2007 ANNUAL REPORT

Strategic and Operational Plans
An Appropriate Response to Agricultural Challenges in West and Central Africa
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*Strategic and Operational Plans*

*An Appropriate Response to Agricultural Challenges in West and Central Africa*

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A New Vision and Mission

Through the adoption of the roadmap for the development of plans aiming at strengthening West and Central African agricultural research, at the end of its seventh General Assembly in 2006, CORAF/WECARD laid the foundations of the in-depth reform of its strategy for cooperation. It is glad to see the various stakeholders’ involvement and adherence in the development process of the new strategy of cooperation. This was emarkably supported by development partners, continued through 2007 and allowed the CORAF/WECARD to end the cycle of the seven workshops for the delivery of its Strategic Plan (2007-2016) and Operational Plan (2007-2011). These Plans were adopted by the Extraordinary General Assembly, held in May 2007, in Abidjan in Côte d’Ivoire.

The 2007 Annual Report that you are holding, devotes a special place to these Plans by dedicating its “Zoom” section to the strategy and mechanisms through which CORAF/WECARD intends to give an appropriate response to the challenges that agriculture faces in the sub-region. It must first be noted that the new strategy of cooperation is nested in the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) that aims, among other objectives, to achieve a 6% average annual agricultural growth by 2015.

To this end, CORAF/WECARD has carved a new vision and a new mission that put producers and users at the centre of its activities. Hence, its vision is to achieve “…a sustainable reduction in poverty and food insecurity in WCA through an increase in agricultural led economic growth and sustainable improvement of key aspects of the agricultural research system”.

Its mission is to achieve “sustainable improvements to the competitiveness, productivity and markets of the agricultural system in West and Central Africa by meeting the key demands of the sub-regional research system as expressed by target groups…”

CORAF/WECARD will achieve the objectives of its vision and mission through its commitment to deliver four different results that are conventional research, policy research, capacity strengthening and knowledge management and the use of innovation platforms.

The programme approach, identified as the sole system for which sub-regional collaboration and the delivery of the aforesaid results are guaranteed through eight priority programmes for the Strategic Plan Implementation through the Operational Plan. Therefore, in 2007, CORAF/WECARD devoted itself to strengthening cooperation with subregional and regional economic communities that are the CAADP’s focal points.

In fact, a third cooperation agreement has been signed with the Communauté Économique et Monétaire des États de l’Afrique Centrale (CEMAC).

The year 2007 was characterized by the celebration of CORAF/WECARD’s 20th anniversary.
This celebration was the occasion not only devoted to review successes and failures but also to acknowledge the merit of all the men and women that, remarkably, contributed to the strengthening of the subregional cooperation by awarding them honours.

The Association went through painful moments with the painful deaths of two members of its Executive Board.

Finally, the statutory structures were held. They adopted the new Strategic and Operational Plans.

The regularity of organization of these statutory sessions also facilitated improvements in transparency in the Association’s financial management system at the level of the Executive Secretariat.

One achievement that is worth underlining is the strengthening of the account service staff and the setting up of a system of control with the recruitment of an internal auditor.

Lastly, other initiatives are underway. The first actions for the implementation of the new strategy have started, namely at the level of the “Staple Crops” and “Biotechnology and Biosecurity” Programmes. Two managers have therefore been recruited.

The chapters “CORAF/WECARD in 2007” and “Research Highlights” describe the main initiatives and state of progress of the main activities conducted by the Operational Units: the one dedicated to Congo, through the presentation of its National Agricultural Research System (NARS) is on the main focus.

Like many other NARS, this country’s experienced a considerable decrease in its resources due to armed conflicts that caused its isolation from the international scientific community. But its ongoing reforms, supported by CORAF/WECARD, provides a better future towards its efficiency and effectiveness.

One can then believe and hope that CORAF/WECARD will effectively help the subregion achieve its targeted objective of 6% growth in agriculture.

Dr. Paco SÉRÉMÉ
Executive Director of CORAF/WECARD
The CORAF/WECARD’s new 2007-2016 Strategic Plan takes into account the concerns of all the agricultural sector’s stakeholders, that of large business companies as well as that of smallholder farmers and breeders, but also the concerns of women, the heads of households, and that of people living with HIV/AIDS. This very inclusive and consensual Plan forms an appropriate response to agricultural challenges in West and Central Africa.

**OBJECTIVES**

CORAF/WECARD 2007-2016 new Strategic Plan’s objective is to contribute to foster sustainable development in the agricultural sector of West and Central Africa through the fair involvement of its stakeholders. It will reach its objective essentially through the achievement of four main results.

The first action consists of enabling the agricultural sector’s stakeholders to use the appropriate technologies and innovations. Then, the strategic options for decision-making as far as policy, institutions and markets are concerned will be defined. The strengthening and the coordination of the agricultural research systems form the third important result that is expected from this Plan. The final action corresponds to the demands for agricultural innovations from target groups that are met.

This Strategic Plan is in keeping with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). One of the CAADP’s objectives is to help Africa achieve an annual average growth rate of 6% by 2015. The CAADP also takes into account the principles and objectives defined by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and other sub-regional organizations.

The new 2007-2016 Strategic Plan’s implementation strategy is based on new principles. The “programme” approach as opposed to the “network” approach involves various stakeholders and gives...
The New CORAF/WECARD Strategic and Operational Plans

them a sense of responsibility. This necessarily leads to significant changes in institutional and organizational systems. In addition, concerns about poverty reduction, equity between men and women, the AIDS pandemic and environmental sustainability and protection are taken into account.

Eight programs will be implemented using the programme approach; these are: Livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, Staple crops, Non-staple crops, Natural resource management, Biotechnology and biosafety, Policy, markets and trade, Agricultural knowledge management and Capacity strengthening and coordination. Each of these programs will be directed by a manager who reports directly to CORAF/WECARD’s Director of Programmes. The Manager is in charge of setting up a specific strategic plan for his programme (yearly and five-year midterm) which will be part of CORAF/WECARD’s general inclusive planning process.

The programme’s plans will include the specific and general objectives, budgets, staffing and the monitoring and evaluation mechanism. They will also give a description of the deadlines for completion of projects, in order to take advantage of the lessons learned to make the necessary adjustments in subsequent research’s activities to enhance progress.

This move toward a programme based approach demands, as mentioned earlier, significant changes in the organizational and institutional systems of CORAF/WECARD and its structures as well. The changes will be implemented in all the sub-region and will need a strictly planned management system.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE 2007-2016 STRATEGIC PLAN

The challenges of agriculture

Agriculture faces a lot of challenges in West and Central Africa. Despite heavy investments, its productivity and competitiveness are low and chronic poverty is still prevailing in the subregion. The eradication of hunger, through food security, presents a major challenge in a context characterised by various biophysical constraints such as drought, the depletion of nutrient elements, acidity, the degradation of soils, climate change, etc. Conflicts and post-conflicts situations that many CORAF/WECARD member states are experiencing come to add to that state of things and make compulsory the appropriate revival of agricultural research. Persistent inadequately articulated policies and the difficult coordination of agricultural research in national systems with limited funding are also among these challenges.

Why a new Strategic Plan?

In response to AU-NEPAD strategy for the growth of African agriculture, nested in the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) that is coherent with the principles of the Framework for African Agriculture Programme (FAAP), as far as its implementation is concerned, CORAF/WECARD needed to review its Strategic Plan in order to achieve the objectives of the CAADP. Therefore, the new Strategic Plan also respond to the agricultural policies of the West and Central Africa Economic Communities (ECOWAS, CEEAC, WAEMU, and CEMAC).

Innovative objectives

The objective of the New Strategic Plan is to achieve “sustainable growth of the agricultural sectors in West and Central Africa” by taking into account environmental issues while avoiding growth based on the degradation of resources. That growth will have to be “driven by the fair involvement of its stakeholders” whose concerns must be considered seriously (be they big commercial businesses, small farmholders and breeders or female heads of households and HIV/AIDS affected individuals).

CORAF/WECARD’s specific objective is to achieve improvement, in West and Central Africa, of the “sustainable growth in the productivity, competitiveness, and markets of the agricultural system in West and Central Africa emanating from the adequate involvement of its
THREE CORE FUNCTIONS

A technical research based on the “innovations systems” concept should, here, be combined with the programme approach. This research placed the users at the heart of the innovative practices that foster learning and the search for solutions through dialogue and the exchange of ideas among all stakeholders.

Within the framework of the 2007-2016 Strategic Plan’s implementation, CORAF/WECARD rationalizes its activities around three core functions.

The first one is capacity strengthening. To this end, the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) and other institutions and partners would operate under four main principles: the sharing of resources through specialization centers, the creation and the maintenance of a minimum basis for expertise in the various zones, the generation and the maintenance of an environment that furthers quality and skills development for the practical application of the agricultural innovations system’s method.

The second function consists of coordinating the NARS’ initiatives. This is vital in avoiding duplication of efforts, create synergies and optimize the available resources. This coordination will be executed through direct (advocacy, forums and meetings) and indirect participation (resource mobilization, information, dialogue).

The third important function is knowledge management. The specific knowledge management program is in charge of disseminating information and of converting it into knowledge for advocacy, coordination and practical learning.

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the 2007-2016 Strategic Plan occurs in a particular context for the agricultural stakeholders”. These improvements in this field will cover the whole value chain: not only producers, but also stakeholders and consumers.

Clearly identified steps and processes

The new 2007-2016 CORAF/WECARD Strategic Plan presents itself as a series of steps and coherent processes presented in a logical framework of cause and effect relationships. This plan sets the objectives (global and specific) that CORAF/WECARD should achieve through the obtention of the four following results:

- Appropriate technologies and innovations are developed;
- Strategic decision-making options for policy, institutions and markets are set;
- The Sub-regional agricultural research system is strengthened and coordinated;
- The Demand for agricultural information from target groups is facilitated and met.

A programme approach

The implementation strategy for the Strategic Plan rests on a “programme” approach, opposed or against to a “network” approach, which involves various stakeholders and gives them the sense of responsibility. The four identified results (see above) will be achieved through 8 programmes:

- Livestock, fisheries and aquaculture;
- Staple Crops;
- Non staple Crops;
- Natural Resource management;
- Biotechnology and Biosafety;
- Policy, Markets and Trade;
- Agricultural Knowledge management;
- Capacity Strengthening and Coordination.
sector in West and Central Africa. In fact, CORAF/WECARD’s 21 member countries rank among the world’s poorest countries. Of their total population of about 318 million people, over a third lives below the poverty line. This population is majority and rural (70%) and almost essentially depends on agriculture for subsistence and incomes.

