

# Echoes from Food Stocks

Quarterly newsletter of the ECOWAS Regional Food Security Reserve

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## In this Issue

Editorial .....	<b>02</b>
The ECOWAS Council of Ministers adopts the Governance and Management Bodies of the Regional Food Security Reserve .....	<b>03</b>
The Regional Food Security Reserve to face Food and Nutrition Crisis in West Africa . . .	<b>04</b>
The Need to link National Response Plans to the Regional Food Security Reserve . . . . .	<b>04</b>
The Regional Food Security Reserve's Stakeholders capitalize on Storage Experiences to improve the Quality of Storage Services for the Products of the Reserve .	<b>05</b>
Towards a Regional Code of Conduct on best Stocks Management Practices in West Africa .....	<b>05</b>
Mobilization of Professional Agricultural Organizations of West Africa for local Storage . .	<b>06</b>
Launch of the ECOAGRIS Website .....	<b>06</b>
The Regional Food Security Reserve in a Nutshell! .....	<b>07</b>



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# E ditorial



Mr Ousseini Salifou,  
Executive Director of RAAF

## Dear Partners,

The Food Crisis Prevention Network tells us that in the light of the projections from the March 2018 Harmonized Framework Analyses, the food and nutrition situation is globally worrying in the Lip-tako Gourma zone in Northern Mali, Eastern Niger, in the Chad Lake Basin, in North-eastern Mauritania and in East-central Senegal. This is due to drought,

lack of animal feed, pastoral crisis, depletion of stocks of vulnerable households, civil insecurity, high food prices, livelihoods erosion of traditional social safety nets linked to displacements of populations. This nutritional situation - 10.6 million people are expected to experience food difficulties, including 1.6 million children - which remains a concern in these countries, could deteriorate further during the hungry season from June to August 2018, with the increase in diarrheal diseases and malaria generally observed during the raining season.

ECOWAS, through the Regional Food Security Reserve, will contribute notably with cereals, to support the efforts of the States in the implementation of urgent actions for food assistance to vulnerable populations.

ECOWAS believes that, in addition to the financial reserve, the development of food security storage at the three complementary levels - local, national and regional stocks – makes it possible for the region to strengthen its risk management capacity and food sovereignty. The Regional Food Security Reserve is therefore one of the main building blocks of the ECOWAS of People.

With the adoption of the institutional mechanism for the governance of the Regional Food Reserve in early July 2018 by the ECOWAS Council of Ministers, in accordance with the provisions of the Additional Act N°AS /2 /02/13 of 28 February 2013 establishing the Regional Food Security Reserve, the activities of the Food Security Storage Support Project take a new curve and place the Regional Food Security Reserve into a Regulatory Framework known and accepted by all.

This institutional mechanism will avail an important advocacy tool for a rapid provision of the Regional Fund for Agriculture and Food and hence, the establishment of the Financial Reserve.

The following lines give an overview of the main achievements of the last quarter. Your contributions and comments are welcome for the continuous improvement of the Newsletter.

*I wish you all a happy reading!*



## The ECOWAS Council of Ministers adopts the Governance and Management Bodies of the Regional Food Security Reserve



With the adoption of the institutional governance mechanism by the ECOWAS Council of Ministers in accordance with the provisions of the Additional Act N°AS /2 /02/13 of 28 February 2013 establishing the RFSR, the activities of the Food Security Storage Support Project take a new curve and place the Regional Food Security Reserve into a Regulatory Framework known and accepted by all.

In view of the worrying regional food and nutritional situation and the crucial importance of the implementation of the Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR) desired and decided by the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government, the ECOWAS Specialized Ministerial Technical Committee (SMTC) Agriculture, Environment and

Water Resource meeting on June 6, 2018, following the Experts' meeting, validated the regulatory arrangements of the Regional Food Reserve. These are the (i) Governance bodies (Management Committee and Executive Committee) and (ii) the Technical Regulation for the operationalization of the Regional Reserve.

### The governing bodies of the Reserve are as follows :

Management Committee	Executive Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Minister chairing the SMTC. He chairs the Management Committee,</li> <li>• The Commissioner in charge of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, representing the President of the ECOWAS Commission,</li> <li>• The Commissioner in charge of the Department of Agriculture, Water Resources and Environment of the UEMOA Commission, representing the President of the UEMOA Commission,</li> <li>• The Executive Secretary of CILSS or his/her representative,</li> <li>• One representative from each Member State of ECOWAS, Chad and Mauritania,</li> <li>• The RESOGEST Office through its President or representative,</li> <li>• A representative of the Farmer Producers' Organizations,</li> <li>• A representative of the herdsmen's organizations,</li> <li>• A representative of the Civil Society,</li> <li>• A representative of the Private Sector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Commissioner in charge of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, representing the President of the ECOWAS Commission. He chairs the Executive Committee,</li> <li>• The Commissioner in charge of the Department of Agriculture, Water Resources and Environment of the UEMOA Commission or his/her representative,</li> <li>• The Executive Secretary of CILSS or his/her representative,</li> <li>• The representative of the Member State with the Presidency-in-Office of ECOWAS,</li> <li>• Two representatives of the RESOGEST Office,</li> <li>• A representative of farmers' and herdsmen's organizations, Civil Society and the Private Sector.</li> </ul>

The adoption of the governance bodies of the Regional Food Security Reserve by the ECOWAS Council of Ministers was held on 7th and 8th July 2018 in Lome, Togo.



