
CORAF/WECARD PAPER
for ECOWAP+10 International Conference

October 2015

CORAF/WECARD PAPER for ECOWAP+10 International Conference

October 2015
Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARI</td>
<td>Advanced Research Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAADP</td>
<td>Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAP</td>
<td>Common Agricultural Policy of Central Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAAPP</td>
<td>Central Africa Agricultural Productivity Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEMAC</td>
<td>Communauté Économique et Monétaire de l’Afrique Centrale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGIAR</td>
<td>Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CILSS</td>
<td>Comité Permanent Inter-États de Lutte Contre la Sécheresse au Sahel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>Change Management Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORAF/WECARD</td>
<td>Conseil Ouest et Centre Africain pour la Recherche et le Développement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DONATA</td>
<td>Dissemination of New Agricultural Technologies in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECCAS</td>
<td>Economic community of Central African States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECOWAP</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States Agricultural Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>Executive Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAAP</td>
<td>Framework for African Agricultural Productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FARA</td>
<td>Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IARC</td>
<td>International Agricultural Research Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAR4D</td>
<td>Integrated Agricultural Research for Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>Innovation Platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;EE</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAIS</td>
<td>National Agricultural Innovation System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARI</td>
<td>National Agricultural Research Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARS</td>
<td>National Agricultural Research System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCoS</td>
<td>National Centre of Specialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEPAD</td>
<td>New Partnership for Africa’s Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP1</td>
<td>CORAF/WECARD first five-year Operational Plan (2008-2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OP2</td>
<td>CORAF/WECARD second five-year Operational Plan (2014-2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REC</td>
<td>Regional Economic Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAILS</td>
<td>Regional Agricultural Information and Learning System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCqE</td>
<td>Regional Centre of Excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3A</td>
<td>Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCARDA</td>
<td>Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research and Development in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Strategic Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STC</td>
<td>Scientific and Technical Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEMOA</td>
<td>Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAAPP</td>
<td>West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCA</td>
<td>West and Central Africa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary

This paper presents the research priorities for transforming agriculture in West and Central Africa based on internal and external evaluations of the CORAF/WECARD’s first Operational Plan (2008-2013) and broad-based multi-stakeholder consultation processes for the revision of the Strategic Plan (2007 – 2016) and the development of the second five-year Operational Plan (2014 – 2018). The OP2 has been designed taking into consideration the strategic orientations and flagship programmes of the ECOWAP/CAADP and it will contribute to the ECOWAP vision for 2015.

The process of developing the OP2 involved diverse stakeholders and partners of all CORAF/WECARD constituents representing the entirety of the West and Central African Agricultural Research for Development System and beyond. The political support and direction from the RECs marked the political ownership of the process and outcomes. The contributions from inter-Governmental Organizations and several innovation systems actors including the private sector, farmer organizations, NGOs, agricultural advisory services, research and learning institutions in sharing their rich experiences during the process and showing their commitment were very instrumental in setting the research priorities for the implementation of the second five-year OP. The process was managed to ensure that the orientations of the RECs agricultural policy frameworks, new CAADP Momentum, Malabo declarations, the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A), which is complementary to the principles of FAAP, and which also serves as a guide to a more efficient implementation of agricultural research and dissemination and adoption of technologies and innovations, were considered.

The inputs and guidance of the development partners, particularly the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, the European Union, the Department of Foreign Affairs Trade and Development (DFATD) of Canada, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of Australia and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom, supported and improved the outcomes of this process. The consultations confirmed the validity of the main objectives, structure, and research priorities of the SP, which remains the basic framework for the OP2 and consistent with the ECOWAP/CAADP vision for 2025.

CORAF/WECARD’s comparative advantage and value addition in transforming Agriculture and contributing to the ECOWAP/CAADP vision for 2025 lies in its core functions of promoting sub-regional cooperation, creating synergies and reducing duplications, mobilizing resources, and generating common solutions to agricultural research and development problems.