Over the last decade, this population experienced a rapid expansion, which caused massive urbanization.

In such a context, structural transformations and an increase in the agricultural productivity are vital for the improvement in economic growth and food security.

Moreover, it has been proven that in West and Central Africa, agriculture accounts for over 35% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and over 40% of its exports. Therefore, the sub-region’s economic growth largely depends on agriculture, despite its global weak productivity. Out of the 3.9% annual GDP growth recorded between 2000 and 2004, only 1.2% came from the agricultural sector.

Irrespective of the poor performance, the sub-region is endowed with a rich agricultural base, spread over a wide range of agro-ecological zones. This diversity, combined with the rapid demographic growth, represents an opportunity to improve the agricultural systems productivity and increase the competitiveness of products and markets.

It is well known that the sector is also characterized with small farm-holders that heavily rely on rain fed production systems and natural methods of

An Overview of the 2007-2016 Strategic Plan

CORAF/WECARD four core principles

In the process of its implementation, CORAF/WECARD’s Strategic Plan is governed by four principles:

1. Subsidiarity in delegating responsibility to the lowest appropriate level;
2. Delivery of the expected results and impact through the effective and efficient use of resources.
3. Accountability to stakeholders for the use of resources and the delivery of results.
4. Participation of all stakeholders in the activities, the results and the objectives’ planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Cross-cutting issues

Some specific issues must be especially considered during the implementation of the Strategic Plan. It must be ensured that the various programmes first address the poor and the individuals that live with HIV/AIDS that they take into consideration the gender approach and contribute to ensure environmental sustainability. Working in innovating systems and following FAAP principles and those of subsidiarity form also part of this Strategic Plan main points.

CORAF/WECARD seeks to ensure that extended innovations are made available to vulnerable populations. The integration of gender considerations in the agricultural sector is one main focus of the new Strategic Plan not only for the promotion of equality between men and women, but also for a sustainable agricultural production. HIV/AIDS reveals to be not only an emergency but also a long-term issue for agricultural development. CORAF/WECARD calls for more awareness raising on the importance of agriculture in the national strategies for the fight against HIV/AIDS, directed to poor rural populations in particular.

Besides, as far as the issue of environment is concerned, CORAF/WECARD is willing to serve as the facilitator for research and development services providers and lay the emphasis on agro-ecological principles and collective learning more than on technology prescriptions and transfer. The Council also commits itself to
maintaining soil fertility, with limited access to markets.

The sub-regions’ main staple foods are roots and tubers, cereals, legumes, fruits and vegetables, and plantain. Major industrial and export commodities are coffee, palm oil, cocoa, rubber and cotton. Emerging crops are gaining importance in food security, income generation, and as non-traditional export commodities.

Despite major investments in the sector, the productivity and competitiveness of agriculture remain weak. So far, they haven’t yielded much impact on the producers’ income.

Food insecurity constitutes another aspect of the context. This report throws light on the sub region economic communities’ agriculture policy primarily that focus on increasing food availability and affordability in the subregion in order to meet the needs of the steadily burgeoning population.

It must also be noted that the sub-region faces biophysical constraints such as droughts, soil acidity, facilitate the training of African scientists through participatory research methods, agro-ecological principles and tools that facilitate the analysis of environmental risks.

Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation system applies to all CORAF/WECARD activities and will synchronise as far as possible with that of FARA through the use of similar approaches and methodologies.

The monitoring and evaluation system wants itself holistic: it must give the information, data and analyses that will be used to amend or improve the ten-year strategy based on lessons learned and in line with the changing political, market and climatic environments.

Integrated agricultural research for development

The Strategic Plan’s new paradigm lays a particular emphasis on an IAR4D approach (Integrated Agricultural Research for Development). It puts the targeted producers and users at the centre of innovative practices and encourages stakeholders to learn through the exchange of ideas by taking example on the successes and failures of the ones and the others. The emphasis must be laid on adaptive and applied research, and imply at least 70% of all available resources.

Research on policies, markets and trade

Research on policies, markets and trade is a new and significant element in CORAF/WECARD’s portfolio. In its broadest sense, policy research responds to the demand from decision makers on how to improve policies. The aim is enhance decision-making based on relevant, factual information. In fact, this implies identifying the key policy and decision makers in the sub-region and creating effective working partnerships between them and the Programme and any other relevant policy research constituents.

Finally, a communication strategy is expected to be developed, as a component of this Programme. This programme will ensure that relevant and appropriate media channels and mechanisms are used to share and advocate the policy options which are developed.
and nutrient-depletion and degraded soils which impinge on agricultural development. In addition, the threats of climate change could prove to be most challenging to an already overstretched sub-regional production system.

Therefore, the challenge consists of promoting holistic productivity approaches based on social practices that respect the environment and support the sustainable management of natural resources.

Conflicts and post-conflicts situations are a true reality in a large number of CORAF/WECARD member states. These circumstances require an appropriate revival of agricultural research, through appropriate and adequate interventions.

Development strategies initiated and implemented by some West and Central African States over the last 20 years focused on national agricultural policies. Under the framework of structural adjustment policies, the focus was on the production systems’ financial profitability rather than on the supportive measures necessary for achieving the agricultural policy goals of food security, rural employment, and integration of the sub-regional market. Agricultural policies, often defined without the participation of the grassroots stakeholders, were not only inadequately articulated with macro-economic policies, but they often amounted to action plans, programmes and projects whose implementation largely depended on external financial assistance.

CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME

The difficult task of coordinating agricultural research constitutes a major handicap. In fact, during the 1970s and 1980s, several national governments...
created various research institutes and other structures in an effort to address problems relating to food insecurity and low agricultural productivity. However, most of the national systems have remained unsustainable, mainly due to the very limited amount of the allocated budgets (in particular for operational expenditures).

Appropriately coordinating the distribution of the support granted to agricultural research in West and Central Africa remains a major challenge to overcome. At the same time, it is necessary to efficiently coordinate, harmonize, and channel research efforts to ensure a greater impact on the populations.

In such a global context, the 2007-2016 Strategic Plan presents itself as CORAF/WECARD’s response to the challenges that agriculture is facing in West and Central Africa.

As a sub-regional organization committed to the implementation of agricultural policies, CORAF/WECARD gathered, on a regular basis, interested stakeholders, in an effort to develop strategies capable of ensuring an agriculture-led growth. On this point, CORAF/WECARD stands by its mandate promoting cooperation, consultation and information exchange between member institutions on the one hand, and the partners on the other. It is also about defining joint sub-regional and regional research objectives and priorities as well as serving as a consultative body for research carried out by regional and international organizations operating at the sub-regional level.

Another part of the mandate is to develop and ensure the efficient implementation of sub-regional research for development programmes, aimed at adding value to national programmes.

Reviews and Amendments. – In order to recall the global process, it is necessary to explain that the 1998 CORAF/WECARD’s General Assembly, in Accra, agreed to develop a strategic plan for 1999-2016, whose main thrusts were to identify priorities for sub-regional agricultural research cooperation; and establish a framework for negotiation and dialogue with the various agricultural research and development partners.

In 2003, this fifteen-year Strategic Plan adopted in 2000, was reviewed and amended, after a three-year operation. The 2003 review was particularly needed given the new strategic relationships established between CORAF/WECARD and the Regional Economic Communities.

In 2006, the Plan underwent a thorough review that was centered on the very strategy of CORAF/WECARD, in order to take into account the new orientations of the CAADP and the Framework for African Agricultural Productivity (FAAP). Seven main issues had been examined during this last review. It was noticed that the fragmented support which agricultural research in Africa receives, would need to be coordinated and harmonized by involving a wide range of stakeholders, especially the producers. Besides, the Strategic Plan should take into account the links between the different pillars of the CAADP, as well as agricultural research, technology dissemination and adoption.

The Operational Plan: Two five-year periods

CORAF/WECARD’s 2007-2016 new Strategic Plan will be executed through two operational plans of five years each. Those plans provide the details of the expected results and the necessary resources. The first Operational Plan starts from 2008 and goes until 2013; the second goes from 2013 to 2018.

The Operational Plan has been developed in the context of CAADP and FAAP. It addresses, among others, issues related to the West and Central African agricultural research system’s priorities. It further benefits from a logical framework that stands as the management and planning tool, particularly, with reference to coherence with the strategies and objectives of FARA, NEPAD and the other national agricultural research systems.

Among discussed priority issues, feature not only the promotion of research, but also the use of innovation platforms, capacity strengthening, and coordination in policy, knowledge management and others, in an effort to create an integrated agricultural research that fosters development.
Two procedures had been chosen: the first consists of identifying and classifying the priority research sectors and the second seeks to largely involve the agricultural sector’s stakeholders.

**Seven consultation workshops.** For the 2007-2016 Strategic Plan, the priority research sectors have been identified and classified. In that way, as a prelude to the planning process, CORAF/WECARD commissioned the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), to conduct an economic and geographic analysis that defined the sub-regional priorities in the field of agricultural production and food security. That study’s results emphasized and formed the alternatives to the sub-region investment opportunities into a hierarchy.

CORAF/WECARD organized seven consultation and planning workshops for its new Strategic Plan. They mainly broadened all the stakeholders’ understanding and ownership of the Strategic and Operational Plans.

The new strategy’s global objective is to ensure a sustainable growth in the West and Central Africa agricultural sector. This sustainable growth takes environmental issues into consideration while avoiding an agricultural growth based on the degradation of resources and any practice that could be harmful to the environment. Besides, this growth should be induced by the fair involvement of the agricultural sector stakeholders. According to the new Strategic Plan, the concerns of all the stakeholders should be taken into account from this time on. This includes large scale business companies as well as small farm-holders and researchers, with a special attention given to female heads of households and HIV/AIDS affected individuals.

**Sustainable Growth**

Collaboration in the subregion and the delivery of results will be ensured through the networking of the various organizations. In the reviewed 2007-2016 Strategic Plan, the base centres, the centres for excellence and the poles keep on playing an important role in the programmes’ implementation, but are no longer in charge of their global management. The “Capacity strengthening and coordination” programme based at the CORAF/WECARD Secretariat will manage the access to resources and reports. In fact, capacity strengthening will allow a larger number of actors to participate in the technical activities of CORAF/WECARD’s agenda.

