

Echoes from Food Stocks

Quarterly Newsletter of the ECOWAS Regional Food Security Reserve

Quarterly Information Bulletin - N° 1 December 2017



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E d i t o

Dear Partners,

The Forty-Second Ordinary Session of the Heads of State and Government of Ecowas held in Yamoussoukro in Côte d'Ivoire in February 2013 took an Additional Act to the Revised Treaty of Ecowas to create the Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR).



Mr **Ousseini Salifou**,
Executive Director , RAAF

The implementation of this Reserve has not yet benefited from the financial support of the Ecowas own resources for its operationalization. However, the support of technical and financial partners have enabled the start-up of the implementation of this tool to address food and nutritional crises in the region.

Thanks to the support from the European Union that funds the West Africa Food Security Storage Support Project with € 56 million, various mechanisms for the implementation of this Reserve as well as the first physical stocks have been put in place. A test of the Reserve's capacity to support an Ecowas member Country has been successfully carried out in the North-Eastern States of Nigeria facing a major food and nutrition crisis.

The European Union's support as well as the technical support from AFD, AECID and Cils made it possible to back up the implementation of the Regional Food Security Strategy with a simultaneous reinforcement of the three lines of defense: local stocks, national stocks and the Regional Food Security Reserve. This support also strengthens the national and regional agricultural information systems with the deployment of Ecoagris and the decision support and strengthening mechanism of the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF).

The first issue of this Newsletter provides an update on the overall implementation status of the Food Reserve and the EU-funded support project.

The Newsletter calls for your comments and questions. It is an exchange platform in the construction process of the regional solidarity for people at risk of food and nutrition crises in an environment confronted with the consequences of climate change and civil insecurity.

It is my pleasure to thank all our technical and financial partners for their support for the operationalization of the Ecowas Regional Food Security Reserve. Special regards go to the European Union for funding the West Africa Food Security Storage Support Project.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

The Physical Stock of the Regional Food Security Reserve is taking Shape

With the progressive constitution of the physical stock of the Regional Food Security Reserve, Ecowas is in the process of strengthening its capacity and building the foundation of a structural regional solidarity for food and nutrition security.



Partial view of the Food Reserve's stocks in Sonagess warehouses, Dedougou, Burkina Faso

As part of the implementation of the Regional Food Reserve, it is envisaged to build a first physical annual stock of 60,000 tons of cereals and nutritional products for the first 4 years. The EU-funded project contributes to the operationalization of the Regional Reserve through the funding of a Food Security Storage Support Project in West Africa amounting to 56 million Euros to help mobilize 31,500 tons, which represents about half of the projected physical stocks. The remaining quantities of the food products shall be mobilized with the Ecowas own resources.

Food storage and maintenance is given to national public food security storage companies on the basis of service provision agreements on behalf of Ecowas. To this end, a call for tenders for the reception, control, storage and maintenance services of the stocks of the Physical Reserve launched in 2016 resulted in the selection of 7 national storage companies, namely Sonagess in Burkina Faso, Nafco in Ghana, Opam in Mali, OPVN in Niger, FRSD in Nigeria, CSA

in Senegal and Ansat in Togo for the selected four storage sub-areas: East, Center, West Atlantic and Gulf Atlantic. Service contracts have been signed or are being signed for a total storage volume of 42,500 tons. Infrastructure compliance has been verified by an internationally recognized independent company hired by the project. A total storage capacity of 87,100 tons has been inspected. The warehouses declared capable to receive the products of the RFSR have a total capacity of 54,600 tons.

To date, the physical stock of the Regional Food Security Reserve is made of 11, 178.5 tons of cereals (millet, maize, sorghum, rice) consisting of 2,750 tons stored in Yendi in Ghana, 2,750 tons in Dédougou in Burkina Faso, 3, 500 tons in Dosso and Zinder in Niger and 1,048.5 in Gombe in Nigeria.

This stock comes from a first call for tenders launched in June 2016. The contracting process with suppliers for a second call for tenders for a volume of 21,000 tons is being finalized and deliveries scheduled for January and March 2018.

Intervention in the North-East of Nigeria: A Concrete Action of Regional Solidarity

Upon receiving the cereals on August 8, 2017 on behalf of the Government of Nigeria, NEMA's Director General, Mr Mustapha Maihajja and the acting Director of NEMA Assistance and Rehabilitation, Mr Kayode Fagbemi, expressed their gratitude to the Ecowas Commission and the European Union, the financial partner of the Food Security Storage Support Project for this humanitarian assistance.



