Acronyms and abbreviations

ABEE  Amélioration des plantes pour le développement de cultures résilientes répondant aux besoins des paysans d’Afrique de l’Ouest
AFAAS African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
AFSTA African Seed Trade Association
AfDB African Development Bank
AGRA Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
ASARECA Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
ASBP African Seed and Biotechnology Program
AUC African Union Commission
AU-IBAR African Union Inter-Africa Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources
CAADP Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program
CCAFS Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security
CCARDESA Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa
CILSS Comité permanent Inter États de lutte contre la Sècheresse dans le Sahel
DeSIRA Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture
ECCAS Economic Community of Central African States.
ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States
ED Executive Director CORAF
EnGRAIS Enhancing Growth through Regional Agri-Inputs Systems
FARA Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
FSRP Food System Resilience Program
IAR4D Integrated Agricultural Research for Development
IBP Integrated Breeding Platform
IDRC International Development Research Center
IFDC International Fertilizer Development Centre
IFPRI International Food Policy Research Institute
IP Innovation Platform
IsDB Islamic Development Bank
iREACH Innovation Research, Extension and Advisory Coordination Hub
M&E Monitoring and Evaluation
NARI National Agricultural Research Institute
NARS National Agricultural Research System
NCoS National Center of Specialization
NEYAT Nurturing Enterprising Youth for Agricultural Transformation Technologies
PAIRED Partnerships for Agricultural Research, Education and Development
PID Priority Intervention Domains
PRAPS Projet Régional d’Appui au Pastoralisme au Sahel
ProPAD Strengthening Climate Resilience and Sustainable Agricultural Productivity in Chad
RCoE Regional Centers of Excellence
ROPPA Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs de l’Afrique de l’Ouest
UEMOA Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine
USAID United States Agency for International Development
WA West Africa
WAAPP West African Agricultural Productivity Program
WCA West and Central Africa
WAVE West Africa Virus Epidemiology
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CORAF 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

- Ninety-two percent of the estimated funds (USD 62 million) for the CORAF Operational Plan mobilized.
- Four new projects (CAADP-XP4, ABEE, and Biorisks-WAVE and iREACH) launched.
- An online variety and fertilizer recommendations map for specific agro-ecological zones (FeSeRWAM) officially launched.
- The web-based Market of Innovations and Agricultural Technologies (MITA) platform upgraded.
- A Technology Scaling Framework developed depicting a schematic matrix of technology scaling.
- The Integrated Regional Agri-input Strategy adopted.
- An electronic-based Seed Demand Forecasting Tool developed for informed decision-making making projections of potential and actual seed demands.
- 2,400 beneficiary lead farmers were identified for technologies upscaling activities for rice, maize, millet, and sorghum in Benin, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal.
- A total of 376 Agri-input packages validated and 142 packages printed, consisting of 52 for rice, 51 for maize, 21 for millet and 18 for sorghum.
- A Web-based monitoring and evaluation platform launched.
- 42 Chadian agricultural research scientists integrated into the network of CORAF Regional Centers of Specialization.
On behalf of the CORAF Community, we are honored and privileged to present the 2020 CORAF Annual Report. This report provides some insight into CORAF activities, focusing on progress made in delivering the four CORAF results through the implementation of three Priority Intervention Domains specified in the 2018–2027 CORAF Strategic Plan.

2020 was a challenging year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, building on gains of 2019 and previous years, CORAF continued with innovative approaches in implementing the CORAF 2018–2027 Strategic Plan and the 2018-2022 Operational Plan. In managing the COVID-19 pandemic, CORAF made appropriate adjustments and adaptations to program implementation processes to ensure that expected outputs were achieved.

Our activities focused on well-coordinated technical support to agricultural research and development, electronically disseminating knowledge and information to stakeholders, and human capital development through capacity strengthening initiatives of our NARS constituents. It also involved implementing projects to deliver on the four CORAF results, consolidating existing regional and international partnerships, and establishing new scientific and technical partnerships to expand our horizon of influence.

We also made concerted efforts to mobilize the required resources and develop CORAF into a credible and dependable organization promoting agricultural research and community development in West and Central Africa.

Significant advances were made in the implementation of our result areas by implementing the following six projects:

The Partnership for Agricultural Research, Education and Development funded by USAID (PAIRED).
Strengthening climate resilience and sustainable agricultural productivity in Chad (ProPAD)

Science led climate-relevant agricultural transformation in West and Central Africa (CAADP-XP4)

Fostering breeding networks and institutional breeding capacity in West Africa to develop resilient climate crops for African smallholder farmers (ABEE)

Anticipating and managing Bio-risks to boost farmers’ resilience to climate change in West and Central Africa (BIORISK)

Innovation Research, Extension, and Advisory Coordination Hub (iREACH)

In this report, the achievements made in delivering the four CORAF results are presented in the context of the three Priority Intervention Domains. Details of the outputs from all these activities are elaborated in this report’s relevant sections, which we invite you to read and enjoy.

As we proceed with operations in the next year, we hope to make greater progress with the implementation of the funded projects while at the same time exploring new frontiers, initiatives, and partnerships to enrich our support to NARS and the farming families in West and Central Africa.

Allow us to express our sincere appreciation to our dedicated donors and development partners who have provided CORAF unflinching support and cooperation throughout the year. We express profound gratitude to ECOWAS, UEMOA, ECCAS, CEMAC, World Bank, European Union, African Union Commission, USAID, FAO, IDRC, the Islamic Development Bank IsDB, and the Bill Melinda Gates Foundation. In addition, we are grateful to the Sub-regional organizations, FARA, ASARECA, CCARDESA, and AFAAS and the National Agricultural Research Systems, the Private Sector and Farmer-based Organizations in our 23 mandate countries.

Lastly, we express deep appreciation to the Executive Director and the entire personnel of the CORAF Executive Secretariat for their dedication and commitment to deliver and to make CORAF an admirable organization championing the cause of improving the livelihoods and welfare of millions of farmers, herders, fisherfolk and smallholder farming communities in the West and Central Africa region.

**Prologue - In this Report**

This CORAF Annual Report 2020 presents advances made in implementing six funded projects during the operational year. For easy comprehension and reference to the CORAF Strategic Plan and Operational Plan, the achievements made on delivery of the four CORAF results are elaborated separately for the three CORAF Priority Intervention Domains specified in the Strategic Plan.

The report is organized into five sections, namely, i. Advances on delivering the CORAF four results. ii Partnerships, iii Resource Mobilization, iv Governance and v. Administration and Finance. Each section provides details of the outputs achieved during the operational year. Taken together, the outputs paint a glowing picture of the inherent capacity of CORAF to function as an efficient sub-regional African organization that coordinates and supports initiatives that promote agricultural research development in West and Central Africa.
Advances on Delivering The Four CORAF Results

Delivering The Four CORAF Results Through Priority Intervention Domains

The CORAF Strategic Plan (2018-2027) specified three Priority Intervention Domains (PID), namely:
2. Policy, Institutions, Markets and Trade.
3. Gender, Youth and Social Equity to guide AR4D in West and Central Africa.

For effective program implementation, we identified three appropriate Interventions Pillars, which are:
1. Establishing Communities of Practice on scaling T&Is for sustainable impact.
2. Integrated regional capacity strengthening in agri-food research and innovation.

The COVID 19 pandemic impacted negatively and slowed progress in program implementation; consequently, appropriate program adjustments and modifications were made to ensure delivery of the following four CORAF results
1. Result 1: Increased use of appropriate technologies and innovations in West and Central Africa.
2. Result 2: Increased uptake of strategic decision-making options for policy, institutions, and markets.
3. Result 3: Enhanced institutional and human capacity in agricultural research for development, and
4. Result 4: Demand for agricultural knowledge from target clients facilitated and met.

We now present an overview of the projects implemented and their contributions to delivering the
CORAF results under the three Priority Intervention Domains.

Projects Implemented
Six projects, shown in Table 1, were implemented during 2020. We now present an overview of these projects, including their objectives, and outputs.

The PAIRED Project
The USAID West Africa Mission awarded CORAF US$ 15 Million to facilitate the implementation of the Partnership for Agricultural Research, Education and Development (PAIRED) in West and Central Africa. PAIRED is a five-year program, implemented through three interdependent components, namely: (i) CORAF capacity strengthened for effective coordination of agricultural research and development, (ii) Innovative scaling framework for Agri-input Technologies and Innovations established in West Africa and (iii) Use of quality Agri-inputs in West Africa increased.

