



The agroecology newsletter

May 2025 · Issue 9

Agroecology in West Africa: concrete advances for a sustainable future



FACED WITH THE CLIMATIC, food and social challenges facing West Africa, it is becoming more essential than ever to pool forces, knowledge and experience in order to build sustainable, inclusive and resilient agricultural systems. It is with this in mind that the Agroecology in West Africa Programme (PAE) has been designed and implemented since 2020, drawing on a wide range of partners from the farming world, research, training, NGOs and public institutions.

This ninth issue of our newsletter reflects this collective and committed dynamic. It highlights the results achieved in the field—particularly in training, action research and the dissemination of agro-ecological practices—while recalling the importance of multi-stakeholder cooperation. Inspiring experiences, such as the strengthening of training centres and partnerships between farmers' organisations and researchers, show that structural change is underway.

The PAE involves 69 partners, more than 70,000 people trained, and a growing commitment to concrete practices adapted to local realities. The results achieved by the projects supported by this programme are a perfect illustration of this dynamic. The adoption of organic fertilisers and innovative agro-ecological techniques has tripled maize yields and doubled yam yields. This progress is also reflected in increased farm profitability, demon-

strating that sustainability and economic performance can go hand in hand.

They are also valuable assets to be capitalised on and disseminated, as demonstrated by the publication of best practice sheets and training modules, and the development of exchange platforms such as the 3AO-Hub.

Behind these success stories are faces, stories of resilience and commitment. Inspiring stories. Agro-ecology is a lever for emancipation and autonomy for rural communities.

The PAE is coming to an end, but the momentum is not stopping there. A new large-scale programme, DésIRA+ Agroecology in West Africa, is taking over to build on these achievements. With an investment of €20 million and an integrated approach, it will support the large-scale agro-ecological transition by consolidating networks of players and facilitating access to innovations.

Our agriculture is at a turning point. Change is possible, and it's already happening. Together, institutions, producers and local organisations are continuing to build a more sustainable, more resilient and fairer agriculture for future generations.

Together, let's continue this transition with determination and confidence!

Mme Massandjé TOURÉ-LITSE,
Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Agriculture,
Ecowas Commission

The number...

70

With almost 70 partners involved — producer organisations, universities, research centres, training centres and regional networks— the PAE has drawn on a wide range of players to drive an inclusive and structuring agro-ecological transition in West Africa

In this issue



Editorial	1
Review of the Agroecology Programme	2
Echoes and testimonies from the field	4
Publications	6
Outlook	8

Review of the Agroecology Programme

Accelerating the agro-ecological transition in West Africa: a reinforced commitment

In a context where the sustainability of agricultural systems is more than ever a priority, concrete actions are being put in place to strengthen skills and support the agro-ecological transition in West Africa. A review of the implementation of the Agroecology Programme in West Africa (PAE) highlights the significant progress made thanks to training, experimentation and support for players in the agricultural sector. The initiatives supported by the Programme were aimed at improving productivity and making the sector more attractive to young people and women.

A number of complementary initiatives have been deployed to promote agro-ecology. Firstly, structural support has been provided to agricultural training centres, with the aim of improving the quality of teaching. This has involved upgrading the skills of supervisory staff - in particular through the training of 270 trainers in pedagogical engineering and agro-ecology - developing appropriate training modules, improving infrastructure and equipping them with modern teaching tools. This support has made it possible to consolidate the training on offer at the centres and better prepare learners for the challenges of agro-ecology.

Specific support has also been given to field projects and partnerships between producer organisations, research centres and training centres. Through co-experimentation schemes, these collaborations have made it possible to develop and disseminate innovative practices, such as the production of fertiliser plant seeds and farmers' seeds, crop rotations and associated crops, improved composting techniques, the integration of rice-fish and market gardening, and the production of biopesticides. These initiatives have encouraged the emergence of more sustainable, intensive and productive farming systems, in line with local realities. National extension services have also received support from the Programme. As a result, 290 extension agents have been trained in agro-ecological advice and approaches.

