

News from the Department

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Agriculture
Environment
Water Resources



● Facing Recurrent Food and Nutrition Crises in West Africa

● A Regional Climate Strategy to better Adapt to Climate Change

● Improving Coordination and Synergies in the Livestock and Pastoralism Sector

● Working Together for Increased Agricultural Production and Competitiveness



Editorial



Sékou Sangaré

Commissioner Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, ECOWAS Commission

Dear Partners,

To facilitate a better coordination of institutional synergies, ECOWAS, in collaboration with UEMOA, CILSS, FAO, ROPPA and CORAF, have undertaken since 2021, the organisation of regional thematic steering committees for the ECOWAP 2025 projects and programmes.

In preparation for the 2022 steering committees, ECOWAS initiated in December 2021, holding of projects technical committee meetings for projects monitoring, to further discuss the achievements of the finishing year and the work plan for following year.

Steering committees are now organized around 8 major thematic areas as follows: (i) livestock and pastoralism, (ii) fisheries and aquaculture, (iii) agricultural productivity and competitiveness, (iv) adaptation to climate change, (v) environment, forests and biodiversity conservation, (vi) management of pesticides, control of crops pests and SPS, (vii) resilience, food and nutrition security, (viii) building institutional and organisational capacities.

Further to the holding of regional steering committee meetings during the first four months of 2022, the ECOWAS Department for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources also implemented other major activities including, the validation of the operationalisation instruments for the Regional Fund for Agriculture and Food (RFAF). This year, the RFAF will finance pilot projects under the West Africa Initiative for Climate Smart Agriculture. The purpose is to adapt to climate change and promote resilient supply chains in some Member countries. The Department also reviewed and validated the evaluation results of the regional action plan with a view to capitalise best practices on the Covid-19 pandemic effects on food and nutrition security in West Africa, participated in the 9th edition of the World Water Forum held in Dakar, Senegal on 21st - 26th March, 2022, under the theme: "Water Security for Peace and Development" and validated the ECOWAS regional climate strategy.

Our Department is fully committed to building partnerships and synergies in regional coordination of projects and programmes, given the great number of initiatives for regional agricultural policy implementation and recurrent food and nutrition crises in the region.

This issue gives an overview of the coordination and synergies efforts in implementing projects and programmes under ECOWAP 2025 as well as actions undertaken to address the various crises in the region.

I wish you a fruitful reading and thank you all for the various supports.

News from the Department

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Publishing Director

Sékou Sangaré, Com. DAERE

Editor in Chief

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Editorial Team

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Facing Recurrent Food and Nutrition Crises in West Africa

West Africa faces recurrent challenges of food and nutrition crises that are worsened by armed and intercommunity conflicts and impacts of climate change. Since February 2020, these challenges were added up to the coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) and recently to the food and non-food consequences of the armed conflict in Ukraine. Such crises affect and disturb all sectors of the food systems in the region.



Despite the various efforts made by Governments and development partners, overall food and nutrition situation in the region remains alarming, especially in the Sahel where food insecurity affects millions of people. The situation is deteriorating year in year out. Indeed, if the regional mechanism for Prevention and Management of Food Crises (PREGEC) estimated in 2019 at nearly 10.7 million, the number of people in food and nutrition insecurity for the period from June to August in the Sahel and West Africa space, statistics of March 2022 already provided a warning on an unprecedented increase in number of people in food and nutrition insecurity in the region, reaching 38.3 million in the forthcoming lean season. This figure includes internally displaced persons.

To support efforts by countries whose budgets are strongly under pressure due to response to health and security crises, ECOWAS strongly mobilized itself to provide humanitarian assistance to the most affected vulnerable populations of its Member States. This humanitarian assistance primarily consisted in provision of food stocks from the Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR) or donations of food and nutrition products. The RFSR is the third line of defence to prevent and manage food crises in West Africa. It is a regional solidarity mechanism which complements proximity stocks (first line of defence at village and community's level) and national food security stocks (second line of defence) held and managed by the States.

Regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, the ECOWAS Commission and the European Union, between 2020 and 2021, provided food and nutrition products to vulnerable populations in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria.

The total volume of the assistance is 21,190 tons of cereals made up of millet, maize, rice and sorghum, and distributed as follows: Burkina Faso (954 tons), Mali (8,165 tons), Niger (8,072 tons plus 205 tons of nutrition products), Nigeria (3,999 tons). However, by cumulating the 12 interventions of the ECOWAS Regional Food Security Reserve between 2017 and 2021, following requests from Member States, the total volume is 40,315.45 tons of cereals, plus 205 tons of nutrition products availed to Member States.