The revised SP (2007 – 2016) and the OP2 (2014-2018) recognises the difference in the way adoption of technologies, innovations, and strategic decision-making options are now internalised within CORAF/WECARD. It also takes into account the specific outputs and outcomes generated by the Executive Secretariat in guiding and facilitating the wider aspects of CORAF/WECARD’s activities, which is reflected as a new result area five. The major changes under OP2 are two-fold: (i) the fusion and transformation of programmes, and (ii) much better integration of over-arching research and development themes common to the CAADP, agricultural development strategies and policies of the RECs and the programmes of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). The Staple and Non-staple Crops Programmes have been fused into one Programme - the Crops Programme. The Knowledge Management Programme has become a full Directorate to serve and strengthen mechanisms for delivery of impact at scale. The revised Strategic Plan [2007- 2016] now recognizes six Programmes, which contribute to the delivery of all five Results.

The Programme and themes approach adopted in OP2 focuses primarily on the following three priority themes identified by broad-based multi-stakeholders consultation processes during the consultation processes as key challenges facing agricultural transformation, and which (i) are aligned with the new CAADP momentum, the S3A, the Malabo declarations, and RECs policies and objectives as well as those of the IAARCs notably the CGIAR and (ii) facilitate the establishment of clear linkages between priority Programmes and deliverables of the RECs policies and in particular country programme (NAIPs). These themes and programmes of OP2 align with flagship programmes of the ECOWAP, PAU and the CAP.

- **Theme 1:** Food, health and nutrition security.
- **Theme 2:** Markets and trade
- **Theme 3:** Sustainable agriculture
Based on lessons learned from OP1, and the need to align with strategic thematic interventions of the RECs, calls for competitive and commissioned projects for the implementation of programmes will be launched under the above themes. The implementation approach emphasizes and promotes the IAR4D which is part and parcel of the Agricultural Innovation System: the actors and networks in an agricultural value chain, domain, industry or food security; as well as the institutions that govern behavior in enhancing the performance of the system. The OP2 recognizes that for IAR4D to be effective in transforming agriculture, it is necessary for it to be widely up-scaled by NARS through the Innovation Platform (IP) and Value Chain approaches.

The OP2 will provide support to NARS in the establishment of a real functional and interactive system in order for them to be more effective partners in collective action to resolve regional issues. The strengthening of National Centres of Specialization (NCoS) and their evolution to Regional Centres of Excellence (RCoE) constituted by a cluster of national institutions addressing research training, learning, and innovations issues in priority areas, will be promoted to create a critical mass around shared strategic areas and enhance the process of generating, disseminating and using innovations and technologies. These centres will also complement sub-regional programmes and add value to country executed programmes, thus reducing fragmentation and duplication of efforts. The NCoS offer opportunities for better coordination of regional initiatives, and this becomes more visible as they evolve into RCoE.

The OP2 will also take into account the demands/needs of non-state actors (producer organization, NGOs, private sector), including those engaged with renewable energy, food safety, quality and standards, carbon sequestration, competitiveness and market access. Such an approach will allow greater integration in the implementation of projects coordinated by CORAF/WECARD in the process of agricultural transformation in WCA and contribution to the achievement of the ECOWAP 2025 vision.

In conclusion, CORAF/WECARD's comparative advantage and value addition in the implementation of the ECOWAP/CAADP strategic orientation and flagship programmes lies in its capacity to promote sub-regional cooperation, create synergies and reduce duplications, mobilize resources, and generate common solutions to agricultural research and development problems leading to the transformation of agriculture in WCA. This is achieved through the support of its four core functions, namely, coordination of NARS, Capacity Strengthening of actors, and coordination, Advocacy and Knowledge Management. Under OP2, the Programme and Themes Approach will make use of technical skills of all programmes and cross-cutting support units to elaborate calls under thematic areas addressing key challenges and opportunities facing agricultural development in WCA as outlined in the agricultural policies of the regional economic communities (ECOWAP, PAU, and the CAP). OP2 will institutionalize and up-scale IAR4D and value chain approaches via multi-stakeholder IPs to strengthen the impact of infrastructure (multi-stakeholder IPs) established during the implementation of OP1. This is envisaged to lead to increased adoption of technologies, improved agricultural production in quantity and quality, and increased connection of producers and their organizations to markets. Mechanisms for up-scaling and out-scaling will be strengthened to ensure sustainability and impact at large scale, which in turn will deliver increased knowledge and skills, wealth creation, diversified economies, resilience, food security, and reduced poverty.

