

WAAPP REGIONAL IMPACT e-NEWSLETTER

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Special Edition:

Senegalese Agriculture more Resilient as a result of WAAPP

No. 07, November - December 2018

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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.



WAAPP SENEGAL IN FIGURES



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FULLY EQUIPPED, THE REGIONAL CENTER ON DRY CEREALS ASSUMES ITS **CATALYTIC ROLE**



f there was one wish by actors of the West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP) at the inception of the centers of excellence, it was to see them begin the process of creating the required collaboration and partnerships to catalyze the critical innovations and technologies to address the region's priority crops.

After many years of substantial investments in both operations and infrastructure, the Dry Cereal Center of Excellence based in Senegal is now fully equipped thanks to WAAPP Senegal and driving the vital research work on millet, maize, sorghum and other cereals.

« It is impossible today to envisage a possibility of researching dry cereals in West Africa without involving us, » says Dr. Daniel Fonceka, former Scientific Director at the Centre for the Improvement of the Adaptation to Drought (CERAAS).

Not only did the Senegalese government through the WAAPP construct a new multipurpose amphitheater for CERAAS, but it also contributed to renovating infrastructure in associated research campuses. This include :

- The modernization of the BAME Laboratory;
- The rehabilitation of buildings and laboratories at the

National Agricultural Research Center in Bambey;

- The purchase of new equipment for the of the laboratory at CERAAS;
- The modernization of laboratories at the Food Technology Institute.

In doing so, the overarching objective of the WAAPP was not only to create an enabling environment in which excellence in research can thrive but also boost the morale of researchers and scientists. Coming after decades of underfunding of research and development (R&D) in West Africa, the WAAPP deemed that this was vital to place R&D on a new trajectory.

Gaining in Visibility

The multipurpose amphitheater located on the campus of the Senegalese National School of Agriculture (ENSA) has a 200-sitting capacity. In recent months, it has hosted both international and national conferences on various aspects of cereals.

Officials of CERAAS argue that the new infrastructure has helped better position the center among the actors in the regional and international research organizations ecosystem and considerably enhanced their visibility.

«Less than a year ago, we could not host a meeting of 80 people, » says Dr. Fonseca.

«But as a result of the new buildings, we have transitioned to welcoming more 150 scientists including the recent Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research in Sorghum and Millet (SMIL) international conference.»

Asserting its Leadership Role

«We are engaging the research community in identifying solutions for the future. That is the role we are called upon to play,» says Dr. Fonseca.

For those familiar with the degrading state of research and development (R&D) before the coming of the West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP), you may agree it is has made a substantial impact in a relatively short period.

The WAAPP funded both operations and infrastructure in its nine specialized centers across West Africa. Based on an evaluation of nine criteria, these centers were expected to transition to regional centers of excellence. Since their creation, two have been upgraded to this coveted status. This includes the Dry Cereals Center in Senegal and the Root and Tuber Center in Ghana.

Graduation to a regional center of excellence under the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) allows for a significant mobilization of resources to examine a priority commodity and allows for greater collaboration and broad dissemination of results.

The Stakes Are Getting Higher

CERAAS is located in Thiès, about 50 kilometers East of the capital, Dakar. Its original mandate was to provide technical solutions to mitigate the effect of drought on agricultural production. Together with other centers, it is today driving research on dry cereals for the benefit of Senegal and the West Africa region.

The dwindling millet production amidst the changing climate means its researchers have a critical mission to devise solutions that would enable the largely cereal-dependent population to become resilient and food and nutrition secured.

Some Great Results so Far

Since its creation, this center on dry cereals has devised over 20 technologies, five new varieties of beans and two varieties of sorghum. As part of its research on climate-smart varieties, the center has developed ten groundnut varieties that are climate-smart as well as other varieties of cowpea. They are all contributing to farmers adaptation to effects of climate change. Eight permanent researchers work for CERAAS while 70 others support the implementation of the research plan.







WAAPP SOWS SEEDS OF RESILIENCE IN SENEGAL



he geographical location of Senegal along the Sahelian belt of Africa means its agriculture is already facing the brunt of climate change. Experts argue that if urgent measures are not taken, small-scale farmers are likely to suffer the most.