## The Regional Food Security Reserve to face the Food and Nutrition Crisis in West Africa

Ministers consider that the development of safety storage at the three complementary levels of local, national and regional stocks that allow the region to strengthen its risk management capacity and food sovereignty, is one of the main building blocks of the construction of the ECOWAS of Peoples.



Building on the findings and recommendations of the Food Crisis Prevention Network on the food crisis in Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal (zones and populations in phases 3 and above of the Harmonized Framework), and in response to the urgent instruction of the Heads of State and Government, the ECOWAS Ministers of Agriculture have decided to quickly mobilize, in solidarity with the vulnerable populations, all or part of the physical stocks of the Regional Food Security Reserve with a current quantity of 25,739.5 tons.

In accordance with this decision, the ECOWAS Commission, by a letter dated June 13, 2018, requested the countries eligible on the basis of the triggering criteria of the Regional Reserve, to submit a request that meets ECOWAS requirements before June 20, 2018. Following this, requests from 4 countries (Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Senegal, Niger) were received and analyzed by the relevant departments of the Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF) at the end of June 2018. This review enabled the Ad-hoc Committee to make the appropriate decisions during their first meeting held in Lome, Togo on 3 July 2018. The ad-hoc Committee has the mandate to decide on allocations to the various eligible countries and decide upon the precise and secure conditions for replenishing stocks through (i) the grain-to-grain reimbursement procedure by the benefitting country, (ii) the procedure for being sponsored by a third-party (Financial partners, WFP, ECOWAS Commission, UEMOA Commission, etc.) and (iii) provision of the Regional Reserve from the Community levy.

As a reminder, the criteria and modalities for mobilizing the Regional Food Reserve comply with two main principles: equity and efficiency. To ensure equity, the decision to mobilize the Regional Reserve to support a country in the region is based on objective and recognized criteria, informed by reliable and publicly available data. To ensure the effectiveness of the Reserve mobilization process, the procedure is simple and quick.

## The Need to link National Response Plans to the Regional Food Security Reserve

This consultation with all ECOWAS Member countries is an important milestone in the process of operationalizing the Regional Food Security Storage Strategy, particularly the aspect relating to the establishment of an effective and transparent mechanism for soliciting food from the Food Reserve by the Member countries. Indeed, the conclusions and recommendations of the workshop will allow ECOWAS to set up a contingency plan at the regional level on the one hand, but also to emphasize the ownership of the Regional Reserve by all stakeholders on the other hand.

As part of the implementation of the regional food security storage strategy in West Africa, ECOWAS brought together stakeholders from the region to Dakar, Senegal from 14 to 16 May 2018 to discuss the findings of a pilot study conducted by the Polytechnic University of Madrid and Oxfam Intermon under the supervision of RAAF. This study focuses on best practices and lessons learned from the experiences of national systems for the prevention and management of food and nutrition crises in 6 countries (Senegal, Nigeria, Togo, Mauritania, Niger and Sierra Leone). It also includes a methodological tool for the development of a regional contingency plan and a guide to enable countries to link the design of their crisis response plans to the Regional Reserve.

The main conclusion of the exchanges focused on the need to support the countries in the elaboration / update of their national response plans in order to allow all the States of the CILSS-ECOWAS region to have an effective tool to respond to food crises. The modalities of this support were differentiated according to the situation of each country and the support process recorded in a roadmap adopted with the representatives of the countries.

It is therefore important that mechanisms to enable countries to mobilize the Regional Reserve when needed are clearly spelt out and that processes for developing national response plans are strengthened for greater efficiency and transparency in the mobilization of the Reserve.





## The Regional Reserve Stakeholders capitalize on Storage Experiences to improve the Quality of Storage Services for the Reserve Products

The exchanges and conclusions of the Bamako workshop should allow not only an improvement of the collaboration and partnership relations between ECOWAS and the national storage bodies but first and foremost a better quality of the services of control, storage and maintenance of stored products.



In the framework of receiving, controlling, storing and maintaining the stocks of the Physical Reserve, contracts for a storage capacity of 37,000 tons were signed in 2017 with national storage bodies of Nigeria (FSRD), Niger (OPVN), Burkina Faso (SONAGESS), Ghana (NAFCO) and Mali (OPAM). A volume of 10,048.5 tons of maize, sorghum, millet and rice has gradually been stored since May 2017 in the warehouses of SONAGESS in Dédougou, OPVN in Dosso and Zinder, FSRD in Gombe and NAFCO in Yendi. After the first cereals entry into stock and in order to improve the management of the reception, storage and maintenance operations of the products of the Reserve, ECOWAS organized a workshop in Bamako, Mali, last May to capitalize on the experience of the implementation of these operations.