The ambitions of the SP and OP2 are aligned with the ECOWAP/CAADP vision for 2025 for food sovereignty and poverty reduction. The OP2 has been designed taking into consideration the strategic orientations and flagship programmes of the ECOWAP/CAADP and it will contribute to the ECOWAP vision for 2015.
1. Introduction

This paper presents the agricultural research and development priorities of CORAF/WECARD which are an outcome of the internal and external evaluations of the first-five-year Operational Plan (2008 – 2013) and the broad based multi-stakeholder consultation processes for the revision of the Strategic Plan and development of the second five-year Operational Plan (2014 – 2018).

The process of developing the second Operational Plan (OP2) involved diverse stakeholders and partners of all CORAF/WECARD constituents representing the entirety of the West and Central African Agricultural Research for Development System. The political support and direction from the RECs including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA), and Communauté Économique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale (CEMAC), marked the political ownership of the process and outcomes. The contributions from inter-Governmental Organizations such as Comité Permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte Contre la Sécheresse au Sahel (CILSS) and several innovation systems actors including the private sector, farmer organizations, NGOs, agricultural advisory services, research and learning institutions, represented by their regional apex organizations and/or networking leaders, in sharing their rich experiences during the process and showing their commitment were very instrumental in setting the priority agenda for the implementation of the OP2. The participation of FARA in the process ensured that the orientations of the CAADP Momentum, the new Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A), which is complementary to the principles of FAAP, and which also serves as a guide to a more efficient implementation of agricultural research and dissemination and adoption of technologies and innovations, are considered. The inputs and guidance of the development partners, particularly the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, the European Union, the Department of Foreign Affairs Trade and Development (DFATD) of Canada, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of Australia and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom, supported and improved the outcomes of this process. The consultations confirmed the validity of the main objectives, structure, and research priorities of the SP, which remains the basic framework for the OP2 and consistent with the ECOWAF/CAADP vision for 2025.

The paper is divided into 4 parts. The first part is the introduction which presents succinctly the background to the development of the priorities for agricultural transformation in WCA and the stakeholders involved in the process. The second part of the part presents the profile of CORAF/WECARD and the context for the development of the priorities and the OP2. The third part of the paper presents an overview of the OP with priorities for agricultural transformation in WCA and implementation approach to results delivery and the last part presents the perspectives and conclusions.

2. CORAF/WECARD Profile & Background to development of OP2

2.1 CORAF/WECARD Profile

The West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD) was established in 1987 as the Conference of Heads of African and French Agronomic Research Institutions. In 1995, it widened its coverage to include English- and Portuguese-speaking countries of West and Central Africa. Its member institutions of the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) are situated currently in 23 countries in WCA. CORAF/WECARD intervenes in these countries covering a total land area of 12.3 million km² with a total population of around 433.2 million inhabitants out of which 74 % are engaged in agriculture. The average proportion of people living on less than US$ 1.25 a day in the area of intervention of CORAF/WECARD is estimated at 48.5 % ranging from 10 per cent in Cameroon and Gabon, to 80 % in Liberia. This figure is however declining in all countries in the region. Food demand is projected to increase by about 60 to 80 %. Average yield gap across key commodities has been relatively high and estimated at 75 %. Average economic growth rate is 7 %.

CORAF/WECARD’s strategic vision and mission are "a sustainable reduction in poverty and food insecurity in West and Central Africa through achieving sustainable improvements to the productivity, competitiveness, and markets of the agricultural system in West and Central Africa by meeting the key demands of the sub-regional research system".

---

1 MDG report 2014
as expressed by target groups. The mandate of CORAF/WECARD is to promote sub-regional cooperation, create synergies and reduce duplications, mobilize resources, and generate common solutions to agricultural research and development problems leading to the transformation of agriculture in WCA. This is achieved through the four core functions, namely, coordination of National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS), Capacity Strengthening, Advocacy and Knowledge Management. The coordination role is primarily achieved by awarding sub-grants to key relevant public and private sector organizations with specialized expertise in areas such as raising agricultural productivity and increasing the incomes of farmers in West and Central Africa.