Peanut ranks among Senegal's top five largest export commodities with millions of small-scale farmers involved.

Once the engine of the Senegalese economy, the peanut sector has suffered a major crisis, according to the Research Program on Climate Change, Food Security, and Agriculture.

But the trends are starting to change with the substantial investment of the West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP) in this critical sector.

In the past few years, WAAPP Senegal has been at the forefront funding research and development efforts to revitalize the sector and get it to boost economic growth, stimulate employment, and achieve the food and nutrition security of the people in Senegal and across West Africa.

Not only did WAAPP support the generation of new seeds, but they also tackled related challenges such as seed storage magazines, aflatoxin (a common disease affecting groundnut), organizing farmers into cooperatives, and improving marketing opportunities. Through the regional center of excellence on dry cereal research, WAAPP funded adaptive research in critical cereals such as millet, maize, sorghum and fonio and associated crops such as groundnuts, cowpea.

Breakthrough Results

Thanks to the support from WAAPP, the National Agricultural Research Center (CNRA) located in Bambey went to work generating resilient groundnut varieties that can adapt to the current climate. So far, ten climate-smart groundnut varieties have been validated, approved, and on their way to being shared with producers.

Some of the new varieties include: Yaakaar, Rafet, Taaru, Essamay, Amoul Morom, Tossette, and Sunugal.

"The current groundnut varieties are about 20 to 50 years old. They cannot produce the expected yields under the current climatic conditions. The new varieties are high-yielding, disease-resistant, and pest-free," says Dr. Issa Faye, Peanut Breeder at the CNRA in Bambey.

"Compared to the old varieties, you can see a significant difference in the maturity of the pods per plant, the weight of the seed and the grain size."

High Expectations

In the center and south of Senegal specifically in the Fatick, Kafrine, Kaolack, Tambacounda and Thiès regions, most of the population are involved in groundnut farming.

Experts project that these new varieties will considerably improve production.

"The dissemination of these new multipurpose groundnut varieties with both a high seed yield potential 2.5 to 3 tons per hectare and a medium-to-long-cycle of 80 to120 days are more resistant to diseases. They contain between 40-50 percent oil value and the large seeds weigh about 15 grams. These are well suited to producers," says WAAPP Senegal.



"What we project is that by 2020, the new varieties will be in the hands of all farmers," added Dr. Faye.

A Benefit for West Africa

Four countries with similar climatic conditions as Senegal have already received the new seeds. This includes Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Benin.

Under arrangements put in place by WAAPP, specific national research centers generate technologies and innovations and ensure that they are available regionally.







«SENEGALESE FARMERS NOW BUYING LESS RICE»



Vields barely lasted three months for rice-producing households of Ngoungoul, a village located about 250 Kilometers to the South of the capital, Dakar.

The conventional rice cultivation methods did not only require more water, seeds, and fertilizers, the harvest often fell short of expectation.

In Senegal as in most part of West Africa, rice is a major staple. Meaning, when yields are low, households have to resort mostly to imported rice to make up for the deficit. For families mostly living on less than USD 2 per day, this places considerable stress on already slender financial resources.

But since the introduction of the system for rice intensification (SRI), an innovative and environmentally-friendly cultivation method, rice growers in this unusually forested Senegalese village are having some respite. Not only have yields doubled, but farmers are also using fewer inputs. Early adopters of SRI in Ngoungoul have experienced an increase in production, freeing farmers to use their limited incomes on other household priorities.

In 2014, Senegal joined 13 other West African countries to implement SRI. Funded by the West Africa Agriculture Transformation Program (WAAPP), Senegal, the overarching mission was to improve rice productivity and achieve self-sufficiency. In Senegal, most of the efforts focused on improving rainfed rice production in the regions of Kaolack, Fatick, Kaffrine, and Thiès.

"The results of cultivating rice using SRI have been very encouraging. Before, our harvest could barely last three months. But now, our yields can last throughout the year and even more," says 50-year old Ndeye Diouf of Ngoungoul.

"My husband used to purchase a bag of rice every month. But since our yields increased, we are now feeding the family from our returns and using the money for other needs."

