Guinea Bissau Seeks CORAF’s Support to Rebuild Research System

The government of Guinea Bissau has requested CORAF to support them in rebuilding the country’s national agricultural research system.

At a brief meeting held on Saturday, February 15, 2020, in Dakar, Senegal, Jorge A.S. Oliveira, the Secretary-General at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, invited CORAF to integrate Guinea Bissau in regional research and development interventions.

Guinea Bissau has developed its national agriculture investment plan. Research is central to the strategy. But with several years of under-investments in science, technology, and innovation, the potential has been substantially reduced.

“The national agricultural research system has collapsed. We have to reconstruct everything anew as the infrastructure is dilapidating,” said Jorge A.S. Oliveira.

“We want CORAF to be more present and active in Guinea Bissau,” said the senior government official.

The National Agricultural Research Institute (INPA) is Guinea Bissau’s only public research body. It conducts crop and livestock research. INPA is also involved in the production of plant and animal material, the diffusion of new technologies, the provision of agricultural training, and the dissemination of scientific and technical information.

Possible Areas of Collaboration

With the implementation of critical programs over, CORAF has pivoted to seeking new support to develop further agriculture in West Africa.

“It is always an honor to know that partners appreciate our solutions, said Dr. Abdou Tenkouano, the Executive Director of CORAF.

“I am delighted that you have initiated your agriculture investment plan. It is a lot easier to determine which partners to work once you already have a plan. And I am happy Guinea Bissau has a clear vision of what it wants to do in terms of developing its agriculture.”

Through West Africa Agriculture Productivity Program, Fruit Fly, support to the maize, cotton, and livestock sector, West African Seed Programs, CORAF contributed substantially to advancing the research systems of most West African countries.

Both parties reviewed the ended projects and possible areas of collaboration in terms of rebuilding the research infrastructure, developing capacity, and working together with other West African countries.

“Guinea Bissau is well-placed to partner with other countries of the region,” said Dr. Tenkouano.

Four of the 23 countries in the CORAF coverage zone are Luxophone speaking. These include Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, and Guinea Bissau, and São Tomé and Príncipe.

CORAF has recently been active in its Luxophone member countries. In early 2020, CORAF held its Governing Board meeting in Praia, Cape Verde. There are plans to hold the next General Assembly of CORAF in Equatorial Guinea.
Jorge A.S. Oliveira, who is also a former official of the United States Agency for International Development, was accompanied by Rui Jorge Alves da Fonseca, Director of Cabinet at the Ministry of Agriculture and Bernado Cassamá, a Director in the same Ministry.

The CORAF Directors of Program, Corporate Services, and the Manager of Communications joined the Executive Director to welcome the Guinea Bissau's delegation.