2.2. **Background to Development of CORAF/WECARD SP and OPs**

The CORAF/WECARD second five-year Operational Plan (OP2) was designed to implement the second five-year phase of the ten-year SP (2007-2016)\(^2\) and fully achieve its stated objectives. It was developed through consultations with CORAF/WECARD's stakeholders who in the process examined the continued relevance of the SP as well as the main findings and recommendations that emanated from evaluations of the OP1 (2008 to 2013). The consultations confirmed the validity of the main objectives, structure, and priorities of the SP, which remains the basic framework for the OP2. Major recommendations from these consultations included the following:

(i) Extend the period covered by the SP to 2018 so as to accommodate the delay incurred between its adoption in 2007 and the beginning of its implementation in 2008, through the OP1; and frame the OP2 accordingly to cover the period from 2014 to 2018.

(ii) Take into account, in the revised SP and the OP2, recent changes in the continental policy environment and priorities such as those included in New Partnership for Africa's Development's (NEPAD) "Sustaining the CAADP Momentum\(^3\)\(^,\) the FARA-led developed S3A\(^4\) and the Malabo Declaration on CAADP and commitment to accelerate Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods.

(iii) Show clearly that the OP2 is contributing to the implementation of the agricultural policies of the RECs in WCA, notably the Economic Community of West African States Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) of ECOWAS and the Common Agricultural Policy of Central Africa (CAP) of ECCAS, as well as their corresponding regional and national investment plans.

(iv) Ensure that the OP2 integrates the key lessons learned from OP1, in order to better respond to the views and expectations of CORAF/WECARD's stakeholders regarding the institution's core priorities, operational principles, and internal efficiency, while also addressing the issue of the institution's long-term sustainability, particularly with regard to the funding of its activities.

(v) Ensure that critical social and environmental issues such as gender, climate change, nutrition and health, and youth unemployment, already identified in the SP but not adequately addressed under OP1, are more effectively addressed in the OP2.

As recommended by stakeholders, CORAF/WECARD's SP has been updated in an "Addendum\(^5\)\) and is presented as a separate document. Therefore, the main issues addressed in this OP2 include: (i) Changes in the continental and regional policy and institutional environment and priorities since the beginning of the implementation of the OP1, and (ii) Lessons learned from the implementation of the OP1, which allows improvement of the operational details of CORAF/WECARD's OP2.

Consultations for the preparation of the OP2 confirmed that the vision and mission, the operational approach and key results of CORAF/WECARD's SP remain as valid and compelling as they were seven years ago. The consultations highlighted, however, the need to consider in both the SP and the OP2, important changes that have taken place since the adoption of the SP in 2007, as well as important lessons learned from the implementation of the OP1.

---


\(^3\) Sustaining the CAADP Momentum – The CAADP 10-year Results Framework. NEPAD, 2014.

\(^4\) Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A), FARA, October 2013.

\(^5\) Addendum to the CORAF/WECARD Strategic Plan 2007-2016, June 2014.
3 OP2 Key Priority Research Programmes & Themes for Agricultural Transformation

The OP2 is fully coherent with the latest orientations of CAADP and the agricultural policies of the RECs. It continues to follow the FAAP principles and has also taken into consideration the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A) as the principal vehicle and framework for operationalizing the AR4D component of the “Sustaining the CAADP Momentum” with the aim of basing this on country CAADP National Agricultural Investments Plans (NAIPs). OP2 builds on the achievements of OP1, pushing the evolution of a more holistic and integrated approach to a programme-themes approach, based on lessons learned from analysis made by stakeholders and external evaluations. OP2 will integrate up-and-out-scaling of technologies/innovations in the programme-themes approach, which will focus on multi-disciplinary initiatives that consider the value chain and the numerous parameters involved in creating interest in new technologies across a range of stakeholders.

The OP2 has, therefore, adopted a much better alignment of research priorities and themes to the RECs agricultural policies and objectives which are expected to foster effective collaboration and linkages among various programmes in contributing to the delivery of results under a common thematic issue. Based on lessons learned from OP1, and the need to align with strategic thematic interventions of the RECs, calls for competitive and commissioned projects for the implementation of Programmes will be published under the above themes. This approach is more holistic: (i) It demonstrates the added value of CORAF/WECARD to delivering on the RECs agricultural policies and objectives (ii) emphasizes more on a people-centred approach with focus on technology/innovation generation and use, considered as the pathway towards impact delivery at scale and effective links to CORAF/WECARD’s vision, and (iii) Encourages key areas such as gender, biotechnology and biosafety, agricultural policy, knowledge management and uptake, capacity development, and partnerships, to add value to other programmes by operating as cross-cutting rather than separate programmes and/or units.

