



**LEADER DE L'INNOVATION AGRICOLE EN  
AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST ET DU CENTRE**  
LEADING AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION IN  
WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA



# ANNUAL REPORT

2023

*Transforming African  
agriculture with sustainable,  
innovative solutions*

A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of several stylized leaves in shades of yellow, green, and white, arranged in a fan-like pattern.

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# SIGLES ET ABRÉVIATIONS

<b>ABEE</b>	West Africa Breeding Networks and Extension Empowerment
<b>AfCFTA</b>	African Continental Free Trade Area
<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>AGRA</b>	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
<b>AGRHYMET</b>	Regional Climate Centre for West Africa and the Sahel
<b>AHC-STAFF</b>	Africa Human Capital, Science Technology and Agripreneurship for Food Security Framework
<b>APESS AR4D</b>	Association for the Promotion of Livestock in the Sahel and Savannah Agricultural research for development
<b>ARI</b>	Advanced Research Institution
<b>ASTI</b>	Agricultural science and technology indicators
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AWPB</b>	Annual Work Plan and Budget
<b>BoD</b>	Board of Directors
<b>CAADP (XP4)</b>	Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program
<b>CAP</b>	Common Agricultural Policy for Central Africa
<b>CARBAP</b>	African Banana and Plantain Research Center
<b>CEMAC</b>	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa
<b>CGIAR</b>	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
<b>CILSS</b>	Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
<b>CIRDES</b>	International Center for Research and Development on Livestock in Subhumid Zones
<b>COAFEV</b>	West African Catalog of Plant Species and Varieties
<b>COP</b>	Conference of the Parties
<b>CORAF</b>	West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus 2019
<b>CRA</b>	AGRHYMET Regional Center
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>CSV</b>	Climate-Smart Village
<b>ECCAS</b>	Economic Community of Central African States
<b>ECOWAP</b>	Agricultural policy of the Economic Community of West African States

<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>EMMP</b>	Environmental mitigation and monitoring plan
<b>ERF</b>	Environmental review form
<b>ES</b>	Executive Secretariat
<b>FAAP</b>	Framework for agricultural productivity in Africa
<b>FAME</b>	Farm Academy
<b>FAO</b>	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FARA</b>	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
<b>GA</b>	General Assembly
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information System
<b>IAR4D</b>	Integrated Agricultural Research for Development
<b>IAVAO</b>	Innovation and Varietal Improvement in West Africa
<b>ICRISAT</b>	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IEA</b>	Initial Environmental Assessment
<b>IFC</b>	International Finance Corporation
<b>ILRI</b>	International Livestock Research Institute
<b>IP</b>	Innovation Platforms
<b>iREACH</b>	Innovation, Research, Extension and Advisory Coordination Hub
<b>MELIA</b>	Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Impact Assessment
<b>NARES</b>	National Agricultural Research and Extension System
<b>NARI</b>	National Agricultural Research Institute
<b>NARS</b>	National Agricultural Research System
<b>NCoS</b>	National Center of Specialization
<b>NEPAD</b>	New partnership for Africa's development
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organization
<b>OP</b>	Operational Plan
<b>PAIRED</b>	Partnership for Agricultural Research, Education and Development in West Africa
<b>PERSUAP</b>	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan
<b>PICSA</b>	Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture
<b>PRAPS</b>	Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project

<b>PRASAC</b>	Regional center for applied research into the development of agricultural systems in Central Africa
<b>PROPAC</b>	Sub-regional platform of farmers' organizations in Central Africa
<b>ProPAD</b>	Strengthening Climate Resilience and Sustainable Agricultural Productivity in Chad
<b>SP</b>	Strategic Plan
<b>RAAF</b>	Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food
<b>RCoE</b>	Regional Center of Excellence
<b>REC</b>	Regional Economic Community
<b>ROPPA</b>	Network of farmers and producers' organizations in West Africa
<b>S3A</b>	Scientific Agenda for Agriculture in Africa
<b>SDGs</b>	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SRO</b>	Sub-regional Organization
<b>STC</b>	Scientific and Technical Committee
<b>T&amp;C</b>	Transferability and convertibility
<b>T&amp;I</b>	Technologies and Innovations
<b>TARSPro</b>	Scaling up agricultural technologies and innovations to increase the resilience of production systems and family farms in West and central Africa
<b>UEMOA</b>	West African Economic and Monetary Union
<b>USAID</b>	U.S. Agency for International Development
<b>WAAPP</b>	West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program
<b>WARSCC</b>	Regional Seed and Plant Committee of West Africa
<b>WASCAL</b>	West African Scientific Service Center on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use
<b>WASP</b>	West Africa Seed Program
<b>WAVE</b>	Virus epidemiology in West Africa
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>WCA</b>	West and Central Africa
<b>WFP</b>	United Nations World Food Program
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization

# I. FOREWORD

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORAF



### *Dear partners and colleagues,*

The year 2023 has been a significant milestone in CORAF's commitment towards transforming agricultural systems in West and Central Africa. With the support of our partners and our dynamic teams, we have been able to achieve tangible results that strengthen our mission.

The strategic deployment of CORAF in Central Africa, within the forest zone, testifies to our determination to strengthen our presence in key agroecological zones. Furthermore, the second edition of the Symposium on the State of Agri-Products Processing in West and Central Africa, held in Lomé, as well as the technical meetings on the Food System Resilience Program (FSRP), allowed us to make headway on such critical issues as food security and resilience in the face of crises.

In 2023, our projects made a significant contribution to achieving the objectives of the Strategic Plan 2018-2027, notably with the release of 128 new plant varieties registered in the regional catalog. We also launched the manual of harmonized procedures for the import and export of seeds which has led to strengthening the capacities of seed sector players through initiatives such as MITA and support for national programs.