Table 1 Projects Implemented during year 2020

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Project Title and Donor</th>
<th>2020 Budget US$</th>
<th>Countries</th>
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<td>2 CAADP-XP4: 2019-2023 Africa Regional and Sub-regional Organizations for Agricultural Research and Innovation- European Union US$ 6,557,000</td>
<td>2,925,000</td>
<td>West and Central Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ProPAD: 2018-2023 Strengthening climate resilience and sustainable agricultural productivity in Chad. World Bank US$ 770,000</td>
<td>337,000</td>
<td>Chad</td>
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</table>
### The CAADP-XP4 Project

Under the auspices of the Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) initiative of the European Union Commission, CORAF, FARA, AFAAS, ASARECA, and CCARDESA received funding administered by IFAD to implement the CAADP-XP4 project. This project aims to boost the transformation of innovation in agriculture and food systems to support member countries of each Sub Regional organization to be more resilient to climate change and better respond to development demands.

CORAF received $6,557,000 for 4 years to implement CAADP-XP4 project in West and Central Africa. The expected outcome is improved effectiveness of African knowledge and innovation systems, demand-driven public policies on agricultural research and extension services, and enhanced knowledge sharing and technology development for climate change adaptation and mitigation of agriculture and food systems in the region. The ultimate beneficiaries of the project outputs are resource poor and smallholder farmers, agro-processors, rural youth and women entrepreneurs, individual producers and producer organizations/groups, cooperatives, and pastoralists as well as the marginalized and vulnerable communities in West and Central Africa.

Outputs for the period were as follows

1. Project successfully launched
2. Focal Points appointed
3. ICT at CORAF Executive Secretariat upgraded
4. Climate Smart Alliance reactivated and established in West and Central Africa
5. Key stakeholders’ capacities enhanced in advocacy and mobilization of funds

### The ProPAD Project

The Government of Chad received $US 41 million from the World Bank Group to implement a Climate Resilience Agriculture and Productivity Enhancement (ProPAD) five years project, 2018 to 2023. The Chad Government signed an agreement with CORAF for an estimated budget of $US 353,331. Through this project Chadian researchers are to benefit from linkages with the network of CORAF Centers of
Specialization and have easy access to the technologies generated by these centers.

Outputs for the period were as follows
1. Chadian scientists integrated into the network of the Regional Centers of Specialization.
2. Integrated Agricultural Research for Development institutionalized using the multi-stakeholders Innovation Platforms for technology dissemination.
3. ProPAD implementing partners trained in Results Based Management.
4. Development and implementation a communication strategy and gender strategy and action plan supported.
5. Chadian scientists and farming community trained in implementing Climate-Smart Agriculture.
6. Chadian government supported in setting up and implementing a sustainable agricultural research funding mechanism.

The ABEE Project
The objective of the ABEE project is to foster a more coordinated regional and national approach to plant breeding, placing breeders from four countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Senegal) in the driving seat to lead the change, in close partnership with experienced actors in the research for development arena. Breeders from the above-mentioned countries were placed at the heart of the action to improve and modernize breeding practices and better identify market demands. The focused crops are millet, sorghum, fonio, cowpea and peanut. Collaborators included CORAF as Coordinator, CIRAD, AfricaRice, IBP, INERA, INRAN and ISRA.

The Biorisks Project
The overall objective of is to contribute to poverty alleviation and enhanced food and nutrition security in ten West and Central African countries by increasing smallholder productivity and contributing to yield stability through enhanced capacity of national stakeholders and regional networks to develop a robust system for early detection and effective containment of phytosanitary threats to major staple and fruit crops in the face of environmental constraints exacerbated by climate change.

The Biorisks project complements a BMGF funded project West Africa Virus Epidemiology (WAVE) which is implemented at the Félix Houphouet-Boigny University of Abidjan.

Outputs for the period were as follows:
Project officially launched and responsibilities defined for each project-partner in the implementation of the activities.
1. Project governance bodies set up and operations commenced.
2. Training workshops organized on the determination of product profiles, use of the Breeding Management System (BMS) as well as the recruitment of students.
3. Seed multiplication and variety testing plots of the various crops set up.
The iREACH Project
In the West Africa region, research activities funded by USAID Washington and USAID missions are poorly coordinated and showcased, making it difficult for USAID missions and other development partners to access, utilize and leverage emerging opportunities. Therefore, it is critical to focus on coordination, information sharing, collective engagement, and alignment of activities to increase the efficiency of these investments.

Against this background, USAID West Africa Regional mission and the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, together with CORAF, Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Sustainable Intensification (SIIL), and other relevant partners, created the iREACH initiative. The vision of iREACH is a strengthened CORAF to meet the objectives of its strategic plan. In an initial four years, pilot phase iREACH will focus on USAID activities in Feed the Future and Resilience Zones in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal.

Outputs for the period were as follows:
1. Initiative formally launched.
2. Work plan and budget for project life span formulated
3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan designed,
4. Protocols for Technology-Park and Communication developed
5. Terms of reference for the project Governing Body developed

The outputs achieved in the delivery of the four CORAF results, through the Priority Intervention Domains are now elaborated.

**PID 1: Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security**

This Priority Intervention Domain addresses issues of sustainable agriculture including production of crops, livestock and fisheries, with strong links to nutrition, food security and human health. It also emphasizes efficient management of the natural resources base and biodiversity conservation.

CORAF delivered the following results.

**Result 1: Increase the Use of Appropriate Technologies and Innovations**

The PAIRED project contributed to delivery of Result 1 as follows.

a. Legal and technical frameworks finalized for the establishment and operationalization of Innovation Platforms and other innovative approaches to up-scale cutting-edge technologies and innovations:

Innovation platforms brought stakeholders together to foster dissemination and adoption of relevant technologies in West and Central Africa. The innovation platform concept was mainstreamed into PAIRED and relevant engagement instruments were designed to achieve the following important outcomes
i. Subaward agreements were signed with the National Agriculture Research Institutions as Memoranda of Understanding between CORAF and the designated institutions with respect to their respective roles and responsibilities in implementing the project and championing scaling of technologies.

ii. Institutional Work plans were developed to facilitate upscaling of proven technologies.

iii. We developed Terms of References for activities and shared them with country implementing partners for inputs and validation. The terms of reference included protocols for establishing/revitalizing innovation platforms, establishing dissemination plots to showcase the performance of new varieties and for the production of breeder, foundation and certified seeds.

iv. The protocol for baseline data collection was developed.

A total of 2,400 potential direct beneficiary lead farmers were identified by the program partners INRAB, NCRI, IER, IAR, SARI, CRI, INRAN, and ISRA for technologies upscaling activities for rice, maize, millet, and sorghum in Benin, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal.

b. Additional agroecology-based agri-input packages recommended for deployment to farmers:

The first batch of 240 agri-input packages by agro-ecological zones was developed and 40 were validated. New varieties with desired features were released in target countries and were integrated into existing recommendations. In Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Niger, Nigeria, Ghana, Togo and Benin the PAIRED team updated the fertilizer and seed recommendations database for West Africa and developed agri-input packages. A total of 376 agri-input packages were validated and 142 packages printed, consisting of 52 for rice, (Figure 1.1), 51 for maize 21 for millet and 18 for sorghum.

Figure1.1 Agri-input package for Maize in Ghana
c. The Fertilizer and Seed Recommendation for West Africa Map (FeSeRWAM) Developed

An online Fertilizer and Seeds Recommendation for West Africa Map FeSeRWAM, (Figure 1.2), was developed based on the database of high yielding and adaptable seed varieties, fertilizer, and good agricultural practices for West Africa. This mapping exercise targeted producers, and traders in agricultural inputs, fertilizer manufacturers and blenders, public and private extension services, and researchers, as well as NGOs for decision making in agricultural services and production. FeSeRWAM provides easy access to productivity and production recommendations on seeds, fertilizer, and good agricultural practices for any agroecological zone in West and Central Africa.