This is the case of Awa Sarr, a widow of five kids. "I now use the extra money to buy fish, vegetables, and other ingredients," she says.

"In introducing this promising method, this is what we hoped for. Any savings made by families can only be good news as it allows them to invest in other critical components of their diet and as a result improve their nutrition security," according to Abdoulaye Sy, the lead coordinated of the SRI project in Senegal.

Ngoungoul is made up of 800 people. A local group of about ten women and a man are among the pioneer adopters of the SRI practice. For almost all those using the practice, they indicated a favorable view with respect to the returns.

How Many Adopters are Needed to Achieve Self-Sufficiency?

While an increasing number of farmers in the lowland regions of Senegal are adopting the SRI, experts argue that for this practice to have a real contribution to rice selfsufficiency in Senegal and West Africa, many more farmers must adopt it.

How many farmers?

"A possible target might be 33 percent adoption rate by farmer, reaching 1.5 million rice farmers and 2.43 million hectares," according to Erika Styger and Gaoussou Traoré, joint editors of a recent report on SRI in West Africa.

"More work needs to be done to massively scale-up of SRI in Senegal," argues Abdoulaye Sy who is leading adoption efforts in Senegal on behalf of the National Agricultural and Rural Advisory Agency (ANCAR).

Results of the implementation of the project in Senegal show that in the Fatick, Kaolack and Kaffrine regions, yields for SRI were 2.5 to 3.6 times higher compared to



conventional practices, on average reaching 3.5 t/ha under SRI compared to 1.24 t/ha under conventional practice. This is proportionally a very large increase, higher than what can generally be expected from areas with more water availability for crops.

Overall, the SRI project benefitted more than 50,000 farmers directly and reached more than 750,000 people in total — of whom 31.6% were women — across the 13 participating countries in West Africa. Yields for farmers increased overall by 56% for irrigated rice and 86% for lowland rainfed rice by merely planting rice differently and in keeping with the SRI method.

What are the Challenges Hindering Adoption?

The debate may no longer be on the advantages of SRI over other traditional cultivation methods. Farmers here seem to be aware of the pluses of SRI.

But what is hindering adoption if it yields more and uses less inputs?

"If we had the right equipment and land, we could have expanded our cultivation,' says Ndeye Diouf who leads the pioneer group of women practicing SRI.

Ndeye's challenge is faced by all early adopters.

The intensive nature of the labor required, the preparation of the land, and the lack of equipment are often cited as the challenges.

In Ngoungoul, rice farmers are using artisanal approaches to prepare plots. Abdoulaye Sy confirms that these are some of the factors limiting adoption.

The lack of water control, undulated plots exposed to flooding after heavy rainfall are also advanced as some of the main challenges facing SRI practitioners in this groundnut basin of Senegal. Experts argue that leveling plots require substantial investment, and this is possibly where the government can help.



Possible solutions

According to the recent publication on SRI, three possible solutions could be explored in Senegal:

- Forming groups to help each other for transplanting has been advanced as a possible solution.
- Focusing on SRI for seed and cash crop production will make it more profitable for farmers to switch.
- Improvements in data collection and field evaluations and the holding of national meetings for review, planning, and better coordination are critical for success.



THE PARADOX OF SENEGALESE WOMEN AGRO-PROCESSORS



n Pout, about 50 kilometers East from the Senegalese capital, about 2400 women have come together to seize the fresh business opportunities in the dry cereals and fruits and vegetable value chains.

Armed with their new knowledge and skills paid for by the Senegalese government through the ambitious West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP), these women are set to break out from the vicious poverty trap and change the narrative of stay-home-moms, sometimes associated with some women on this part of the continent.

For years, they have turned maize, millet, sorghum, and wheat into the local delicacies including '"Sankhal," "Thiéré," and "Thiakry" etc. As the quality of their products has improved, demand has also risen from both the local market and wholesalers.

But as the demand rises including from Auchan, one of Senegal's largest grocery food store, the women find themselves unable to meet expectations in part of because of the lack of a revolving fund.

"We are having orders from Auchan and other major wholesalers," says Awa Diop, the group's President.

"Presently, the demand is higher than the supply."

"The women want to work. They have been trained. They have capacities and the know-how. What is setting us back is a rolling capital."

