

News *from the* Department

Quarterly Information Bulletin Double Issue 4&5 of December 2020

Agriculture
Environment
Water Resources



Réponse à la Covid – 19

La Cedeao donne des vivres au Gouvernement du Mali pour les ménages vulnérables



● **Regional Solidarity: Food to the Most Vulnerable Households to Cope with Covid-19**

● **Cross-border Cooperation: Hydro-agricultural Facilities to Strengthen Community Life and Social Cohesion**

● **Paris Climate Agreement: Publication of a Guide to its Implementation in the region**

● **Promotion of Youth Employability in the Agro-forestry-pastoral and Fisheries and Local Milk Sectors: Major Achievements to be Deployed**

Editorial



Sékou Sangaré

Commissioner Agriculture, Environment and Water
Resources ECOWAS Commission

Dear Partners,

The ECOWAS Commission is more determined than ever in its commitment in addressing the various developmental challenges and in managing the emergencies facing the region in the context of insecurity, Covid-19 pandemic, and inflation in some countries. Over the past six months, ECOWAS has implemented its regional emergency action plan for Covid-19, notably by channelling its supports to the most vulnerable households.

These include food assistance to the States mostly affected by insecurity through the mobilisation of its Regional food security reserve, the provision of hydro-agricultural facilities, support to agropastoral chains with animal feed and the identification of social safety nets to be scaled up to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable households.

Despite the efforts made by governments and partners, the situation in the region remains worrisome, particularly in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin where malnutrition affects millions of children and women. This situation is the outcome of the combined effects of food insecurity, which has already deteriorated significantly, coupled with persistent security crisis compounded by the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. To date, analyses reveal that nearly 17 million people need immediate assistance, while the total number of food-insecure persons could reach 24 million people, including internally displaced persons and refugees, in the upcoming lean season (June-August 2021).

This difficult situation highlights the regional solidarity that has rapidly developed to support the efforts of governments and partners. However, the responses that have been provided have not met expectations due to the impact of several crises and their severity, which have had severe strain on national and regional budgets. However, the coronavirus pandemic could be an opportunity for the region to capitalize on the lessons learnt from this mobilization to better prepare for other crises.

The ECOWAS Commission remains convinced that professional agricultural organisations and, more broadly the private sector, have a major role to play in the transformation of agriculture and food systems and the construction of a new economic scheme that is innovative, sustainable and creates wealth and jobs. In this perspective, it has decided to further support bulk importation of fertilizers by the private sector to strengthen the capacity of producers to increase production and supply markets. Indeed, working with public resources and those of development partners only is not enough to create the development we are yearning for.

The ECOWAS Department of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, wishes to thank you all for the support, particularly for the successes we have achieved together over the past year.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas with my best wishes for 2021.

News from the Department

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Regional Solidarity: Food to the Most Vulnerable Households to Cope with Covid-19

Although Covid-19 affects and disrupts all sectors of activity, it could be an opportunity for the region to capitalize on the lessons learnt from the regional mobilization to better prepare for other crises.



Faced with the worrying food and nutrition insecurity situation in the context of Covid-19, the ECOWAS Commission, and the European Union provided food donations to the vulnerable populations most affected by food and nutrition insecurity in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria. This regional solidarity aims to support the response plans of these countries already facing the cumulative consequences of terrorism and climate change. The total amount of these donations is 6,219 tonnes of cereals consisting of millet, maize, rice, and sorghum, broken down as follows: Burkina Faso (954 tonnes), Mali (793 tonnes), Niger (473 tonnes) supplemented by nutritional products worth 430,000 Euros), Nigeria (3,999 tonnes).

The operation was carried out through a combined action to mobilise stocks from the ECOWAS Regional food security reserve and additional cereal purchases directly from producer organisations. It is supplemented by the purchase of local nutritional products to help the most vulnerable households to cope with the multiple crises while preserving their livelihoods and dignity.

Despite these interventions, which add to national and international efforts, the results of current food and nutrition surveys reveal a persistence and even an increase in the prevalence of acute malnutrition. Indeed, the health crisis has, among other things, undermined the socio-economic situation of households, food systems and the capacity of governments to provide essential nutritional services in 2020.

It has affected all sectors and disrupted production, storage, marketing, processing, and distribution systems for agricultural and food products, and has highlighted that the ECOWAS Humanitarian Emergency Fund and food reserves are major tools for responding to emergency food and nutrition needs.

The ECOWAS Commission continues to mobilise Member States, the region, and partners to refocus the action in favour of structural investments that address the root causes of recurrent crises and strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable. It also works to strengthen efforts for the coordination, alignment, and effectiveness of interventions.