CORAF has placed particular emphasis on inclusion, with increased support for youth and women, strengthening therefore their ability to play an active role in agricultural transformation. Strategic partnerships were renewed or established, notably with the International Water Management Institute, AfricaSeeds, and several other partners to consolidate our basis for future fruitful collaborations.

The year 2023 has also seen the renewal of our communication and knowledge management tools with the creation of a new website, the development of a communication strategy (2023-2027) and the establishment of communities of practice on foresight and monitoring-evaluation.

I would like to thank our technical and financial partners, our teams and all those who have contributed to these successes. Together, we will continue to work towards a resilient, sustainable and inclusive agriculture in West and Central Africa.

**Dr. Abdou TENKOUANO**

Executive Director of CORAF



**Transforming African  
agriculture with sustainable,  
innovative solutions**

## II. HIGHLIGHTS OF CORAF 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

### *PID 1 - Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security*

- Adoption and dissemination of the 2022 edition of the **Regional Catalog** of Plant Species and Varieties
- 128 new varieties** were released and registered in the regional catalog.
- Evaluation of the **centers of specialization** based on their performance and review of **investment plans**
- The Regional Center of Specialization on Fruit and Vegetable of Burkina has upgraded now to a **Regional Center of Excellence (RCoE)**

### *PID 2: Policies, Institutions, Markets and Trade*

- Development and adoption of a **regional manual of harmonized procedures** for the import and export of seeds in the ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS zones.
- Eighth statutory meeting of the **West African Regional Seed and Seedling Committee (WARSSC/CRSPA0)** in Bissau (Guinea Bissau), May 9 to 11, 2023
- WCA Agriculture Research Leaders Forum (CORAF-RLF)**, October 18 to 19, 2023, Praia, Cape Verde
- Symposium on the State of Agri-Products Processing in West and Central Africa**, November 23 to 25, 2023, Lome, Togo
- Participation in the 6th **Africa-Wide Agricultural Extension Week (AAEW) 2023**, November 6 to 10 in Abuja, Nigeria
- Organization of a **Market for Agricultural Innovations and Technologies (MITA)** from September 12 to 15, 2023 in Ouagadougou, Burkina-Faso, with a focus on **gender- and nutrition-sensitive** agricultural technologies and innovations.
- Support for national programs in the operationalization of national response plans (NRPs)
- Development of national response plans for each of the 10 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, DRC, Sierra Leone and Togo) and approval by the Ministry in charge of agriculture.

## PID 3: Gender, Youth and Social Equity

- Support for 95 students (29 PhD and 66 masters), including **25 women** in **10 countries**
- CORAF has begun building the institutional capacities in gender for **20 National Agricultural Research Systems** (NARSs) in West and Central Africa. The Gender Focal Points of these NARSs have received training and technical support for the development of Gender Action Plans.
- The “Gender and Seed Business” training program attracted **191 participants** from Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal; 62% of beneficiaries were women (118) and 45% were young people (86). More young women (53%) than young men (47%) attended the training courses.

## Monitoring & Evaluation, Knowledge Management and Foresight

- Final external evaluation of CORAF’s Operational Plan (OP) 2018-2022
- Establishment of the community of evaluation practitioners for the 23 countries in 2022 and subsequently trained on this MEL system in August 2023 in Burkina Faso.
- Deployment of the monitoring and evaluation system (MEL) and CORAF expert database / digitization of the M&E process
- Training on the MEL system in August 2023 in Burkina Faso for the community of evaluation practitioners set up by CORAF for the 23 countries.
- Formalization in June 2023 of the community of practice (CoP) on foresight analysis



## III. PROGRESS MADE AND RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2023

CORAF is committed to achieving the following four results under the Operational Plan 2023-2027: (i) Increased use of appropriate technologies and innovations in WCA; (ii) Increased adoption of strategic decision-making options for policies, institutions and markets; (iii) Strengthened institutional and human capacities in agricultural research for development; and (iv) Demand for agricultural knowledge from target client is facilitated and met.

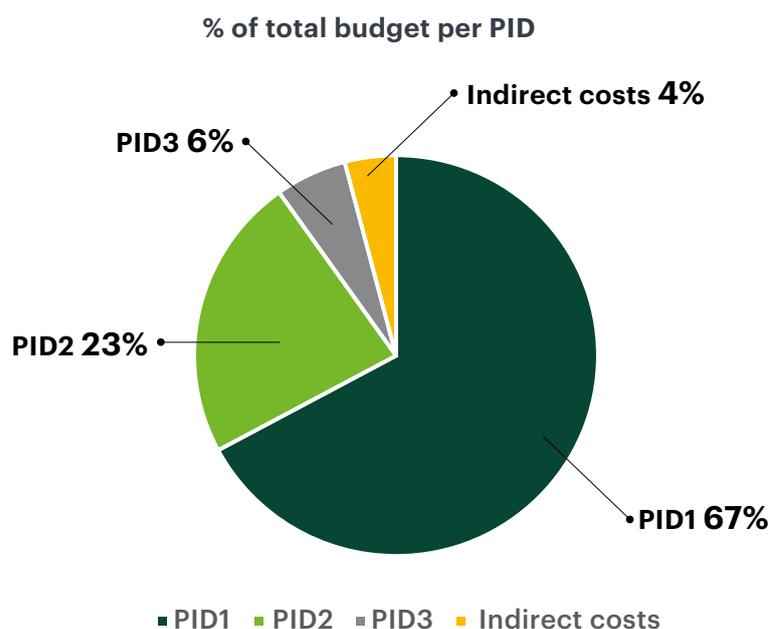
The above results will be achieved through three well-coordinated Priority Intervention Domains (PIDs): (i) PID 1 - Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security; (ii) PID 2 - Policy, Institutions, Markets and Trade; and (iii) PID 3 - Gender, Youth and Social Equity.

