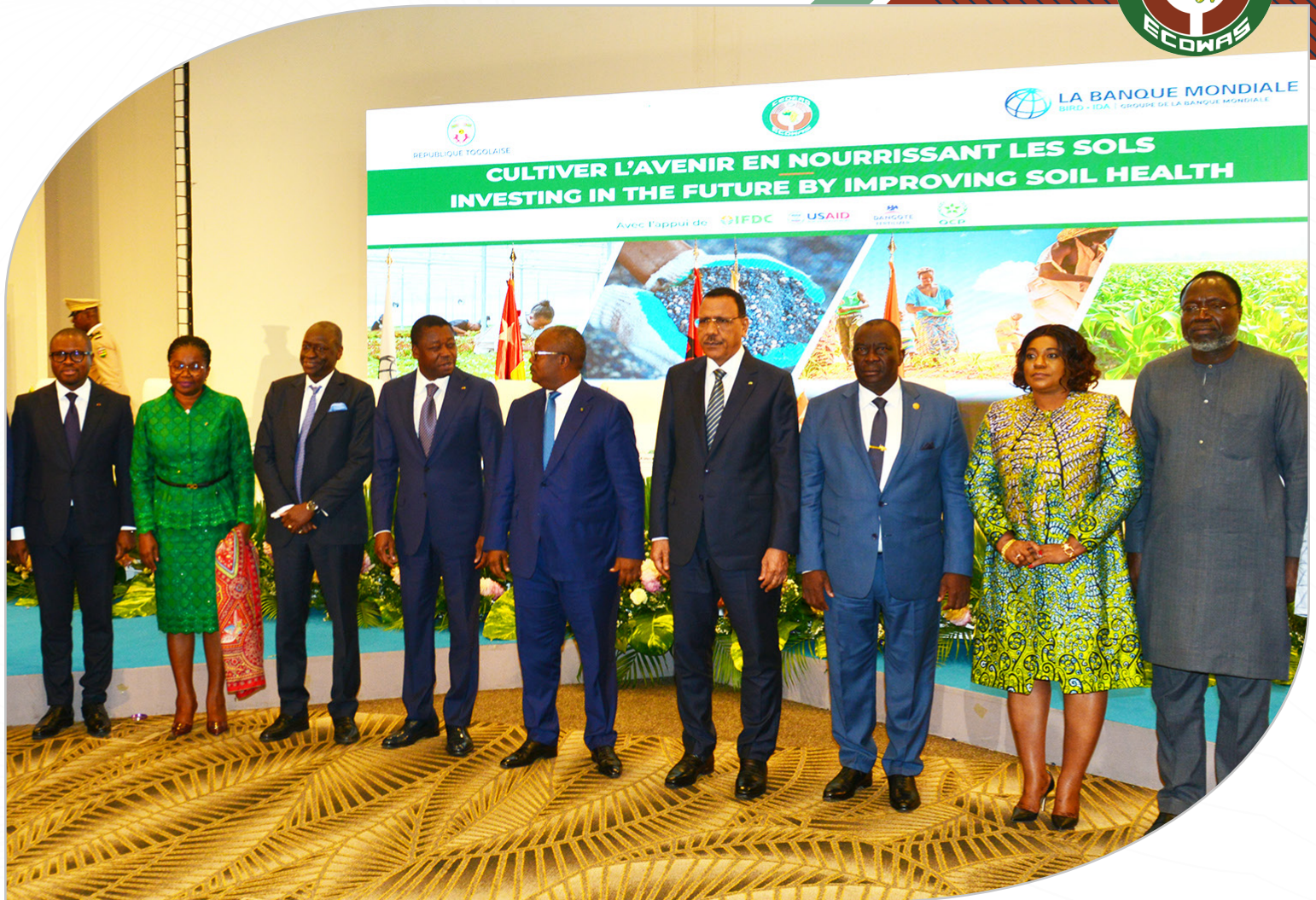


Ecowap news

Quarterly Information Bulletin

Issues 9 & 10 / July 2023



● **Improving Soil health to better feed an Endless-growing Population**

● **Strengthening the Resilience of the Food System**

● **Enforcing the Regional Marketing Authorisation System for Veterinary Medicines**

● **Promoting Synergy to Improve Regional Coordination of ECOWAP Implementation**



Editorial



Mme Massandjé Touré-Litsé

Commissioner for Economic Affairs
and Agriculture,
ECOWAS Commission

Dear Partners,

*Producing more, now and in the future, is becoming the top **MUST** for West African agriculture in the current context of multiple crises (security, health, humanitarian, climatic, environmental, and socio-political) that continually threaten the state of agriculture and food. In this regard, various efforts are being made by the ECOWAS Commission, with the support of its partners, and jointly with other regional institutions which are multiplying synergy actions to better coordinate the implementation of the regional agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) at regional level.*

Taking action for agriculture and food security is therefore a battle that brings together all the Member States, the ECOWAS Commission, socio-professional players including the private sector, civil society organisations, communities, and international partners from technical cooperation organisations.