**Figure 1.2 FeSeRWAM - Fertilizer and Seed Recommendations for West Africa Map online platform**

The FeSeRWAM platform offers opportunities to make specific queries on suitable varieties and fertilizer recommendations for specific agroecological zones. This platform was officially launched in September 2020 and is accessible at https://feserwam.org/. In 2021, IFDC and CORAF will formulate an integrated marketing and communication strategy to raise awareness on FeSeRWAM and associated agri-input packages to promote wide scale adoption and use.
d. Upscaling of technologies and innovations with the use of Market of Innovations and Agricultural Technologies (MITA) facilitated

PAIRED project developed a web-based Market of Innovations and Agricultural Technologies (MITA), Figure 1.3, under the West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program (WAAPP), to inform stakeholders on technologies and innovations and to support information dissemination. MITA provides a platform for sharing of information on cutting-edge agricultural technologies that can be game changers in the life of farmers. Upgrading MITA was initiated during the year following a user satisfaction survey conducted in 2019.

![Figure 1.3 The MITA platform on the CORAF website](image)

e. Technology scaling framework developed:

During implementation of the PAIRED project, a Technology Scaling Framework, Figure 1.4, was developed as a schematic matrix of technology scaling. This framework included steps from technology screening through diffusion and adoption. This framework became a highly reliable and user-friendly stakeholders guide to technology out scaling.
Figure 1.4 Technology Scaling Frameworks

The iREACH Project

Preliminary Techno-Parks activities initiated:
CERAAS allocated 2 ha of land with irrigation facilities for the establishment of a Technology Park on its farm site. An initial list of technologies to showcase in this Techno-Park was compiled. Dual purpose millet and cowpea varieties were established for demonstration and field visits were organized.

Result 3: Enhance Institutional and Human Capacity in Agricultural Research for Development.

Under the PAIRED project, the following outputs were achieved.

i. Steps towards effective coordination of bio-risks by CORAF initiated:
The Fall Armyworm *Spodoptera frugiperda* continued to seriously threaten food security and the livelihoods of millions of smallholder farmers in the region. Although many ongoing initiatives are aimed at managing this pest, the poorly coordinated pattern of interventions threatens to undermine effective management of FAW. Therefore, under the auspices of PAIRED and within the framework of the Bio-risk management facility, we recruited an experienced consultant to design an Early Warning System Protocol with an effective coordination framework for the prevention, surveillance and environmentally sound integrated management of the Fall Armyworm.
CORAF initiated effective coordination of Bio-risks to achieve the following major outputs:

- Major Stakeholders involved in the management of FAW in the region were mapped.
- Existing interventions by relevant stakeholders in FAW management in the region critically reviewed.
- Framework developed for an Early Warning System for the prevention, surveillance and management of pests including the FAW.
- Capacity building needs for stakeholders in managing Bio-risks determined.
- Meetings and consultations of stakeholders organized on Bio-risks management.
- Better coordination between technical and financial institutions involved in the management of FAW, desert locusts and other plant pests.

The CAADP-XP4 Project

The CAADP-XP4 project came into effect in 2019 and implementation modalities involving FARA, AFAAS and sub-regional organizations were agreed on during the first quarter of 2020. Outputs of project implementation include:

i. Increased awareness of IFAD and EU procedures by project staff: The project team became fully familiar with EU and IFAD procedures and tools following participation at meetings convened by IFAD.

ii. Arrangements finalized for Strengthening of CORAF on-line Capacity: One major weakness identified for CORAF was low internet capacity to support the Knowledge Management System for our constituents. Interventions to address this constraint were (i) effective communication, (ii) operationalizing a web based M&E system, (iii) supporting easy browsing of the CORAF website to access knowledge products and information,(iv) operationalizing the WebTV used by FARA and the other SROs as well as the economic communities for actions related to the CAADP accountability framework and (v) Holding online meetings on mitigation of climate change issues.

iii. Network of CAADP-XP4 Focal Points established: The establishment of an effective operational link between the CORAF Executive Secretariat and its national focal institutions, particularly the National Agricultural Research Institutes is crucial for the successful CORAF coordination efforts.

Country focal points were essential in supporting the NARIs Director Generals collaboration with the CORAF Executive Secretariat as well as linking with the National Agricultural Research Systems. Therefore, Country Focal Points were designated in each of the NARIs to facilitate the CORAF outreach activities. Furthermore, in consultation with the Director Generals of the 23 National Agricultural Research Institutes we appointed CAADP-XP4 project implementation focal persons.
The ABEE Project

i. Project successfully launched:

The project was officially launched in Dakar, Senegal in March 2020 and the event was attended by 80 participants from the implementing partners. The following were achieved for effective project implementation:

- All stakeholders became fully aware of the focus of the ABEE project - The accounting and administrative procedures of the project were fully understood.
- The Project Indicators, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Communications Plan were validated.
- The project intervention sites were updated and validated.
- Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in project implementation were identified.
- Synergies between ABEE and other projects operating in the same areas were established.

ii. Project management established: The Project Steering Committee was established and appointed ISRA's Scientific Director Dr Elhadj Traore as Committee Chairman and and Dr Ousmane N'doye, Project Coordinator from CORAF, as Secretary. The Rules of Procedure governing the operations of the Project Steering Committee were adopted.

iii. Acquisition of key equipment. A Procurement Plan was developed and adopted by all stakeholders. In effect, the first contracts were initiated, notably acquisition of vehicles, computer equipment, and motorcycles for INERA, INRAN and ISRA.

iv. Postgraduate students recruited for capacity development: The project aims at strengthening the capacities of researchers to effectively participate in modern breeding efforts. In this context, 7 seven post graduate students were recruited to undertake short term post graduate courses in breeding in African universities.

v. Capacity of researchers enhanced in modern breeding techniques: Online training workshops were organized for crop breeders in the use of the BMS platform for modern plant breeding techniques. A common form for collecting field data as well as harmonizing novel approaches and methodologies for collecting information from NIRS (Near InfraRed Spectrophotometry) was developed.

The Biorisks Project

i. Project officially launched:

The project was officially launched in October 2020. During this event, the project was presented to stakeholders who were briefed on CORAF financial management procedures in line with those of the donor. Stakeholders were also briefed on gender mainstreaming, environmental safeguard measures, monitoring and evaluation as well as communication, for effective project management.
The ProPAD Project

i. Chadian scientists linked with Regional Centers of Specialization:

At the request of CORAF, Chad National Agricultural Research Institute (ITRAD) compiled a list of 42 scientists, working on Sorghum, Millet, Maize, Cowpea, Sesame, Groundnuts and Rice, were linked with CORAF Centers of Specialization.

ii. Chadian R&D stakeholders acquire skills in establishing and animating Innovation Platforms:

CORAF organized training for ProPAD implementing partners in setting up and animating value chains multi-stakeholder’s innovation platform. A total of 39 participants consisting of 10 women (26%) and 5 youths (13%) strengthened their capacity in setting up and animating Innovation Platforms.

iii. Selected R&D stakeholders acquire skills in Results Based Management and Gender mainstreaming:

CORAF arranged training for 28 ProPAD Monitoring and Evaluation specialists, including 12 women, on result-based management. A gender mainstreaming strategy for the ProPAD project team was also developed.

iv. Plans advanced for the establishment of climate smart villages:

CORAF partnered with CCAFS to develop a proposal for setting up climate-smart villages in the project intervention areas. National partners in this initiative were ITRAD and the national meteorological agency

Result 4 Meet the demand for Agricultural Knowledge for Target Clients

i. PAIRED implementing partners acquainted with M&E tools and procedures:

To effectively collect relevant data on the PAIRED performance indicators, two online trainings were conducted for 20 people, including 8 women, M&E Officers and commodity focal persons of partner institutions from Benin, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal. After training, they took ownership of the M&E tools and procedures during implementation of the PAIRED project.

ii. Indicator targets for the CORAF Operational Plan finalized:

Indicator targets for the CORAF Operational Plan were thoroughly reviewed to guide CORAF to effectively contribute to AR4D in West and Central Africa.

iii. Framework for Robust Monitoring, Evaluation, Knowledge Management, Learning (MEAL) Systems established:

The project M&E team established a web-based CORAF Knowledge Management Portal, Figure 1.5, to assist in the generation, codification, and transfer of knowledge. This CORAF Portal provides site for project implementation personnel and NARS members to access and report on standardized indicators and customized indicators.
A detailed survey of the human and material capacity of the NARIs was undertaken to identify the required capacity strengthening needs of NARIs. Furthermore, the M&E team finalized the knowledge management system and customized the repository to link with the CORAF website to build a functional, decentralized web-based M&E system. This initiative strengthened the CORAF Knowledge Hub, improved reporting on progress in project implementation as well as documenting lessons learned to enhance capacity building in the region.