Implementation of the OP2023-2027 began in 2023 and capitalizes on the results achieved and lessons learned from the evaluation of the OP 2018-2022.

Some progress has been made and results achieved in this first year of implementation of the OP2023-2027.

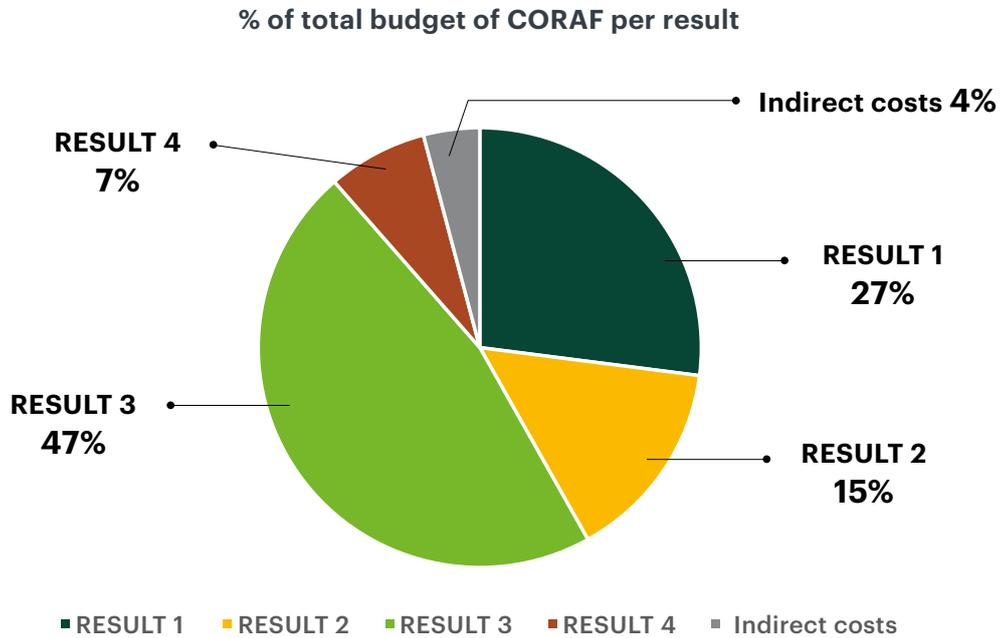
As a result, over the course of 2023, a number of activities have been implemented under the various programs to achieve CORAF's four results through the Priority Intervention Domains (PIDs). The figure below shows the breakdown of CORAF's 2023 budget per PID.

**Figure 1. Budget breakdown in % per PID**



All 3 of CORAF's PIDs appear to be covered by the 2023 budget. PID 1 (Agriculture, food and nutrition security) takes up around 2/3 of CORAF's budget.

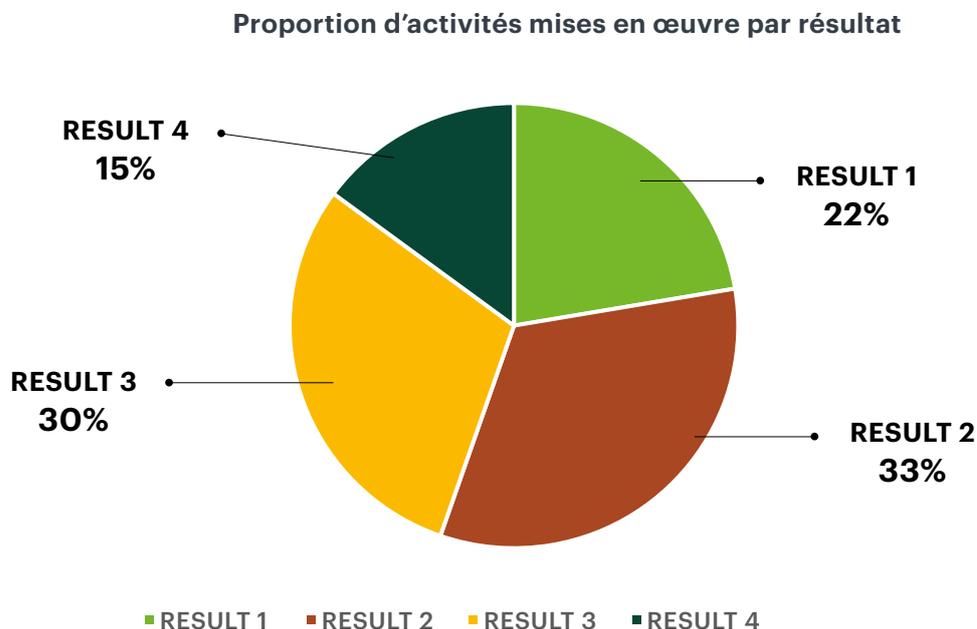
**Figure 2. Budget breakdown in % per CORAF results**



All four (4) results of CORAF are well reflected in the 2023 budget. Result 3 on strengthening institutional and human capacities in agricultural research for development accounted for around half of the 2023 budget.

However, the size of the budget does not necessarily mean the volume of activities implemented per result as illustrated by the figure below:

**Figure 3. Proportion of activities implemented per result**



## IV.1. PID 1: AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

This PID deals with issues relating to sustainable agriculture, including crop production, livestock and fisheries, with close links to nutrition, food security and human health. It also focuses on the efficient management of natural resources and biodiversity conservation.