Cross-border Cooperation: Hydro-agricultural Facilities to Strengthen Community Life and Social Cohesion

The objective aimed at through these facilities is to promote cross-border cooperation contributing to strengthening community life and social cohesion among cross-border populations.

As part of the implementation of the socio-economic development programme of the cross-border zones liberated from onchocerciasis along the border of Burkina Faso Central South, Central East and Ghana Upper East regions, the ECOWAS Commission proceeded on 15 November 2020, in the village of Feo (Ghana), to the handover of hydro-agricultural facilities to cross-border communities (water boreholes, drinking water, market gardening, etc.).

In each of the 8 beneficiary villages in Burkina Faso (Barré, Narguia, Kolinia, Bingo) and Ghana (Namoo, Feo, Mayoro, Widnabaa) 1 borehole (with a minimum flow rate of 4 m³/h) is drilled. Each borehole is equipped with a submersible pump powered by solar plate (1,500 W) and combined with 2 water storage towers (2 polytanks of 10 m³ each). In addition to supplying the population with drinking water, 0.5 ha of market gardening perimeters have been developed on each site, delimited by a wire

fence, and reinforced by a quickset hedge. The beneficiaries of these plots are mainly vulnerable people who are affected by onchocerciasis, particularly women and the blind.

Adding to the commitment of the beneficiary populations to properly maintain the facilities, the governments of Burkina Faso and Ghana reiterate their determination to provide further support to ECOWAS actions at both national and regional levels. Besides, the agro-input private sector (especially AMG Ghana, Syngenta and OCP Morocco) promises to provide the 8 beneficiary villages with a contribution of 100 bags of agro-inputs (fertilizers, pesticides, seeds) for the next production season.

For the ECOWAS Commission, the experiences and lessons learned from this pilot initiative could foster the promotion of regional integration among cross-border peoples living together in strong cohesion with shared resources regardless of borders. The capitalization



of these investments will serve as a scaling up support through one or more large-scale projects geared towards reducing the difficult access to drinking water, the responsibility for which is first and foremost entrusted to women and children in villages, and the development of income-generating economic activities.

The Paris Climate Agreement: A Guide to its Implementation in the region

Beyond the regulatory action, the ECOWAS Commission attaches great importance to strengthening the capacities of its Member States and their understanding of the rules enacted for the enforcement of the Paris Agreement.

The Paris Agreement aims to strengthen the global response to climate challenge. Its success is based on the commitment and accountability of countries. The modalities were gradually clarified through successive Conferences of Parties (CoPs) until the adoption in 2018 of the Book of rules governing this framework. The 17 West African States of the ECOWAS region and members of CILSS are signatories to this Agreement.

With the support of the GCCA+ West Africa project, funded by the European Union and implemented by Expertise France, the ECOWAS Commission, through its Department for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, published in September 2020 a Guide on the Paris Agreement for its enforcement by its Member States. The ambition is to help developing countries meet their obligations based on a good understanding of the meaning and scope of the Agreement provisions.

The Guide aims first and foremost to supporting the Member States of ECOWAS and CILSS in due enforcement of the Agreement. It considers their specific needs as well as the initiatives of some of them that can inspire other States in the region. Subsequently, the Guide presents concrete examples of ongoing or completed projects carried out by the States to comply with the

provisions of the Agreement.

It also puts into perspective examples of regional actions likely to strengthen the enforcement of the Agreement and cooperation actions in the region.

Notwithstanding the fact that the ECOWAS Commission is not a signatory to the Agreement, it nevertheless has strong regulatory prerogatives applying to all its Member States, as Community law takes precedence over national law. As such, it intends to put this regulatory power at the service of climate action while strengthening its initiatives to make its regional sector policies climate-friendly and providing targeted support to the least equipped States.

As part of the efforts to controlling climate challenge, the ECOWAS Commission launched last November, jointly with the West African Development Bank (BOAD), a regional project to support the promotion of climate-smart agriculture in West Africa.

Implemented by the ECOWAS Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food, the project is carried by BOAD, the designated regional entity of the Adaptation Fund which finances it and covers 5 ECOWAS Member States.



Promotion of Youth Employability in the Agro-forestry-pastoral and Fisheries and Local Milk Sectors: Major Achievements to be Deployed

The promotion of youth employability in the agro-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector and the promotion of local milk are two of the ECOWAS Commission top priorities. Subsequently, the Commission mobilises and invites stakeholders and partners to address them.