Yet, many challenges are still ahead of the region given that the number of people vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity has risen from less than 10 million to more than 42 million in less than 5 years, according to the March 2023 results of the Harmonised Framework.

To meet the challenge of "**feeding West Africa properly**", our vision, our approach and our planning must be regional with a greater involvement of Member States and our partners. Every citizen's action counts.

While I welcome the overview of the main achievements of the first half of the year presented in this 9th issue of our newsletter, I wish to invite all stakeholders to the collective fight to stay on and follow the path and guidelines set out by the Heads of State and Government of the region at the High-Level Round Table on Fertilisers and Soil Health held in Lomé, Togo, on 30 and 31 May 2023.

The region also needs to refocus its efforts to promote youth employment in agroforestry and fisheries sectors, boost the resilience of the food system, improve animal health, structure the livestock-meat value chain and food and nutrition security storage, etc.

I wish you a pleasant reading and thank you all for your various supports.

Ecwap News

In this issue:

Editorial.....02

Improving Soil health to better feed an Endless-growing Population.....03

Promoting Youth Employment in Local Milk Value Chains.....03

Strengthening the Resilience of the Food System.....04

Enforcing the Regional Marketing Authorisation System for Veterinary Medicines.....05

Improving the Organisation of the Livestock-Meat Value Chain.....05

Consolidating and Extending the Achievements of Food and Nutrition Security Storage.....05

Promoting Synergy to Improve Regional Coordination of ECOWAP Implementation.....06

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Improving Soil health to better feed an Endless-growing Population

With a view to developing an updated roadmap for improving soil fertility and agricultural productivity, ECOWAS organised, from 25 to 27 April 2023, virtual consultations respectively with the private sector, civil society, and the public sector with the technical and financial support of IFDC and the World Bank Group, and a high-level round table from 30 to 31 May 2023.



Prior to the Roundtable, virtual consultations helped to mobilise stakeholders, inter-governmental organisations (ECOWAS, CILSS and UEMOA) and their member countries to contribute to the development and adoption of a specific regional agenda that includes performance indicators on soil fertility and health.

As a result of the three (03) consultations (private sector, civil society, and public sector), it is worth noting that the convergence of views led to the identification of priorities for 12 actions, including 6 in favour of policies, 3 in favour of access to fertilisers, 2 in favour of agronomy and 1 in favour of knowledge. These include enhancing and promoting local agricultural production, increasing, and promoting local production of fertilisers, coordinating and strengthening monitoring of soil conditions and providing appropriate recommendations, raising awareness among decision-makers and stakeholders of the need to restore soils, and coordinating monitoring of fertiliser use.

It will also be necessary to ensure that countries are supplied with fertilisers, strengthen the financial and operational

capacities of agro-dealers, improve the availability and accessibility of inputs, and improve the effectiveness of fertiliser subsidy programmes. The same applies to the need to strengthen the regional regulatory framework for the control and quality of fertilisers, update and strengthen the Community tariff system for fertiliser trade and promote complementary inputs through extension services.

At the round table, the roadmap was approved by country delegations, including President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé of the Republic of Togo, President Mohamed Bazoum of the Republic of Niger, and current Chairman of UEMOA, President Umaro Sissoco Embaló of Guinea Bissau and current Chairman of ECOWAS, the President of the ECOWAS Commission, and ministers in charge of agriculture and finance of the Member States. Another important outcome of the round table is the Lomé Declaration, which highlights key commitments by Member States to improve soil health and fertility and strengthen the resilience of farmers and production systems to climate change and other exogenous shocks. Industry leaders, development partners and the Regional Agricultural Policy donor group also reaffirmed their support for an innovative and integrated approach to sustainable soil fertility management.