### IV.1.1. Analysis of PID 1 results

**Table 1. PID 1 Results: Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security**

<b>PID 1 - AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY</b>	
<b>Planning / Activities carried out in 2023</b>	<b>Progress made Outputs &amp; results achieved in 2023</b>
<b>FRSP evaluation of the upgrading of 7 centers of specialization for the production of climate-smart technologies</b>	The two centers of excellence on dry cereals, and roots and tubers have maintained their status; the center on fruit and vegetables has been upgraded to center of excellence, the centers on livestock and rice have kept their status as centers of excellence, while the center on mangrove rice has remained a national center of excellence. Letters of agreement have been signed with the host institutions of the centers of excellence
<b>Financial resources mobilized by FSRP/PRSA, TARSPPro, iREACH to showcase technologies in 9 countries</b>	More than <b>120 climate-smart technologies</b> have been selected to be showcased at the <b>9 technology parks</b> .
<b>FSRP and CAADP-XP4 co-organize a MITA to showcase climate-smart, gender-responsive and nutrition-sensitive T&amp;I</b>	More than 190 end-users attended this MITA and selected <b>70 T&amp;I</b> for adoption. A park containing <b>10 technologies</b> was established to demonstrate over <b>120 climate-smart technologies</b> to visit.
<b>Strengthening the capacity of the TARSPPro project beneficiaries to establish climate-smart villages</b>	A total of <b>19 players</b> , including <b>04 women</b> and <b>06 young people</b> , were trained in the use of the Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture (PICSA).
<b>Baseline survey of 5 climate-smart villages in TARSPPro countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger)</b>	<b>5 final reports</b> on the baseline survey of climate-smart villages produced
<b>Variety trials/participatory evaluation including short-cycle and intermediate-cycle varieties were conducted under the ABEE project</b>	<b>4,226 producers</b> , including <b>35% women</b> , attended the demonstration of <b>917 participatory trials</b>

## DIP 1 - AGRICULTURE, SÉCURITÉ ALIMENTAIRE ET NUTRITIONNELLE

<p><b>Adoption of the updated regional catalog as customized by the characteristics of the regional seed committee</b></p>	<p><b>128 new varieties</b> have been released in the regional catalog</p>
<p><b>Pooling CAADP-XP4 and AICCRA resources to develop a strategy for adaptation to climate variability and change in Central Africa</b></p>	<p>A <b>regional support program</b> for pro-CSA platforms has been established to meet the needs in CSA knowledge and technologies, agroecology and NDC alliances</p>
<p><b>AICCRA project support for (i) the establishment and capacity building of a community of practice on foresight analysis and (ii) the development of a regional pest and disease outbreak preparedness and response plan</b></p>	<p>A <b>15-member</b> community of practice has been <b>certified</b> to support CORAF starting with pest and disease management.</p> <p>The AICCRA project has developed a regional preparedness and response plan to improve the management of pest and disease outbreaks in West and Central Africa and 2 submitted it to ECOWAS for approval and launch</p>
<p><b>Development and operationalization of a visual database for the recognition of viral disease symptoms by the BIORISKS project</b></p>	<p><b>1,460 people, 51% of them women and 27% young people</b>, have learned to recognize cassava diseases thanks to the <b>Nuru</b> application installed on <b>260 smartphones</b></p>
<p><b>Establishment of 10 agricultural technology parks in 9 CORAF countries to support the transfer of agricultural technologies and facilitate agricultural development.</b></p>	<p>Agricultural technology parks have been set up by national agricultural research institutes in Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo to showcase over 500 proven technologies with high adoption potential, with support from FSRP, iREACH and TARSPPro</p>
<p><b>As part of the activities of CORAF's agricultural technology parks, open days, guided tours and capacity-building activities were organized with the support of FSRP; TARSPPro and iREACH</b></p>	<p>A total of <b>55 open days</b> and guided tours were organized, attended by <b>1,764 women</b> and <b>2,481 men</b>, while capacity-building activities for farmers in agricultural production, post-harvest processing and other areas reached out to <b>447 men</b> and <b>233 women</b></p>
<p><b>Strengthening capacities in technology transfer and of the research system in The Gambia</b></p>	<p>The assessment of the capacity-building needs of the NARI (National Agricultural Research Institute) and the NSS (National Seed Secretariat) was carried out, and <b>7 innovation platforms</b> were revitalized and/or established to support technology transfer. CORAF has also helped the Ministry of Agriculture to develop an agricultural extension strategy</p>
<p><b>Strengthening the capacities of pro-CSA and agroecology platforms in The Gambia and Cape Verde through the CAADP-XP4 project</b></p>	<p>More than <b>45 players</b> from the national platforms received training in the methodological approach to assessing the climate-smartness of agricultural practices and technologies; methodologies for scaling up climate-smart technologies and practices; and the design of pro-CSA projects.</p>

Les défis à relever dans le cadre du DIP1 sont les suivants :

- 🍌 Effects of climate change on the production of high value-added food and non-food crops, livestock and fisheries.
- 🍌 Managing foreign invasive pests in emergency.
- 🍌 Water resource management, with a focus on improving farm and watershed productivity.
- 🍌 Promoting soil fertility and improving conservation.



## IV.1.2. Progress made per CORAF results

The next section shows the achievements of ongoing projects under PID1 with regard to the four CORAF results in 2023.

### IV.1.2.1. Result 1: Increased use of appropriate technologies and innovations

#### Establishment of agricultural technology parks:

The main purpose was the establishment of technology and innovation parks to significantly increase the uptake of advanced technologies and innovations that the research centers have developed by improving the information sharing on these T&I.