Called the Network of Women Micro-entrepreneurs of Pout, this group has rented a processing unit costing about 30000 FCFA (USD 60) per month. Most of the transformation done here is artisanal. The women explain that the rising fixed cost of doing business means they end up with less profit.

"If we owned our own plant and transformation equipment, we will increase our operations and gain more money," says Ms. Diop.

Agro-processors are expected to comply with stringent hygienic and quality assurance regulations in Senegal. For now, the Senegalese government has apparently not yet authorized these women to commercialize their products at large-scale.

"What this means is that most of what our women produce is consumed mostly in their households," says Diop.

To a certain extent, this limits their customer base, she argues.

While looking for other avenues to raise additional capital, the women group of Pout are assembling a monthly contribution.

"We simply cannot wait on others. We have to take our destinies in our hands. This is why we have tasked ourselves every month to donate an 8000 FCFA (16 USD) contribution to purchase the relevant raw material that allows us to continue work and to meet the demand of our customers."

The Network of Women Micro-entrepreneurs is made up of women involved in several activities. Some are involved in tailoring, livestock rearing, and the production of onions and tomatoes. By diversifying, the women are able to expand spread the risks and make more profit.



WAAPP Senegal has paid for training and capacity development of the women of Pout as well as others around the country in several domains. Some of these include good practices in the transformation of mango, maintaining proper hygiene in the processing of fruits, financial management, finding market opportunities, the nutrition of some key commodities, and packaging. The WAAPP invested 3 million FCFA (USD 6000) into this women group in 2014. Since then, WAAPP experts argue, significant change has been observed in the activities and lives of those involved. Some of the real benefits are in the area of capacity development and not necessarily monetary, WAAPP argues.

IN THIER OWN WORDS



AMINATA MAREGA, 30 YEARS OLD

Refore joining the women group, I was a stay-home mom doing nothing. But since I joined, I have not only increased my knowledge and ability to transform and package cereals, I also know how to make bleach.



AMINATA CISS, MARRIED WITH TWO KIDS

I have been actively involved in the transformation of dry cereals for a year and a half. The income earned here has enabled me to participate more in running the affairs of my household. I am really busy and happy to be able to support my family.



KHADY DIOP, MARRIED

The most important benefit has not been the money. It is the knowledge I have acquired while working here that I loved the most.

REGIONAL COOPERATION STRENGTHENS SENEGAL CASSAVA

SECTOR

assava may not be the number one crop in Senegal. Compared to maize, millet, sorghum, peanut, or mangoes, it is right down the pecking order. The country's annual cassava production has tended to fluctuate between 600.000-650.000 thousand metric tons in recent years.

But as a new form of regional collaboration on technologies and innovations brought about by the West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP) takes hold, Senegal is now looking to step up its annual production.

"Our ambition is to get to **one million metric tons of cassava per year in Senegal**," says Assane Ndiaye, the man who manages the Interprofession manioc au Sénégal, a group of leading actors in the cassava sector.

Senegal has long considered the cassava sector as one which can contribute to boosting its economy, increase the incomes of actors, and strengthen the food and nutrition security of its people. But with the "Soya," and "Combo," two of the local varieties, not much progress was achieved.

"The local varieties yields barely 11 tons per hectare," says Assane Ndiaye.

While the varieties imported from Ghana yield 25-30 tons per hectare under rainfed conditions and 40-50 tons per hectare under irrigation. Some of the priced varieties from Ghana include Ampong, Broni, Sika, Bankyehemaa, and Otuhia.

"Not only are these new varieties high yielding, diseaseresistant, and pest-free varieties, they are extraordinary in terms of performance," says Maguette Diop, who earned about 700.000 FCFA (USD1400) at the end of the last cultivation season.

Going Beyond Yields - To Transformation

Tivaouane, located about 70 kilometers from the Senegalese capital, Dakar, is the leading cassava production region of Senegal. Here, actors have set their sight to higher goals – the transformation of cassava.

The import bills of wheat and other flour in Senegal are on the increase, experts argue. Adequately transformed, cassava can produce flour, gari, fufu, and starch.