The CAADP-XP4 Project

i. Communication Plan developed:

CAADP-XP4 project Communication Specialists developed a Communication Plan, significant CORAF inputs, was approved by IFAD.

With a budget of Euros 22,111, this Communication Plan covers the goals, objectives, target groups, messages, communication activities and tools, partnerships and resources.

ii. Framework for CORAF Document Repository developed:

The CORAF Document Repository was restructured to enable easy and quick access to relevant documents. This Document Repository makes CORAF the one stop shop for agricultural research and development information in West and Central Africa.
iii. Framework for effective data collection established:

Monitoring and Evaluation Specialists of the CAADP-XP4 project successfully organized two workshops one in Johannesburg, South Africa and the second in Accra, Ghana. CORAF representatives made significant contributions in these workshops which achieved the following outputs:

(i) M&E concepts and terminologies were reviewed to develop clear understanding of the data required for efficient reporting on the CAADP-XP4 project.
(ii) Project indicators were defined and targets set.
(iii) Results Framework and Results Plan of CAADP-XP4 were refined and
(iv) Terms of References for baseline studies were finalized and agreement reached on implementation timelines as well as financial contributions by organizations.

iv. Modalities for Baseline Survey designed.

A Baseline Survey was commissioned to collect qualitative and quantitative data for tracking achievements of interventions during implementation of CAADP-XP4 Project activities.

v. Mapping Existing Climate Smart Agriculture Initiatives.

CORAF coordinated mapping of Climate Smart Agriculture and Climate Relevant Initiatives in West and Central Africa. The data collected and mapping will be helpful in the development of an interactive map of all climate smart agriculture initiatives in Africa for reference and use to inform country and regional decisions on climate change interventions in agriculture.

vi. ISO Compliance Standards in Knowledge Management Developed.

CORAF collaborated with CAADP-XP4 project partners to strengthen knowledge management through developing ISO compliance standards, ISO 30401, Knowledge Management and ISO 27001 Information Security Management, for information sharing amongst CAADP-XP4 project partners. Understanding ISO compliance standards and requirements facilitated the capture, use and dissemination of knowledge by CAADP-XP4 project partners.

The ABEE Project

i. Visibility of the ABEE project Enhanced:

Visibility of the ABEE project was enhanced through press releases, posting project information on Twitter and Facebook as well as screening of a short film. A project logo and slogan were also adopted. Furthermore, the ABEE project was presented at a Climate Day Conference organized by the European Union and well attended by CORAF personnel and national and international partners. Discussions at this conference were broadcast on radio and television channels worldwide.
The iREACH project

i. Stakeholders buy into the iREACH project

CORAF and stakeholders of the iREACH project organized a workshop and reached a general consensus that the iREACH initiative was important, worthwhile and should be pursued. There was common agreement that the initiative was well aligned with the CORAF Strategic Plan 2018-2027.

ii. Lessons learned from the Cambodia Center of Excellence on Sustainable Agricultural Intensification and Nutrition (CE-SAIN):

Since 2016, CE-SAIN of Cambodia has rich experience in managing technology parks. A virtual lesson learning session between representatives of iREACH and CE-SAIN in August 2020 covered the following issues (i) Considerations for selecting technologies (ii) iREACH coverage of the whole value chain including processing machinery, (iii) creating an appropriate environment for the adoption of technologies and (iv) responding to the demands of end-users introduced to the technologies.

The ProPAD Project

i. ProPAD Communication Strategy was aligned with CORAF Knowledge Management Strategy to ensure harmonized and effective engagement of stakeholders.

ii. ProPAD Communication Strategy shared with CORAF.

CORAF inserted a knowledge management component to the project strategy.

PID 2: Policy, Institutions, Markets and Trade

Implementation of this PID emphasized the importance of trade in driving market development processes. This PID constitutes one of the major components of ECOWAP, APU-UEMOA and CAP-EC-CAS policies and priorities.

The PAIRED project:

PID 2 covers PAIRED IR3: Enabling Policy Environment for Regional Seed Trade in West Africa which contributes mainly to CORAF Result 2:

During the year, the PAIRED project contributed to the following CORAF results:
Result 2: Increase the uptake of strategic decision-making for policy, institutions and markets

Through the PAIRED project CORAF supported organization of the fifth statutory meeting of the Regional Seed and Seedling Committee. Seed actors from 17 countries met in Abuja, Nigeria, to assess progress in the implementation of the harmonized Regional Seed Regulation. The meeting assessed progress in the implementation of the recommendations and reviewed the status of implementation of the harmonized Regional Seed Regulations at by the ECOWAS and CORAF. Many countries (Figure 1.6) have made positive advances in the domestication and implementation of the Seed Regulation.

Figure 1.6 Implementation of the Regional Seed Regulation
ii. **Regional Catalogue of Plant Species and Varieties of West Africa -Version 2018 updated, and distributed.**

In collaboration with CILSS, UEMOA and the National Seed Committees, the PAIRED program updated the Regional Catalogue of Plant Species and Crop Varieties, Figure 1.7. The updated catalogue which focused on eleven priority crops and comprises 132 new varieties was released in October for wide scale distribution. This catalogue provides passport data of all crop varieties useful for quality certification process by the national seed certification agency and reliable information to breeders on the existing varieties. This catalogue is accessible on the CORAF website (http://www.coraf.org).

Figure 1.7 Updated Regional Catalogue of Plant Species and Crop Varieties

iii. **Integrated Regional Agri-input Strategy for West Africa and the Sahel developed and validated:**

In West Africa and the Sahel, poor accessibility to quality agri-inputs continues to undermine farmers efforts towards achievement of increased and sustainable agricultural productivity. To address this critical constraint, CORAF with Hub Rural facilitated the formulation of a comprehensive Integrated Regional Afri-input Strategy, Figure 1.8, with funding support from USAID West Africa. This strategy incorporates a 5 year Action Plan that covers crop seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, feed concentrates for livestock, vaccines, and animal genetic materials for priority crops, livestock, and aquaculture. The strategy provides a vision and harmonized framework for investments and management for the production, distribution and use of agricultural inputs at the community level. The Integrated Regional Agri-input Strategy was adopted by CORAF member States and Inter-Government Organizations in August 2020.
Result 3: Enhance Institutional and Human Capacity in Agricultural Research for Development

i. Private Sector participation in the Regional Seed Industry fostered:

The PAIRED program supports private sector seed companies to partner with national research institutions for identifying and promoting input technologies that have high commercial potential. The PAIRED program also supported private seed organizations to improve their governance and resource mobilization efforts.

The PAIRED project revitalized and transformed the ASIWA platform into a sustainable structure to make it absolutely relevant in serving the following functions:

- serve as an inclusive multi stakeholder’s platform
- to advocate the promotion of national and regional issues in seed sector development to expand production, supply and use of quality seeds in West Africa and
- link the private sector, public sector and the seed end-users.

ii. Strengthened capacity to boost variety development through Plant Variety Protection (PVP)

The Plant Variety Protection, PVP, systems encourage plant breeding by granting breeders of new plant varieties exclusive rights to commercialize their registered varieties. The PAIRED project partnered with stakeholders to promote innovative PVP systems that allowed farmers to gain access to a wide range of improved genetic materials. In partnership with Syngenta Foundation Seeds to Business (Seeds2B) program, PAIRED representatives participated in the 2-day Bamako training workshop in the “Development of License Contract Model to facilitate Seed Business and access to New Genetic Materials from Research”.