The stocks were used through one or more social safety nets instruments depending on the beneficiary countries, specifically through sales at subsidized prices, free distributions of cereals for vulnerable populations and internally displaced persons and distribution of enriched flours for children aged below 5 years.

The food and nutrition situation of this year is exceptional. Prices of agricultural produce increased from 33 to 37% averagely, compared to quinquennial average with increases reaching up to 50% and more in some places. The already alarming situation is worsened by the effects of recent international geopolitical tensions, particularly the war in Ukraine.

Consequences include: (i) direct impact on global prices of wheat, maize and fertilisers, of which Ukraine and Russia are major producers and (ii) increase in oil prices inducing direct impact on international, regional and national transport costs for all goods and services. This is expected to cause a generalised inflation.

To face this situation, ECOWAS is mobilising all its internal instruments (RFSR, emergency humanitarian fund, etc) as well as its technical and financial partners.

A specific action plan is under development. It is therefore imperative to review intervention policies and approaches by anticipating in order to better prevent food and nutrition crises rather than managing them.

A Regional Climate Strategy to Better Adapt to Climate Change

With the technical and financial support from its partners including the European Union, French Development Agency, Adaptation Fund, Climate Green Fund, Swedish Cooperation and FAO, ECOWAS encourages partnership, synergies and sharing of experiences and knowledge resulting from various projects and programmes, with a view to further strengthen exchanges and cooperation among States, and foster robust national and regional public policies, taking climate and agroecological issues into account.

For this purpose, ECOWAS fifteen (15) Ministers for Environment, validated the ECOWAS Regional Climate

Strategy on 29th April 2022. This Strategy is the result of a collaborative process of more than one year,



implemented through the support Project for global alliance against climate change in West Africa (GCCA+WA), among regional institutions, ECOWAS Member States, technical and financial partners and civil society. This process was concluded after a two-day high-level workshop on April 26th and 27th in Accra, Ghana. Similarly, with climate change affecting all of us, the response imposes participation from all. The regional Climate Strategy is a catalyst of the action of all stakeholders.

By adopting this strategy, ECOWAS is committed to supporting its fifteen (15) Member States to make climate a priority for political action in the region, consistent with its Vision 2050. Impacts of climate change are transboundary and it is together that ECOWAS Member States will take up this challenge. This is also an opportunity for expressing the voice of the region internationally, while conveying messages of a united and interdependent region on climate negotiations.

Complementary actions from other ECOWAS projects such



as the Support Project for agroecological transition in West Africa and the Project to promote climate-smart agriculture, also contribute to building a culture of resilience of the populations in order to address the climate challenge.

Improving Coordination and Synergies in the Livestock and Pastoralism sector

In the coming years, these initiatives shall seek to reinforce synergy with regional institutions in order to better contribute to policies integration, harmonisation of regulations and strengthening of coordination among countries, hence fully contributing to reducing poverty in West Africa.

Under this thematic area, several projects are being implemented with the support from technical, financial and development partners including the World Bank, European Union, French development Agency, African Development Bank, Swiss, Swedish and German Cooperations and FAO.

The Project for Integrated and Secure Livestock Farming and Pastoralism in West Africa (PEPISAO) for example, reinforced implementation of conflicts prevention and management approaches in targeted zones, capitalisation, exchange and dissemination of initiatives as regards prevention, management and transformation of conflicts. On behalf of ECOWAS, the Project coordinates the development process of a regional shared vision on mobile breeding systems, and renegotiation of regulatory frameworks. Capacity building is led by the Project in synergy with the African Union Border Project, PREDIP and PRAPS. The focus is on (i) training magistrates and security and defence forces, to raise awareness on conflicts for access to natural resources, (ii) organising dialogues among Farmers' Organisations and Regional Farmers' Organisations of Sahelian and coastal countries, with a view to highlighting best practices as regards prevention, management and transformation of conflicts among users of natural resources, (iii) training journalists from Community radios in highly conflict-prone zones and (iv) creating a virtual radio soundcloud.com/user-445095840. In the margin of these actions, PEPISAO and other regional projects facilitate organisation and holding of high-level dialogue for peaceful transhumance.