Finally, the 2007-2016 Strategic Plan is the outcome of a consultation and coordination process whose implementation is governed by following four principles: subsidiarity in delegating responsibility to
The new 2007-2016 CORAF/WECARD Strategic Plan presents itself as a series of steps and coherent processes presented in a logical framework of cause and effect relationships.

The numerous biophysical constraints (drought, the depletion of nutrient elements, acidity and soil degradation, etc.) are challenges that the Strategic Plan takes into account.

development of results, and finally, the participation of all stakeholders in planning, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating activities, results and objectives.

From 2007-2016, this new strategy will be implemented through two Operational Plans, each running for five years. These plans list the expected results and the necessary resources. The Operational Plan will be reviewed annually.

The monitoring and evaluation system, applied to all CORAF/WECARD activities, will be harmonized in the best way possible with that of FARA through the use of similar approaches and methodologies.
AN OVERVIEW OF 2007

Rich Activities for a Sustainable Growth in Agriculture for West and Central Africa

The review of CORAF/WECARD activities in 2007 can be summed up in these words.

During the 2007 – 2016 Strategic Plan review process, five consultation and development workshops were held in 2007 and they came to add to the two workshops held in November 2006.

In 2007, regular exchanges between CORAF/WECARD’s Executive Secretariat and ECOWAS Commission of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources facilitated the organization of a tripartite meeting between ECOWAS, CILSS and CORAF/WECARD, in August, at the Community’s headquarters.

This concertation meeting allowed to retain priority actions for the implementation of the Biotechnology Development Action Plan in the ECOWAS zone from 2007 to 2008 and the consideration of CORAF/WECARD in the ECOWAP/CAADP – NEPAD Regional Agriculture Investment Programme that is being implemented.

Ressources mobilization

Concerning other issues, the CORAF/WECARD – CEMAC protocol of cooperation was signed by the Community’s Vice President and CORAF/WECARD Executive Director, in Bangui, in July 2007. This protocol allowed CEMAC to make CORAF/WECARD become its technical branch for its agricultural research activities.

The lobbying performed at the level of development partners through the different contacts and visits of the Executive Director to these partners facilitated the achievement of important results. Resources mobilization at the level of DFID for the setting-up of the systems necessary for the new plans’ effective implementation, the acknowledgement of CORAF/WECARD by the European Commission in its new agricultural development strategy for Africa and the preparations, on IFDA’s request, for a project in the framework of the implementation of the Livestock, Fisheries and Aquaculture Programme and the coordination of FIDAfrique are also elements that are worth noticing.

USAID/WARP commitment to support CORAF/WECARD during the 2008 fiscal year (October 2007 – September 2008) is worth noting. As far as information and communication are concerned, the
main activity performed in the former period dealt with the Plan’s preparations for the setting up of a training and agricultural information system (RAILS, Regional Agricultural Information and Learning System) funded by the African Development Bank to the advantage of FARA and SROs.

Advocacy actions

AfDB funded project on « the promotion of science and technology for agriculture development in Africa » aimed at strengthening capacity in the field of knowledge management through agricultural research in Africa and at supporting proven agricultural technology’ adoption and dissemination.

Thanks to the concertation between the agricultural research sector stakeholders convened by FARA, CORAF/WECARD adopted a roadmap. This roadmap is experiencing an important delay in its implementation due to the resignation of the Information and Communication Manager in April.

The issues 39 to 42 of the CORAF Action newsletter have been released and disseminated on the Internet. Distribution by mail, that was interrupted since issue 36 because of financial problems, has resumed. The delay recorded in the regularity of release for various issues of the newsletter has been shortened.

In the framework of the Strategic Plan and of the first Operational Plan review process, 4 workshops among which 2 dedicated to the identification of the Operational Plan’s points and to the search for a consensus on the Operational Plan draft version were held from January 2006 to May 2007. Like the process’s three first workshops, the two workshops have also benefited from media coverage. The actions started in the framework of the advocacy for agricultural research were mainly concerned with ensuring the participation of CORAF/WECARD’s various partners in the preparations for the new Plans that aim at strengthening agricultural research in West and Central Africa.

RAISING OF SUBSIDIES UNTIL APRIL, 30, 2006 (IN CFA FRANCS)

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<td>17-10-06</td>
<td>15 692 700</td>
<td>51,3 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID Investors</td>
<td>23 072 003</td>
<td>15-03-06</td>
<td>18 171 660</td>
<td>78,8 %</td>
<td>4 900 342</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID CGS</td>
<td>351 833 799</td>
<td>28-04-06</td>
<td>172 938 799</td>
<td>100,0 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID DPSAR</td>
<td>706 230 720</td>
<td>18-08-06</td>
<td>314 597 250</td>
<td>89,4 %</td>
<td>74 718 135</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDRC</td>
<td>35 441 898</td>
<td>23-12-05</td>
<td>9 467 628</td>
<td>95,5 %</td>
<td>1 599 794</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTA</td>
<td>28 074 960</td>
<td>28-12-05</td>
<td>1 705 488</td>
<td>75,4 %</td>
<td>6 913 182</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28-11-05</td>
<td>19 456 289</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRPI/WCA &amp; Gloval Dv</td>
<td>51 000 000</td>
<td>08-06-06</td>
<td>5 577 000</td>
<td>64,9 %</td>
<td>17 879 299</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13-06-06</td>
<td>16 896 000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24-06-06</td>
<td>10 647 701</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions of NARS</td>
<td>18 000 000</td>
<td>26-06-06</td>
<td>1 000 000</td>
<td>8,3 %</td>
<td>16 500 000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16-06-06</td>
<td>500 000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 371 753 379</strong></td>
<td><strong>1 234 575 162</strong></td>
<td><strong>90,0 %</strong></td>
<td><strong>137 418 052</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the level of the Regional Economic Communities, advocacy, in the specific case of CEEAC, has led to the necessary drafting of an agreement for cooperation with this Community as it was the case with the other communities.

The said agreement draft project, written by the Secretariat, has been submitted to CEEAC for possible comments and amendments with a view of its upcoming signature.

As far as financial partners are concerned, advocacy activities have been conducted at the level of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In this framework, the one-year contract for a USAID West Africa Regional Programme grant in favour of the CORAF/WECARD was only signed in February 2007, after much discussion. This grant had been expected since December 2006. Estimated at US dollars 900,000, it intends to support the preparations process for the new Strategic Plan and the Operational Plan, as well as the coordination activities in the Cereal and Biotechnology Networks, and also to play the role of an institutional support to CORAF/WECARD’s Executive Secretariat.

As far as the World Bank is concerned, it must be avowed that it has not been possible to allocate the Japanese grant to the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme preparations, despite the signature of the formal management contract which finally occurred in January 2007, after different negotiation meetings with ECOWAS.

Many meetings have been held with the World Bank in Washington, Dakar and Accra for the finalization of the Project’s Evaluation Document and for the project’s negotiations. CORAF/WECARD was finally granted three millions US dollars by the World Bank as the contribution of Senegal, Mali and Ghana to the funding of the West Africa Agricultural
Productivity Programme’s regional activities. This contribution has undergone very important decrease during the negotiations process given that the expected initial sum amounted to US dollars 9 million.

Negotiations are processing with other countries in the sub-region, in an effort to convince them to integrate the Bank’s initiative for the funding of the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme.

Resources mobilization has been conducted at the level of various donors: the DFID, thanks to the funding agreement signed in 2006 which covered the period ranging from June 2006 to May 2007, the USAID/WARP, thanks to the funding agreement signed in February 2007, which covered the period ranging from February 2007 to January 2008, and the USAID Trust Fund, thanks to a funding which covered the period going from January to December 2007.

The balance of CORAF/WECARD bank accounts was estimated at FCFA 388,333,488 as of 30th April 2007. The audit report of PARAO was voted in 2007. The Executive Secretariat received a certificate of receipt from the European Commission Delegation for the total of FCFA 327,263,972 that represented the difference between the funds perceived in advance and real and eligible expenses. The tripartite meeting with the DCE and the DDI did not however facilitate the refunding of the total of FCFA 43,486,800 that represented travel fees that have become non eligible in the absence of a boarding card and in the case of travels in business class. There has not been any proof provided for the total of FCFA 25,792,000 spent in the frameworks of the fallow programme in Cote d’Ivoire.

BDO, the international audit cabinet, is conducting the process of certification for PARAO’s 2006 annual bank accounts.
The need to strengthen capacity in the agricultural research field is recognized by all the stakeholders. It is in that respect that the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), in partnership with CORAF/WECARD, is implementing the SCARDA which is nothing more than a capacity strengthening tool. A workshop was organized in Accra, Ghana, from the 27th to the 29th of August 2007, in order to define a framework for action for SCARDA. This framework includes improvement in the governance and the management of research, the strengthening of scientific capacity and the strengthening of collaboration.

It is however worthwhile to note that FARA’s advocacy for the initiation of SCARDA was positively welcome by the DFID which financed the planning of a pilot phase for the development of a real programme centered on these concerns. It is in this vein that CORAF/WECARD and the stakeholders from the SRO participated in a workshop, in February 2007 aimed at developing activities for the pilot phase with two components base. The first one is Skills and Capacity strengthening in agricultural research management, and the second one is about Capacity strengthening for professional development in research and agriculture development.

SCARDA needs to produce four results. The first one is a comprehensive programme of capacity and structure strengthening, and the second one is centered on the improvement of agricultural research management systems and the skills to direct a high quality research. The third result is about the improvement of the organizational capacity of the NARS, improvement in the capacity of scientists and the executing agents to enable them to fully carry their mission. The fourth and last expected result is the adoption of the innovation systems as a paradigm that supports research and development through Africa’s NARS. SCARDA’s activities will include sub-regional group training centered on the highest priorities among the themes identified after the evaluation and on other themes to be determined. Post –training support will also be offered up to a year in order to strengthen the capacity acquired through group training. The activities will also include training in order to improve the capacity of the new agricultural research prospective applicants’ professional career and on going training, as well as postgraduate studies. This will provide them with key skills for research and agricultural development. So as to adequately report SCARDA’s activities, CORAF/WECARD commissioned two consultants in 2007 that were in charge of evaluating the NARS comprehensive capacity needs for the 22 countries of the sub-region. The results of this evaluation will facilitate the comprehensive development of the final implementation plan to be submitted to DFID by August 2007.

As far as human resources are concerned, the Executive Secretariat carried on the improvement efforts in 2007 in order to ensure quality in the organization’s functioning as well as transparency in its management. This was materialized by the new senior accountant taking up function in February, but also through the hiring of a manager for the biotechnology department and of an internal auditor.