Figure 1.8 The Integrated Regional Agri-input Strategy
iii. Entrepreneurship and innovative business models for a vibrant private seed sector promoted in the region:

During the year, the PAIRED project activities contributed to promoting seed entrepreneurship in the region. Promoting innovative business models included (i) Designing and disseminating models for the private sector using the toolkit of six modules developed by FAO to support the private investors along the seed value chain, (ii) Promoting innovative partnerships to facilitate private sector access to new genetic materials (iii) Developing and disseminating seed demand forecasting to stimulate production, and market quality seeds and (iv) Forging strong collaboration in seed policy and seed business development, between PAIRED and ongoing initiatives and organizations, such as TASAI, Access to Seed Foundation, AFSTA, and WAFF, Seed Connect.

iv. Designing and disseminating entrepreneurship and business models for the private sector:

In partnership with FAO, the PAIRED project contributed to wide distribution of the FAO Six Modules Capacity-Building Toolkit, Figure 1.9. PAIRED trained stakeholders to build capacity to design and implement models that support private investors along the seed value chain. Training assisted the private sector to acquire knowledge and skills required to deliver quality seeds and planting materials of crop varieties to farmers.


v. Innovative partnerships to facilitate private sector access to new genetic materials promoted:

During the year the PAIRED project promoted partnerships to facilitate private sector access to new genetic materials in order to encourage healthy competition in the wide scale distribution of new genetic materials. Activities were conducted at two levels namely:

i. Regional – The PAIRED project selected 11 regional seed companies and linked them with AfricaRice hybrid rice technology uptake. Trials to test the technology led by private companies, were conducted under the supervision of AfricaRice experts. PAIRED also consulted with regional partners and leading companies such as AATF, SSG, and Quality Basic Seed to explore the development of a regional framework for production and supply of Early Generation improved varieties of Rice Seeds.

ii. National - In Ghana, Benin, Nigeria, and Mali, PAIRED supported establishment of collaboration between the national implementing partners (NCoS/RCoS) and the private sector including Seed Companies.
Through the PAIRED project, CORAF facilitated entrepreneurship and business models for the private sector resulting in the following excellent output.

- Twenty-Nine (29) partnerships were established with seed companies and fertilizer blenders, 6 in Ghana, 5 in Nigeria, 5 in Benin and 13 in Mali to support scaling of improved seeds with the appropriate fertilizers for increased crop production.

**Result 4: Meet the demand for agricultural knowledge for target clients**

i. Matching seed production with market demands:

Poorly developed and inefficient seed technology delivery systems in West Africa strongly constrain smallholder farmers access to improved varieties. Lack of information on accurate estimates of seed demands often undermines the efforts of seed enterprises and breeder seeds producing entities in meeting farmer’s seed demands.

![Figure 1.10 Seed Demand Forecasting Tool Portal](image)
To address this production constraint, the PAIRED project developed an electronic-based Seed Demand Forecasting Tool, Figure 1.10. This tool is used for making projections of potential and actual seed demands of public seed sectors and private seed companies. It is also useful for informed decision-making and assessment of available products and markets. Furthermore, the tool helps in the design of the seed production roadmap and estimating seed market values and business investments. Early next year, PAIRED plans to distribute the tool widely and strengthen the capacity of stakeholders in efficient planning and designing their seed program road maps.

ii. Regional Quarantine Pests List (RQPL) adopted and widely distributed

In October 2019, the Regional Seed Committee adopted the ECOWAS regional seed borne and seed transmitted quarantine pests list, RQPL, for the eleven priority crops Rice, Maize, Sorghum, Millet, Groundnut, Cowpeas, Yam, Cassava, Irish Potato, Tomato, and Onion. Figure 1.11 shows the types of quarantine pests transmitted through Seeds for various food crops in West Africa. The regional quarantine pests list marked compliance provisions of Articles 78 of the ECOWAS Seed Regulation related to periodic updating of national and regional quarantine pests lists.
The Seed Quarantine Pests List is a component of the quarantine system designed to prevent the entry, establishment and spread of pests in the region. This list enables achievement of the following: (i) preventing the entry and establishment of new key pests into the region, (ii) providing assurance to importing countries that seeds exported from ECOWAS member states are free from pests of quarantine significance through regionally accepted export certification practices (iii) promoting safe trade by creating awareness for the effective management of seed transmitted pests under transparent policies. The list also provides the legal instrument within which national plant protection services undertake issuance of seeds phytosanitary certificates.

CORAF, with the support from the PAIRED program, widely distributed the Seed borne and Seed transmitted Quarantine Pests List to National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPO) of 15 countries and to Intergovernmental Organizations, to Seed Companies, as well as to Farmer-Based Organizations. The RQPL is accessible on the CORAF website at www.corafo.org.

**PID 3: Gender, Youth and Social Equity**

_Thrust of this Priority Intervention Domain_

Priority Intervention Domain 3 is concerned with gender and youth employment issues to ensure equal access to agricultural research and development resources, opportunities and benefits for men and women, particularly vulnerable groups in West and Central Africa.

CORAF Gender, Youth and Social Equity Program provided technical support for mainstreaming gender and youth dimensions during project implementation, as well as in initiatives led by CORAF partners. We ensured that gender considerations were mainstreamed during project development and implementation.

_Achievements from implementation of the CORAF Gender, Youth and Social Equity Program_

1. **Gender Issues mainstreamed in Project Concept Notes and Proposals**

The CORAF Regional Gender Advisor contributed to the development of a proposal titled _West African Root Nodule Microbes for Legume Sustainability_ (WARiLS) in collaboration with Ghent University of Belgium and NARS partners. This project will exploit the potential of grain legumes to produce high yields, generate incomes, and provide sound soil health for legume crops grown by smallholder farmers in West Africa.

CORAF led the Working Program on _Implementing Legume processing opportunities with a focus on women and youth_, and worked closely with LadyAgri, AcSSA Afrique Verte, Wageningen University, ISRA, and ITRA to formulate the project which was submitted to the European Union.
The CORAF Regional Gender and Social Development Advisor contributed to a review of the gender section of the project *Innovations in West Africa crop breeding for genetic gain and for rapid development of varieties of sorghum, pearl millet and cowpea* which is led by ISRA, collaborating with ITA, ICRISAT, CIRAD, IRD and Kansas State University. ISRA designated the CORAF Regional Gender Advisor Leader of the regional coordination of the gender chapter of the project.

In June 2020, IDRC launched a call for proposals to document responses to economic and health shocks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, together with the impact of COVID-19 on food production, availability and access, as well as gender relations and equity for vulnerable groups. The CORAF proposal was one of the submissions selected for funding by IDRC. The CORAF Regional Gender and Social Development Advisor provided valuable guidance in mainstreaming gender into the concept note and proposal and is leading implementation of the project.

The outcomes of this initiative will inform the development of more efficient and equitable responses to fragility and shocks and will contribute to policy formulation that will facilitate stronger resilience of farmers and pastoralists to the COVID-19 pandemic and future pandemics.

### ii. Research and Development Stakeholders in Cape Verde briefed on CORAF Gender Strategy and sensitized on Gender issues

In February 2019, the CORAF Regional Gender and Social Development Advisor presented the CORAF Gender Strategy to participants at a one day Agricultural Research Forum in Praia, Cape Verde. She also sensitized participants on mainstreaming of gender issues in agricultural development and project implementation. She fully participated in a panel discussion on the topic *Research, innovation and technology transfer for the sustainable development of agricultural sector in West and Central Africa*. Through CORAF contributions at this panel discussion, the Cape Verdean agricultural research and development community were fully briefed on incorporating gender issues in agricultural and community development programs.

**Gender Mainstreaming Project Activities at CORAF Executive Secretariat**

### i. Capacity of ProPAD team strengthened to mainstream gender in project activities:

A mission was organized to Ndjamena, Chad to strengthen the capacity of ProPAD project implementing partners in gender mainstreaming into project activities. ProPAD Stakeholders designed and adopted a roadmap to implement and monitor gender activities during project implementation.

### ii. Stakeholders of launched projects sensitized for gender awareness to ensure effective gender mainstreaming in project activities:

CORAF launched new projects, including i. the EU funded ABEE project, ii. the PAIRED project, and iii the Biorisks project. During launching, project implementing partners were sensitized to consider gender aspects in projects’ various activities as well as how to develop frameworks for gender mainstreaming in these projects.

In August, we organized an online Gender Training for the PAIRED project partners. Twenty three participants, including 8 females, who attended the training, were briefed on critical gender sensitive activities for the project. Additionally, in collaboration with the World Bank, we developed a new Food Resilience System Project incorporating a Gender Action Plan.
iii. Gender mainstreaming initiatives led by Regional and International Partners

Through CORAF extensive gender network, together with our expertise in promoting mainstreaming gender issues in agricultural and community development initiatives, CORAF received regular requests for support on gender matters from partner organizations including the CGIAR, NGOs, Farmers Organizations, national governments and Regional Economic Communities.