As regards animal health, COMATAO/PREDIP invested efforts in activities which contributed in controlling transboundary animal diseases having an impact on animal and human health. Regional strategies were developed on: (i) animal health and wellbeing, (ii) identification and traceability of livestock and (iii) controlling the spread of vector-borne diseases. The following activities were undertaken: a review of epidemiologic situation in the ECOWAS space during the last five years, building regional capacities for diagnosis, supporting veterinary laboratories, updating countries' regulations as regards veterinary medicinal products and harmonising vaccination campaigns among coastal countries and Sahelian countries transhumant herds, regardless of their geographical location in the Community space.



For regional integration of policies, harmonization of regulations and coordination of countries as regards management of animal health, the Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project (PRAPS) made a strong contribution. To implement this component, an agreement was signed between ECOWAS and CILSS in July 2021 for a duration of six years. In the light of the successful achievement of the first phase, PRAPS 2 will continue investments intended to improve animal health systems, access to natural resources and governance, support local and transnational peaceful movements along transhumance corridors and increase incomes.

Besides, several technical collaboration partnerships (TCP) were signed with FAO, notably on assessment of

the fodder potential in the ECOWAS space. Moreover, for the support Project for control and eradication of Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) and Rift Valley fever (FVR) an agreement was signed in August 2021 between the Swiss Cooperation and ECOWAS to finance the Project consolidation and its extension until December 31st, 2022.

The support Program for livestock and meat trading in West Africa (PRIDEC/PACBAO) provided continued institutional and operational capacity building for ECOWAS, specifically for the Regional Animal Health Centre (CRSA) and COFENABEVI. The Programme implemented and monitored 16 field pilot projects for livestock and meat marketing.

Consolidating Governance in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector

Only combination of efforts will make it possible to modernise the aquaculture and fisheries sector in the region and will thus give possibility to Member States to better take advantage of fisheries resources.

Governance in the fisheries and aquaculture sector remains a big challenge for ECOWAS despite an improvement since 2018 with the support from the European Union. This is achieved through the implementation of the Programme for Improved Regional Fisheries Governance in West Africa (PESCAO). Indeed, PESCAO contributes in strengthening social, economic and political role of the sector in the region, in particular as: (i) source of income and foreign currencies, (ii) major contributor to regional food security and important animal protein supplier for many populations and (iii) key component of livelihood for coastal communities.

New initiatives are in progress, including the TCPs of FAO on strengthening regional coordination, protection of marine ecosystem, development and scaling up of aquatic food system.



Promoting Good Management of Pesticides, Control of Crops Pests and SPS

Discussions on this issue resulted in convergence of views on the need for combining efforts to effectively control pests, increasing income for producers and adding value to market shares for West African export products.

The implementation of the Regional Innovative System for Fruit Fly Control in West Africa (SyRIMAO) made it possible to implement the project in the countries mainly with the : (i) validation of 5 research protocols to foster better control option under researcher's management, formulated in finished product and tested in the field, (ii) capacity building on new administrative and accountancy procedures, as well as monitoring and evaluation for projects

management teams in Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone and Senegal, (iii) building capacities for 106 people from farmers' organizations, divisions for plant protection, and officers from border posts and official control (Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Niger), (iv) support for mango inter-profession of Burkina Faso in the process of adopting compulsory financial contribution, continuous surveillance – monitoring – early warning in countries.



Regarding ownership on fruits flies control mechanism by actors, SYRIMAO should consider joining hands with other ongoing initiatives in the sector. Indeed, within the framework of anticipation and early control actions against desert locusts, REOWA-SFW, in collaboration with CLCPRO, provided technical assistance to the Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Development of ECOWAS Commission and to Member States.

Moreover, a virtual regional meeting reviewed actions undertaken by countries, challenges and prospects for sustainable management of fall army worms.

Similarly, the operationalisation of the West African Committee for the Registration of Pesticides (ECOWAS-UEMOA-CILSS tripartite convention), is on track.



Working Together for Increased Agricultural Production and Competitiveness

Strength being achieved through unity, consultations highlighted the need for working together, to achieve greater agricultural production and competitiveness in West Africa.

Ongoing initiatives in this sector are mainly financed by the World Bank, FAO, German Cooperation and the Bill and Melinda Gate Foundation.