Another highlight of this dynamic was the special edition of the Regional Forum on Agroecology and Organic Agriculture in Abuja. Co-organised by 3AO, WAfrOnet, Action Aid Nigeria and ECOWAS, this event brought together 350 participants and provided an opportunity for rich exchanges on intensive and sustainable agroecological systems, as well as the associated funding mechanisms. Alongside the forum, a digital platform, the 3AO-Hub, was launched with the support of CIRAD and the FAIR Sahel project. This digital space is intended to be a place where knowledge can be shared and experiences exchanged on agroecology, thereby encouraging the dissemination of good practice on a large scale.

The progress made under this initiative has also led to the capitalisation of the Programme's achievements around seven cross-cutting themes. These themes include innovative partnerships, agro-ecological innovations, the dynamics of agro-ecological product markets, vocational training and the integration of young people into farming systems,



multi-stakeholder consultation frameworks, participatory research and agro-ecological livestock systems. This capitalisation work has led to the publication of manuals and training modules designed to strengthen agro-ecology curricula, as well as the production of 15 sheets of good agro-ecological practice, accessible to more than 50,000 farmers.

The impact of these initiatives is already significant. Around 72,000 people have been trained, including 62,500 farmers who have benefited from training via school fields and peer training schemes. Among them, 6,342 farmers who have adopted agroecological practices have seen their cereal yields triple or even quadruple, reaching 3.5 to 4 tonnes per hectare for maize and rice, and up to 58 tonnes per hectare for cassava. The introduction of integrated agro-ecological systems, such as fish farming combined with rice growing and market gardening, has also improved income diversification and food security for many families.

The acquisition of equipment has also helped to improve productivity and reduce post-harvest losses. Multifunctional threshers, huskers and motorised grinders have been distributed to producers, making it easier to process and add value to agricultural produce. Solar dryers and other drying equipment have also been made available to improve the conservation of agro-ecological products and their marketing on the markets.

Finally, securing land tenure has been an important lever in guaranteeing the sustainability of agro-ecological initiatives. Thirteen village agreements, known as “papiers-juges”, have been signed to regulate access to natural resources and farmland, ensuring fairer and more sustainable management of production areas.

These results are part of an overall vision based on five complementary strategic areas:

- **Nourishing the soil to feed people better, using nature’s resources and intelligence.** The introduction of practices such as crop associations, agroforestry and service plants has encouraged biodiversity, improved the supply of natural nitrogen and reduced the use of herbicides. The use of organic fertiliser combined with appropriate management (contouring, filter bunds, drainage of low-lying areas) has increased water infiltration, preserved soil moisture, reduced erosion and restored soil fertility. Rotation systems incorporating improved fallow with *Mucuna* and *Cajanus* have boosted yields, particularly in the Béré (Côte d’Ivoire) and Plateaux (Togo) regions, where maize yields have risen by 300–400% compared with the sub-regional average.
- **Securing agrosystems through biological control, by promoting ecological management of pests and reducing exposure to chemical pesticides.** The programme has made it possible to improve control over processes for manufacturing and using biopesticides, guaranteeing greater food safety and sustainable protection of the environment.
- **Bringing agriculture-livestock-fish farming relationships closer together to build integrated agro-ecological sys-**

tems. These approaches make the most of the natural synergies between the various components of the farm, optimising the use of resources and diversifying sources of income.

- **Making the acquisition of knowledge a major lever for sustainable development.** The PAE’s approach has placed a strong emphasis on lifelong learning, via field schools, peer training, specialised modules and the promotion of endogenous knowledge. These measures have strengthened the capacities of young people and women, facilitating their integration into production systems.
- **Reforming public policies to support the transition to more autonomous,** economically viable agroecological systems in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Multi-stakeholder dialogues have helped to initiate discussions on the regulatory frameworks that need to be adapted to give wider recognition to agroecology. These advances mark a decisive stage in the development of agroecology in West Africa. By strengthening skills, supporting innovation, securing resources and integrating public policies, these actions are helping to build a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive agricultural sector, for the benefit of rural communities and future generations.



