West African Farmers to Soon Access Seeds and Fertilizers Data Online

Key seeds and fertilizers actors in West Africa are at the last stage of designing an online tool that will soon help address the challenges of accessing these critical inputs by farmers.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/West Africa provides funding for this initiative, and the Feed the Future Enhancing Growth through Regional Agricultural Input Systems (EnGRAIS) and Partnership for Agricultural Research, Education and Development (PAIRED) Projects, implemented by the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) and CORAF, respectively, are leading it. Experts from IFDC, CORAF, and the private sector are meeting in the Senegalese capital, Dakar, August 12-16, 2019, to hammer out the remaining details of the online tool.

The Fertilizer and Seed Recommendation for West Africa Map, abbreviated FeSeRWAM, will be a Geographical Information System (GIS) web-based platform capturing, storing, and visualizing recommendations data on seeds and fertilizers.

The primary advantage provided by this tool for market actors in the seed and fertilizer value chains is that it opens new paths for the dissemination, sharing, display, and processing of their spatial information on the Internet. With access to seeds and fertilizer remaining an intractable challenge in West Africa, experts think online options could further facilitate access. Internet penetration and mobile usage are on the increase in most West African countries.

“The FeSeRWAM will provide low-cost and efficient ways of delivering recommendations information on seeds and fertilizers to farmers in our region,” says Dr. Caroline Makamto Sobgui, a technology scaling-up expert working for CORAF.

This project seeks to leverage these advantages to better serve farmers who need quality input to increase productivity and stem the food and nutrition insecurity in the region.

“The new FeSeRWAM would allow users to access the most appropriate fertilizer and seed recommendations as well as good agricultural practices that they can immediately use. This tool should substantially increase the demand for appropriate fertilizer and improved seed,” says EnGRAIS Chief of Party, Mr. Robin Wheeler.