With the financial support of the Swiss Co-operation in the framework of the regional support programme for producer organisations on youth employability, the region was able to set in motion a dynamic with a very strong involvement of networks of professional organisations and the Civil Society.

Faced with the huge challenge of youth employability for instance, the ECOWAS Commission adopted in 2019 (i) a regional strategy for youth employability, (ii) priority investment programmes for massive job creation, and (iii) specific mobilising projects for the benefit of regional professional organisations and Member States. By 2030, the strategy anticipates that at least 30% of young people will be employed in the sector, a 75% reduction in youth underemployment in rural areas and a 75% reduction in young people subject to emigration. It will be deployed through the priority investment programme and the 12 specific mobilising programmes of the 12 regional professional organisations. The action is based on the urgent need to involve the networks of regional professional organisations and the sector ministries in the operationalisation process of the strategy.

The same applies to the promotion of local milk, a concern expressed in the form of a "regional offensive" after the one initiated on rice in 2015. Collaborative work also allowed to develop a regional strategy as well as a priority investment programme respectively with the European Union and the Swiss Cooperation financial supports. The strategy aims to promote an emerging West Africa among the continent dairy basins and gradually increase its contribution to regional trade in dairy products. It aims to double the volume of local fresh milk production to 10 billion litres per year by 2030.



The investment programme proposes development schemes for the different links in the chain to be scaled up throughout the region. It is structured around (i) improving the productivity of livestock systems, (ii) collection, processing, and marketing, (iii) a favourable environment and (iv) coordination and facilitation of its implementation.

For ECOWAS, it is important that the youth and women (often active in the dairy sector) who constitute the labour force, become more involved in the agro-forestry-pastoral and fisheries sector, the main driving force behind the region economy and development. Youth employability will also enable, among other things, to reduce their uncontrolled emigration from the region and the continent, their exposure to the risk of integrating criminal groups and thus, strengthen peace and stability in the region which already faces many scourges, including civil insecurity and the coronavirus pandemic.

Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture: Validation of a Detailed Strategic Framework

With the adoption of the Framework by ECOWAS Member States, it is expected that the fisheries and aquaculture sector will be better organised and, above all, that the livelihoods of fishermen and all stakeholders in the sector will be improved.

The fisheries and aquaculture sector plays an important social, economic, and political role in West Africa, particularly as: (i) a source of employment, income, and foreign exchange earnings, (ii) a major contributor to regional food security and the main supplier of animal protein to feed many people, and (iii) a key element in the livelihoods of coastal communities.

It contributes more than 15% of the region gross domestic product and almost 3% of rural economic activities.

However, the sector faces many challenges such as poor management of fish stocks, illegal fishing and lack of coordination and cooperation between regional institutions and competent national authorities.

Faced with these challenges, the sector ministers for fisheries and aquaculture validated, on 2 November 2020, the Detailed Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture. The drafting of the policy document was supported by the EU-funded programme "Improving Regional Fisheries and Aquaculture Governance in West Africa (PESCAO)".

The overall objective of the Framework is to ensure that fisheries and aquaculture contribute to the satisfaction of food and nutrition needs, social and economic development and poverty reduction of communities depending on fish for their livelihoods. The document will be submitted to the ECOWAS Council of Ministers and Heads of State Authority in 2021 for adoption.

To recall, the PESCAO programme is aimed at a better regional fisheries governance in West Africa through better coordination of national policies. It is implemented



through the establishment of a partnership with the sub-regional Fisheries Commission, the Fisheries Committee of the Central West Gulf of Guinea, and the European Fisheries Control Agency.

Funding of the Private Fertilizer Sector: ECOWAS and EBID to Support WAFA

With the encouragement of the ECOWAS Commission, WAFA mandated EBID to mobilize financial resources and provide the necessary technical assistance and advice.

To further promote fertilizer consumption which is still very poor in the region (around 20 kg/ha out of an expected consumption of 50 kg/ha in 2015), the Commission and the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) have decided to join forces to support the economic scheme of the West African Fertilizer Association (WAFA).

In this perspective, WAFA mandated EBID on October 8, 2020 to mobilize the financial resources. The fundraising concerns a total amount of USD 520 million, of which USD 430 million is for fertilizer imports and USD 90 million for investments.

The ECOWAS Commission, through its Department for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, sensitizes, and encourages WAFA members to speed up the preparation and submission of relevant and bankable projects to EBID for funding. Furthermore, it has undertaken strong advocacy with the States that was coronated on 10 December 2020 with the virtual meeting of the ministers of agriculture of the 15 Member States, with the participation of EBID and that of WAFA officials and members.