To recall, despite the efforts made and the progress recorded since the African Fertilizer Summit held in Abuja, Nigeria, in June 2006, which resulted in the Abuja Declaration on Fertilizers for a Green Revolution in Africa, a continental strategy aimed at reversing the worrying trend of low productivity in African soils, agricultural productivity and production are still insufficient, and fertilizer use is still at low levels, estimated at 20kg of nutrients per hectare, a long way from the adopted target of 50kg of nutrients per hectare.

Promoting Youth Employment in Local Milk Value Chains

As it is the case in other development sectors, the ECOWAS Commission is stepping up its efforts to create conditions to facilitate the retention and socio-professional integration of young people in the agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries sectors and the agri-food value chains. The local milk sector is one of the tools to be used to reduce underemployment and unemployment among the working population, and to minimise rural exodus and uncontrolled migration.

On 8 May 2023, in Lomé, Togo, the ECOWAS Commission launched 23 field projects, with the financial support of the Swiss Development Cooperation, to promote youth employment in local milk value chains in West Africa and Chad.

Selected in the region following a call for proposals for local initiatives to promote youth employment in the agroforestry and fisheries sector, particularly in the local milk sector, these field projects are grouped into three headings: (i) improving milk and livestock feed production, (ii) collecting,



processing, and distributing local dairy products and specific equipment, and (iii) providing innovative financial and non-financial services that create jobs for young people.

Funding for these local initiatives, led by ECOWAS, governments, agricultural socio-professional organisations, and the private sector, comes from the overall budget of the Regional Farmers' Organisations Support Programme (PRAOP), phase 3. The cost of the field projects amounts to seven million two hundred and sixty-one thousand seven hundred and one (7,261,701) USD, or 4,307,123,406 FCFA.

Phase 3 of PRAOP is part of the consolidation of the achievements of two previous phases, all funded by the Swiss Cooperation, and which led to the development and validation of strategies for the promotion of local milk value chains and the employability of young people in the agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries sectors, with their respective priority investment programmes.

Efforts to promote youth employment are part of the regional strategy to support the employability of young



people in the agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries sector in the ECOWAS region, adopted in 2020. This strategy is underpinned by priority investment programmes such as the Priority Investment Programme in the agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries sector and the Regional Offensive for the Promotion of Local Milk Value Chains. In addition to these priority programmes, there are 12 mobilisation programmes run by regional professional organisations.

Strengthening the Resilience of the Food System

In response to the ever-increasing food and nutrition crises, and as part of the implementation of ECOWAP, ECOWAS is increasing initiatives to help build the resilience of vulnerable households, families, communities, and systems to multiple shocks.

With this in mind, several thousand households are benefiting from the actions and impacts of projects such as the social safety nets project (SSN), the Improving Governance of Resilience, Food & Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture in West Africa Project (PAGR-SANAD), the programme to strengthen resilience to food and nutrition insecurity in the Sahel (P2-P2RS), the support project for the milk offensive in West Africa (PAOLAO), the interim phase of the Stocks project, the research and innovation project for productive, resilient and healthy agro-pastoral systems in West Africa (PRISMA), the regional programme for the integration of agricultural markets (PRIMA) and the Food System Resilience Program (FSRP).

While some of these initiatives are nearing completion, others have just been launched and are in the early stages of implementation, such as the FSRP, which is coordinated at regional level by the ECOWAS Commission. The FSRP project facilitates intra-regional trade, disseminates climate-smart technologies, and modernises agriculture through digital advice. This initiative mobilises several stakeholders and partners at

both national and regional level. There are currently seven (07) beneficiary countries: Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone, and Togo. In the countries and at regional level, the first results recorded are noteworthy and are helping to facilitate the current 2023/2024 agricultural season.

At national level, fertilisers and seeds have been distributed to many farmers. In Niger, 16 tonnes of seed have been shared with 700 farmers; in Mali, 15,000 tonnes of fertiliser and 4,500 tonnes of seed have been distributed to 400,000 farmers, including 160,000 women; in Sierra Leone, the Government is supporting 20,000 vulnerable people through cash transfers to meet their food needs and relaunch farming activities; and in Togo, more than 34,000 tonnes of fertiliser have been distributed to 100,000 farmers, including 25,000 women. At regional level, the coordination team has been operating since the first quarter of the year. On International Food Safety Day, the project's activities raised awareness among more than 100 stakeholders and partners from 8 countries of the need to adopt healthy practices. More than 30 stakeholders in the rice sector have a better understanding of the ECOWAS



Rice Observatory, enabling them to contribute to the development of the rice sector in their countries.