The OP2 therefore recognizes the following six Programmes as priority research and development areas of intervention, which contribute to the delivery of all five Results. These programmes fall into three broad categories as follows:

A. Technical research – using an integrated agricultural research for development (IAR4D) approach based on systems and commodities employing new holistic, participatory methodologies:
   (i) Livestock, Fisheries and Aquaculture;
   (ii) Crops;
   (iii) Natural Resource Management;
   (iv) Biotechnology and Bio-safety

B. Policy research – identifying and responding to key issues preventing achievement of the improved access to markets, competitiveness and productivity through research.
   (v) Policy, Markets, Trade, Institutions and Socio-economics

C. Efficient research delivery – improving information, knowledge management and increase competences and skills to deliver
   (vi) Capacity strengthening and Coordination

These six Programmes mutually contribute to the delivery of all five results of the OP2 as follows:

- Result 1: Increased use of appropriate technologies and innovations in WCA
- Result 2: Increased uptake of strategic decision-making options for policy, institutions and markets
- Result 3: Enhanced institutional and human capacity in agricultural research and development
- Result 4: Demand for agricultural knowledge by target clients facilitated and met
- Result 5: Result delivery effectively managed by CORAF/WECARD
3.1 Programmes and Themes

Based on lessons learned from OP1, the OP2 adopts a programmes and themes approach focusing primarily on the three priority themes (Food, Health and Nutrition Security, Markets and Trade, and sustainable agriculture) identified by diverse multi-stakeholder consultations as key challenges facing agricultural transformation, and which (i) are aligned with the CAADP and RECs agricultural policies and objectives as well as those of the International Agricultural Research Centres (IARC) notably the CGIAR and (ii) facilitate the establishment of clear linkages between priority research programmes and deliverables of the RECs policies and in particular country programmes, the NAIPs. They are fairly dynamic in order to address changing situations and calls for research proposals under the programmes (Livestock, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Crops, Natural Resource Management, Biotechnology and Biosafety, Policy, Institutions, Markets and Trade, and Capacity Strengthening and Coordination) will be formulated under each theme to address research priorities, and sub-regional challenges and/or opportunities.

A Theme is defined as a major opportunity or challenge facing agricultural transformation in the sub-region. Themes themselves are not cross-cutting because projects that are developed thematically must incorporate all relevant and appropriate cross-cutting and technical issues. This will be reinforced through the strategies and priorities of cross-cutting units and programmes. The themes exist as a virtual means for institutionalizing collaboration between programmes and cross-cutting units. The approach will also include the strengthening of management and leadership skills, and support to a shift in attitude, which encourages a multi-disciplinary, multi-sectorial approach. For example, malnutrition, a growing concern, would require the effective collaboration of crops, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, in addition to NRM, biotechnology and policy as well as capacity strengthening with the requisite gender considerations to provide a holistic response. In effect, such collaboration across disciplines will be explicitly reflected in the call for proposals to mainstream the approach among the NARS. This will be further incorporated in the CORAF/WECARD manual of competitive and commissioned grant schemes.

The themes provide a clear poverty focus which will tackle problems facing CORAF/WECARD’s clients in an integrated manner and responding to their demand for improved technologies, clearer and better links to markets and the opportunity to participate in the generation of solutions through their own empowerment. The focus under the Themes will be on increasing the resilience of households and systems to respond to threats posed by a wide range of biological, social, environmental and political challenges. These themes are:

3.1.1 Theme 1: Food, health and Nutrition Security

In West and Central Africa, some of the biggest challenges and opportunities linking agriculture with improved nutrition and health include: (i) access to nutritious foods and continuous availability of nutritious food, (ii) food safety and (iii) diseases linked to agriculture intensification (zoonoses and endemic diseases). This theme aligns with flagship programmes of the ECOWAP, PAU and CAP.