The planned economic scheme is to cover both bulk importation of fertilizers and the establishment, in the countries by local shareholders, of private fertilizer blending units.

The ECOWAS Commission also drew the attention of the ministers on the fact that, despite numerous efforts, local rice production accounts for only 60% of the needs for an average annual consumption estimated at 24 million tons in 2019, which means that the region loses huge amounts of foreign currency through massive rice imports.

This situation strongly contrasts with the human, land and water resource potential of the region already faced with unemployment, poverty, and high migration.

Considering the high stakes and the highly strategic sector that the WAFA initiative and the regional strategy of the ECOWAS rice offensive intend to address, ministers gave their political support to the two processes and called for their immediate implementation.

For the ministers, the availability of agricultural inputs, especially fertilizers, at the right price and at the right time, should enable farmers to increase their production, especially for local rice.

Besides, the ECOWAS Commission should, quickly initiate a strategic reflection on the harmonization of regulations on rice imports with all Member States and further strengthen its support to the implementation of their national rice development strategies.

Environmental Protection: A Validated Action Plan to Strengthen the Policy Enforcement

The implementation of the Action Plan is expected to improve regional environmental governance and increase the effectiveness of Member States in international negotiations.

The ECOWAS environmental Policy (ECOWEP) adopted in December 2008 general objective is to reverse environmental degradation and the depletion of natural resources, improve the quality of the living environment, conserve biological diversity with a view to ensuring a healthy and productive environment, thus improve the living standards of the region communities

One of the operational policy instruments, through which ECOWAS can channel the efforts of stakeholders for the enforcement of the Policy, is the Action Plan and its Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. Both plans have been revised with the support of the USAID-funded West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change Project (WA BICC) with the objective of implementing the ECOWEP for the next 7 years (2020-2026). They were then validated by the sector ministers of all Member States in February 2020 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. These documents were later adopted in Niamey, Niger, by the Council of Ministers on 4 and 5 September and by the Authority of the Heads of State on 7 September 2020, with an implementing regulation.



These documents strengthen the operational mechanism for the enforcement of the ECOWEP and will help to ensure the long-term preservation of forest, maritime, coastal and biodiversity resources and climate resilience.

Control and Prevention of Transboundary Animal Diseases: ECOWAS Launches a Mass Vaccination Campaign Against Small Ruminant Plague

The Pre and Post-vaccination evaluation illustrate vaccination performance and provide relevant indicators for appropriate implementation of small ruminant plague (PPR) vaccination programmes in West Africa.

Following the mass vaccination campaign launched in December 2019 simultaneously in Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia with the financial support of the Swiss Cooperation, the ECOWAS Commission, through its Regional Animal Health Centre (RAHC) based in Bamako, Mali, organised last September, post-vaccination evaluation exercise to assess the impact of the vaccination campaign in the three countries.

In Guinea, a seroconversion rate (presence of antibodies) of the vaccinated animals of 72.6% was observed, compared to the results of the pre-vaccination evaluation during the mass vaccination campaign (37%). In Liberia, a 58% seroconversion rate was observed as compared to 34% of the pre-vaccination evaluation while in Sierra Leone, the results showed 78% seroconversion compared to 36% of the pre-vaccination evaluation. The acquisition of antibodies against PPRV after the vaccination indicates that the animals had responded to the vaccine and were probably protected against the PPR virus. A total of 580,453 households, mainly women, directly benefited from the project with multiplier effects on resource-poor households and communities. The project has also had a positive impact on veterinary governance as well as human resources and laboratory capacity.



The results observed in the 3 countries are epidemiological indicators confirming that the objectives set by the ECOWAS Commission for the eradication of PPR is attainable by 2030 in line with the PPR Global Strategy. However, follow up vaccination rounds must be carried out for full protection of newly susceptible species in all the mapped vaccination sites.

It is also important to establish a broader surveillance strategy involving more vaccinated herds and farmers to better assess the impact of vaccinations.

ECOWAP

2025 Vision : «A modern and competitive agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries sector, inclusive and sustainable guaranteeing decent jobs, food and nutrition security and food sovereignty».

ECOWEP

2025 Vision : « A peaceful, dignified and prosperous West Africa whose natural, diverse and productive resources are conserved and managed sustainably for the development and balance of the sub-regional space».

WAWRP

2025 Vision : «Water resources that are efficiently and practically managed so that everyone has access to safe drinking water for basic needs, waste disposal facilities, food security and reduced poverty; protected human health, the biodiversity of terrestrial and aquatic systems protected ».



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