"The cassava sector can produce 235,000 tons of flour per year. If 10% of this cassava flour is incorporated in the flour for bread, it will reduce the bill of 120 billion FCFA spent by Senegal importing of 2.500 tons of flour a day to make bread," argued Ibrahima Wade, one of the leading proponents of the country's drive to accelerated Growth.

"If we get only a ten percent addition to the flour sector, the government will benefit," says the President of group of cassava actors in Senegal.

"Cassava is the crop of the future. With transformation, it will boost production, create jobs for women, and reduce imports," says Assane Ndiaye.



As in other value chains, the lack of capital and equipment can significantly stall progress. While WAAPP Senegal has invested considerable sums in empowering actors and strengthening the cassava sector, the women group of Tivaouane are looking to increase the production.

Asked what is their number one priority right now? The leading woman transformer in Tivaouane picked equipment.

"We need a production unit that can help us save energy, money and time and produce in large quantities. There are business opportunities with bread bakers," says Maguette Sy.

WAAPP Senegal donated a grant of four million FCFA (USD8000) to the women transforming cassava in Tivaouane. The money helped them kick-start activities. WAAPP was designed to make agriculture more productive, sustainable and profitable for smallholder farmers, to improve the conditions of life of consumers through the provision of agricultural products at competitive prices, build a critical mass of researchers for sound, efficient and collaborative research programs and finally to ensure that technologies generated nationally are available regionally.

Earlier individual countries worked within their boundaries with limited cross-border interactions. But with the WAAPP, Senegal and Ghana have collaborated leading to the uptake of critical technologies and innovations by farmers in both countries.



WAAPP OTHER ACTIVITIES:



- Niger : Innovations double milk production in Toukounous
- World Bank Satisfied with CORAF's Implementation of WAAPP
- Major Regional Agricultural Research Programs Share Experiences



WAAPP other Activities

NIGER : INNOVATIONS DOUBLE MILK PRODUCTION IN TOUKOUNOUS



Ik production in the Toukounous dairy farm in Niger has more than doubled as a result of innovations provided by the West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP).

"Milk yield per cow has doubled since the start of the WAAPP project," Prof. Moumouni Issa of both the Faculties of Science and Agronomy of the Abdou Moumouni University located in Niger's capital, Niamey said.

The government of Niger invested substantially in research and development in recent years as part of broader efforts to increase local milk production and reduce the imports of dairy products.

The WAAPP funding enabled scientists to conduct research activities including crossing the famous indigenous 'azawak' cow species with exotic cows from Italy and France.

Experts argue that the azawak has unique features that facilitate their adaptation to the unusually harsh climate of Niger. Scientific evidence also shows that the azawak can produce between 5-15 liters of milk daily under the favorable conditions. In addition, they are also excellent in terms of meat production.

With the WAAPP funding which included the purchase of laboratory equipment, the researchers at the Toukounous ranch have not only been able to conduct the critical genetic research but take measures towards the conservation of the local breeds through a sperm conservation system that can last as much as 40 years.

"The WAAPP supported us in the construction of infrastructure and in critical equipment that allows us to carry out artificial insemination," said Prof Moumouni.

Milk Production still Below Demand

Though Niger has a long cultural history with Livestock farming, this West African country still imports a substantial quantity of dairy products each year. According to available data, the country produces 1,002 million liters of milk annually against a requirement of 63.8 liters (per capita / year).

"Our production has increase and now enable us to contribute to national production,"

More specifically, WAAPP supported the Toukounous farm in the following areas:

- The creation of modern farm;
- Collection and conditioning of sperms;
- Building equipment;
- A training room;
- Four (04) sets of electricity generators;
- A vehicle;
- The renovation of the cow barn and the laboratory;
- The construction of the laboratory;
- Equipment and consumables in artificial insemination;
- The creation of a master's degree program in animal production at the faculty of agronomy of the country public university.

Challenges

Modern dairy farms divide the animals into different management units depending on their age, nutritional needs, reproductive status, and milk production status. The group of cows that are currently lactating, the milking herd, is often managed most intensively to make sure their diet and environmental conditions are conducive to producing as much high-quality milk as possible.

"Most of what we do here is extensive rearing. This is very challenging. We do not have all the conditions for intensive rearing. And this represents a significant challenge for us in the sense it slows down our production levels," said Prof. Moumouni.