During 2020, CORAF provided technical support in the following areas.

• CORAF remained a member of the IFPRI led project AU – Biennial Review Technical Working Group on Commitment 4 “Eradicating Poverty through Agriculture”. During the project Team Working Group meeting held in October, the CORAF Regional Gender and Social Development Advisor provided critical analysis of the gender aspects in the BR report.

• The CORAF Regional Gender and Social Development Advisor participated actively and contributed substantially at meetings of the steering committee of the CILSS project, Integrated and Secure Livestock Farming and Pastoralism in West Africa. She made valuable inputs to improve the draft Conflict Prevention and Management Guide.

• The CORAF Regional Gender and Social Development Advisor made significant contributions to a review of the 2019 Regional Agriculture Joint Sector Review on Youth and Gender of ECOWAS.

• At the October meeting of the ICRISAT Grain Legumes and Drylands Cereals (GLDC) Independent Advisory Committee, the CORAF Regional Gender and Social Development Advisor presented valuable comments on the state of implementation of gender activities and recommended improvements.

• At the launch of the CGIAR Gender Platform during the September African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF), the CORAF Regional Gender and Social Development Advisor served in the Panel of Experts that discussed the topic Rise Up Together: Women’s Role in Transforming African Food Systems. She highlighted the importance of gender equality in transforming African Food Systems and Feed Cities.
Partnerships

Strategic Partnerships Established and Strengthened

The concept of partnerships remained a major operational agenda of CORAF. Developing and nurturing partnerships with national, regional and international development partners, institutions and associations was strongly promoted to enable CORAF to deliver on its four results of the CORAF Strategic (2018–2027) and CORAF Operational Plan (2018–2022). During this reporting year, we engaged with a wide range of partners, including researchers, producers, processors, development partners, sub-regional organizations, NGOs, and policymakers, to contribute to the results’ achievements.

Institutional Partnerships

CORAF signed seven Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with strategic partners such as AKADEMIYA2063, and the Seed Systems Group (SSG) for collaboration in increased evidence-based planning and research to develop strong seed systems in the sub-region.

CORAF also established strong collaboration with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), to foster scientific exchanges and cooperation in rice research and development.

Figure 2.1 illustrates the categories of CORAF institutional partnerships.

![Figure 2.1 Categories of CORAF Institutional Partnerships](image_url)
Scientific and Technical Partners
CORAF Scientific and Technical partners, including the CGIAR International Agricultural Research Institutes, and Non-Governmental Organizations participated in planning, design and implementation of CORAF research and development activities.

Scientific Partners

CGIAR:
The CGIAR Centers operating in the CORAF region worked closely with CORAF to develop technologies and innovations, particularly in backstopping the National Agricultural Research Institutes and other NARS organizations. CGIAR Centers collaborated with CORAF in developing the CORAF led Component 2: Sustainability & Adaptive Capacity of the Food System’s Productive Base of the World Bank project Food System Resilience Program. The partners involved in this successful collaboration included CCAFS, IITA, AfricaRice, ICRISAT, ILRI, World Fish, and World Vegetables.

Furthermore, we collaborated with FARA, AFAAS, ASARECA, and CCARDESA to implement the CAADP-XP4 project. These partners undertook baseline studies, mapping of existing climate-relevant initiatives, and finalized vital indicators and targets.

NARS: The Director Generals of the 23 NARIs in the CORAF mandate region nominated focal persons in each country for the implementation of the CAADP-XP4 project. These NARS focal persons would coordinate the collection of vital national data including scientists, partners, and production data.

University of Félix Houphouët-Boigny: In 2019, CORAF signed an MoU with the University of Félix Houphouet-Boigny, Cote d’Ivoire, for collaboration in implementing the second phase of the West Africa Virus Epidemiology (WAVE) project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the European Union.

USAID Feed the Future Innovation Labs: Collaboration between CORAF and USAID was made through an agreement between CORAF and Kansas State University KSU, for the implementation of iREACH, the Innovation, Research, Extension and Advisory Coordination Hub (iREACH) program. KSU will support staff costs for the project manager for two years while CORAF will mainstream the position thereafter. iREACH initiative is an important feature under CORAF-USAID-KSU collaboration.

Technical Partners
The major technical partners that worked with CORAF were Development AID, AATF, AGRA, and IFDC. DevelopmentAID: CORAF collaborated extensively with a Cyprus based agency, https://www.developmentaid.org/ and negotiations were initiated for the following services:
• DevAid has a database of several donors which CORAF can scan funding forecasts ahead of time allowing us to proactively develop proposals.

• This database serves as an aggregator of funding and grants and can be filtered by the Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security, Climate Change sectors of CORAF

• CORAF information in the public domain will be updated to highlight our programs.

(AATF) **The Africa Agricultural Technology Foundation:** We collaborated with AATF in the development of the Regional Agri-input Strategy and in the implementation of the Seed Regulations.

(AGRA) **Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa:** Working with AGRA, we developed the Regional Agri-input Strategy and implementation of the seed regulations. AGRA also considered funding of a proposal on Seed Purity and Biosafety in West Africa.

(IFDC) **International Fertilizer Development Corporation:** Several agri-input packages were jointly developed with IFDC while a Fertilizer and Soil Map for West Africa was updated. Recommendations on improved seeds and appropriate fertilizer application regimes were designed to increase productivity of the main crops in the agro-ecological zones of West Africa.

**The Private Sector**

CORAF recognizes the importance of the private sector in enhancing the quality, efficiency, and impact of improving agricultural production and productivity, increased incomes and enriched livelihoods of West and Central Africa farmers and entrepreneurs. CORAF engaged with private sector entities to provide improvements in competitiveness and markets of the agricultural system in West and Central Africa.

**The Agri-input Platform** is an active platform for the engagement of private sector stakeholders. The platform was established in 2019 to link partners operating in the agri-input sector. A second edition of the Platform partnership meeting was held in Abuja, Nigeria in February 2020 involving CORAF and sixty-six participants, including CORAF, from 25 organizations (see Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.3). Over 50% of the participating organizations were representatives of the agri-inputs private sector, while ten seed industry organizations participated.

**Figure 2.2 Participants at the Agri-input partners meeting in Abuja, Nigeria**
The African Seed Trade Association (AFSTA) is the apex seed organization representing the African seed industry. AFSTA annually convenes the largest meeting of seed stakeholders in Africa. CORAF participated in the 2020 annual Congress of AFSTA held in Lusaka, Zambia. At this Congress CORAF presented its activities in the Seed Sector in West and Central Africa focusing on the establishment of national and regional quarantine pests list for seeds and an update of the implementation of the harmonized seed regulation in the ECOWAS Region.

Development Partners

USAID: The USAID funded project PAIRED is one of CORAF flagship projects consisting of three components. Activities of the PAIRED project are crucial in the realization of the four CORAF results. Within the context of the PAIRED project, CORAF forged relationships with Innovation Laboratories benefiting from the expertise of top U.S. universities to address the challenges of sufficient food production, storage, processing and marketing.

EU/IFAD collaboration: In collaboration with sub Regional Organizations and FARA together with AFAAS, CORAF was involved in implementing the CAADP-XP4 project.

World Bank: Following the successful implementation of WAAPP, CORAF participated in the development of a World Bank project proposal on Food System Resilience Program (FSRP). CORAF led the development of Component 2: Sustainability & Adaptive Capacity of the Food System’s Productive Base.

UNICEF: CORAF contacted the UNICEF Focal Point, Dr Noël Zagre, for Nutrition in West and Central Africa. The CORAF team discussed areas for collaboration through a project idea which aims to strengthen food security, and build the nutritional capacities of mothers and
young children during the first 1000 days of the child’s life to prevent child malnutrition. The approach also emphasize gender aspects, communication for behavioral change, community dialogue, community capacity building in agriculture and nutrition. Dr Caroline M. Sobgui is designated the CORAF focal point for this initiative.

(SDC) Swiss Development Cooperation: Negotiations with SDC were initiated for a possible support by the SDC for AR4D in the region.

Regional Economic Communities and the African Union

(ECOWAS) Economic Community of West Africa States: CORAF continued to function as the technical arm of ECOWAS. This function involved overall coordination of AR4D, hosting the Secretariat of the West Africa Seeds and Seedling Committee, as well as coordinating the development of the Agri-input Strategy.