For the year 2023, CORAF has supported each of the centers of specialization to set up a technology park co-financed by EACH, TARSPRO, and FSRP. Following the

signature of these agreements, funds were transferred to Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Mali, Niger, Togo; Chad and Senegal for effective implementation. As a result, to date at least 500 proven technologies with high adoption potential are under demonstration in the 10 agricultural technology parks established. Over the past season, 55 open days and guided tours were organized for agricultural stakeholders, representing an average of 5.5 days or guided tours per park.



Photo 1: Open Day in Mali

These open days and guided tours saw the participation of 4245 agricultural actors, 41% of whom were women, including representatives of farmers/processors, the agricultural private sector, including seed companies, agricultural equipment manufacturers, students and decision-makers.



Capacity building activities at national level in agricultural production, post-harvest processing and pest management were attended by 447 men and 233 women. At regional level, 50 actors involved in the management of agricultural technology parks attended capacity building sessions in monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management, strategic communication and partnership development.



Photo 2: Technology being demonstrated at the Davié technology park in Togo.

### Organization of a Market for Innovations and Technologies:

Dans le même esprit de promotion de l'accès à des T&I éprouvées, le FSRP et le CAADP-XP4 ont organisé conjointement du 12 au 15 septembre 2023 la troisième du marché des innovations et des technologies agricoles (MITA) à Ouagadougou (Burkina

Faso), en mettant l'accent sur les T&I pro-AIC, sensibles au genre et à la nutrition. Plus de 120 technologies ont été exposées à environ 190 utilisateurs finaux et 70 T&I à adopter ont été sélectionnées.



Photo 3. Exhibition of technologies and innovations at the MITA

### **Improvement of seed production systems by the ABEE project:**

86 seed actors, 20% of them being women, participated in the series of national consultation meetings designed to have the project teams in the three countries assess the effectiveness of seed production systems and identify limitations and bottlenecks. 32 metric tons of breeder seeds (groundnut, sorghum, millet, cowpea and

fonio) were produced from demonstrated varieties and from new incoming varieties. 05 profiles of breeding products defined through consultation mechanisms were selected, namely gruel/meal for millet, tô for white sorghum and dolo (or millet beer) for red sorghum in Burkina, millet flour in Senegal and millet ball (foura) in Niger.

### **Promotion of climate-smart agriculture (CSA):**

As part of the CAADP-XP4 project, a mapping of CSA initiatives was carried out in West and Central African countries to highlight gaps in those initiatives and to propose possible policy directions for improved implementation in CSA. After 9 countries were surveyed in 2021, the focus for 2023 has been on Cabo Verde,

Chad, Congo, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger and Sierra Leone. The guidelines and structure of two regional programs to support the operation of CSA and agroecology platforms have been defined, one for WA and the other for CA.

### **Catalyzing the engagement and contributions of the private sector to agricultural research and development in WCA:**

The second edition of the Research Leaders Forum was held in Praia, Cabo Verde, to address this issue as a collaborative link between researchers, policymakers and academia for transformative change. The forum was attended by 37 people, including 29 men and 8 women.

Participants came from 17 countries in West and Central Africa, including 51% from agricultural research institutions, 24% from SROs, 5% from the private sector, 5% from development partners, 3% from policy-makers, 3% from RECs, and so on.

### **Building farmers' resilience to climate change:**

The beneficiary countries of TARSPRO (Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Chad) all received training in climate-smart village approach using Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture (PICSA) as an operational implementation tool. The nexus between value chain development

and the innovation platform based on the PICSA approach is seen as a strong mechanism for climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as for building the resilience of producers. In building the capacity of stakeholders to adapt to climate change, the skills acquired during PICSA

training courses can also be seen as a means of reducing risks in the agriculture and food system value chains, offering these skilled people more opportunities to access financial services to support their livelihood activities. As a result, during

2023, the TARSPRO project held a training workshop in Burkina Faso for project teams on Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture (PICSA). 19 players attended (including 04 women and 06 young people).

### Participants' knowledge was enhanced in the following areas:

- 🍌 the concept, components, phases and implementation stages of the PICSA;
- 🍌 decision-making tools for choosing options for farming, herding/hunting and other livelihoods adapted to the local context;
- 🍌 the use of participatory planning tools to help make appropriate decisions and prepare for the next cropping season;
- 🍌 the participatory monitoring and evaluation of the PICSA approach with producers.

Researchers from ITRAD (Chad) and NARI (Gambia) attended PISCA training under the TARSPRO project. CIAT and CORAF signed agreements to implement CSA activities in Chad as part of the ProPAD project, and in The Gambia as part of the GIRAV project. In addition, the TARSPRO project carried out

a baseline survey of the 5 climate-smart villages (CSV) in the five countries covered, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Chad. The survey reports for the five countries are available and have been shared among beneficiaries. The results of the baseline surveys include the following:

- 🍌 Climate-related vulnerability factors are determined for each country.
- 🍌 The main current resources (farmland, grazing areas, road networks, school and health infrastructures, etc.) of each village are determined.
- 🍌 The different organizations involved in each village are identified.
- 🍌 The future vision for the villages is drawn up (ideal conditions for 2030).

These results are essential for the implementation of climate-smart villages (CSVs) as they provide microclimatic conditions and ecosystem services to

boost and sustain agricultural production, agrobiodiversity and products for improved nutrition and transformation of smallholder production systems.

### **Establishment and operationalization of innovation platforms:**

Innovation platforms (IPs) have proven to be very promising in bringing together stakeholders and fostering the dissemination and adoption of relevant technologies in the region. The IP approach was adopted by the TARSPRO project to develop proven technologies and innovations.