The Regional Support Project for Irrigation Initiative in the Sahel (PARIIS) for example is a joint initiative coordinated by CILSS, with the support from ECOWAS and UEMOA, to make irrigation in the Sahel a performing sector. Its vision is based on various irrigation solutions adapted to Sahelian context, financed within an institutional framework, with a view to developing sustainable, competitive and inclusive agriculture.

In addition, the West African Food System Resilience Programme (FSRP) piloted by ECOWAS, CILSS and CORAF, seeks to reinforce inherent risks management of regional food systems, improve sustainability of production base in targeted zones and develop regional agricultural markets.

Other initiatives are added to these two projects, such as the analysis of seeds landscape in West Africa, Initiative for Competitive African Rice Initiative (CARI), the



2020-2025 Rice Action Plan and ECOWAS Rice Observatory and the Project for Family Agriculture, regional markets and transborder trade corridors in the Sahel and West Africa.

Better Protecting Forests, Environment and Biodiversity Conservation

With support from partners like USAID, European Union, Swedish Cooperation, UNEP or NEPAD, ECOWAS strongly encourages collaborative work and synergies among stakeholders.

Faced with endless increasing challenges in the sector, ECOWAS designed several instruments and mechanisms including the ECOWAS Environmental Policy adopted in

2008 and the Convergence Plan for use and sustainable management of forest ecosystems in West Africa adopted in 2013.

Challenges include high rate of forest degradation, depletion of biodiversity, desertification, continuous pollution, as well as increasing impacts of climate change. Triggering factors include extensive farming and shifting cultivation, illegal forestry development and illicit trafficking in timber and wood by-products and wild species, firewood supply for domestic energy and overexploitation of non-wood forest products.

Several adaptation and mitigation measures and initiatives are on track. They are led in a collaborative and partnership way in the Member States and at regional level with contributions from various technical and financial partners.

Examples include the West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change Project (WA-BiCC) funded by USAID, the Project for comprehensive transformation of forests for populations and climate, funded by Sweden and implemented by FAO with a focus on West Africa, the support Programme for the preservation of biodiversity and fragile ecosystems, regional governance and



climate change in West Africa (PAPBIO) and the support Programme for the preservation of forest ecosystems in West Africa (PAPFor), both funded by the European Union.

Building Institutional and Organisational Capacities

The Swiss Cooperation, USAID, French Development Agency, AfDB and FAO provide important support to ECOWAS in building its institutional and organisational capacities.

In 2021, for instance, the regional support Programme for professional and farmers' organizations, which successfully closed in 2020, allowed the formulation of a phase 3 focused on youth employability in the local milk value chain with funding from the Swiss Cooperation. The specific objective of this programme is to improve access of young people to decent and remunerative employment in local milk value chains in targeted zones, through initiatives led by ECOWAS, countries, socio-professional agricultural organisations and private sector.

Additionally, in 2021, the PAGR-SANAD contributed in conducting studies, building capacities for coordination institutional framework, steering, monitoring and evaluation of SANAD policies and programmes & resilience of ECOWAS at regional level.

Other initiatives contributing in building capacities of ECOWAS in formulation and monitoring-evaluation of policies at regional and national levels include: (i) support to the FIRST project (Impact, Sustainability and Transformation for Food and Nutrition Security), (ii) facility of preparation and monitoring of development projects, livestock, within the framework of



PRIDEC (FAPS), strengthening the mechanism for monitoring and analysis of Covid-19 impact on food and nutrition security, (iii) launching the detailed strategic framework for development of a sustainable aquaculture and fisheries sector.

ECOWAP

Regional Agricultural Policy

2025 Vision : «A modern and competitive agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries sector, inclusive and sustainable guaranteeing decent jobs, food and nutrition security and food sovereignty».

ECOWEP

Environmental Policy

2025 Vision : « A peaceful, dignified and prosperous West Africa whose natural, diverse and productive resources are conserved and managed sustainably for the development and balance of the sub-regional space».

WAWRP

Water Policy

2025 Vision : «Water resources that are efficiently and practically managed so that everyone has access to safe drinking water for basic needs, waste disposal facilities, food security and reduced poverty; protected human health, the biodiversity of terrestrial and aquatic systems protected ».



Department of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources

Annexe River Plaza – 496 Abogo Largema Street
Central Business District, PMB 401 Abuja FCT

araa@araa.org | agric_ruraldev@ecowas.int | rahc_crsa@ecowas.int
environment@ecowas.int | wrmc_cgre@ecowas.int