nutritive value to rice in Benin.*

are high yielding, adapted, resistant to all different pests and diseases, and we feel we have technologies to quickly transform some of these varieties so that we can get that maximum yields or achieve the required transformation during a short period. We are ready to take some of these techniques to scale. Take for example; if you take one hectare of cassava, you can multiply material and plant 10 hectares. We have methods that can increase that 100 times in less than a year and be able to have enough material to plant one hundred times what you started with. Those are the kind of technologies that we have ready to go regarding transforming the technologies on cassava. If we take yam as another example, we have devised techniques where we can use the vines of yam to produce a tuber and again that can multiply a hundredfold more than we can do now. So, there are some technologies that IITA has ready to go, and we are ready to share some of these techniques with the other countries so that we can rapidly transform agriculture under the joint WAAPP, TAAT collaboration.

**CORAF:** You just talk about silos; how do you plan to work with national and regional agricultural research systems across Africa to take to scale technologies and achieve expected results?

**Dr. Chrysantus Akem:** To break the silos, we need to start planning together. Now is the time to plan together with all partners. Right now, we have the AfDB and the World Bank. Both donors want to make a difference. CORAF and IITA are



*Parboiled rice is a better source of calcium, potassium, fiber, and vitamin B-6.*

the two implementing agencies. To be effective, we have to brainstorm and develop our priorities together. Incidentally, IITA and CORAF have similar partners at national and regional levels. So, if we do the preliminary plan on how we can take this to scale and then engage the national partners and work out modalities, it can make a difference. More importantly, national partners need to come on board because we want this to be sustainable time around. We want TAAT to be owned by national partners.

**CORAF:** And talking about sustainability, both TAAT and WAATP will end at some point. How do you ensure countries take ownership of these programs and put in place lasting arrangements?

**Dr. Chrysantus Akem:** Yes. Planning is an aspect we need to build into the program from the design phase. Past programs have attempted to do that, but they may not have been very effective. But we need to do that this time around in a way that we get a commitment from national partners. One of the ways to secure country commitment is through counterpart funding. What this means is getting national partners to not only partner but also bring in their own contribution. This means providing personnel, land, and other infrastructure such as laboratories so that it becomes a continuous program. And we also want to ensure that countries build this into the planning processes of the national agriculture programs. This way, you do not have a differentiation between national and international

programs. If this planning becomes a yearly affair where the technical and policy personnel of national governments are systematically involved, this will lead to complete buy-in and commitment. With this approach, we believe that it can actually be sustainable even when we start to withdraw.

**CORAF:** We always end this conversation by asking you one very individual question. You have been on the development scene for a very long time, as we begin to plan this critical program for the west and central regions, do you have any major concern?

**Dr. Chrysantus Akem:** Yes. My concern is that of fulfilling commitments. The Malabo declaration stipulated that countries will invest at least 10 percent of their national budgets on agriculture. From what we know, there are only a few countries that have met that commitment, and very few others have made it up to five percent. So, my concern is we need to stop talking and act. The African government needs to measure commitment by what they do and not just what they talk because time has come where we need to go beyond talking and start doing.

**CORAF:** Thank you very much for speaking to us. We appreciate your time.

**Dr. Chrysantus Akem:** Thank you very much. It is my pleasure. I hope, and I look forward a solid collaborative working relationship between IITA and CORAF.

## New Program Seeks Lasting Changes



West African youths are increasingly seizing on some of the technologies to create business opportunities in the agric sector such as here in Nigeria.

Even with overwhelming evidence showing the **West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP)** has ‘substantial’ impact on economies of West African countries, efforts are currently underway to sharpen the focus of an even more ambitious and transformative iteration.

Known as the West Africa Agriculture Transformation Program (WAATP), this new intervention aims to considerably scale up the adoption of climate-smart technologies, enhance job creation and increase access to regional markets for targeted commodities.

### What’s New?

The WAATP seeks to transform the agriculture industry sustainably by scaling up replicable innovations, technologies, and crop varieties using ICT tools and geo-mapping.

The geographical scope of coverage will extend to Central Africa with Cameroon among the participating countries. Chad and other Central African nations could potentially join.

“Despite the progress made, agricultural productivity in the West and Central Africa sub-region still lags behind the rest of the World,” says **Dr. Niéyidouba Lamien**, WAAPP Regional program coordinator.

“Focus has to go beyond productivity to address the overall issue of enhancing the food system to address the demand of an increasing population, address youth unemployment, climate change, migration, gender, and nutrition.”

Expected to be launched by late 2018, the WAATP will focus on five mutually reinforcing components:

- Strengthening the new model for innovation development in West Africa
- Accelerating large-scale adoption of improved technologies and innovations
- Policies, markets, and institutional strengthening
- Contingent emergency response
- Project management, learning, monitoring and evaluation

“This program has assigned itself very ambitious targets because West and Central deserve that. Among the beneficiaries, at least 40 percent must be women. The technologies disseminated have to be linked to critical areas such as climate-smart agriculture, nutrition, mechanization, and processing. And it will be judged on the number of permanent and seasonal jobs it creates,” says **Dr. Abdou Tenkouano**, Executive Director of the West and Central Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF).

### What did the WAAPP Achieve?

More than two hundred technologies were released and adopted by almost 4.5 million producers and processors on about 4.8 million hectares. These technologies are available on [www.mita.coraf.org](http://www.mita.coraf.org).

WAAPP financed master degree and Ph.D. studies for 1021 youths. This represents 72% of men and 28% women. These young researchers are expected to replace most the agriculture researchers going on retirement. The nine national centers of specializations of countries participating in the program benefitted from the renovation of their infrastructure and new research laboratories were constructed. Two of the centers have been upgraded in regional centers of specialization. This includes the Dry Cereals Center based in Senegal and the Roots and Tuber center based in Ghana.

By increasing the major crops yields between 30% for dry cereals and 150% for rice, fruit, and tubers, the program has had a considerable impact on food security and caloric intake. Caloric consumption rose from 2,777 kcals to 2,964 kcals and the “hunger period” reduced by 28 to 55% according to the commodity. WAAPP has also increased by 34% the economic situation of farmers as well as transformed communities.

The West African Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP) was launched in 2008 and assigned the mission to boost productivity, reduce hunger, improve nutrition, create jobs, and support collaboration across borders.

Ten years after, the program reached close to nine million people directly and about 49 million indirectly.

In 2016, the World Bank rated the WAAPP as the second-best project funded by the World Bank in Africa.

The WAAPP is an initiative of the **Economic Community of West African States**. It is funded by the World Bank and technically coordinated by CORAF.

## WAAPP IN THE MEDIA

As usual, WAAPP attracted so much media coverage. Here are a sample articles in the region leading media.

- Les producteurs appelés à s'approprier les résultats de la recherche
- Dr Abdou Tenkouano, Directeur exécutif du Coraf : « ...30 ans d'existence...mutualiser les moyens de recherches et de développement »
- Basse Guinée : une centaine de ménages équipés en outillages agricoles par le PPAO
- Renforcement de la production maraichère en Basse Guinée : le PPAO équipe plusieurs ménages en outillages agricoles
- La CORAF, une alternative à l'immigration des jeunes africains
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