During 2023, two (2) coaching/training sessions were organized in Burkina Faso to operationalize the innovation platforms. At the end of these sessions, members of the six innovation platforms in Burkina Faso improved their understanding of business plan development and resource mobilization principles. A total of 43 people attended the training, including 11 women and 12 young people aged 35 and under. The FSRP

recruited three firms to support countries in setting up and managing their IPs on priority value chains. The firms began fieldwork in the last quarter of 2023. The support is to: (i) build the capacity of value chain actors on the concept, principles and management of an IP; (ii) identify IP facilitators who will be coached and mentored to manage a sustainable IP.

As part of the GIRAV project, CORAF supported the project implementation team in revitalizing and establishing 7 innovation platforms targeting the rice, maize and horticultural value chains. CORAF also supported the GIRAV team in assessing the capacity building needs of NARI and NSS in The Gambia.

### **Strengthening regional capacities for pest monitoring, notification and management:**

In the context of the development and operationalization of a visual database of viral disease symptoms, the Biorisk project has distributed 260 smartphones in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Sierra Leone and Cameroon. Key achievements also include the training of 1,460 people (51% women and 27% young people) in the recognition of cassava diseases using the Nuru smartphone application. Dedicated clouds in each of the project countries are used to collect participatory monitoring data.

In addition, 17 demonstration plots were established in 5 centers (Cameroon, Gabon, DRC and Sierra Leone), while 197 seed multipliers (cassava cuttings) and 1122 cassava growers received training in cultivation practices on these demonstration plots.

The AICCRA project has also developed a regional preparedness and response plan to improve the management of pest and disease outbreaks in West and Central Africa, and 2 countries among them submitted the plan to ECOWAS for approval and launch.

#### IV.1.2.2. **Result 2: Increased adoption of strategic decision-making options for institutions, policies and markets**

##### **Supporting national programs in operationalizing the national response plans (NRPs):**

The Biorisk project supported national programs in the operationalization of the national response plans (NRPs) and the establishment of appropriate emergency operations centers (EOCs). As a result, national response plans were developed

for each of the 10 countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, DRC, Sierra Leone and Togo) and approved by the Ministry in charge of agriculture.

##### **Revision of the national agricultural strategy:**

In 2023, the ProPAD project in Chad began revising the April 2019 strategy by incorporating the Integrated Agricultural Research for Development (IAR4D) approach as the main research and extension strategy in ProPAD's intervention areas. The national agricultural strategy is currently being drawn up. In addition, facilitation for the identification of sustainable financing mechanisms has begun and is ongoing. The aim is to identify and propose sustainable models for competitive funding

of agricultural research in Chad, based on other competitive grant models with funding from the private sector.

For the Gambia GIRAV project, CORAF supported the national team in the development of a national agricultural extension strategy. The final document has been handed over to the GIRAV team for submission to the Gambian Ministry of Agriculture.

##### **Financing the investment plans of the centers of specialization:**

In the context of the FSRP, CORAF has pursued its evaluation of the centers' upgrading performance. Recommendations based on performance gaps have been

formulated for countries to update their centers' investment plans. Countries must therefore allocate resources to implement these updated investment plans.

### IV.1.2.3. Result 3: Strengthened institutional and human capacities in agricultural research for development.

#### Equipping and modernizing experimental stations:

The ABEE project is equipping and modernizing experimental stations to produce reliable phenotypic data and improve seed conservation and management in Senegal, Niger and Burkina Faso. In the course of 2023, each of the 3 countries has achieved 80% completion rate of the investment plans

developed. The investment plans cover boreholes equipped with solar pumping systems, cold stores, the construction of irrigation basins and the development of irrigable land, threshing, sorting and seed packaging areas, greenhouses, vehicles and IT equipment.



Photo 4: Donation of material to INRAN in Niger

#### Participatory varietal evaluation and selection (PVES) in different agroecological zones with existing farmer networks and organizations:

In the field of participatory varietal evaluation and selection (PVES), 4,226 producers, 35% of them women, were involved in demonstration tests through 917 on-farm participatory tests carried out in collaboration with the three

partner farmers' organizations (FOs) (AMSP, YIYE and Sougr-Nooma) in Burkina Faso, RESOPP in Senegal and the two FOs (Fuma Gaskia and Mooriben) in Niger.

#### Development of climate variability and change adaptation strategies:

AICCRA organized a regional workshop to facilitate the implementation of agricultural policies and investments in climate-smart agriculture (CSA) in West Africa. The main outcome of the workshop was the identification and analysis of country-led measures and political will to invest in

climate-smart agriculture (CSA) technologies and innovations. In addition, a roadmap is made available to accelerate the acquisition of CSA technologies and innovations in the following West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Togo).

AICCRA also organized a workshop in collaboration with the CAADP-XP4 project to initiate a regional program to support pro-CSA and agroecology platforms in West Africa. The workshop brought together

experts from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. The main outcomes of the workshop are:

- 🍌 Updated directory of CSA and agroecology development platforms/projects in West Africa.
- 🍌 Mapping of current and potential funding sources/mechanisms.
- 🍌 Definition of the components of the climate-smart agriculture and agroecology program for West Africa.
- 🍌 Roadmap for finalization of the regional support program.