Echoes from the field

Success of the agro-ecology project in Côte d'Ivoire: crop yields up sharply!

The partnership between COOBAPAT-SCOOPS, CSRS and AGRINNOV SARL, supported by the ECOWAS Agroecology Programme (PAE), has borne fruit in Côte d'Ivoire! Launched in June 2023 and completed in December 2024, this project has significantly improved the agricultural productivity of yam producers in the Béré region through the adoption of innovative agroecological practices.

Thanks to the experiments carried out in the Farmer Field Schools (FFS), agricultural yields have undergone a real transformation. By incorporating innovations such as the use of organic fertilisers combined with kitchen ash or hot pepper, maize yields have tripled, from 1.3 t/ha to 4 t/ha. Similarly, improved fallow land based on *Mucuna spp* has

boosted yam production from 7.9 t/ha to 16.4 t/ha.

The economic impact is just as impressive: agroecological farms have proved to be 300% more profitable than traditional systems, thanks in particular to the reduction in costs associated with pesticides and chemical fertilisers.

To ensure widespread dissemination, 2,175 farmers, including 438 women, were trained through field visits and educational materials (technical fact sheets, extension videos). In addition, 10 agricultural technicians were trained in systemic approaches to agro-ecology.

With a total budget of 38.9 million CFA francs, this project is a great success, paving the way for more sustainable and productive agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire.

A major step forward for agro-ecology and food security in the region!



An innovative tool for assessing agro-ecological performance in Burkina Faso

As part of the AVACLIM project, a major breakthrough was achieved in Burkina Faso with the development of a simplified tool for assessing the performance of agroecological systems. Originally designed as a scientific tool, it has been adapted for easy use by farmers themselves, without the need for specialist expertise.

Thanks to participatory development by the ARFA consortium, IRSAT and the MASSOUM and NERBOULI SCOOPS, supported by the Agroecology Programme (PAE), the number of indicators has been reduced from 131 to 80, making the assessment more accessible and intuitive.

How does it work?

The tool assesses the performance of agro-ecological systems along four main dimensions:

- **Technical and economic performance:** economic viability, production efficiency, local employment
- **Quality of life and well-being:** food security, empowerment, social cohesion.
- **Resilience:** crop diversity, local autonomy, sustainable resource management.
- **Agroecosystem health:** biodiversity, water management, soil fertility.

Farms are rated on a scale from 0 to 100, enabling systems to be classified as non-performing, performing or very performing.

A key tool for guiding the agro-ecological transition and sustainably improving farming practices in arid zones!



Testimonies from the field

Youhamidou Abdou: Adapted seeds for autonomy

I'm Youhamidou Abdou, 43, married with two children. Thanks to the Support for Agricultural Producers' Organisations Innovation, Adaptation of Family Farming Systems and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources through Agroecology project implemented by the NGO UAVES, I have learnt to produce my own seeds adapted to our local conditions. Before, we depended on market seeds, which were often of poor quality and not very productive.

With my "Wafakay" group in Bagoundié 2, we have received training in the choice of seedlings, harvesting and seed conservation. Today, my crops are more abundant and I can even sell seeds to other market gardeners and tree planters, which gives me extra income.

Despite some challenges, such as the lack of water and pests, this experience is making us more self-sufficient and enhancing our traditional knowledge. I'm convinced that this practice will continue to be passed on and strengthen our resilience in the face of agricultural challenges.

Women from Ndiaye Ndiaye: Fighting for access to land

We are Fana Touré, Anta Gaye, Amy Touré, Thioye Thiam, Aissatou Dieng, Fatou Touré and Diabou Touré, residents of the village of Ndiaye Ndiaye. Thanks to the "Yessal Sunu Mbay" project implemented by the NGO Eclodio, we have been able to restart our market gardening activities after years of difficulties linked to the loss of our land.