Indicative areas for CORAF/WECARD-based initiatives under Theme 1

The indicative areas for CORAF/WECARD based initiatives under this theme for OP2 include among others the following:

- Understanding the full pathway of change from agricultural change to nutritional outcomes.
- The indirect effect of changes in agriculture on nutrition.
- The effect of agricultural policy change on nutrition throughout the value chain.
- Governance, policy processes and political economy related to agriculture-for-nutrition policies and programmes.
- Improving the way agriculture and nutrition research is conducted.
- Broader target groups e.g. rural wage workers and non-rural populations.
- Cost-effectiveness.
3.1.2 Theme 2: Markets and Trade

This Theme is concerned with encouraging commercialization and access to input and output markets through policy support and providing technologies to promote value addition to agricultural products. It focuses on continued engagement with value chains and emphasizes the importance of trade in driving market processes. It addresses the Pillar IV theme of Development of Sustainable Market Chains and expands opportunities to tackle new and emerging issues as more countries actively pursue a CAADP-based agenda. This theme constitutes one of the main thrust/component of the ECOWAP and the CAP-ECCAS policy objectives and priorities, which clearly spells out the development of value chains and improved access to regional and international markets.

Indicative areas for CORAF/WECARD-based initiatives under Theme 2

- Enhancing regional value addition, processing, value chains and commercialisation of strategic high-value non-staple and staple crops, livestock and fisheries – improving market access.
  - Market analyses to inform policy and investment options.
  - Support to the development and harmonization of standards and regulations in WCA that facilitate market access.
  - Improving the utilization of innovations to enhance market opportunities.
  - Adoption and utilization of approved standards for roots and other crops and biosafety guidelines.
  - Addressing trade barriers to promote regional trade
  - Linking farm level gains made on agricultural productivity to the market through the value chain including, where appropriate, local cooperative societies.

- Enhancing viable and sustainable seed systems.
  This includes development of innovative ways for addressing seed systems in West and Central Africa.

- Promotion of smallholder enterprise development as an incentive for smallholders to invest in sustainable farm-based enterprises.

This will compliment efforts in the application of incentive mechanisms to promote support to ecosystem management. This will be an approach to develop smallholder access to technology, services/functions such as assembly, storage, marketing, financing including factoring arrangements and business development services in general. This sub-theme is in line with the CAP-ECCAS and ECOWAS objectives on promoting seed systems and the seed industry in member states to enhance agricultural productivity and competitiveness in WCA.

3.1.3 Theme 3: Sustainable Agriculture

This broad theme addresses both technical and policy issues. It tackles challenges created by climate change, pests and diseases of livestock and crops. It provides the opportunity to build on possibilities provided by the sub-region's biodiversity and techniques and options provided by biotechnology. It also addresses issues of nutrition and food security with links to human health and its effects on agriculture/livelihoods, mechanization, harvest processes, post-harvest handling, storage and management. It is directly connected to Pillar IV through the Theme of Adaptive Management of Appropriate Germplasm and Policy for Sustainable Agriculture. This theme also aligns with the ECOWAP and CAP-ECCAS policy objectives and priorities which emphasize sustainable management of the natural resources base and biodiversity conservation.

Indicative areas for CORAF/WECARD-based initiatives under Theme 3

- Effects of climate change on strategic high-value non-staple and staple crop, livestock and fisheries production.

This area links to the current fluctuations in climate. There is need to develop innovations to address and mitigate the effect of climate change. This will include:
• Strategies for adaptation to climate variability and change;
• Regional ability for climate forecasting and interpretation of changes for use by farmers and other stakeholder for addressing resilience;
• Enhancing the use of new and indigenous knowledge for predicting climate change and variability and strengthening resilience of poor farmers to climate induced shocks;
• Sustainable crop-livestock and fisheries-environment interactions for improved systems productivity, including pastoralists.

- Management of emerging diseases and pests for high-value non-staple and strategic staple crops, livestock and fisheries – enhancing regional capacity for surveillance and control.

This will also include surveillance for effective monitoring of the diseases and pests in the region.

- Water resource management with emphasis on enhancing water productivity at farm and watershed levels using techniques such as micro-irrigation and water harvesting.

Watershed management using innovative approaches including carbon markets and payment for environmental services schemes is key in supporting the agricultural sector. Integration of staple and high-value non-staple crops with natural resource management [water/soil] will lead to improved productivity.