With FSRP, ECOWAS and its technical partners CORAF and CILSS intend to provide a sustainable response to food insecurity by making the food and nutrition system more resilient for the benefit of 5 million beneficiaries, who are farmers, 40% of whom are women.



Enforcing the Regional Marketing Authorisation System for Veterinary Medicines

Though animal population represents more than 75 million cattle and more than 300 million small ruminants and is a source of employment and incomes for more than 25 million people, the issue of marketing veterinary medicines has not yet been sufficiently addressed by the competent authorities of the ECOWAS region. A regulatory framework has been put in place since 2010, but its effective implementation is still pending.

The ECOWAS Commission held a regional workshop in Abidjan from 20 to 22 June 2023 to discuss the thorny issue of marketing authorisations for veterinary products (MAs) in the region. Resource persons and members of the Regional Veterinary Committee (RVC) from the 15 ECOWAS Member States plus Mauritania and Chad, including directors of veterinary services and presidents of veterinary associations, reviewed the issue and formulated concrete solutions for improving the import and marketing of veterinary medicines in the region, including the management of "orphan" or "limited market" medicines.

The proliferation of counterfeit medicines and medicines of questionable quality, the uncontrolled development of informal drug distribution networks and the growth of antibiotic resistance in the region have reached such a level that ECOWAS is obliged to take affirmative efforts to clean up the sector.

At regional level, experts recommend, among other things, that ECOWAS (i) recruit staff as soon as possible to run the centralised system for marketing authorisation and management of veterinary medicines, (ii) adopt implementing texts for the regulations relating to veterinary pharmacy, (iii) disseminate and enforce relevant regulations and (iv) include, starting from 2024, a budget line for the operationalisation of the harmonised system for marketing authorisation and management of veterinary medicines. Considering the UEMOA countries experience in the sector, the ECOWAS Commission is also encouraged to

strengthen collaborative work with the UEMOA Commission to learn from their experience in the management of veterinary medicines.

At national level, Member States should (i) regularly and in a timely manner report on their progress in implementing the recommendations arising from meetings of the Regional Veterinary Committee, (ii) widely disseminate the ECOWAS regulatory texts relating to veterinary pharmacy and (iii) be more engaged in raising awareness of those involved in the management of veterinary medicines regarding the enforcement of the provisions of the regional regulatory framework.

The ECOWAS Commission reiterates its determination to be at the forefront of public health and protection. It will continue to strengthen its coordination and support activities for Member States with the support of its partners to speed up the process of operationalising the regional veterinary medicines marketing authorisation system.



Improving the Organisation of the Livestock-Meat Value Chain

The expansion of current economic and commercial opportunities and the optimisation of future demand for products in the livestock-meat value chain require innovation and substantial investment in the professionalisation and sustainable development of the West African livestock-meat value chain.



To strengthen the industry, the ECOWAS Commission has been providing technical and financial support for several years to the region's professional organisations, especially COFENABVI (Confederation of National Federations of the Livestock and Meat Industry in West Africa), through several initiatives.

Last April, the ECOWAS Commission, through the Support Programme for Livestock Marketing in West Africa (PACBAO) funded by the Swiss Cooperation, supported the organisation of the second edition of SIBVAO (The West African Livestock and Meat Exhibition) coupled with the Camel Fair (SIBVAO CAMEL FAIR 2023) under the institutional sponsorship of ECOWAS and the Ministry of Animal and Fisheries Resources of Côte d'Ivoire. Following the first edition held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in 2016, the second edition is part of the same drive to boost the regional economy, with the overall objective of transforming the livestock and meat value chain and making it more profitable and efficient.

The event enabled the various stakeholders to reach a major consensus: the need to comply with the organisation of sector players around the OHADA law, with recommendations for better structuring of the sector. The main recommendation is to draw up a regional programme focusing on the development of livestock and meat value chains, with a particular emphasis on improving livestock production and productivity, the marketing of livestock products, and the governance of the sector, taking into account support measures such as access to inputs and financing, and the fluidity of transport and trade.

This involves strengthening the partnership between existing regional professional organisations such as APRESS, AOCTAH, COFENABVI, RBM and ROPPA. It will also be necessary to build the capacity of these professional organisations so that they take on board the various UEMOA and ECOWAS texts in force on the organisation and structuring of the sector.