During the same period, the Information and Communication Manager resigned, he took another position as FARA’s Training and Agricultural Information System Director. He has been was replaced following the habitual procedure.

Otherwise, CORAF/WECARD met from May 29th through May 31st 2007 in Abidjan along with the
Centre National de Recherche Agronomique (CNRA) to celebrate its 20th anniversary (see Box).

The fifth session of the Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) held in Dakar on November 16th and 17th 2007 reviewed the activities conducted from the fourth session. Eight of the nine members of the committee took part in the meeting, Dr Sangharé, of the Biotechnology programme was not able to attend it. The Scientific and Technical Committee is satisfied with the Executive Secretariat and the Board’s efforts to implement most of the recommendations. However, some mechanisms should be put in place in order to improve communication between the CORAF/WECARD units and within these same units.

The Scientific and Technical Committee congratulated the Executive Secretariat for the quality of the report presented and above all for all the efforts put into the finalization of the documents for both Plans and into the promotion of the Plans at different levels.

**CORAF/WECARD 20TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Research, the Vehicle of Development**

CORAF/WECARD’s 20th anniversary was celebrated from May 29th to May 31st 2007. The anniversary theme was: “agricultural research, the vehicle of Africa’s economic development.”

Mr. Ibrahim Cissé, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, represented his Excellency the Prime Minister of Côte d’Ivoire, and chaired the opening ceremony. The activities really started with the Organization’s special General Assembly where the presentation, the discussion and the adoption of the Strategic and Operational Plans took place.

Two parallel conferences were organized. The one on partnership for agricultural development was given by Mr. Ibrahim Mayaki from the Platform for Rural Development and Food Safety in West and Central Africa (HUB), and the other, dealing with Africa’s position on the genetically modified organisms, given by the Pr Walter Alhassan from PBS-FARA.
FISCAL YEAR 2007 AUDIT AND CERTIFICATION OF CORAF/WECARD

Accounts for the 2007 fiscal year, from January 1 to December 31, were audited and certified by the accounting firm BDO MBA located in Dakar, Senegal.
### CORAF/WECARD EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
#### INCOME STATEMENT (IN THOUSANDS OF CFA FRANCS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007 Certified accounts</th>
<th>2006 Certified accounts</th>
<th>2005 Certified accounts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOURCES OF FUNDING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational subsidies</td>
<td>1 434 117</td>
<td>1 475 320</td>
<td>1 657 039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARS Contribution</td>
<td>20 000</td>
<td>20 000</td>
<td>18 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfert to operating units and projects</td>
<td>&lt;217 712&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;529 987&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;838 688&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other products</td>
<td>34 247</td>
<td>2 547</td>
<td>10 147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total funding</strong></td>
<td>1 270 652</td>
<td>967 889</td>
<td>846 498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed infrastructures costs</td>
<td>227 994</td>
<td>193 299</td>
<td>188 650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other operating costs</td>
<td>113 104</td>
<td>90 248</td>
<td>92 218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory meetings</td>
<td>57 099</td>
<td>77 208</td>
<td>82 514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific and professional activities</td>
<td>810 789</td>
<td>498 451</td>
<td>346 370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>95 981</td>
<td>14 978</td>
<td>86 284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation and provisions</td>
<td>108 218</td>
<td>51 275</td>
<td>37 976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td>1 413 185</td>
<td>925 459</td>
<td>834 012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESULT</strong></td>
<td>&lt;142 533&gt;</td>
<td>42 430</td>
<td>12 486</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CORAF/WECARD in 2007

THE REGIONAL COMPETITIVE FUND

A Dozen Projects for Technology Development and Transfer

CORAF/WECARD established the Regional Competitive Fund as a sustainable funding system and a tool for the achievement of its research and cooperation priorities. Its aim is to strengthen the institution in its sub-regional coordinating function of agricultural research and development. Its general objective is the promotion of research for agricultural development in the West and Central Africa subregion through a sustainable and efficient contribution to its funding.

The Regional Competitive Fund’s specific objectives comprise, among others: the strengthening of regional and inter-institutional cooperation between the countries of the West and Central Africa subregion and, if needed, with the countries of other sub-regions.

A new kind of partnership between the National Agricultural Research Systems components (NARS), the International Agricultural Research Centres (IARC) and field stakeholders represented by NGOs and farmer organizations, on the sub-region’s priorities and technology innovation transfer to users of the research results was also promoted.

This fund facilitates more openness and diversification of scientific and financial partners, as orientation of research toward social demand, as well as the improvement in its quality through the promotion of excellence.

Following a call for project proposals in which 75 research proposals were assessed and 12 of them shortlisted. Seven project proposals dealt with technology generation while 5 dealt with technology...
The aim of the Regional Competitive Fund is to strengthen the CORAF/WECARD function of agricultural research and development coordination in West and Central African countries.

**CORAF/WECARD in 2007**

transfer. The Competitive Fund's total budget is FCFA 936,589,000. It comprises the allocations to the 12 projects and the travelling costs for the mid-term evaluation. The following table summerizes the contributions from the various partners in constituting to the Competitive Fund's funding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESIGNATION</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PARAO-DFID</td>
<td>247,919,000</td>
<td>26.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>214,000,000</td>
<td>22.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AfDB</td>
<td>474,670,000</td>
<td>50.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>936,589,000</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Composition of the project teams

The project teams are made up of some agricultural research institutes, universities, international agricultural research centres and research partners that comprise farmer organizations, development units, NGOs and the private sector...

Sixty-nine bodies from these organizations participated in the 12 evaluated projects.

Each team comprised an average of 6 institutions. The Agricultural Research Institutes (ARIs) represented 39% of the stakeholders. NARSs high level of participation indicates their high involvement in CORAF/WECARD activities. The lowest participation was recorded from universities and especially from their departments in charge of agricultural research. The IARC (the International Agricultural Research Centres and the Base...
Centres) make up 20% participants and shows their interest in these projects. The participation rate producer organisation was estimated at 30%, a rather high rate that shows that the teams have integrated not only scientists but also development stakeholders in the rural areas.

In addition to their multi-institutional aspect, projects are being implemented in several countries. The 12 projects are implemented in 9 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Togo) out of the 16 that form the West African region.

Regional coordination is done by about 40% IARC scientists, whereas universities only coordinate 25% projects.

Projects’ evaluation

Remarks and comments have been analyzed according to parameters and criteria well defined in the projects’ synthesis tables.

Management of the projects’ teams – The evaluation shows a good collaboration between the institutions from the same country and between different countries’ institutions. There has not been any mis-management of the budgets allocated to the projects. But there are still some weaknesses, and they are concerned with a rather weak regional coordination, administrative heaviness, delays in the forwarding of accounting documents, the absence of an internal monitoring and evaluation system and lack of clarification on the complementarity expected from the various organizations.

Projects’ assessments. – The projects are still relevant with regard to their basic objective. They will be implemented following pre-established plannings and, globally accepted principles. The activities that have been implemented in the framework of all the projects are of an undeniable scientific quality. In terms of their impact and sustainability, the impacts of the projects on their beneficiaries are not yet very evident for all the projects with regard to their present state of implementation. This is the reason why their managers proposed to strongly involve extension services and development organizations, civil society and the private sector because of the limited duration of the projects (3 years maximum), so that they can follow up on the extension and promotion of technological innovations.

List of the 12 Projects Shortlisted in the Framework of the Competitive Fund

1. **FC/2003/12 Project:** Fodder resources management for the sustainable use of the Sahelian pastunes.

2. **FC/2003/15 Project:** Production and management of the gommerais planted in Niger, Senegal and Burkina Faso.

3. **FC/2003/19 Project:** Ecologically sustainable intensification of the production of a yam with a quality acceptable for food.

4. **FC/2003/20 Project:** Integrated management of feed resources for the intensification of animal productions in West African agropastoral zones.

5. **FC/2003/27 Project:** Potential use of botanical extracts on vegetables as alternatives to chemical in peri-urban zones of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo.

6. **FC/2003/35 Project:** Regional Integration, access to markets and agricultural diversification in the WAEMU area : political options for competitive and sustainable milk sectors.

7. **FC/2003/43 Project:** Market surveys and sub sector analysis of vegetable production in West Africa : farmer's and consumer's awareness of pesticides risks and willingness to produce and consume organic vegetable.

8. Dissemination and extension network for livestock improvement methods.

9. Promotion of agricultural products processing technologies in Benin, Togo and Burkina Faso.

10. Combining water harvest techniques and nutrient management to sustain food production in the dry lands of West Africa.

11. Fertilizer micro-dosing and drought tolerant varieties technology transfer for small farmer prosperity in the Sahel.

CORAF/WECARD in 2007

It is worth noting that the encouraging results gained in this system of management urged CORAF/WECARD to adopt the system of Competitive Fund for its new 2007-2016 Strategic Plan implementation. Generally, the projects have been evaluated as satisfactory, as 80% of them have been well rated by the evaluation team.

Strong positive points

Apart from the general comments, other positive points have been given by the monitoring and evaluation team.

The existence of a dynamic partnership between the research sector stakeholders. – The various stakeholders (scientists, extension agents, producers, private sector) work closely in the framework of a dynamic partnership.

Start workshop. – The various regional launching workshops facilitated the harmonization of a methodological approach for each country. National workshops and the field visits also contributed to the projects’ success.

Training. – The projects represented opportunities to supervise and train young students in the framework of their project work in their final years’. Moreover, some young scientists have been recruited by the projects’ teams; their dynamism and commitment encouraged these teams to do so. Producers and technicians have also been trained.

Complementarity with other projects. – Some of the field activities are useful and complemented other ongoing activities. Gender approach has integrated more women in the targeted group was adopted.

Participatory approach. – The projects have been implemented using an iterative and participatory approach.

Other positive points. – The other observations are concerned, among others, with the priority equiped laboratories, the producers’ low level of training, slowness in the implementation of the activities, the inappropriate choice of project’s sites.

Points to be improved

Funds availability. – In all the projects without any exception, there has been a delay in the release of funds. This delay impacted the start of many activities.