Also quote the director of the ranch.

Livestock Regional Center of specialization Making Critical Strides

The WAAPP set up nine centers of specialization at inception. Niger agreed to lead research on livestock for the West Africa region.

So far, the center is close to becoming a regional center of excellence.





WORLD BANK SATISFIED WITH CORAF'S IMPLEMENTATION OF WAAPP



he World Bank has expressed its satisfaction with the state of implementation of the West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP). CORAF is mandated by the Economic Commission of West African States to coordinate the program at the regional level.

Speaking at the end of a routine institutional support mission (ISM) at CORAF's Headquarters in Dakar, Senegal, on Thursday, November 8, 2018, Dr. Abdoulaye Toure, Lead Agriculture Economist at the World Bank praised the state of progress of WAAPP.

"Overall, we are satisfied with the WAAPP's contribution in closing food and income gaps, building the next generation of agric researchers, generating critical innovations and technologies and laying the foundation for sustainable agricultural research in West Africa," said Dr. Toure.

At the inception of the program in 2007, the WAAPP's primary target was to reach six million people. Based on available evidence, the program has surpassed its initial goals and reached more than 9 million people directly and another 56 million indirectly.

More than two hundred technologies were released and adopted by almost 4,5 million producers and processors on about 4.8 million hectares.

WAAPP financed master's degree and Ph.D. studies for 1021 youths. This represents 72% of men and 28% women. Some of these young researchers are already fully involved in advancing critical research in their respective countries.

With improved research equipment and infrastructure, the nine national centers of specialization are creating the required collaboration and partnerships to catalyze the critical innovations and technologies to address the region's priority crops.

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.

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WAAPP other Activities

CORAF Must Do More

While lauding the progress made, Dr. Toure challenged CORAF to do more in the uptake of technological innovations.

"CORAF must do more to facilitate the exchange of technologies and innovations at the country level.

"CORAF is also accountable to the expected results particular with respect to the adoption of technologies. What this means is that as part of its regional coordination mandate, CORAF must play an active role in facilitating technology exchanges and adoption."

Helping Make CORAF a Sustainable Instrument

Dr. Toure further reiterated the World Bank's commitment to make CORAF a sustainable instrument to help advance the research and development agenda in West and Central Africa.

He praised the new strategic direction of CORAF which according to him has renewed confidence in CORAF.

"I see confidence is back. I see a strong and solid team, focused on results," said the World Bank Task Team Leader.

"You can count on the support of the Bank as long as you continue in this direction."

"Satisfactory"

Institutional support missions are also designed to rate the performance of CORAF and implementing bodies of the WAAPP.

Based on progress in the implementation of WAAPP as of November 2018, CORAF got a satisfactory score..

What is WAAPP?

WAAPP is an initiative of ECOWAS. Started in 2008, the WAAPP seeks to make agriculture more productive, sustainable and profitable for smallholder farmers. It aims to improve the conditions of life of consumers through the provision of agricultural products at competitive prices, build a critical mass of researchers for sound, efficient and collaborative research programs and finally to ensure that technologies generated nationally are available regionally.

The program is paid for by countries through a loan system obtained from the World Bank. CORAF implements the program at the regional level. All parties meet twice a year to evaluate the state of implementation and agree on clear actions to speed up implementation of agreed results.

Closing

Out of the 13 countries that started the program, activities are ongoing in Benin, Guinea, Niger, and Togo. Operations are expected to close in December 2019 for these countries.

The program is closed in all other countries except for Mali, Ghana, and Senegal where operations all close in December 2018.

A more Ambitious WAAPP

Building on the results of the WAAPP, countries, ECOWAS, and the World Bank are finalizing plans to implement a more ambitious iteration of the WAAPP.

The 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. Women and youths are central to the new program which is expected to go operational in 2019.





MAJOR REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

PROGRAMS SHARE EXPERIENCES

ctors of three major regional agricultural research programs in Africa met recently in Lusaka, Zambia to share experiences and strengthen collaboration.

These include The East African Agricultural Productivity Program (EAAPP), the Agricultural Productivity Program in Southern Africa (APPSA), and the West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP).

