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#Press Release#

AECID Visits ARAA's Field Projects in Togo

As part of the follow-up of their collaboration with ECOWAS in general and the projects it finances in Togo through ARAA in particular, the Spanish Cooperation Regional Office (AECID) based in Abuja, Nigeria, undertook a visit to some ARAA's field projects in Togo for a direct interaction with the beneficiaries.

Because it was not possible to access the field projects it finances through ARAA in the North of Togo for security reasons, the AECID and ARAA delegations visited two ARAA field projects funded by the French Development Agency (AFD) and the Swiss Cooperation in Atakpamé in the Plateaux and Central regions on 14 September 2022. Such projects are the "Support Project to the Consolidation and Scaling up of Agroecological Practices" (Procepa) under the ECOWAS Agroecology Programme and the "Project for the Economic Development of Stakeholders in the Small Ruminant Meat Sector in Togo (Meat - Challenge) through social entrepreneurship".

Exchanges with the beneficiaries of the Procepa Project, mainly members from the Association of Cereal Producers of Togo, highlighted that the Project contributes to the dissemination of good agroecological practices, capacity building (model producers) and capitalisation/scaling up of achievements.

Among other achievements, progress has been made in rapid composting techniques, summary development of lowlands, phytosanitary practices, awareness-raising on gender issues through listening clubs and radio broadcasts and setting up of community economic groups. For the adoption of agroecological approaches, the project has installed 65 Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and trained more than 4330 beneficiaries on agroforestry, association and rotation practices, mulching, Intensive Rice System (IRS) and the use of compost. While the community economic group (village savings and credit association) set up by the project remains sustainable with tangible effects, the beneficiaries reminded the AECID and ARAA delegations that the major challenge lies in the consolidation and promotion of good practices achievements at large scale.

The Meat-Challenge Project, funded by the Swiss Cooperation, through ARAA and implemented by VSF Switzerland, focuses on the professionalisation of the meat sector in Togo by supporting small ruminant producers in the marketing of livestock/meat while ensuring the safety and quality of the production.

With this Project, producers' animals are in better health thanks to the vaccination sessions they organise as a group. Their incomes have improved due to sales that are now based on the weight of the animal and their cooperative is in the process of being officially recognised by the Public Administration. However, the major constraint remains the same as that of the Procepa Project, namely the sustainability of the action at the end of the Swiss funding.

While the Spanish Cooperation acknowledges the increasing efforts in taking gender into account in the various field activities of both projects, this sector still needs to be improved to enable vulnerable groups, particularly women, to contribute to development actions and to strengthen and consolidate their socio-economic role.

The beneficiary populations of the two projects seized the opportunity of this visit to request financial and technical support from the Spanish Cooperation to support the promotion of Agroecology as an adaptation



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means to the climate challenge and the professionalization of meat cattle in Togo in particular and in West Africa in general.

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