



## ALL ACP AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES PROGRAMME

### WEST AFRICA BRIEF

West African agricultural producers, including cotton growers are facing one of the most severe crisis of the last decades, with fluctuating prices, combined with a dramatic increase in costs of inputs. And in a context of price volatility, food security is more than ever a key priority in the region.

The AAACP is contributing to address these issues, by providing support to specific sectors identified as priorities during consultations with the region. Programme partner International Organisations are joining their efforts to develop participatory strategies, strengthen diversification options and increase the capacities of the stakeholders concerned.

#### Cereals

The programme is supporting the reinforcement of farmer-buyer linkages for the rice sector. To do so, **FAO** has selected cooperatives in Senegal and Burkina Faso for the assessment of existing business models and their development in view of improving linkages between producers and buyers and enable them to participate effectively in the **ITC**-led process of sectoral strategies development.

An AAACP workshop on policy formulation and institutional development for the sector brought together participants from seven West African countries. A set of recommendations was developed relating to the establishment of inter-professional organizations. Following this workshop, specific actions have been launched jointly by FAO and ITC. A first action consisted in improving farming incomes as well as food security for rice and maize producers through value addition and capacity-building for professional organizations of the sector. A second project focuses on the identification of regional market potential and opportunities for the cereal sector. Existing market strategies are being reviewed and the possibilities to develop trade and food security throughout the region will be assessed next.

UNCTAD is providing support in the area of commodity exchange. A training workshop will be held in December to present the reports from two studies funded by the AAACP: (i) a review of warehouse receipts for the financing of West African agriculture; (ii) an assessment of the establishment of commodities exchanges in West Africa.

#### Cotton

Following the evolutions African cotton has faced during the last decade, several West African countries were forced to review their strategies in order to revive the sector at their own level but also after a wider strategic approach involving the whole region. In this context, the AAACP has been approached by the region to provide support in addressing some of the key issues the sector is facing.

As such, the programme is supporting the updating of WAEMU's « Agenda Coton-Textile » as well as the regional cotton strategy. In May 2009, ITC organized a workshop in Ouagadougou to initiate this process, which is expected to be finalized before end 2010.





In parallel, a set of complementary activities focus on the issue of the quality. One of the major interventions consists in the setting up by the Common Fund for Commodities of a standardized instrument testing of cotton, along with the establishment of a regional technical centre in Mali. Eventually, this project plans to upgrade the certification systems of national laboratories involved, hence, better control the quality of cotton lint in the whole region.

Another component consists in preventing the contamination of seed cotton. Through this action, CFC is facilitating producer training and provision of required harvest inputs, while the World Bank contribution will be targeted towards institutional linkages and incentives. ITC complements the support by linking cotton lint consumers to 'clean' cotton suppliers. The ultimate purpose of this activity aims at establishing sustainable mechanisms to increase the direct incomes of cotton smallholders in the targeted West African zones.

Under the auspices of FAO, the programme covers a third component seeking to strengthen local capacities by the adoption of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and the Integrated Pest Management for cotton-cereal livestock farming systems. This intervention aims at improving productivity and quality of cotton grown in Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali. In this view, FAO has launched a training programme through Farmer Field Schools from recipient countries, in collaboration with regional stakeholders such as SODEFITEX. A Farmer Field School programme will be continued during the 2010-2011 growing season.

Furthermore, the AAACP proposes various activities aimed at strengthening producers capacities to reduce the impact of risks. To this end, the World Bank is playing a major role in the setting up of a weather insurance index for the cotton value chain in Burkina Faso. In addition, FAO is carrying studies in Mali and Burkina Faso on cereals-cotton systems, including experimenting with warehouse receipts systems.

Finally, AAACP partners have been invited to reinforce Côte d'Ivoire cotton sector. As the country stabilizes, the World Bank has assessed its reform process as part of a broader comparative study. The findings of a study commissioned by UNCTAD on the creation of a guarantee funds for the sector were presented at a workshop in Abidjan last July. The workshop aimed to examine the potential role of such a fund within the implementation of the revival strategy for the sector.

## Fruits

The sector benefits from substantial support under the AAACP, the bulk of which has gone in complementing efforts of other development partners in addressing the fruit fly issue in the West Africa region. Together with IITA and CIRAD of France, the AAACP has co-financed the West African Fruit Fly Initiative (WAFFI) to develop applied research protocols aimed at the surveillance and control of fruit fly populations in eight West African countries. The results of the three WAFFI initiatives (2008, 2009 and 2010) will serve as a basis for the design and implementation of the ECOWAS' five years 25 M€ West African Regional Action Plan to control Fruit Flies.

With AAACP funding, the World Bank commissioned from KIT of the Netherlands a substantive study of the potential for processing the large surplus of fresh mango existing in Mali and Burkina Faso. The situation revealed by the study points to the urgent need for updated technologies to be introduced in the drying of mango in both countries. Leveraging additional funding from its ongoing agricultural programmes in these two countries, the WB will be piloting a new drying technology imported from South Africa in the course of the 2011 mango season.





## Roots crops

Roots & tubers represent another priority for West Africa. Liberia has been chosen to be the pilot of the AAACP support to this sector. In collaboration with regional institutions like WAEMU and ECOWAS, lessons learnt will be shared with other countries of the region.

Following a diagnosis of the sector and the development of a strategy facilitated by ITC, the programme is focusing on the cassava sector and the strengthening of producers' capacities. Liberian producers are provided with direct support to grow improved varieties of cassava for processing into value added food products, improve the quality of primary processing and packaging in rural areas and to organize collection points and logistics to distributors. With the technical support of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the development of regional market options for local stakeholders has also been undertaken.

## Cross sectoral activities

At the request of the Government of Ghana and the local World Bank office, the AAACP is exploring opportunities for technical assistance programme on agricultural risk management. Weather risk management, supply chain risk assessment and early warning system for agricultural risks have been identified as potential areas of interventions.

UNCTAD will provide support to the region by adapting its Sustainability Claims Portal. It is also contributing to the enhancement of the existing project of commodity exchange in Ghana. A capacity-building workshop with potential stakeholders of the exchange and international partners will assess the ways of advancing the project, share experiences and best practices and formulate recommendations.

FAO organized a regional workshop for farmers' organizations in Dakar, Senegal in September 2010 in order to strengthen their capacity to respond to trends in agriculture markets. The workshop focused on lessons learned and exchange of experiences. This allowed a more participatory process and to improve how lessons learned will be disseminated and applied at the farmer level. The emphasis was put on services that producer organisations can provide to their members.