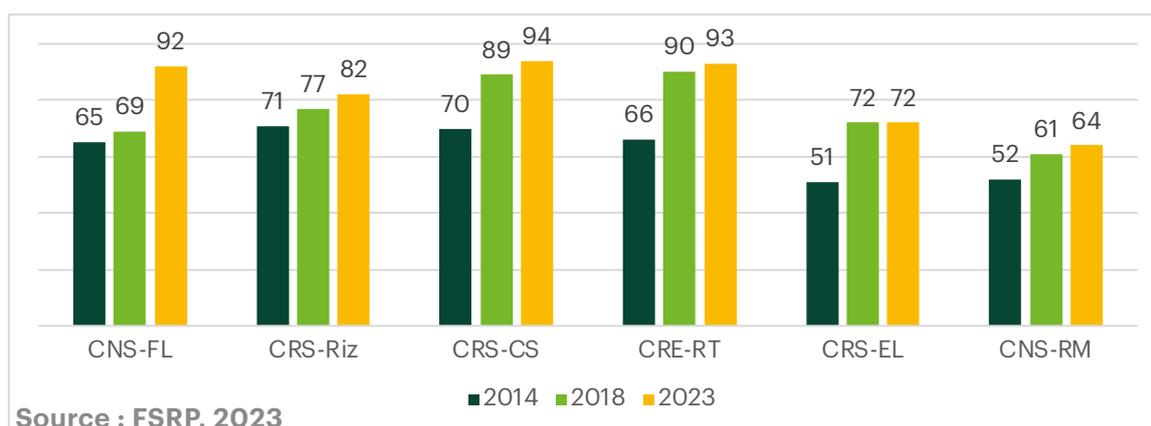
### Evaluation of the centers of specialization based on performance and revision of investment plans:

In collaboration with the relevant countries, the activity involved evaluating existing and future centers of specialization based on the nine criteria for upgrading to regional centers of excellence. The purpose of the assessment was to identify performance gaps related to the updating or the development of investment plans that meet these excellence criteria. To this end, two individual consultants were recruited, one specialized in agricultural research and the other in the quality approach leading to ISO certification. At the end of the evaluation, a summary of

which is provided in the figure below, the Regional Center of Specialization on Fruit and Vegetables in Burkina Faso has become a Regional Center of Excellence (RCoE). The Regional Center of Excellence on Dry Cereals in Senegal and the Regional Center of Excellence in Ghana still meet the criteria to remain as a Regional Center of Excellence (RCoE).

The Regional Center of Specialization on Livestock could become a Regional Center of Excellence if certain challenges are overcome.

**Figure 5. Trends in overall center performance**



The results of the evaluation of the seven (7) centers, including the new center on bioaggressors in Togo, were shared with the FRSP community during a regional workshop

held from June 14 to 16, 2023, during which the centers' investment plans were revised against these results.

### **Supporting the regional planning meetings of the Centers of Specialization:**

Regular meetings to plan research activities/projects and share research results and experiences are an excellent networking practice. The goal of this activity is to bring together researchers from the CGIAR and

other international research centers, as well as their peers from the national research systems organized around the Centers of Specialization, to work together on a common research issue.

### **Commissioned grant for regional research activities:**

The dialog between researchers and end-users of research outputs in 2022 resulted in research themes around which consortia of institutions were formed under the leadership of the Centers of Specialization for the joint implementation of research activities. A

total of seven proposals were received by the April 25, 2023 deadline. These proposals were evaluated on the basis of CORAF's competitive and/or commissioned grant mechanism. It is expected that at least four (4) research proposals will be funded.

### **Support for a session of CORAF's Scientific and Technical Committee (STC):**

The 19th session of CORAF's Scientific and Technical Committee on the FSRP was organized on November 24 and 25, 2023 (in

Lomé, Togo). During the 19th session, the following points were discussed:

- 🍌 Examen et observations sur le plan de travail et le budget annuels (PTBA) 2023
- 🍌 Examen du rapport d'activité 2023 du CST
- 🍌 Examen et observations sur les nouvelles initiatives du CORAF.
- 🍌 Partage et discussion du plan de départ et de renouvellement des membres actuels du CST.

#### IV.1.2.4. Result 4: Demand for agricultural knowledge from target customers are facilitated and met

In the framework of the regional variety exchange network, a total of 239 trials were conducted (an increase of 61 trials over the reporting period) and 238 varieties were shared, including three sites for sorghum (41 varieties), millet (38), cowpea (22) and fonio (19), and two sites for groundnuts (20) from IAVAO, (49) short-cycle varieties and (49) intermediate-cycle varieties from ICRISAT. In addition, 116 trial data sets were uploaded to the regional server of the Breeding Management System (BMS), corresponding to an increase of 48 trial data sets during 2023.





## IV.2. PID 2: POLICIES, INSTITUTIONS, MARKETS AND TRADE

This PID deals with the promotion of marketing and market access for inputs and products through the development of policy support and technologies to add value to agricultural products. This PID underscores the importance of trade in market development

processes. The PID on Policy, Institutions, Markets and Trade is one of the main components of the policies and priorities of ECOWAP, APU-UEMOA and CAP-ECCAS.

The main challenges addressed by PID2 include:

- 🍌 Regional value addition, processing, value chains and marketing of non-food crops and high value-added food crops, as well as livestock and fisheries.
- 🍌 Improved management systems in seeds and other agri-inputs.
- 🍌 Promotion of small agribusinesses to encourage smallholders to invest in farm businesses.
- 🍌 Promotion of national agro-industries to encourage private research and innovation leading to industrialization.