CILSS: CILSS is part of the tripartite (ECOWAS-CILSS-UEMOA) agreement that designated CORAF as the secretariat of the Regional Seeds and Seedling Committee. CORAF participated in the development of the second phase of the Projet Régional d’Appui au Pastoralisme au Sahel (PRAPS).

(ECCAS) Economic Community of Central Africa States: CORAF continued to solicit for the required budgetary support to effectively provide services to them.

(AU) African Union: CORAF participated in the African Union Commission workshop in Nairobi, Kenya in December 2019 to (i) review the draft Report of the state of the seed sector in Africa and (ii) to develop an action plan for the next decade of the African Seed and Biotechnology Program. Based on CORAF leading role in the seed sector in West and Central Africa and its contribution over the past ten years, in the design of the 10-year ASBP Program (2020-2029), CORAF is envisaged to play a pivotal role in regional coordination for the enhancement of policy and regulatory framework for efficient seeds system, as well as governance and institutional arrangements for ASBP.
Resource Mobilization

Strategic Positioning and Resource Mobilization

During this reporting year, we undertook an aggressive resource mobilization effort to ensure that adequate financial and associated resources were available for coordination and program implementation. Successful resource mobilization was predicated on strategic positioning of CORAF in the agricultural development agenda of West and Central Africa countries.

Strategic Positioning

CORAF is now firmly established in regional agro-ecosystem organizations that are active in agricultural research and development in West and Central Africa. During the year, CORAF participated in several virtual meetings to review and plan ongoing projects and programs implemented under the auspices of ECOWAS. These projects included:

- ECOWAP Donors Group meeting for the Joint Sector Review of ECOWAP (September 2020).
- Joint Advisory Committee of EnGRAIS and PAIRED Projects for West Africa (September 2020).
- 36th Annual Meeting of the Food Crisis Prevention Network (December 2020).

CORAF leadership was confirmed in the Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development (SAF-GRAD), of the African Union through a series of high-level discussions launched in July 2020 on the theme “Boosting Agricultural Research and Innovation to achieve the Agenda 2063 Target in Africa”. The first topic of the theme was Innovative Financing Mechanism for Agricultural Research and Development in Africa—“Towards achieving the African Union’s recommendation of expenditure of 1% GDP on Research and Development.” During these consultations, CORAF experience with the WAAPP funding model was commended.
Furthermore, CORAF fully participated in meetings and workshops organized in October and November 2020 to establish a West Africa Alliance of the “Long-term Europe-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership for Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (LEAP4FNSSA)” jointly set up by the African Union and the European Union under the Horizon 2020 program. This initiative brought elements of diversification into nontraditional partnerships for CORAF.

CORAF also participated in a November high-level event jointly organized by FAO and TAP on “Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators: a Critical Resource for Agricultural Innovation System Capacity Development” The event was moderated by the Chief Scientist of USAID Bureau of Resilience and Food Security. The potential outcome of this event for CORAF is hosting the Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators Platform.

Resource Mobilization Initiatives

Proactive diversification of funding sources and self-financing for CORAF

CORAF hosted the signing of a major donor agreement to support the implementation of the CORAF Strategic Plan. In addition, following ongoing discussions to finalize CORAF contribution to the World Bank regional project, CORAF secured financing for two important initiatives as follows……

i. The Regional Project for the Dissemination of Agricultural Research Products in West Africa - Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

An official signing ceremony in November 2020 formalized CORAF partnership with the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), culminating in a funding agreement in support of the CORAF Strategic Plan. The agreement was signed by the Chair of the Governing Board for CORAF and the Swiss Ambassador to Senegal in presence of the Ambassador of Niger to Senegal, the Honorary Consul of Tchad, the First Counselor representing the Ambassador of Burkina Faso to Senegal as well as the Chair of FARA, the media and staff from the CORAF Executive Secretariat. The US$ 11 million (5.6 billion FCFA) agreement funds the CORAF Strategic Plan (2018-2027) and covering the period 2020 to 2024.

This funding constitutes the first phase of a 12-year SDC commitment for an overall US$ 33 million (18 billion FCFA) to CORAF. SDC will support the promotion of research products through strengthening regional capacities to coordinate research and to disseminate agricultural technologies and innovations in the countries. Emphasis is on the use of New Information and Communication Technologies (NICTs) through training and capacity development of women, young farmers, herders, and entrepreneurs in West Africa.
ii. The World Bank’s Regional Project to Support Food Security in Response to Climate Change

To finalize the project development phase of the World Bank new Regional Project Supporting Food Security in Response to Climate Change, CORAF organized a Stakeholder Consultation Workshop to brainstorm on solutions to increase the Sustainability and Adaptive Capacity of the Food System’s Productive Base as part of the Food System Resilience Program (FSRP). Funding for CORAF to coordinate implementation of this project was projected at US$ 18 Million for the initial phase (2021-2024) of this project.

The involvement and contributions of CORAF to the project development process attracted other partners including HarvestPlus of IFPRI and Wageningen University and Research (WUR) to explore opportunities for collaboration with CORAF.

International Development Research Centre (IDRC) - Impacts of Government’s COVID-19 responses on food systems and livelihoods

In June 2020, IDRC launched a call for proposals to collect and analyze evidence from sub-Saharan Africa, and to document how responses to economic and health shocks associated to COVID-19 undermine food production, availability and access, and how it has impacted on gender relations and equity for the most vulnerable groups. The CORAF proposal was one of the submissions selected for funding. Hopefully, the findings of the investigations will inform policy formulation that will facilitate stronger resilience of farmers and pastoralists to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as future pandemics. The project is expected to last one year, with a budget of approximately 750,000 CAD.

Tony Blair Institute for Global Change

In November 2020, CORAF was engaged in crucial discussions with the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change (TBI). There is some synergy between CORAF strategic objectives and TBI’s involvement in matching investment in agriculture and bridging the gap to private sector entities that are interested in agricultural innovations and technology uptake. The expertise of TBI in linking demand to suppliers and developers of innovations will be matched with CORAF network of National Agriculture Research Institutes and the National Centers of Specialization as key factors in developing and disseminating local innovations and research investments to SMEs and the private sector.
Mobilizing Financial Resources

Funding the CORAF Operational Plan 2018–2022

The CORAF Operational Plan is designed to constitute an enabling policy environment that contributes to achievement of the objectives of regional agricultural initiatives such as the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) and the UEMOA Agricultural Policy.

The estimated funding for the Operational Plan is US$60,892,556 comprising US$ 52,239,559 for Research and Development and US$ 8,663,027 for Institutional support. Since inception of implementation of the Operational Plan, US$ 55,735,000 comprising US$ 17,508,000 for phased out projects and US$ 38,227,000 for ongoing projects were mobilized. In effect 92% of the estimated funds for the CORAF Operational Plan had been mobilized at midterm of the current plan.

Projects submitted for funding - Efforts were continued to mobilize additional funds for implementation of the Operational Plan 2018–2022. Projects amounting to US$ 23,045,000 were submitted to donors for funding.

Mobilizing Human Capital Resources

In addition to mobilizing financial resources, we made intensive efforts to mobilize the required highly qualified human capital resources to effectively implement the CORAF Operational Plan 2018-2022.

CORAF Core Staff - The Operational Plan provided for a senior management team consisting of an Executive Director, Director of Research and Innovation a Director of Corporate Services, and a Manager of Communications and Marketing. This management team is supported by an Internal Auditor attached to the Board of Directors, a Head of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security, a Head of Policy, Institutions, Markets and Trade, a Head of Gender, Youth and Social Equity, and a Head of Knowledge Management and Foresight, a Head of Partnerships and Contracts, a Head of Finance and Accounts, a Head of Procurement and Logistics, and a Head of Human Resources. The complete senior management team is in now place and fully functional. The Monitoring and Evaluation Expert was designated as head of the Knowledge Management Unit while the Program Officer for WAAPP and the Gender Officer were designated as Focal points for the Food and Nutrition Security Unit and the Gender, Youth and Social Equity Advisor, respectively.

CORAF Roster of Expertise - We mobilized a critical mass of experts to serve as implementing partners in collaborating institutions and as consultants.

Specialists: We launched an online questionnaire to compile a Register of Specialists in the CORAF mandate area. The response to the call was overwhelming and as at May, over 1,100 specialists had been registered from 71 institutions including NARIS, the Universities and CGIAR.