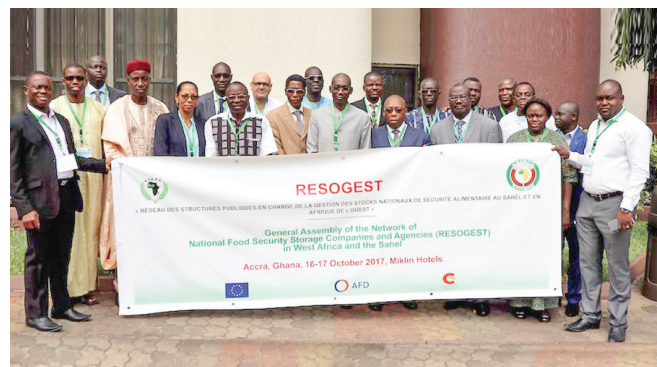
Donation by Ecowas of cereals to the Government of Nigeria

Following the Nigerian Government's request to the President of the Ecowas Commission dated 24 September 2016 for support for the populations of the North-East of Nigeria facing a food and nutrition crisis, Ecowas, in consultation with its partners, responded positively by mobilizing cereals from the Food Reserve. A total quantity of 1,130 tons of cereals (730 tons of millet, 200 tons of maize and 200 tons of sorghum) was delivered on 8 August 2017 to NEMA (National Emergency Management Agency) for the populations of Borno, Gombe, Adamawa and Yobe States. A second contribution of 690 tons of rice is in progress to better meet the dietary habits of the assisted populations. Thus, the total support of Ecowas and its partners will be of 1820 tons of cereals.

To recall, the assessment of the food and nutrition situation carried out in August 2016 with the Harmonized Framework tool in the three (03) States of the North East of Nigeria (Adamawa, Borno and Yobe) showed that 65, 000 out of 4,448,000 people were at risk of starvation.

Support to National Storage Policies and Resogest

The Uemoa Commission, a major stakeholder of the implementation of the regional strategy, has mobilized its own funds for the construction of storage facilities for the benefit of its 8 member States. These warehouses strengthen public storage capacities and could be mobilized for storing the products of the Food Reserve.



Partial view of the participants to the General Assembly of Resogest, Accra, Ghana

Component 2 of the Food Security Storage Support Project in West Africa is mainly geared towards strengthening national food security stocks. It is implemented by the member States with the support of RAAF and under the leadership of Resogest (Network of Public Companies in charge of the Management of National Stocks of Food Security in the Sahel and West Africa) which also benefits from specific supports.

The first annual meeting of Resogest held in October 2016 in Lomé, Togo, made it possible to revitalize it and adopt a roadmap. The By-laws and rules of procedure were adopted at the General Assembly held in Accra, Ghana from October 16 to 17, 2017. The second annual meeting held on October 18, 2017 provided an update on the implementation of the activities of the project and national food security stocks. The Accra discussions also reviewed the three-year action plan (2018-2020) and provided a reminder for a quick handling of the Memoranda of Understanding to be signed between each State and Ecowas within the framework of the support that the project plans to provide to Resogest members.

The support envisaged for the countries concerns mainly (i) assistance to countries to acquire or update their national storage policies, (ii) capacity building of the national stock management companies, (iii) adoption of the code of management procedures; and (iv) training stocks managers.

A Manual of Procedures is necessary for the Regional Food Security Reserve

Participants' views will be considered by the consultant in the final drafting of the Procedures Manual which will be validated at a regional workshop. A ministerial meeting is also planned to deliberate on the Regulation establishing the Regional Food Reserve Management Committee.



Partial view of the launching of the study on the Manual of Procedures

Since the startup of the operationalization of the Regional Food Reserve in 2015 through the food security storage support project, the Reserve Management Technical Unit has been working hard to facilitate the establishment of governance bodies and other management instruments of the Reserve, including the Management Committee and the Manual of procedures.

Indeed, the Manual of procedures is one of the first instruments for the management of the Reserve. It clearly defines management procedures for the physical and financial components of the Reserve. To this end, a consultant recruited and committed to this task met and discussed with several stakeholders intervening in the Reserve. This includes among others, Ecowas (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, Directorate of Humanitarian Affairs), Directorate of Legal Affairs, EBID) and AFD.