Our former one-hectare community field had been rendered infertile by the rising salt wedge, depriving us of our crops and our income. Determined not to give up, we tried to farm on borrowed land, but without official documents, we were restricted. That's when the YSM project helped us to advocate for women's access to land.

Thanks to our perseverance and the support of the project, we have obtained title deeds for several plots, thanks to the solidarity of our families. Today, we have a secure environment in which to grow our crops and provide for our families. Our struggle has inspired other women and young people in the village to demand their right to land. There are still challenges ahead, not least access to water, but we have taken an essential step towards agricultural self-sufficiency.

PAE publications

Better knowledge for better action: key studies on agroecology in Africa

As part of the Agroecology Programme in West Africa (PAE), a number of studies have been carried out to gain a better understanding of the issues and support the development of sustainable practices. You can consult them here:

- A study of financing mechanisms for the agro-ecological transition in ECOWAS.
- An inventory of existing networks and platforms in

agro-ecology and training in sustainable agriculture, with a map of the initiatives and organisations involved.

- An analysis of agricultural training in agroecology and sustainable agriculture in ECOWAS countries.
- An inventory and characterisation of agro-ecology training centres, with an in-depth analysis of the structures to be supported.

All these reports are available here: <https://www.araa.org/fr/projets/programme-agroecologie-en-afrique-de-louest-pae>



Programme Agroécologie en Afrique de l'Ouest (PAE)

Durée

Durée du PATAE : 2018-2024 / Durée du PAIAD : 2020-2024

Pays Membres

Liens externes du projet

[avsf](#) - [inades.ci](#) - [refer](#) - [iram-fr](#)

Partenaires Financiers

Partenaires financiers : Agence française de Développement (AFD) et Union européenne (UE)

Partenaire Techniques

Partenaires techniques : Ministères en charge de l'agriculture, Universités et Instituts d'agriculture

Budget

16,2 millions d'euros dont 8 millions pour le PATAE financé par l'AFD et 8,2 millions d'euros pour le PAIAD financé par l'Union européenne

Découvrez plus d'indicateurs concernant le projet

Capitalization

Lessons to be learned

Now that the Agroecology Programme in West Africa has entered its closing phase, a cross-cutting capitalisation study is underway to analyse the key lessons and build on the achievements to inspire future sustainable initiatives

The initiatives undertaken as part of the PAE's various support programmes have generated key lessons that strengthen the ability of local players to innovate and sustain the results achieved.

Strategic and complementary alliances between local, technical and institutional players strengthen the sustainable implementation of agroecological practices.

Local adaptation of technical innovations helps to optimise the agronomic, economic and environmental performance of agro-ecological systems.

The structuring of supply chains and the promotion of agro-ecological products are essential to stimulate demand

and ensure the sustainability of agro-ecological practices.

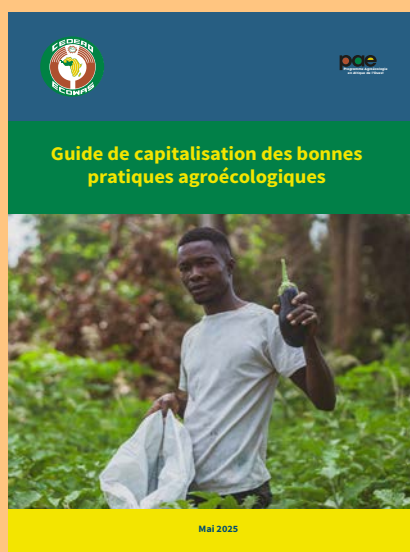
Agro-ecology offers real prospects of integration for young people, provided we rethink training and support for entrepreneurship.

The establishment of inclusive frameworks for dialogue will enable agro-ecology to be better taken on board at institutional level and integrated into agricultural policies.

The co-construction of knowledge with producers is a powerful lever for the relevance and adoption of agro-ecological innovations.