This workshop enabled ECOWAS experts and officials of national storage bodies to: (i) discuss the obligations of each contracting party for the reception, storage and maintenance of the Reserve products, (ii) the review of the tools for monitoring operations with national storage bodies, (iii) the discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of product reception, storage and maintenance operations, and (iv) the summary of good stock management practices.

Building on the lessons learned from these exchanges, several recommendations have been made to improve the implementation of contractual obligations on both sides. These include (i) real-time communication between national bodies and RAAF, (ii) regular production and submission of storage reports by national bodies, (iii) continued capacity building for the staff in charge of inventory management, (iv) continued technical and financial support to RESOGEST, (v) the organization of exchange of experiences between countries, (vi) the technical rotation of stocks, etc.

## Towards a Regional Code of Conduct on best Stock Management Practices in West Africa

For ECOWAS, the results of the Bamako discussions should allow GRAD consulting Group to propose the main guidelines necessary to develop a regional code of conduct on good management practices for stocks in West Africa.

The Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food gathered from 8 to 9 May 2018, in Bamako, Mali, the stakeholders of the Regional Food Security Storage Strategy in West Africa, including national storage bodies, technical and financial partners, Producers' Organizations and ECOWAS experts to review and validate the study on the capitalization of Good Food Safety Inventory Management Practices conducted by GRAD Consulting Group on behalf of the Food Security Storage Support Project in West Africa.

The conclusion of this study reveals that the management of national food security stocks in the ECOWAS/CILSS region is characterized by a diversity of practices, particularly in terms of governance and technical and administrative management procedures. In general, recommended good practices for national reserves include: institutional anchorage, the establishment of analytical accounting like in Mali, the elaboration of a framework convention for the maintenance of the reserve as it is the case in Niger, the implementation of performance indicators for management bodies, particularly in Burkina Faso and Niger.

Experiences in the management of food security stocks at the country level were capitalized and proposals made by participants to develop guidelines for a regional code of conduct on good management practices for stocks. In addition to the views of the participants, the elements identified for the FAO code of conduct for national and local stocks, GRAD Consulting Group will take into account the good practices identified during the study and the principles of stock management adapted to the West African context. Such practices are essentially the following two major components: general governance and operations management.





## Mobilization of Agricultural Professional Organizations for local storage

Pending the signing of the convention and the payment of the first instalments for the start-up of the agreed activities, RAAF is in discussion with the French Development Agency (AFD), the delegated supervisor of the implementation of the activities of the project component 3 for the associated no-objection agreements.

The new orientation of component 3 of the Food Security Storage Support Project in West Africa focuses on capacity-building activities of 3 regional networks of producers' organizations: ROPPA, APSS and RBM, and one interprofessional organization, ROAC. The approach seeks to strengthen their capacity for a better contribution to the consideration of the first line of defense for the provision and management of local stocks.

For this purpose, discussions have been initiated since May 2018. The latest on 8 June 2018 reviewed the technical and financial proposals of the 4 regional umbrella organizations and exchanged views on the contractual aspects of the convention that will bind RAAF to each of these benefiting organizations as well as the modalities for implementing activities and justifications of expenditures.

The discussions continued and resulted in the finalization and submission of the action plans of the selected organizations to the project team for consideration. These plans have effectively been validated after the arbitration of the various budgets.



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## Launch of the ECOAGRIS Website

Once fully operational in all its dimensions, the ECOAGRIS information system should facilitate decision-making for more effective management of agriculture and food and nutritional security in West Africa the same way as the Harmonized Framework tool for developing the map of acute food and nutrition vulnerability and for quantifying populations in the situation of current or projected vulnerability, on an approach based on the consensus among the stakeholders of the diagnosis.

Following the various trainings of the technicians on the management of the national servers, the capacity building of the countries on the population of the platform, the verification of the level of population and the solutions found to the blocking causes identified, the project team proceeded to the official launch of the ECOAGRIS website under the address [www.ecoagris.cilss.int](http://www.ecoagris.cilss.int) on 19 June 2018 in Niamey, Niger. This platform will integrate the links of the websites of the various technical and financial partners.

After this launch, the major challenge remains the regularity of data generation in order to fill up the insufficient information and reliable agricultural statistics in the region and the animation of the website in the ECOWAS 3 official languages: French, English and Portuguese.



## 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.

- 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.



*Echoes from Food Stocks*

## Ecowas Member States Agricultural Experts' Meeting in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, June 2018



**With the financial support of the European Union**



**And technical support from implementing partners**



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