



**PRESS RELEASE**

**Cotonou, Benin, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

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Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF)

**ECOWAS Agroecology Programme: 15 training Centres selected for Stakeholders' Capacity building**

**Taking advantage of the regional 2022 review and 2023 planning workshop of its Agroecology Programme, the ECOWAS Commission officially launched, in Cotonou Benin on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022, the agroecology training activities of 15 specialised training centres selected for improving their agroecology capacity building offers.**

The ECOWAS Agroecology Programme held this year in Cotonou, Benin, from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 5<sup>th</sup> November 2022, its regional workshop to review the activities of 2022 and plan for those of 2023. On the side-lines of this workshop, representatives of the training centres that will be supported by the Programme were invited to a meeting to officially launch the activities of their agroecology training projects.

The launch event, which took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022, was followed by a training session on administrative and financial procedures, monitoring and evaluation, and communication/visibility guidelines, to which any project funded or co-funded by the ECOWAS Commission must adhere.

These training projects consist of implementing or improving training curricula in agroecology in selected agricultural training centres in each of the 15 ECOWAS Member States. The initiative aims to train at least 12,000 learners, with at least 30% of them women, to maintain soil fertility and optimise the use of water resources in a context of irregular, insufficient but sometimes dangerously abundant and devastating rainfall.

According to Amadou Diongue, ECOWAS Resident Representative in Benin, it is important to promote the knowledge of farmers at the grassroots level who participate in agroecology. For him, the operationalisation of these training centres is an integral part of the implementation of the Regional Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) which aims to significantly transform agriculture in West Africa through accompanying family farms towards agroecological transition. The training centres will also reduce the harmful effects of climate change by teaching integrated climate, soil and crop management techniques.

To recall, the ECOWAS Agroecology Programme is designed as an alternative to face the challenges of climate change and vulnerability. It aims to support family farms towards an agro-ecological transition that allows them to reconcile economic performance, food security, strengthening resilience, preserving the environment and the health of populations. It started on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018 with the operational implementation of the Projet d'Appui à la Transition Agroécologique (PATAE) funded by Agence Française de Développement (AFD) with a budget of €8M. It has been extended with the integration, as of 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019, of the Project to support the Dissemination and Implementation of Good Practices for Sustainable Agricultural Intensification (PAIAD) funded by the European Union (EU) with a budget of €8.2M. The operational implementation of PAIAD started in June 2020.



ECOWAS COMMISSION  
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO  
COMISSÃO DA CEDEAO

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### **RAAF: Feed West Africa**

The creation of the RAAF by ECOWAS through a regulation in August 2011 and its official launch and installation in September 2013 in Lomé, Togo, is part of the operationalisation of the Regional Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) adopted in January 2005. It also reflects the need to create operational agencies with administrative and financial management autonomy to coordinate the implementation of the Regional Agricultural Policy projects and programmes. RAAF is an ECOWAS specialised Agency headquartered in Lomé, Togo.

RAAF mandate is to ensure technical execution of regional programmes and investment plans contributing to the implementation of the Regional Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) by relying on regional institutions, organisations and actors with proven expertise. The Regional Agricultural Policy rests on a modern and sustainable agriculture, based on the effectiveness and efficiency of family farms and the promotion of agroforestry and fisheries enterprises with the active involvement of the private sector.

In this perspective, the estimated 300 million citizens of the ECOWAS Community can ultimately take ownership for the realisation of the new vision of moving from an ECOWAS of States to an **“ECOWAS of the People: Peace and Prosperity to All”** by 2050.