Budgets planning. – The mission noted that one fourth of the projects had underestimated the projects’ activities implementation costs. The mission recommended that the number of their activities be reduced and to focus on the activities that are likely to have positive impacts.
CORAF/WECARD in 2007

CORAF/WECARD Main Workshops and Meetings in 2007

* **JANUARY 15-19**
  Dakar (Senegal)
  2nd consultation on WAAP, organised by CORAF/WECARD and the World Bank

* **JANUARY 27-28**
  Saly Portudal (Senegal)
  4th DPSAR workshop on the region’s strategic planning

* **FEBRUARY 5-11**
  Accra (Ghana)
  Closed meeting of SRO/FARA and EXCO meeting on FARA Strategic Plan

* **FEBRUARY 13-16**
  Accra (Ghana)
  3rd conference on WAAP, organised by CORAF/WECARD and the World Bank

* **FEBRUARY 19-22**
  Accra (Ghana)
  Technical training project of FARA and AfDB

* **FEBRUARY 26-28**
  Douala (Cameroon)
  5th DPSAR workshop on changes in management

* **MARCH 14-17**
  Dakar (Senegal)
  6th DPSAR workshop on the Operational Plan Development

* **MARCH 27-30**
  Accra (Ghana)
  3rd conference of the Ministers of ECOWAS member countries for the adoption of its action plan on Biotechnology and Biosecurity

* **APRIL 19-20**
  Accra (Ghana)
  Final DPSAR workshop. Consensus and information of the five-year Operational Plan

* **APRIL 26-27**
  Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)
  Consultation workshop of partners and strategic stakeholders, organised by AU-SAFGRAD

* **MAY 5-9**
  Accra (Ghana)
  Consultation workshop on FARA new’s strategy

* **MAY 26-27**
  Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)
  Consultation workshop on FARA new’s strategy

* **MAY 28-31**
  Abidjan (Cote D’Ivoire)
  1st CORAF/WECARD Executive Board meeting for 2007

* **JUNE 10-16**
  Johannesburg (Afrique du Sud)
  FARA 4th General Assembly and meeting of CORAF/WECARD partners along this General Assembly

* **JUNE 20-22**
  Montpellier (France)
  Meeting between CORAF/WECARD, CIRAD, Agropolis and IRD on animal and plant biotechnology

* **JUNE 27-30**
  Brussels (Belgique)
  International conference on agricultural research for development in Europe: towards a shared vision

* **JULY 20**
  Bangui (Centrafrique)
  Signature of a cooperation agreement between CORAF/WECARD and CEMAC
### CORAF/WECARD Main Workshops and Meetings in 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST 7-9</td>
<td>Cotonou (Benin)</td>
<td>Launching workshop of the Regional Agricultural Investment Programme (PRIA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST 6-11</td>
<td>Cotonou (Benin)</td>
<td>Re-launching workshop of the PRIA formulation process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST 22-26</td>
<td>Accra (Ghana)</td>
<td>Preparation workshop of the SCARDA project document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST 27-29</td>
<td>Accra (Ghana)</td>
<td>Regional workshop on the evaluation of the first phase of the SCARDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPTEMBER 27-28</td>
<td>Abuja (Nigeria)</td>
<td>Meeting of the committee of the national experts and 26th ordinary session of the Council of WARDA’s Ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCTOBER 5</td>
<td>Abidjan (Cote d’Ivoire)</td>
<td>Workshop for the definition of a guideline for the NARS reconstruction in armed post-conflict situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCTOBER 5</td>
<td>Roma (Italy)</td>
<td>Presentation of CORAF/WECARD new Strategy to IFAD West and Central Units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCTOBER 25-26</td>
<td>Brussels (Belgique)</td>
<td>Conference of CORAF/WECARD donors at the European Commission’s headquarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCTOBER 28-31</td>
<td>Accra (Ghana)</td>
<td>Meeting of FARA Executive Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCTOBER 31/NOVEMBER 2</td>
<td>Accra (Ghana)</td>
<td>Annual meeting of USAID partners in agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER 2-3</td>
<td>Dakar (Senegal)</td>
<td>Workshop on the development of a workplan for the implementation of DONATA, organised by CORAF/WECARD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER 2-3</td>
<td>Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)</td>
<td>Workshop on the definition of a harmonized framework for the PRIA formulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER 5-8</td>
<td>Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)</td>
<td>ECOWAS Conference of Ministers of the Biotechnology, Pests and Seeds Action Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER 8-10</td>
<td>Douala (Cameroon)</td>
<td>Workshop for the validation of the workshop on CEMAC capacity strengthening for the formulation and the implementation of harmonized national legislative frameworks for GMO management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER 11-14</td>
<td>Bamako (Mali)</td>
<td>ICRAF workshop on Agro-forestry systems sustainable management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER 16-17</td>
<td>Dakar (Senegal)</td>
<td>Annual meeting of the CORAF/WECARD’s Scientific and Technical Committee for 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOVEMBER 27-28</td>
<td>Dakar (Senegal)</td>
<td>2nd session of CORAF/WECARD Executive Board for 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECEMBER 4</td>
<td>Beijing (China)</td>
<td>CGIAR 2007 AGM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECEMBER 12-14</td>
<td>Saly Portudal (Senegal)</td>
<td>Sub-regional concertation for West, Central and Northern Africa. Development of a food strategic framework for Africa. Organized by CILSS in collaboration with CASA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Programmes

BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOSECURITY

Flagship Activities for the Programme Enhanced Development

CORAF/WECARD Biotechnology and Biosecurity Programme Manager executed various activities from March to August 2007. March 2007 flagship activities comprised: ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on Biotechnology and Biosecurity (PBB/ECOWAS) review, the PBB/ECOWAS final document, and review of CORAF/WECARD Biotechnology Programme within the framework of the workshop on the review of the Operational Plan. The PBB/ECOWAS was also accepted by ECOWAS Conference of Ministers.

The activities carried out in April and May 2007 included the preparations and participation in the Information and Consensus workshop on CORAF/WECARD’s Operational Plan, the drafting of concept notes on regional Biotechnology and Biosecurity projects and participation in CORAF/WECARD’s Extraordinary General Assembly for the adoption of CORAF/WECARD’s Strategic and Operational Plans. A partnership agreement has been signed with the "Africa Bio Fortified Sorghum Project". Exchanges with FAO on the Biotechnology Training Project following the first contacts made with the free zone on Biotechnology in Cote d’Ivoire within the framework of the development of the relationships between CORAF/ WECARD and the private partners in the field of Biotechnology.

A regional concertation framework

In June 2007, the Biotechnology and Biosecurity Programme Manager developed partnership activities, in the field of Biotechnology, between CORAF and AGROPOLIS; and exchanged activities through a workshop held on 20-22 June 2007. In the framework of fastering partnership, contacts have been made with the African Biotechnology Agency.

In July 2007, a regional consensus framework on Biosecurity was set up in collaboration with CILSS, WAEMU and other ECOWAS partner organizations in a workshop held from 17-19. The operating budget for 2008 was elaborated and submitted to ECOWAS in the same month.

In August 2007, a meeting with ECOWAS for the validation of the operating budget was held, and at the same time the work plan with CILSS and WAEMU was reviewed and harmonized.
A Database on Cereal Technology

Consultations with Host Institutions of Cereal Networks

During 2007, the Cereals Network Coordinator who has now been changed to the Staple Crops Programme Manager consulted the CG Centres – WARDA, ICRISAT and IITA – Centers that hosted the former rice, sorghum & millet, and maize networks respectively. During these consultations (a) information was shared with scientists working on cereal programmes in the CG centres - including information on the new cereals network in the context of the CAADP, MDGs, CORAF/WECARD’s strategic plan and CG centres’ Medium Term Plans for effective collaboration; (b) contacts initiated with other partners and collaborators; (c) technical, administrative and financial management experiences were shared; (d) on-going activities were made known (e) concerns of the CG centres with regard to the future of the network in relation to the sustenance of the gains of the former networks were shared; vital inputs from the centres’ perspective were provided for the development of an operational mechanism for the future and (d) familiarization with on-going activities.

Database on Cereal technology

Within the year, a project was launched to create database on cereal-based technologies within the CORAF/WECARD sub-region with special reference to sorghum, millet, maize and rice. Objectives of this exercise were to: (1) to obtain relevant information on projects that have been completed within the past five years and have generated useful research results for transfer to end-users, (2) to obtain information on on-going projects to guide CORAF/WECARD so as to avoid duplication in future, (3) to identify research for development gaps for future support and (4) to determine capacity needs of the member NARS.

Out of the 22 NARS contacted, 67% have so far responded; in addition, IITA and ICRISAT have responded. Table 1 shows the summary of completed projects that can be transferred whereas Table 2 shows the on-going projects. The information received have been categorized into (1) processing and marketing, (2) crop and soil fertility management, (3) pest, disease and drought management, (4) land and water management and (5) variety development and seed system. The information received so far indicate that a total of 51 projects have been completed whereas 92 projects are on-going. It is evident that whilst much more work is being done on variety development and seed system, land and water management is not receiving much attention. Among the completed projects, less attention had been given to processing and marketing of maize and rice, which is the same for maize again in the on-going projects. Information on human capacity and equipment status and needs are also being compiled. The results provide opportunities for technology transfer of completed projects and to also avoid duplication of projects. The gaps identified provide another opportunity for addressing the weak links in the cereals value chains and capacity needs.

Implementation of the Staple Crops programme

During the forth quarter of 2007, preparations were made towards conducting a survey to identify key constraints and needs of end-users of research technologies and innovations. The general objective
The objective of the study was to identify in a consultative process the most constraining elements in the staple crops value-chains, which if adequately addressed during the next five years will significantly improve the food security situation and incomes of smallholder farmers and agro-based industries. The outcomes of this study would serve as vital inputs for a 5-year (2007-2011) Action Plan (Roadmap) that will help direct research and development investments in the staple crops sub-sector.

A questionnaire was prepared at the CORAF/WECARD Secretariat and tested in Ghana. In addition, a concept note was sent to prospective participants of the survey, which included the CG Centres, as well as the NARIs, NGOs, Farmers Organizations, Private Sector processors and agri-input dealers in the six countries. One National Focal Person who helped identified groups and organizations was identified for each country. The survey itself took was to take place in 2008.

Outcomes of Workshops attended

Workshop on Vegetable Breeding and Seed Systems: Between 29th and 31st August, the CORAF/WECARD Staple Crops Manager represented the organization at an Inception Planning Workshop of the new Vegetable Breeding and Seed Systems (vBBS) Program under the World Vegetable Centre (AVRDC), which took place in Arusha, Tanzania. The objective of the workshop was to determine the main drivers for vegetable breeding and seed systems and to establish a clear work plan for 2007/2008 in consultation with key partners in SSA.