In order to widen this base of consultation, RAAF organized on June 30, 2017, a consultation workshop on the implementation of the Food Reserve (Roppa, Apess, RBM, Sonagess, etc.) in order to enrich the Manual of Procedures under development.

Towards Effective National and Regional Agricultural Information Systems

Once fully operational in all its dimensions, the Ecoagris information system should continue to facilitate decision-making for more effective management of food and nutrition security in West Africa, as in the case of the Harmonized Framework tool that consensually proceeds to the development of the map of acute food and nutritional vulnerability as well as the quantification of populations in current or projected vulnerability.

The regional institutions (Ecowas, Uemoa, Cilss, Resimao, Coraf, Africa Rice) adopted in June 2013 a Cooperation Framework for the implementation of the Regional Agricultural Information System : Ecoagris (Ecowas Agricultural Regional Information System). Component 4 of the support project contributes to this goal.

The strengthening of national and regional systems aims at (i) providing all countries with basic information systems on the food and nutrition situation in order to reliably feed into the Harmonized Framework analyses, which are necessary for the establishment of food security plans, national responses to cyclical crises and requests to the Regional Reserve in the event of a major crisis, (ii) strengthening processing and analysis capacities, (iii) developing household economy surveys and (iv) connecting national systems and developing regional databases in the decision support system as well as monitoring and evaluation of the regional agricultural policy, Ecowap. The activities of Ecoagris component are implemented within the framework of a direct agreement between the Regional Center of Cilss (Agrhytmet) and the EU Delegation in Niger. In addition, the signature of the agreements between Agrhytmet and the countries represented by the Ecoagris National Committees is planned.

To date, conventions have been signed with sixteen (16) of the seventeen (17) countries concerned, namely the fifteen (15) Ecowas countries plus Mauritania and Chad. The Ecoagris platform has been designed and validated. The settlement of the platform is being operationalized in the five pilot countries. The surveys on the collection of new primary data and nutrition are effective, the two cycles of training in microcomputing and networks are functional. Analyses of the Harmonized Framework have been reinforced through the extension of the analyses of household economy. The Ecoagris component has particularly innovated on the HEA (Household Economy Analysis). As a matter of fact, it has introduced the analysis in the coastal countries by the development of livelihood zone maps as well as the training and the effective development of benchmarks and results analysis for better control and resilience management in West Africa. Finally, in connection with the management of food stocks, a methodology for monitoring local stocks has been produced and validated.

A Code of good Practices is necessary for Food and Nutrition Security Storage

This study which covers 8 countries, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo, will enable Ecowas to have a Draft Code of good Practices on the management of food reserves that will be submitted to member States for validation, then to Ecowas for adoption.

Conscious of the challenges related to the implementation of the Food Reserve in terms of governance and management, Ecowas launched a capitalization study on good practices for stock management on 18 July 2017 in Lomé, Togo, as part of the implementation of the EU-funded Support Project.

GRAD Consulting Group is conducting this study with the main objective of capitalizing on good practices in the management of food reserves at both local (local stocks) and national (national security stocks) levels. At the end of its mission, GRAD Consulting Group should deliver to Ecowas (i) a Country Report on the management of national stocks and the management of local stocks, (ii) a Regional Synthesis of good Practices of national stocks management, (iii) a Regional Summary on good practices for managing local stocks and (iv) a Code of good Practices for the management of food and nutritional security stocks

Contingency Plans for a better Management of Food and Nutrition Security

According to the specifications, it is expected that capitalization of experiments will be done in two areas: National Prevention Systems and Management of Food and Nutritional Crises.



Partial view of the launching of the Study on the Good Practices on Stocks Management

With a view to improving efficiency in the governance of the Regional Food Reserve on the one hand, and in the Region's response to food crises on the other hand, Ecowas, through the Food Security Storage Support Project in West Africa, launched in late October 2017, a series of studies to analyze and capitalize on good practices to develop or revise guidelines for national contingency plans for the 17 Ecowas/Cilss countries and recommendations for a regional contingency plan. These case studies specifically cover 6 countries: Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

Field missions are ongoing to allow the consortium (Polytechnic University of Madrid and Oxfam Intermon) in charge of these studies to take stock of the specific situation of the actors identified and involved in the development of contingency plans. More specifically, these studies aim at (i) capitalizing on good practices and lessons learnt from previous experiences, (ii) providing methodological rules for the development or revision of contingency plans, (iii) supporting the revision and / or development of national contingency plans and (iv) supporting the development of a regional contingency plan.