Consultants: To reduce the cost of regular recruitment of consultants, a call was made for prospective consultancy firms and individual consultants, to be included in the CORAF Register of Consultants who would be invited to undertake the variety CORAF assignments. As at June 2020, a total of 5 firms and 180 individual consultants were registered in the CORAF Register of Consultants.
Governance

Activities of the Governance Bodies

The 28th Ordinary Session of the CORAF Governing Board was held virtually in July 2020 to finalize the amended minutes which were subsequently adopted at the 29th Ordinary Session of the Governing Board. In compliance with the decisions of the 28th Ordinary Session of the Governing Board, two calls of expression of interest were launched to (i) support CORAF in developing a strategy for strengthening its presence in Central Africa and (ii) to conduct a mid-term assessment of the CORAF Transition Strategy.

In November, the CORAF Executive Secretariat convened the Sixteenth ordinary session of the CORAF Scientific and Technical Committee to consolidate efforts of the STC members to effectively guide scientific excellence in line with the new Strategic and Operational Plans. The work plan and budget for projects and programs for 2021 were reviewed and recommendations were made for effective implementation.

Memberships and Chairmanship of the STC were renewed for a second 3-year term and a succession plan for STC membership was endorsed.

The Governing Board convened the 4th Ordinary Session of the Executive Committee in December to review plans for the 13th Ordinary Session of the General Assembly in Yaoundé in April 2021. Later, Cameroon declined hosting the Ordinary Session of the General Assembly; consequently the Governing Board referred the matter to the Commission of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), which contacted other Central African countries. Finally, the Marshal of Chad, President of the Republic, and Head of Government, accepted to host the 13th Ordinary Session of the General Assembly in N’djaména in April 2021. However, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was impossible to organize this meeting on the specific dates. Therefore, the Executive Committee of the Governing Board decided to organize the 13th Ordinary Session of the General Assembly in two parts as follows:
• A Virtual Business Meeting scheduled for April 2021 dedicated to the renewal of CORAF governance bodies and revision of Operational Manuals.

• Face-to-face scientific exchanges in January 2022 in N’Djamena, Chad.

CORAF constituencies and stakeholders were notified of these arrangements for the 13th Ordinary Session of the General Assembly.

Review of Statutory Documents and Organizational Performance

Organizational Strategy and Governance
Periodic review of statutory documents is an integral part of CORAF quality assurance system management. Following Governing Board approval of the terms of reference to conduct a mid-term assessment of CORAF Institutional Transition Strategy, the Consultants selected began the assignment in December 2020 with the expected completion date of February 2021. This effort constitutes the first phase of activities to conduct an audit of CORAF and to determine the effectiveness of current operations.

Furthermore, we recruited Legal and Public Law experts to review the current governance tools to guide CORAF leadership and staff in continuous maintenance of transparency, accountability, quality, and integrity of the delivery of services. This document was approved by the Governing Board during the 28th Ordinary Session.

Organizational Performance Management

During this year, we strengthened management tools and provided support to program implementation through the following non-routine tasks:

i. Review of CORAF Standard Operating Procedures to streamline and integrate the system into an automated online platform. Mazars, the appointed firm, completed this task and presented a report to the CORAF Governing Board.

ii. Review of CORAF Human Resources Policy and Management in relation to adoption of best practices. The exercise included a benchmarking study with three of the four ex-CAADP Pillar IV regional organizations. Deloitte & Touche, which was appointed to undertake this task, completed its work and presented a report to the CORAF Governing Board.

CORAF Outstanding Contributions

During the year, a contribution of FCFA 9,000,000 was received from INIDA, for 2001 to 2008 and for 2020. The Executive Secretariat continued to engage with resources persons to assist with the collection of contribution arrears from organizations not represented in the CORAF Governing Board.
Administration & Finance

Administration
The Department of Corporate Services successfully organized restitution of the evaluation mission conclusions of the human resources management system. The department also provided technical support to the Executive Director and the program team in development of the budget of the Swiss Cooperation agreement which was signed in November.

The global COVID-19 pandemic seriously affected implementation of CORAF project activities. Consequently we made adequate program adjustments and adaptations including re-examination of the value in use of development costs and the assets assigned to them. CORAF Executive Secretariat took appropriate actions to ensure delivery of the CORAF results and achievement of the objectives of the CORAF Strategic Plan (2018-2027).

Finance
The Department of Corporate Services efficiently monitored the quantum of resources mobilized for implementation of the CORAF Operational Plan. Since launching the CORAF Operational Plan, an amount of US$ 66,654,000 had been mobilized, including US$17,508,000 for closed projects and US$ 49,146,000 for ongoing and approved projects. At the mid-point of implementation of the current Operational Plan, the total funding estimate of US$60,892,556 was exceeded by US$ 5,761,444. Thus the funds mobilized and secured as at November 2020 for the implementation of ongoing projects amounted to US$ 39,321,369. Figure 3.1 illustrates CORAF funding status as at November 2020.
For funding support, CORAF targeted important partners such as the NARIs, the RECs, namely ECOWAS and UEMOA, CILSS, CGIAR and major financial partners, including USAID, the World Bank, the European Union and IDRC. Positive outcomes from engagement with the private sector resulted in the contribution of FCFA 5 million from the Neema Agricole du Faso SA (NAFASO) Seed Company in Burkina Faso into CORAF endowment fund. However, the challenge of funding CORAF core operations remains, and this issue will be fully addressed as the main agenda of the Executive Secretariat in 2021.

Following the final Grand Thornton and COFIMA audit of CORAF accounts for 2019, the unqualified accounts were certified. Through financing from the PAIRED project, we implemented recommendations from the diagnostic report of the MECA conducted fiduciary management of CORAF partner institutions, particularly the National Centers of Specialization.

Despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, CORAF was firmly established as a powerful organization in our geographical and transactional space. Financing the 2018-2022 Operational Plan was completed, strategic and diversified partnerships were established. The Executive Secretariat now enjoys the privileges conferred by its renewed Headquarters Agreement.

**Communication and Marketing**

Through Communication and Marketing, CORAF established itself as an important partner in the complex ecosystem of agricultural development stakeholders in West and Central Africa. During this year, we introduced a wide range of virtual and social media tools. For example, compilation of media reports of the official program launch events showed positive mention of CORAF.
The rapidly growing healthy CORAF relationship with donors and development partners was illustrated through several invitations for CORAF to participate in global press conferences to highlight innovative solutions to address issues of climate change. Together with ISRA, CIRAD, and the European Union, CORAF showcased some of the ABEE project innovations on people of the Sahel at a worldwide broadcast press conference which was organized in partnership with the Senegal Press Club and the EU Headquarters in Brussels in October 2020.

We also made concerted efforts through public outreach to ensure that CORAF becomes a leading resource partner, and not merely an implementing agency of third-party programs.

Furthermore, we consolidated our web platforms. Over 60 articles were published on the main website attracting over 88,000 viewers. CORAF social media following amounted to 193,000 on Facebook, 10,000 on Twitter, and 244,000 on YouTube. We produced monthly newsletters, which were distributed through over 5000 email addresses. Through our main corporate website, our communication activities reached about 8 million on social media and about 88,000 viewers.

Thus CORAF increased visibility was evident in the resources mobilized, new MoUs signed, strengthened strategic positioning of CORAF, and changing public perception of CORAF, to the extent that many organizations confidently requested for CORAF support in strengthening their communications systems.
Appreciating to Our Donors and Development Partners

CORAF enjoys solid support from International donors, Foundations, Bilateral agencies, Regional and African development organizations, as well as international agricultural research centers of the CGIAR. We also receive support from partners in the national agricultural research systems of the 23 CORAF member countries, NGOs, Regional Economic Communities, Farmer-based Organizations, Sub-regional Organizations, ASARECA and CCARDESA, AFAAS, and FARA, as well as with the Private Sector in West and Central Africa.

At CORAF, we are profoundly grateful and appreciate the financial and related support from our donors and development partners whose support has enabled us deliver on the four CORAF results.

Your support enables us to be proud of a vision when people and communities in West and Central Africa achieve sustainable food and nutrition security, and improved livelihoods through high increases in agricultural production and productivity, as well as promoting competitiveness and markets.
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