Within the CORAF/WECARD sub-region, two hub centres of the program are based in Mali and Cameroon, which will serve WCA in the development of vegetable breeding and seed systems. The vBSS program has a tremendous potential in strengthening the vegetable breeding and seed systems of WCA to support the implementation of the CORAF/WECARD Strategic and operational plans. Farmers’ access to productive consumer-preferred vegetable seeds would be enhanced to contribute to our strategic objectives of broad-based agricultural productivity, competitiveness and markets sustainably improved for target groups. This will also strengthen capacity for vegetable research and seed production, an area that had not received much attention in the past.

IITA/WECARD/IFAD Yam technical workshop: This workshop was organized between 11th and 13th September in Accra, Ghana. The objectives of the workshop were to (1) provide an opportunity for yam specialists and members of the Yam Network to disseminate the findings from the IFAD TAG 704 project (2) share and assess progress in improving productivity and competitiveness of yam systems in West and Central Africa and (3) provide inputs for the formulation of a new phase.

The Yam Project through its implementation has succeeded in developing partnerships among the six implementing NARS. Through this partnership several yam varieties and technologies for the production have been developed. The project has also done some limited studies on marketing and utilization. There are however, many gaps remaining in (1) expanded partnership to cover other stakeholders, (2) the use of modern breeding tools to develop resistance to diseases and pests and to develop inter-specific hybrids, (3) the strategy to promote seed yam production and marketing and thus reduce cost of seed yam, (4) technology to reduce storage losses and studies to improve efficiencies in the marketing channels and (5) efficient strategies to upscale and extend the existing technologies and innovations to farmers, which remain a challenge in view of the low adoption rate of yam technologies vis-à-vis the quest to achieve the CAADP target of 6% growth.

Recommendations have been give in the main report to address these shortcomings in implementation of CORAF/WECARD’s strategic and operational plans.
CORAF/WECARD Cotton Network participated in various activities in 2007. The three main ones among them include: the workshop on the decrease in cotton productivity in Africa, the 4th World Cotton Research Conference and the workshop on seeds production and the cotton variety improvement in West and Central Africa.

The workshop on the decrease in cotton productivity in Africa was held from 9-10 August in Lome, Togo. Its objective was to better understand and evaluate the causes of the decrease in cotton productivity. This process involved assessing all the tools developed through research and development in order to achieve cotton production’s rational.

More than 150 participants from Farmer Organizations, development societies and the National Agricultural Research Systems of the countries that produce cotton in West and Central Africa attended the workshop. These countries include Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Senegal and Ghana.

The participants made recommendations aimed at eliminating technical, institutional and socio-economic constraints. In this framework, it was recommended that the States should support the acquisition of agricultural inputs and equipments in order to improve production. The State should also strengthen cotton research capacity through regular funding in order to facilitate the removal of technical constraints to production. Strengthening the managerial skills of the leaders and officers from the sector’s various economic stakeholders was also advocated.

The fourth world conference on cotton research was held from 10-14 September in Lubbock, Texas, USA. It lasted four days and brought together a majority of scientists and also all the profiles directly or indirectly connected with research, cotton development processing of other textile plants from more than 50 countries. The CORAF/WECARD Cotton Network’s interim coordinator participated in this conference in order to examine opportunities for direct information exchange on cotton research and extension and new technologies on cotton.

This conference concluded that cotton was still a very important product for the world’s greatest industry, the textile industry: the world fiber consumption has generally increased. However, of all fibers, cotton is the least used. It was remarked during the conference that cotton exploitation is perceived as a full business in many countries. And as such, it should represent a cooperation subject between the private and the public sectors organisations, as prevails in Israel, a cotton producing country (30,000 ha), but with an intensive production system.

The workshop on seeds production and West and Central Africa cotton variety improvement was organized from 28-30 November in Bamako, Mali. The workshop objective was to make an inventory of the activities in the fields of cotton variety improvement and production. The participants -scientists, technicians and staff members of the research development liaison units in Benin, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Mali and Togo recommended that CORAF/WECARD variety catalog be published and reviewed, every two years from 2008 onwards. They also recommended the acknowledgement of physiological and morphological characteristics in the selection criteria. It was also recommended to rationalize the quantity of seeds used for the seedbed by selling them at a reasonable price and the use of delinted seeds was also advocated.
CIRDES

Strengthening the Animal Biotechnology’s Emergency Pole

Strengthening the animal biotechnology’s excellence pole has been an important activity of the Centre International de Recherche-Développement sur l’Elevage en Zone Sub-humide (CIRDES) in 2007. The CIRDES has also set up many research projects and recruited Africans at PhD and PhD and post-Doctorat positions.

The CIRDES, headquartered in Burkina Faso, implemented various activities in 2007. This year represented an opportunity to strengthen CIRDES’ excellence pole in the field of animal biotechnology thanks mainly to the implementation of the WAEMU Support Programme to Regional Excellence Centres (PACER).

Various activities have been conducted in this framework. They were about the acquisition and the instalment of new laboratory equipment, the modernization of the CIRDES website, the progressive computerization of the documentation management system and the setting up of a cyberspace.

Besides, the computer tools for financial management have been improved, new projects on biotechnology and molecular biology have started, training has been strengthened and activities related to the extension and dissemination of the results of research are ongoing.

There are many achievements that have facilitated the improvement of research conditions, the strengthening of CIRDES partnerships and availability of results of research developed by the NARS.

Local production of bovine serum

Many research projects have been implemented on the sleeping disease epidemiology, glossins and trypanosomes’ serologic and molecular diagnostic with effective implementation by IRD scientists and also the recruitment of African post PhD and young PhD graduates of the sub-region. It must be underlined that subjects are still diversified in animal health, animal production, livestock, environment and the ecology of vectors’ socio-economy.

Therefore, in order to have a broader idea on these achievements, one can just consult the book of the subjects CIRDES’ young teams work in 2007. The drafting of an operational protocol on the local production of bovine serum must be studied in this context. This research action has been jointly funded in the framework of the West African Economic Monetary Union Support Programme to Regional Excellence Centres (PACER-WAEMU) and of the Pôle d’Excellence Régional d’Etudes et de Contrôle Stratégique des Trypanosomoses Animales en Afrique de l’Ouest of the Francophone University Agency (PER-AUF).

Its aim is to draft the in situ operational protocol for the delivery of a bovine antiserum in order to serve the extension goals of the sero-immunological test through Elisa method that adresses West Africa partnering laboratories.

Other subject developed : the examination of the anti-saliva response of glossins. Its aim is to develop an assess immuno-epidemiologic tool for human beings and bovines, antibodies particular to saliva proteins of glossins that can be integrated into the various methods for THA risk measurement (Geographic Information System, for example) in order to identify and set the limits of the trypanic hotspots so that to better control this disease through the implementation of preventive strategies.
One of the studies conducted at CIRDES aims at improving the efficiency of the struggle against the tse-tse fly.

Among other topics, CIRDES young teams studied in 2007 “farmer national strategies of development and investments in the field of agriculture-livestock integration”. This study was conducted in the framework of the activities of the research project on the “valorization of local knowledge on agriculture-livestock integration for the sustainable management of the Africa’s subhumid savannas’ ecosystems”, known under the DURAS acronym. It aims at setting up a macroeconomic framework in order to contextualize agricultural producers’ practices and knowledge. The study was restricted to Burkina Faso, and the cotton, a crop that has deeply marked this country’s history, served as the framework of reference.

Research Highlights

The Base Centres

Researches in Medical Entomology, Prevention training and Strategies

Researches in Medical Entomology, Prevention Training and Strategies (FSP-REFS) consist in evaluating THA and its vectors’ present situation and contribute to its control in Burkina Faso and West Africa. They also study the conditions of emergence, epidemiisation or suppression in field studies and implement appropriate strategies to improve interactions between the 3 stakeholders of the pathogenic complex in their environment.

In the framework of the campaign for the elimination of the tse-tse, genetic and morphometric studies conducted in the CIRDES confirmed the isolation of the tse-tse of the Loos Islands (4 km from Conakry) compared to those of the surrounding mangroves of the continent which have the highest prevalences.

The programme for the tse-tse eradication from the Loos Islands will facilitate the sustainable prevention of the human population diseases and the development of porcine breeding that is already ongoing but was likely to be affected by trypanosomoses, has been launched.

One of the most efficient methods for the control of Human and Animal Trypanosomes is the control the tse-tse. One of the most practical, the most accessible and the most efficient approaches is the use of the toxic attractive systems (SAT: pitfalls, soaked screens).

Improvement the control of the tse-tse fly

Olfactory attractives has been identified in the glossins of the morsitans group in Eastern Africa and they help to reduce the screening’ density up to 30 km2 thanks to the improved efficiency of the SAT. This study aims at identifying, developing, and applying the visual and olfactory attractives to the glossins of the palpalis group thanks to an international consortium for the improvement of the control of the tse-tse.
Research Highlights

The Base Centres

CERAAS

Various Works for the Improvement of Drought Adaptation


These activities were concerned with various points: the first one was about the characterization crops answer to drought and the improvement of selection methods. The second one deal with biotechnologies, the third one was on the improvement of plant breeding for a better adaptation to drought. The fourth point was on the improvement of agricultural productions planning methods.

Various activities were performed in the framework of each of these intervention points. The first point laid stress on the production of “interspecific backcross” populations. It’s a project that aims to generate various F2 and Backcross populations between these two amphidiploid varieties and many varieties that are grown in Senegal.

DNA extraction from the tamarind and baobab trees

Cowpea varieties screening in the field for resistance to the “striga gesneroides” consists of testing cowpea lineages and varieties coming from the subregion countries by the local parasites’ pressure. These varieties have been tested in various West and central Africa places and were judged as promising. It was also proceeded in 2007 for the characterization of the sorghum digging dynamics.

In the field of biotechnologies, CERAAS developed a DNA extraction technique for the tamarind and the baobab trees. The improvement in plant breeding methods for improved adaptation to drought is another result the centre has achieved. Various activities were conducted in this framework among which were the diagnosis of land use mechanism on the soil and plants carbon, and the demonstration tests on the comparative advantages of natural phosphates on soils fertilization in Senegal, etc.

The CERAAS also worked on the improvement of agricultural productions methods. It also organized various seminars, workshops and conferences. Its scientists participated in trainings. Four Diplômes d’Etudes Approfondies (DEA) theses have been defended and many university articles have been produced.
The Centre Africain de Recherches sur Bananiers et Plantains (CARBAP), headquartered in Douala, in Cameroon, participates in the improvement of banana and plantain based crops systems through the processing and commercialization of the productions through research-development.