- Promoting soil fertility and conservation enhancement approaches through the application of various concepts.

This will include, inter alia, conservation agriculture, ever-green agricultural, and soil nutrient boosting techniques.

OP2 will provide support to NARS in the establishment of a functional and interactive system to resolve regional issues. The strengthening of regional centres of excellence (Research Innovations and Learning Institutions) will be promoted complementing sub-regional or country executed programmes and reducing fragmentation and duplication of efforts. Included in OP2 priorities will be the involvement and empowerment of women and youth in delivery of agricultural innovation, implementation of agricultural policies such as fair access to resources, production, up-scaling, out-scaling and the marketing of agricultural products.

3.2 CORAF/WECARD’s Comparative Advantage and Value Addition in Transforming Agriculture

CORAF/WECARD’s comparative advantage and value addition in transforming Agriculture and contributing to the ECOWAP/CAADP vision for 2015 lies in its core functions of promoting sub-regional cooperation, creating synergies and reducing duplications, mobilizing resources, and generating common solutions to agricultural research and development problems. In terms of promoting sub-regional cooperation, creating synergies and reducing duplications in West and Central Africa, CORAF/WECARD has the convening power to bring diverse stakeholders on issues, challenges and opportunities facing agriculture in the sub-region and lead regional initiatives to generate solutions that results in greater economies of scale than if each country had to generate its own solutions to challenges. This capacity has been demonstrated in several instances for example: Seeds systems, Climate Change and Mitigation, Livestock Trade and Cross boundary crisis in West and Central Africa, Fruit Flies projects etc.

CORAF/WECARD’s coordination role focuses and adds value to NARS programmes through: (i) increasing FAAP compliant programmatic support around identified regional priorities, (ii) encouraging common planning horizons, and (iii) encouraging common financial and administrative systems to enhance accountability and good governance in the management of resources at the NARS level.

With regard to Capacity Strengthening and Coordination of its constituents CORAF/WECARD adds value directly through the empowerment of stakeholders to participate fully in the process of development, providing the capacity in terms of all that is both necessary and sufficient, for them to deliver what is expected of them. More specifically, strengthening the capacity of NARS and their partners focuses on: (i) pooling human resources within centers of specializations for example, (ii) creating and maintaining a database of expertise in the sub-region, (iii) fostering institutional strengthening arrangements and quality, and (iv) developing competency in implementing IAR4D
including innovation systems and value chain approaches. Under the OP2, CORAF/WECARD will pool resources together through the Regional Centres of Specialization (thus empowering scientists to work across borders; identify and strengthen centres of excellence in the sub-region to conduct cutting-edge research; create a fund that is accessible to a wide constituency of researchers). The OP2 will enhance and develop coordination mechanisms through the establishment of high impact IPs; develop effective partnership arrangements, foster a process of institutional strengthening and institutional arrangements to enhance actors’ capacity to deliver.

Advocacy with focus on: (i) ensuring that CORAF/WECARD functions and roles are known by partners and integrated into the implementation of their activities, (ii) encouraging dialogue and providing information for strengthening and influencing regional policies, and creating enabling environment for delivering results, and (iii) advocacy for increased financial investment in agricultural research as well as their harmonization and coordination.

Knowledge Management will focus on: ensuring information dissemination and uptake, (ii) transforming information to knowledge, and (iii) encouraging experiential learning and sharing through innovation platforms.

4. Implementation Approach

4.1 Integrated Agricultural Research for Development (IAR4D)

The IAR4D is part and parcel of the Agricultural Innovation System: the actors and networks in an agricultural value chain, domain, industry or food security; as well as the institutions that govern behavior in enhancing the performance of the system. Through systematic facilitation of interactions and concerted action, potentially, constraints to smallholder can be remove and opportunities captured by integrating value chains, improving access to technology, inputs, credit, markets, information, policy and enabling conditions including rights legislation in smallholder sustainable intensification.

In the case of CORAF/WECARD, IAR4D has been practiced through the facilitation of innovation platforms (IPs) in value chains, food systems, and natural resource management. Through the IPs, key innovation system actors are convened, informed and assisted to engage in concerted action with respect to some entry point(s).