Livestock farming contributes an average of 36% to agricultural GDP in Sahelian countries, and 15% in coastal countries. It also accounts for 5 to 10% of exports from countries in the sub-region, notably Chad, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. Most of the region's meat demand is met by domestic production, supplemented by imports, the value of which is estimated at 745 million US dollars for meat and meat products and 998 million dollars for milk and dairy products in 2020.



Consolidating and Extending the Achievements of Food and Nutrition Security Storage

In April/May 2021, the international conference held in Accra on the West African food security storage system enabled ECOWAS agriculture ministers to call for the construction of a multilateral partnership to sustainably strengthen the resilience of the regional security storage system. The response to this call has been taking shape since 2022.

Between 2016 and 2021, EU funding for the ECOWAS Stocks Project made it possible to begin implementing the regional food security storage strategy for West Africa adopted in 2012, by strengthening the three lines of defence against food insecurity: local stocks, national stocks, and the Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR).

In response to the Accra appeal and given the urgent need for ECOWAS to mobilise interim funding to (i) safeguard the RFSR intervention capacities, and more generally the achievements of the first phase of the project, the French Development Agency (AFD) granted the ECOWAS Commission funding of 17 million euros to consolidate existing achievements.

Signed in December 2021, the Funding Agreement for the

Stocks Project Interim Phase effectively began its field activities in the first quarter of this year. The objective of the project, which will end in December 2024, is to provide the region with a growing capacity to manage food, nutrition and pastoral crises, the causes of which are diversifying and the scale increasing due to a combination of structural and cyclical factors.

Increasing this crisis management capacity involves consolidating, in the short term, the achievements of the implementation of the ECOWAS regional storage strategy and building a multilateral partnership around the regional system for responding to food, nutrition and pastoral crises in the medium and long term. Project activities will be carried out in all fifteen (15) ECOWAS Member States plus Mauritania and



Chad involved in the implementation of the Regional Reserve. The World Bank is also contributing to this multilateral partnership effort through funding for the Food System Resilience Programme (FSRP). Pending further contributions, the European Union is preparing to strengthen this partnership with new funding.

Without waiting for the contribution of partners, the ECOWAS Commission has been allocating sovereign resources since 2021 to maintain the operationality of the Reserve and increase the level of physical stocks.

With this renewed interest from partners alongside ECOWAS in the West African security storage system, the Regional Food

Security Reserve could increase its current intervention capacity from 36,812 to more than 62,000 tonnes of cereals by the end of the year.



Promoting Synergy to Improve Regional Coordination of ECOWAP Implementation

The current context of multi-sectoral crises (civil and health insecurity, climate change, continuing degradation of arable land, increasing scarcity of resources, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, etc.) leaves the region with no choice but to work together, combine efforts and pool resources to ensure the food and nutrition security of its populations.



The current state of implementation of the Regional Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) highlights challenges that are endogenous, exogenous, structural, and cyclical, as well as the limited synergies between the main stakeholders.

Faced with these challenges, the main regional institutions - the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions, CILSS and CORAF - have decided to increase collaborative work as part of the implementation of the Regional agricultural Policy projects and programmes.

Thus, since 2021, annual discussions of the regional steering committees meetings for projects and programmes (COPIIL) are organised around nine (09) priority thematic areas under the leadership of the ECOWAS Commission: (i) livestock and pastoralism, (ii) fisheries and aquaculture, (iii) agricultural productivity and competitiveness, (iv) climate change and agroecology, (v) environment, forests and biodiversity conservation, (vi) pesticide management, plant pest management and SPS, (vii) resilience, food and nutrition security, (viii) youth employability and (ix) institutional and organisational capacity building.

To improve coordination at regional level, the 2023 COPIILs recommend in particular:

- the rationalisation of interventions by making a very clear distinction between the functions of regulation, standardisation, and policy measurement, which should be given to ECOWAS and UEMOA, and more technical and operational functions relating to information systems, rural land tenure, regeneration of natural resources, fodder production and climate services, which fall within the portfolio of CILSS and CORAF,

- strengthening of synergies between projects in the same thematic area through sustained joint programming efforts. The aim is to go beyond the single rate of conflict reduction currently followed by all projects,

- continuation and increase of discussions on the future of livestock farming systems in general, and agro-pastoral systems in particular, in relation to the changes in progress in the region (climate variability and change, pressure on resources and insecurity for people and property).





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