The agro-ecological approach to livestock farming strengthens the autonomy of farms, improves the resilience of systems and contributes to the regeneration of ecosystems.

The lessons learnt from these seven themes highlight a range of levers and concrete measures, at different scales, to better support the agro-ecological transition in the region.



N°	Pays	Porteur du projet	Consortium	Titre du projet	Subvention
1	Burkina Faso	GRE Terre Verte (TV-VF)	GRE - ATN - BRG - LATRAME	Le Boudage solitaire en partage (BSP)	204 299 €
2	Burkina Faso	Union provinciale des professionnels agricoles des Hauts-Bassins (UPPA-HB)	INERA - CIRAD - Green Cross Burkina Faso	Amélioration de la production et l'efficacité d'utilisation de la terre organisée dans les systèmes de production à l'ouest du Burkina Faso (APSPFO)	304 000 €
3	Burkina Faso	Action contre le faim, mission du Burkina Faso (ACF)	CREA/INERA - Association BEC/NEER - UPPA/FFRA	Projets innovants pour lutter contre une potentielle crise à l'échelle des pratiques agroécologiques (PNEC)	300 000 €
4	Côte d'Ivoire	Association nationale des organisations professionnelles agricoles de Côte d'Ivoire (ANAPCO)	CIRES - PEZ/UNA - PPA/UNA	Mise en place de systèmes de production de produits agricoles à l'échelle de la région de l'ouest (MISPE)	214 400 €
5	Côte d'Ivoire	Agriculteurs français et développement international (AFDI)	UREC - SC238 - NP-HB	Les OP, la recherche et les entreprises valorisent les effets durables de l'agroécologie dans les systèmes de production à l'échelle régionale (VITAL)	298 000 €
6	Côte d'Ivoire	Institut national de coopération et de développement (INCD)	CIRAD - PCP/MOZA	Appui à la transition agroécologique dans la filière maraichère en Côte d'Ivoire (MARC)	204 900 €
7	Mali	Union pour un avenir durable et solidaire (UADS)	TAN - URC/MF - CORDON - COOP/AM	Appui aux organisations de producteurs agricoles pour l'innovation l'adaptation des systèmes agricoles familiaux et la gestion durable des ressources naturelles à travers l'agroécologie (JACORE)	204 844 €
8	Mali	Fondation Paul Gélis-Laplace (PGL)	ACF - SCODIS - CORDIS	Appui à la transition agroécologique au Mali par la horticulture d'été (MAG)	204 392 €
9	Mali	Association nationale d'étude et de développement durable (ANEDD)	Commissariat régional de Kiffissou - CNA	Intégration agro-écologique et gestion durable des espaces et des ressources naturelles au Sud du Mali (SAC)	204 905 €
10	Sénégal	Association sénégalaise pour la promotion du développement de la terre (ASPD)	ISRA - CRES	Projet d'appui à la résilience des exploitations familiales agroécologiques (PNEFA) face aux effets des changements climatiques	302 854 €
11	Sénégal	ECOLISSO	APES - COORDIN - COORDIN - COOP/AM	Vitalité des exploitations (VSE) - Assainissement agricole	300 000 €
12	Sénégal	The Hunger Project Sénégal (THP-SN)	ASPD - UPPA/UNA - UPPA/UNA	Intensification agroécologique et valorisation des produits des exploitations familiales (PNEF)	242 474 €
13	Togo	Centre pour l'écologie et le développement (CED)	MAFPO - CAD-Togo	Promotion des exploitations familiales agro-écologiques pour la sécurité alimentaire et la résilience des revenus durables dans la région des plateaux au Togo (PNEFA)	204 735 €
14	Togo	Entreprises, territoires et développement (ETD)	CFC-Togo - CAD-Togo	Projet d'appui à la transformation et à la mise à l'échelle des pratiques agroécologiques dans les régions des plateaux et du littoral (PNEFA)	301 870 €
15	Togo	Recherche, appui et formation aux initiatives d'auto-développement (RAIFAD)	URDFC-S - SANI	Intensification durable des pratiques agroécologiques dans la région des Savanes (SDN-S)	204 892 €