4.2 Engagement with Stakeholders

The OP2 will provide support to NARS in the establishment of a real functional and interactive system in order for them to be more effective partners in collective action to resolve regional issues. The strengthening of regional centres of excellence constituted by a cluster of national institutions addressing research training, learning, and innovations issues in priority areas, will be promoted to create a critical mass around shared strategic areas and enhance the process of generating, disseminating and using innovations and technologies. These centres will also complement sub-regional programmes and add value to country executed programmes, thus reducing fragmentation and duplication of efforts. The RCE will also represent a force for consolidating partnerships with advanced and international research and development institutions operating within and out of the sub-region to adequately deliver on the regional agenda.

The OP2 will also take into account the demands/needs of non-state actors [producer organization, NGOs, private sector], including those engaged with renewable energy, food safety, quality and standards, carbon sequestration, competitiveness and market access. Such an approach will allow greater integration in the implementation of projects coordinated by CORAF/WECARD in the process of agricultural transformation in WCA.

The OP2 will promote youth employment and entrepreneurship in agribusiness and implement programmes to involve young people in agriculture. The involvement and empowerment of women in the delivery of agricultural innovation and the implementation of agricultural policies such as fair access to resources, production, up-scaling, out-scaling and the marketing of agricultural products, will be included in OP2 priorities.

The OP2 will forge partnerships where possible with the CGIAR to maximize opportunities to deliver effectively on its Specific objective. The CGIAR institutes are important partners for many of CORAF/WECARD’s activities, and their overall strategy aligns with that of CORAF/WECARD and other stakeholders.
4.3 Gender and Social Development

In OP2, CORAF/WECARD is committed to the institutionalization of gender in agricultural research and development sector, focusing on the key role of women and youth in agriculture and food security. This will be reflected as gender mainstreaming, in all commissioned and competitively funded projects, initiatives, procedures and overall management, with target of 40% minimum for women as beneficiaries. In line with the Results of the OP2, the Gender and Social Development Unit will ensure gender mainstreaming in programmes and projects in supporting delivering on the following results: (i) Gender smart technologies and innovations increased throughout capacity building, and provision of tools for gender integration in agricultural research programmes and projects to stakeholders; (ii) Gender responsive agricultural and market policies identified and proposed; (iii) Gender mainstreaming in the regional and national agricultural research system strengthened and coordinated; (iv) Demand for gender technical assistance formulated by stakeholders to mainstream gender in agricultural research and development facilitated and satisfied. The aim will be to ensure equitable access to agricultural research and development resources, opportunities and benefits for men and women, particularly for vulnerable groups (women and youth) in WCA.

Conclusions

The successes and lessons learned during implementation of the OP1 form an adequate basis for the preparation of the 2nd Operational Plan (2014 – 2018) which clearly outlines the priority interventions. The analysis of the challenges and key lessons learned, resulted in stakeholders adopting a much better alignment of research themes to the RECs agricultural policies and objectives which are expected to foster effective collaboration and linkages among various programmes in contributing to the delivery of results under a common thematic issue. Under OP2, the Programme and Themes Approach will make use of technical skills of all programmes and cross-cutting support units to elaborate calls under thematic areas addressing key challenges and opportunities facing agricultural development in WCA and as indicated in the agriculture agenda of the regional economic communities of the sub-region. OP2 will institutionalize and up-scale IAR4D and value chain approaches via multi-stakeholder IPs to strengthen the impact of infrastructure (multi-stakeholder IPs) established during the implementation of OP1. This is envisaged to lead to increased adoption of technologies, improved agricultural production in quantity and quality, and increased connection of producers and their organizations to markets. Mechanisms for up-scaling and out-scaling will be strengthened to ensure sustainability and impact at large scale, which in turn will deliver increased knowledge and skills, wealth creation, diversified economies, resilience, food security, and reduced poverty. The ambitions of the SP and OP2 of CORAF/WECARD embraced fully the ECOWAP/CAADP agenda or vision for 2025 on food sovereignty, hunger and poverty reduction.

References

2. CORAF/WECARD (2007), First Five-Year Operational Plan 2008-2013
7. CORAF/WECARD (2014), Addendum to the CORAF/WECARD Strategic Plan 2007-2016, June 2014
8. DFID (2014), Project Completion Report: Support to the West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD) – Project 114018