CARBAP conducts its activities in order to support the banana and plantain sectors. These researches allow the development of adapted technical tools, which, when they are mastered, would facilitate a sustainable improvement of the productivity in a logic of crops systems reasoned intensification.

**Development support**

CARBAP conducts and extends researches outputs that meet national priorities and that are of the same interest at the regional level. It strengthens the research-development national programmes on Banana and Plantain in West and Central Africa and develops scientific cooperation in this same region on topics that deal with banana and plantain productions.

CARBAP activities are related to development support and training. As far as development support is concerned, it implements the development of strategies for the transfer of research results to users through a participatory approach (producers, processors, consumers, economic operators and other stakeholders of the banana and plantain sector). In the field of training, CARBAP trains scientists, extension and development officers and other stakeholders of the banana and plantain sectors. CARBAP elaborates many research programmes and projects among which: the production systems' improvement, the improvement and the dissemination of the PIF technique for in vivo healthy plants and the development of high density crops production. CARBAP programmes also comprise the development of improved cropping systems and in the promotion of NPK fertilizer and soil fertility management combination tests.

In the framework of the contract of diseases and pest, CARBAP carefully studied the biology of the
disease pathogènes and developed the technique of inflorescences bind technique.

As far as nematology is concerned, the evaluation in the actual environment of mycorhization on the tolerance of banana trees to nematods was performed (mushrooms stems with mycorhizes derived from prospecting in farmer areas, grown in station, tested first on vitroplants and then in real environment). In the field of entomology, the specific distribution and the dynamics of weevil populations have been analyzed at the same time as alternative solutions to synthesis pesticides (entomopathogène Beauveria bassiana, neem) were evaluated. Many other studies have been conducted in the fields of variety improvement, auxiliary bud’s use, post-harvest technology for the evaluation of the fruits from 700 varieties collection and physico-chemical characteristics, etc.

Participatory evaluation

CARBAP is also involved in many projects that gather a lot of partners such as the DURAS project (Promotion of Sustainable Development in the Agricultural Research Systems of the South) financed by the French Foreign Ministry. It comprises 12 participatory research projects, among which INNOBAP, led by CARBAP, "a regional network of exchange platforms for improvement in the identification of farmers’ needs and in the dissemination of new plantain varieties". Benin, Cameroon, Gabon and Guinea are partner countries.

This project allows CARBAP to benefit from the experience of platforms that gather farmers, extension agents, NGOs, processors and restaurant operators, scientists and potential donors (micro-credit providers) in the framework of a contract.

The CARBAP is also involved in the CORUS project (Study of the Genetic Diversity between the Pest Nematodes for Banana and Plantain Trees in West and Central Africa). This project is coordinated by CARBAP with the support of CIRAD and the participation of the CNRA (Côte d’Ivoire), the CENAREST (Gabon) and the Université de Dschang (Cameroon). Knowing nematods’ diversity is a tool for the development of resistant varieties of plantain and banana.

Increasing collaborations

CARBAP is involved too in Harvest Plus that is one of CGIAR “Global Challenge” programmes. It is coordinated by two of its centres: the IFPRI (International Food Policy Research Institute) and CIAT (the International Centre of Tropical Agriculture, headquartered in Columbia). Harvest Plus aims at improving some staple crops nutrient content. Biodiversity coordinates the Musa programme in West and Central Africa, in which CARBAP and CRI (Crop Research Institute of Ghana) collaborate. Works conducted in CARBAP deal with the centre’s collection characterization in terms of nutrient and mineral content (priority is given to carotene, iron and zinc) and the study of environment and cultural practices influence on the alimentary components of the bananas and the plantains produced in four agro-ecologic areas of Cameroon.

By participating in all these projects, CARBAP has the opportunity to develop its skill in participatory research, to increase its collaborations with other countries of the region and to commit itself in the valorisation of its varieties and its innovations in terms of agricultural practices and processed products.

The three last fiscal years (2005, 2006 and 2007) show that CARBAP budgets have reached the global total of 3,817,054 euros.
**Research Highlights**

**Advancement of Research Projects and Programmes**

**National System of information exchange on Phytogenetic resources for food and agriculture project**


**Objective:** Implement a national system of information exchange on Phytogenetic resources for food in each of the countries (RPGAA).

**Donor:** Funds allocated to biodiversity International by CIDA Canada.

**Implementing Partners:** FAO, IRAD (Cameroon), CRAL (Congo), IRAG (Guinea), INRAN (Niger).

**Planned Activities:**
1. Convening of a decision-makers’ national meeting in each of the four countries;  
2. Convening of a stakeholders’ national meeting in each of the four countries;  
3. Collection and analysis of the data on the RPGAA in the four interested countries;  
4. National meeting for the validation of the results;  
5. Drafting of the national reports on the RPGAA’s situation in the four countries.

**2007 Achievements:** Decision makers met in each of the countries on the following dates as planned: 19th June in Cameroon, 26th June in Congo, 7th July in Guinea, 26th June in Niger.

These meetings were used to facilitate awareness creation on the relevance of an RPGAA exchange system implementation at the level of decision makers.

A stakeholders’ national meeting was held in each of the four countries as follows: 16th – 17th August in Niger, 20th – 21st August in Cameroon, 23rd – 24th August in Congo, 29th – 30th August in Guinea Conakry.

This technical workshop facilitated the introduction of the NISM software designed for data and information collection and analysis to all the partners.

Data were gathered and analyzed in 2007. These data were collected from various national stakeholders.

Three workshops were organised in November 2007 in Cameroon, Congo, and Niger to validate the database within the framework of the drafting of the national reports on the RPGAA state. The fourth workshop scheduled for 2008 in Guinea Conakry.

The reports on the situation of the phytogenetic resources for food and agriculture have been completed for these three countries.

**GRENEWEC Project**

**Title:** Regeneration of the phytogenetic resources collections of the West and Central African Network of Genetic Resources.

**Objective:** Regenerate the collections of rice, millet, sorghum, voandzou, sweet potato, cassava and cow pea phytogenetic resources.

**Donor:** The Crop Genetic Diversity Trust. A US $ 100,000 total funding is being negotiated.

**Implementing partners:** The following Countries’ National Programmes on Genetic Resources: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Guinea Conakry, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo.

**Planned activities:** Seed viability tests, variety characterization and agronomic evaluation, regeneration and preparation of the accessions duplicates, dispatching of these duplicates to some of the subregion’s reference centres.

**2007 achievements:** National collections to be regenerated (characterized) have been identified, priority collections have been identified (direct countries' funding), the regeneration request has been prepared and submitted to the donor.
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH: Return towards the International Scientific Community

Because of the recurrent armed conflicts, investments in agricultural research in Congo experienced a considerable decrease during the 1990s. Donors’ funds rapidly decreased and Congo found itself even more isolated from the international scientific community. But CORAF/WECARD provided the region with support in Congo’s efforts to resume work with the international scientific community.

Located in Central Africa, Congo sits astride the Equator and has a surface of 342,000 km². Congo has a population of only 3,500,000, however, it is one the most urbanized countries in Africa. In fact, the major part of the population (60%) lives in urban areas. 55% of the country’s total population and 90% of the urban population live in Brazzaville, the capital city, and Pointe Noire, the second city.

In Congo, agricultural research experienced a considerable decrease in terms of investments in the 1990s because of the ongoing armed conflicts. During that period, many laboratories and research stations were damaged.

Donors’ support rapidly decreased and Congo found itself more and more isolated from the international scientific community. But CORAF/WECARD provided the region with deciding support in its efforts to resume work with the international scientific community. The organization of the 5th General Assembly, in Brazzaville, in 2004, illustrated this point.

There are two types of vegetations in Congo. The forest which covers 22 million hectares and savannas that cover 12 million hectares Congo’s hydrographic network offers approximately 20 million m³ of...
suitable water for agriculture. Its hydro-agricultural resources are estimated at 400,000 hectares but the irrigated surface is lower than 100 hectares.

In this country, about 40% of the working populations are in the agricultural sector but the sector’s contribution to the GDP only reaches approximately 6% and constitutes about 1 to 2% of the export. Since the discontinuation of the agricultural businesses, the agricultural sector has essentially depended upon traditional agriculture in small farms. They cover 80% of the cultivated surface and carry out 90% of the agricultural production. Stock breeding, which has never been very developed, experienced a strong decline during the armed conflicts. Continental fishing provides 13,000 tons of fish per year. The annual production of sea fishing reaches 14,000 tons per year.

Despite this favorable condition, the Congolese agriculture remains weak. The national production cannot meet the totality of the population’s needs.

This paradoxical situation is the aggregation of the conjunction of many constraints resulting in weak productivity which is the immediate consequence of a poor research and extension system.

**INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING**

Agricultural research in Congo has however experienced various stages. Before independence and, as soon as 1901, the French colonizers set up the first experimental botanical gardens of the African continent in Brazzaville. The experimental station of Loudima was created in 1935. After the Second World War, other French Research Institutes (IRHO, IRCT, IFAC, CTFT, and ORSTOM) came to settle in Congo.

In 1960, Congo’s year of independence, the Congolese Government set up the General Delegation for Scientific and Technical Research that was given the mandate to supervise all agricultural research activities.

Ten years later, the Laboratoire Scientifique Vétérinaire was created thanks to the Soviet Union support. In 1985, it was renamed and became the Centre de Recherches Vétérinaires et Zootechniques (CRVZ) and since then, it has been Congo’s sole research organization centred on livestock.

In strengthening of its institutions, Congo has also implemented many other research activities centred on biotechnology, forestry, biodiversity, hydrobiology, soil and product processing. Besides, post-graduate studies in natural sciences and agronomy, and in agri-resources processing have recently been created at the Faculty of Sciences of the Marien Ngouabi University.

It must however be recalled that in the 1990’s, Congo experienced socio-political unrest that resulted in the destruction of the research infrastructures, which immediately completed a lot of scientists to leave, financial resources to decrease and many research programmes to cease.
Nowadays, research stations are being rehabilitated and institutional reform is in process. This explains why since more than ten years, the global Scientific and Technological Research Policy and Agricultural Research, in particular, has been transferred into the hands of a specialized Ministry department or one that is in charge of other duties like the promotion of development, coordination and monitoring of all research activities conducted in the national territory.