Classe de pratique	N°	Page	Nom de la bonne pratique	Nature	Échelle	Cultures	Pays	Porteur de projet
Identification et maintien des cultures	1	11	Optimiser l'usage et l'entretien des plantes	Agroécologie	Parcelle	Agroécologie	Côte d'Ivoire - AFRI	Togo - CFI
Intégration agroécologie	2	23	Utilisation de la traction animale	Agroécologie	Parcelle	Agroécologie	Togo - BAFIA	
Intégration agroécologie	3	24	L'accompagnement des terres en cours de mise	Agroécologie	Parcelle	Agroécologie	Mali - ANEDD	
Gestion et maintenance des sols et de l'eau	4	35	Optimisation de l'utilisation du compost	Agroécologie	Parcelle	Agroécologie	Togo - CFI	Burkina Faso - UPPA/UNA
	5	43	Compostage en tas	Agroécologie	Parcelle	Agroécologie	Burkina Faso - UPPA/UNA	
	6	49	Le biochar	Agroécologie	Parcelle	Agroécologie	Burkina Faso - ACF	
	7	55	Les fosses compostières	Agroécologie	Parcelle	Agroécologie	Sénégal - ASPRODES	
Lutte biologique et recours à des alternatives aux pesticides	8	61	Le sarclage localisé en culture céréalière au Sahel	Agroécologie	Parcelle	Agroécologie	Burkina Faso - Terre Verte	
	9	67	Les biopesticides	Agroécologie	Parcelle	Agroécologie	Mali - ANEDD	Mali - UNES
Semenciers paysans	10	75	Les semenciers paysans	Agroécologie	Parcelle	Agroécologie	Mali - UNES	
	11	81	Accès des femmes et des jeunes aux semences	Agroécologie	Parcelle	Agroécologie	Sénégal - ECOLISSO	
	12	87	Développement des semences de haute qualité	Agroécologie	Parcelle	Agroécologie	Sénégal - ASPRODES	
	13	93	Le potager familial	Agroécologie	Parcelle	Agroécologie	Sénégal - ECOLISSO	
Transfert de connaissances	14	101	Clubs d'étude communautaires	Agroécologie	Parcelle	Agroécologie	Togo - ETD	
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Outlook

DéSIRA+AO: a new project to accelerate the agro-ecological transition in West Africa

Following on from the Agroecology in West Africa Programme (PAE), which will run from 2017 to 2025, a major new project is being launched: DéSIRA+Agroecology in West Africa. Supported by ECOWAS and financed to the tune of €20 million by the European Union and the Agence Française de Développement, this ambitious programme will run from 2024 to 2029.

Faced with the growing challenges of climate change, degradation of agricultural land and pressure on natural resources, agroecology is emerging as an essential response. DéSIRA+Agroécologie in West Africa aims to support family farms in their transition to more sustainable practices, reconciling economic performance, food security and environmental protection.

This project covers all the ECOWAS member states and is based on an integrated approach to encourage innovation and the adoption of agro-ecological practices. It aims to strengthen synergies between farmers' organisations, research centres, NGOs and private players in order to develop solutions tailored to local realities. Training and raising awareness among producers will be at the heart of this dynamic, with a clear desire to involve players in the agricultural sector in the construction of public policies favourable to agroecology.

Ultimately, DéSIRA+Agroecology in West Africa aims to widen access to agroecological innovations, encourage their widespread adoption and consolidate an institutional framework conducive to the transformation of West African agricultural systems. This is a decisive step towards ensuring the resilience of rural communities and meeting the challenges of food sovereignty in the region.

The agroecology reduces carbon emissions, protects soils and biodiversity, cares for women, men, ensures their food and provides them with the livelihoods to protect, educate and care for their children, the future generations.



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