An Information and Communication Campaign with and for Farmers' Organizations

The preparation of this campaign is scheduled to end this year to allow the consortium and its partners to interact directly, starting from 2018, with producers' organizations that have been selected.



Partial view of the launching of the Information Campaign

As part of the capacity building program for producers' organizations, the West Africa Food Security Storage Support Project includes, among other things, information and communication actions enabling specialized producers' organizations to efficiently respond to calls for tenders for the supply of the Regional Food Security Reserve. This will be achieved through an information campaign.

The campaign for producers and agribusiness processors is conducted by a consortium led by Oxfam Intermon with the main objective of informing, advising and training producers and processors' organizations in the Ecowas and Sahel countries on the modalities of supply and reconstitution of the Regional Food Security Reserve.

Its preparation consists of (i) producing communication tool (an adapted version of the bidding documents, capitalizations of experiments, a strategic and informative watch, a quarterly newsletter, dynamic training tools) and (ii) the setting-up of interactive information and communication tools (website, "mailing list", distribution list or a directory of addresses for the dissemination of emails, the creation of a Facebook page and the animation of a remote support-advice service, a Help Desk).

The Regional Food Security Reserve in a Nutshell !

- The Forty-Second Ordinary Session of the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS Member Countries, created the Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR) on February 28, 2013 by Additional Act N°AS /2 /02/13 to the ECOWAS Revised Treaty.
- It is the third line of defense to prevent and manage food crises. It is complementary to local stocks (the first line of defense at the village and community level) and national food security stocks (second line of defense) owned by the States.
- It (i) complements the efforts of the member States to provide rapid and diversified food and nutrition assistance, (ii), it expresses regional solidarity with Member States and affected populations through transparent, equitable and predictable mechanisms, (iii), it contributes to food sovereignty and to the political, economic and trade integration of West Africa.
- It intervenes mainly in the form of loans or disposals for free of food or financial resources decided by the Management Committee. These interventions express regional solidarity and the region's contribution to response or contingency plans designed by countries in response to food crises.
- It consists of a physical reserve (1/3) and a financial reserve (2/3).
- It only covers emergency food crises.
- Ecowas has planned a first four-year phase with a permanent annual reserve of 176,000 tons before raising it up to 411,554 tons from the 8th year,
- The Support Project will provide a contribution of 31,500 tons to the physical component of the Regional Food Security Reserve.



Echoes from Food Stocks

- The creation of a Regional Food Security Reserve falls within the ECOWAP guidelines adopted by Heads of State and Government in 2005 and aims to prevent and manage cyclical food crises in the region,
- The Regional Food Storage Strategy is based on four complementary lines of defense mobilized according to the level and severity of crises: (i) local stocks; (ii) national security stocks; (iii) the Regional Food Reserve and (iv) call for international aid,
- the stocks of the Regional Food Security Reserve available and mobilizable by ECOWAS for emergency interventions in the event of food crisis in a Member State are stored in the warehouses of various countries' national food storage facilities,
- The modalities for mobilizing the ECOWAS Regional Food Security Reserve are based on three principles: equity, efficiency, transparency and must follow the following procedure:
 - a. A request by the Member State, justified by:
 - i. The vulnerability analysis and the food situation: starting from level 3 of the Harmonized Vulnerability Analysis Framework (CH),
 - ii. The National Response Plan, identifying the gap between the mobilized resources and the needs.
 - b. A technical investigation by the Stocks Info Unit leading to a technical advice (assistance towards decision-making) to the Reserve Management Committee.
 - c. A decision taken by the Reserve Management Committee for the granting/destocking of food products of the Reserve to the population of the Member State facing severe food crises with guarantees for rebuilding the stock (by the country, the ECOWAS Commission, a third party, etc.).
- It is important to formalize and consolidate the legal framework that governs the implementation of the RFSR through the Regulation establishing the Management Committee and the Implementing Regulation of the President of the ECOWAS Commission.
- It is necessary to mobilize the ECOWAS Commission's own financial resources for strategic purchasing of the Reserve's physical stock and its operationalization, and to implement sustainability mechanisms of the Regional Reserve by ensuring its sovereignty.

With the financial support of the European Union



And technical support from implementing partners



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