The Congolese national agricultural research system comprises a relatively high number of scientific and technical state organizations mostly under the authority of the Ministry in charge of Scientific and Technological Research, the Ministry of Forestry, Economy and Environment and the Ministry of Higher Education. These structures are very different in terms of their legal status, mandate, resources, viability and achievements.

As far as agronomical research structures are concerned, they consist of four main centres: the Centre de Recherches Agronomiques de Loudima (CRAL), the Centre de Recherche sur l’Amélioration Génétique des Plantes (CERAG), the Centre National de Semences Améliorées (CNSA) and the Centre National du Sol (CNS). The two last centres are under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture.

In addition to the other divisions, there are also two main forestry research centres in Congo: the Centre de Recherche Forestière du Littoral (CRFL) and the Centre de Recherche Forestière de Ouesso (CRFO). University research structures, non governmental organizations and mixed teams come to add to this system.

In 2004, the human resources of the national agricultural research system comprised 190 scientists and engineers involved in state agronomic

Dr. Grégoire Bani
A Preeminent Entomologist

Dr. Grégoire Bani, Director of Research, was born on 14th 1955 in Kebara, Republic of Congo. Holder of a Bac D (at the Lycée Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza in Brazzaville) in 1975, he joined the Rural Development Institute (RDI) of the Marien Ngouabi University that he left in 1980 with the Diploma in rural development. He was recruited in the same year in the civil service and put at the disposal of the Ministry of Scientific Research where he worked for the Laboratory of Agricultural Entomology of the ORSTOM Centre in Brazzaville. For years, he has led research on cassava pests, with a focus on the interplay between cassava (Manihot esculenta)/smelly locust (Zonocerus variegatus). And these researches, original results allowed Dr Bani to defend a unique PhD thesis at the University of Rennes. He was financially supported by ORSTOM that has become the Institute for Research and Development (IRD).

In 1991, he was the Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister of Higher Education in charge of Science and Technology.

In 1996, he was appointed Director of the Centre for Agronomic Researches of Loudima (CRAL) but he immediately faced the challenge of rehabilitating the research stations that had been destroyed by the recurring civil wars and that of regaining partners’ confidence. He was noticed by the peers, became a member of CORAF/WECARD Executive Board in 2005 and served as the Vice-President at that time. In 2004, Gregoire Bani organized in Brazzaville CORAF/WECARD 5th General Assembly that took a productive decision to develop actions in favour of NARS in armed post-conflicts situation, with the support of all the colleagues and the top management.

He was instrumental in urging the government of his country to sign the Constitutive Act of the Centre Africain de Recherche sur le Bananier et Plantain (CARBAP) and gained membership to the African Rice Center (WARDA).

He is the author of various publications and is a member of CAMES. He also teaches entomology at IDR and the Department of Sciences. Gregoire Bani is an FAO expert consultant (Brazzaville Office). Concerning his association membership, he is the President of Congo’s Entomology’s Society and Secretary General of Congo’s Biology Society.

Gregoire Bani has ceased to serve as CRAL’s Director since April 10, 2008.
Since 2005, this potential has tremendously decreased. This situation is the result of both retirements and the suspension of recruitments in the public service.

The levels of skills for the senior officers of the national agricultural research system vary a lot according to the existing structures. The percentage of the DGRST scientists at post-graduate level has slightly declined, going from 86% in 2001 to 83% in 2004, as a result of the non renewal of retired scientists added to the resignation of the highly qualified young scientists going to the Marien Ngouabi University for better employment conditions.

The majority of the scientists (29%) work on the genetic improvement of crops. 20% scientists work on natural resources, 10% of them work on the control of pests and animal diseases, the other 10% work on soils and 7% on post – harvesting activities.

Third of the research activities on crops deal with cassava, the population’s basic food. The national agricultural research system counts a great number of centred and very specialized settlements that are mainly located in Brazzaville, Loudima and Pointe-Noire. The estate property is huge but it has been very much affected by the acts of vandalism committed in 1993, 1997 and 1998.

The total consolidated financial resources of the national agricultural research system were estimated in 2007 at about FCFA 1,600 million on which one billion allocated by the State and the 600 million were in foreign currency. Grants from the State have significantly increased compared with the four previous years.

Plant production and activities of research centres are centred on the following seven programmes: annual crops, perennial crops, dynamics for production and climate change mechanisms, control of diseases and pest in the agricultural production systems, phyto-genetic resources, biotechnology and technology transfer in rural areas.

These research programmes led to interesting results, especially on cassava, maize, rice, groundnuts and soybean. Important collections have been made and many high yielding varieties have been tested and transferred to rural areas. Technical recommendations (field preparations, seed density and time, crops rotations, harvest time, maintenance, the associations of crops) have been clearly defined and made available to producers.

Finally, the ongoing research planning, that would conclude the formation of a special organization for the implementation of agricultural research, will certainly bring the necessary adjustments in the research system.
THE GOVERNING ORGANS OF CORAF/WECARD

The West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD) consists of four hierarchical entities: the General Assembly, the Governing Board, the Scientific and Technical Committee, and the Executive Secretariat. These organs supervise the activities of local operational units, which implement the organization’s objectives in various sub-regions.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA)

Representatives of the General Assembly are drawn from the NARS of member countries, regional and international agricultural research institutions operating in the sub-region, the private sector, professional agricultural organizations (PAO), and development partners. The General Assembly must ratify all decisions, and determines the overall goals and orientation of CORAF/WECARD.

GOVERNING COUNCIL (GC)

The Governing Council acts on and pursues the decisions of the General Assembly. The Council has nine members: 6 SNRA representatives elected by the GA, and 3 representatives drawn from agricultural research partners (NGOs, private sector interests, and farmers’ groups).

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (STC)

The Scientific and Technical Committee serves as an advisory board to the GA. Its role is to evaluate the ensemble of scientific activities and assist the Executive Secretariat in animating and coordinating those activities. It has twelve members, scientists drawn from NARS and partner institutions, chosen intuiti personae for their competence.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT (ES)

The Executive Secretariat is composed of four permanent employees (the Executive Director, the Director of Programmes, the Director of Administration and Finance, and the Manager of Information and Communication) and various support personnel. Under the direction of the Executive Director, the ES carries out the decisions of the GA, follows the progress of scientific activities, audits research programs, manages human and financial resources, and prepares statutory meetings.

STC = Scientific and Technical Committee.
M&E = Monitoring and Evaluation.
CGS = Competitive Research Grant Scheme.
Base D = Database.
Public = Publications.
Doc = Documentation.
P1, P2, Pn = Programmes.
Annexes

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CORAF/WECARD brings together the NARS of 21 countries, divided into three agro-ecological zones:

- the Sahelian Zone of West Africa,
- the Coastal Zone of West Africa,
and
- the Central Africa Zone.

Here is the list of member nations:

- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Cameroon
- Cape Verde
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Congo
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Gabon
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea Bissau
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- Togo
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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

## AAA
- AfDB, African Development Bank
- ARI, Agricultural Research Institute
- AVRDC, World Vegetable Centre

## CCC
- CAADP, Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme
- CAMES, Conseil Africain et Malgache de l’Enseignement Supérieur (*African and Malgasy Center for Higher School*)
- CARBAP, Centre Africain de Recherche sur Bananiers et Plantains (*African Research Centre on Banana and Plantain*)
- CEEAC, Communauté Économique des États de l’Afrique centrale
- CEMAC, Central Africa Economic and Monetary Community
- CERAAS, Centre d’Études Régional pour l’Amélioration de l’Adaptation à la Sécheresse (*Regional Centre for Studies on the Improvement of Plant Adaptation to Drought*)
- CERAG, Centre de Recherches sur l’Amélioration Génétique des Plantes (Congo)
- CIAT, Centre International pour l’Agriculture Tropicale (*International Centre for Tropical Agriculture*)
- CILSS, Comité permanent inter-Etats de lutte contre la Sécheresse au Sahel
- CGIAR, Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research
- CIRAD, Centre de Recherche Agronome pour le Développement International (*French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development*)
- CIRDES, Centre International de Recherche-Développement sur l’Élevage en Zone Sub-Humide (*International Centre for Research-Development on Livestock in the Sub-Humid Zone*)
- CNRA, Centre National de Recherche Agricole (Côte d’Ivoire)
- CNS, Centre National du Sol (Congo)
- CNSA, Centre National de Semences Améliorées (Congo)
- CRI, Crops Research Institute (Ghana)
- CTA, Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development
- CORUS, Coopération par la Recherche Scientifique et Universitaire (*Cooperation through University and Scientific Research*)
- CRAL, Centre de Recherche Agronomique de Loudima (*Centre for Agronomic Research*, Loudima (Congo)
- CRFL, Centre de Recherche Forestière du Littoral (Congo)
- CRFO, Centre de Recherche Forestière de Ouesso (Congo)
- CRVZ, Centre de Recherche Vétérinaire et Zootecchnique
- CSIR, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Ghana

## DDD
- DFID, Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
- DURAS, Promotion of Sustainable Development in the Agricultural Research Systems of the South

## EEE
- ECCAS, Economic Community of Central African States
- ECOWAS, Economic Community of West African States
- EU, European Union
- ES, Executive Secretariat

## FFF
- FAAPP, Framework for Africa Agriculture Productivity Programme
- FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- FARA, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa

## III
- IARC, International Agricultural Research Centre
- IAR4D, Integrated Agricultural Research for Development
- ICRISAT, International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
- IFAD, International Fund for Agriculture Development
- IITA, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
- INRAN, *Institut de Recherche Agronomique du Niger*
- IRAD, *Institut de Recherche Agricole pour le Développement* (Cameroon)
- IRAG, *Institut de Recherche Agronomique de Guinée* (Guinea)
- IRD, Institut de Recherche pour le Développement
- IFPRI, International Food Policy Research Institute
- INERA, Institut de l’Environnement et de Recherches Agricoles
- INNOBAP, *Innovation Variétale chez le Bananier Plantain*

## NNN
- NARS, National Agricultural Research System
- NEPAD, Nouveau Partenariat pour le Développement de l’Afrique

## PPP
- PACER-WAEMU, West African Economic Monetary Union Support Programme to Regional Excellence Centres
### Annexes

- **PARAO**, Programme d’Appui à la Recherche Agricole en Afrique de l’Ouest
- **RAILS**, Regional Agricultural Information and Learning System
- **SCARDA**, Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research in Africa
- **STC**, Scientific and Technical Committee
- **USAID**, United States Agency for International Development