These programs have one feature in common: **to promote cooperation for agricultural research and technologies** in the continent and facilitate sharing of agricultural information, knowledge, and technologies across national boundaries.

The Lusaka gathering did not only offer actors the opportunity to develop the necessary networks and knowledge sharing plans for future improvements but to also draw lessons to improve current implementation as well as design the future interventions.

Huge Potential but Weak Contribution to Agriculture Economy

The agriculture sector employs about 70 percent of the workforce on the continent. Yet productivity is still considerably low, experts argue. Aggregate annual food import to Africa is estimated at US\$35 billion, and this is projected to rise to US\$110 billion by 2025.

At the initiative of regional economic communities, many African countries in collaboration with the World Bank have implemented critical regional research and development programs in the past decade.

In West Africa, the WAAPP was established at the initiative of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as a response to the renewed commitment of African States' to step up the implementation of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP). Africa's largest sub regional research organization, CORAF is mandated to coordinate the WAAPP in West Africa.

What's Has Been WAAPP Record?

At the inception of the program in 2007, the WAAPP's primary target was to reach six million people. Based on available evidence, the program has surpassed its initial goals and reached more than 9 million people directly and another 56 million indirectly.

More than two hundred technologies were released and adopted by almost 4,5 million producers and processors on about 4.8 million hectares. WAAPP financed master's degree and Ph.D. studies for 1021 youths. This represents 72% of men and 28% women. Some of these young researchers are already fully involved in advancing critical research in their respective countries.

Many observers have argued that the WAAPP has been a huge success. And have sought to learn from the WAAPP about what worked, why, and under what circumstances. The WAAPP took some of these lessons to share with partners in Lusaka as well as draw relevant lessons to improve the program in West Africa Agricultural Transformation Program.

Scaling up the Cassava Value Chain

One of the innovative features of the WAAPP was the creation of national centers of specialization. Each was assigned a priority crop. They include the roots and tubers center in (Ghana), Rice (Mali), Dry cereals (Senegal), fruit and legumes (Burkina Faso), plantain (Côte d'Ivoire), aquaculture (Nigeria), maize (Benin), livestock (Niger), and mangrove Rice (Sierra Leone). So far, the Dry Cereals and the Root and Tubers centers based in Senegal and Ghana respectively have been upgraded to Regional Centers of Excellence. Others are on their way to earning this coveted status.

The uniqueness and research outcomes of these centers were discussed

Participants acknowledged the research had contributed to advancing the production and transformation in the cassava value chain. They argued that it has huge potential for the economies of the countries involved and should be further developed and scaled up.

EAAPP released maize bio fortified-hybrid varieties. WAAPP acknowledged that these varieties have immense potential and could be taken up in West Africa especially by the Maize Regional Center of Specialization based in Benin.

At the end of the gathering, participants recommended that government and development partners invest more in the cassava value chain.

There was also a call for the standardization of concepts such as the National Centre of Specialization, the Regional Centre of Excellence and Regional Centre of Leadership.

A similar learning meeting was called for next year in East Africa. They would examine livestock and dairy products, horticulture/Fruits & Vegetables, and dry cereals (Sorghum & Millet).

WAAPP IN THE MEDIA

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

- Niger: WAAPP self-assesses, under the control of CORAF
- Niger : Le PPAAO s'autoévalue, sous le contrôle du CORAF
- L'Afrique de l'Ouest se prépare à un nouveau Programme de productivité agricole -PPAAO
- Afrique de l'Ouest: Agriculture Le Programme de Productivité Agricole s'autoévalue
- Niger : Le PPAAO s'autoévalue, sous le contrôle du CORAF
- Partenariat Ppaao/Centre Songhaï : 100 jeunes déscolarisés aguerris en entrepreneuriat agricole
- Agriculture/ Le bilan du PPAAO-Guinée jugés « Très satisfaisant » par la Banque Mondiale
- 100 jeunes déscolarisés formés à l'entreprenariat agricole
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PUBLICATIONS



WAAPP Newsletter is a publication of the West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP). It sums up major activities of the program.

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Conseil Ouest et Centre Africain pour la Recherche et le Développement Agricoles

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