## IV.2.1. Analysis of PID 2 results

**Table 2. PID 2 Results: Policies, Institutions, Markets and Trade**

<b>PID 2: POLICIES, INSTITUTIONS, MARKETS AND TRADE</b>	
<b>Planning /Activities carried out in 2023</b>	<b>Progress made Outputs &amp; results achieved in 2023</b>
<b>Support for the implementation of sustainable funding mechanisms for the agricultural research sector</b>	<b>2 workshops</b> organized with the participation of various stakeholders in Chad
<b>Facilitation and coordination of the implementation of harmonized regional seed and seedling regulations in the Member States</b>	Eighth statutory meeting of the Regional Seed and Seedling Committee for West Africa (WARSSC/CRSPAO) held in Bissau (Guinea Bissau) from May 9 to 11, 2023.
<b>Facilitation of intra-Community trade in plant seeds by reducing the volume of documentation required and processing times for seed import and export applications at the various levels of approval in the countries.</b>	Adoption for the first time of a manual for harmonized regional procedures for seeds import and export in the ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS zones.
<b>Organization of the 6th Africa-Wide Agricultural Extension Week (AAEW) from November 6 to 10, 2023 in Nigeria</b>	CORAF partnered with AFAAS to organize the 6th edition of AAEW 2023 in Nigeria. On this occasion, a side event was also organized on the theme of "Research-Extension-Farmers collaboration", bringing together researchers, extension services and farmers.
<b>Capacity building for women and young seed entrepreneurs in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal under the CAADP-XP4 project</b>	<b>191 people</b> reached, <b>62%</b> of them are <b>women</b> and <b>45%</b> are <b>youth</b>



## IV.2.2. Progress made per CORAF results

The following section outlines the achievements of the projects implemented in connection with the four (4) CORAF results during the year 2023.

### IV.2.2.1. Result 2: Increased adoption of strategic decision-making options for institutions, policies and markets

#### Implementation of the governance mechanism of the regional seed sector: Eighth statutory meeting of the West African Regional Seed and Seedling Committee (WARSSC/CRSPA0)

For the proper implementation of the harmonized seed regulation in West Africa, the ECOWAS Commission designated CORAF in 2013 as the facilitator and coordinator for the implementation of the harmonized regional seed and seeding regulation in member states.

and CILSS signed a cooperation agreement on seed issues to designate CORAF to manage the implementation of the harmonized regional seed and seedling regulation and coordinate the Executive Secretariat of the Regional Seed and Seedling Committee for West Africa (WARSSC/CRSPA0).

In addition, on June 4, 2018, ECOWAS, UEMOA



Photo 5 : Photo de famille Réunion CRSPA0

The objectives of the harmonized regional regulation are: (i) to increase local production of quality seed, (ii) to facilitate seed marketing and cross-border seed movements in the sub-region, (iii) to improve farmers' access to quality seed, (iv) to create a favorable policy environment for the private seed sector, (v) to widen farmers' choice of new plant varieties, and finally (vi) to strengthen public-private partnership in the supply of quality seed.

The Regional Seed Committee is a key provision of the harmonized regional seed regulation. It aims to improve regional governance of the seed sector and coordinate national seed committees to fast-track implementation of the regulation. As part of its mandate to host the Permanent Secretariat of the Regional Seed Committee, CORAF organizes the annual statutory meeting of the regional committee, bringing together representatives of the national seed committees of the 17 member states of ECOWAS-UEMOA and CILSS, including the main regional players (private and public) in the seed sector. The annual statutory meetings of the Regional Seed Committee have helped improve the regional seed sector and review the implementation of the harmonized regulations, as well as make

recommendations for improving existing policies/regulations and investments in each country. Annual meetings will evaluate and rank countries according to their level of implementation of the harmonized regulation.

The eighth statutory meeting of the West African Regional Seed and Seedling Committee (WARSSC/CRSPAO) was held in Bissau (Guinea Bissau) from May 9 to 11, 2023.

The meeting provided an opportunity for all member states to report on domestication and implementation of the harmonized regulation. CORAF presented regional perspectives in seed regulations. In addition, the meeting adopted for the first time a manual for harmonized regional procedures on seed import and export in West Africa and the Sahel. It also adopted and published the 2022 edition of the catalog of newly released varieties (2021-2022). Following a discussion of regional strategic issues/themes on seeds and regional seed policy, the meeting made recommendations on private and public sector commitments to the seed sector with regard to the facilitation of cross-border seed trade and seed quality assurance.

### **Consultation meeting between CORAF and regional intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) on the implementation of the seed cooperation agreement**

Ahead of the 8th meeting of the Regional Seed and Seedling Committee on May 8, 2023 in Bissau, a consultation meeting was held on the progress of the cooperation agreement in seeds between CORAF, ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS. This meeting discussed the following

points (i) the financing mechanism of the tripartite agreement and the distribution of funds between the intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), (ii) the mechanism for signing the executive regulations and protocols adopted in support of the

harmonization of seed regulations by the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), (iii) the format for organizing and holding statutory meetings of the Regional Seed and Seedling Committee of West Africa, and (iv) the review and renewal of CORAF's mandate as permanent secretariat of the Regional Seed Committee (WAPSRC).

The discussions highlighted the following items:

- 🍌 The low attendance of senior officials from IGOs (ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS) at the Committee's statutory meetings. This situation could be due to the inadequate scheduling of meetings and the current format of the aforementioned body's work, which places very little emphasis on the presentation of country annual reports and leaves little room for strategic discussions.
- 🍌 With a view to improving the format of WAPSRC meetings, CORAF is proposing that consideration be given to the possibility of commissioning a consultant to carry out an annual assessment of the progress made in implementing harmonized seed regulation in the various countries, and to produce a consolidated regional report to be examined and validated by the countries during the WAPSRC meeting. This would spare more time to be devoted to strategic discussions of interest to high-level decision-makers from member states and IGOs.
- 🍌 With regard to the funding of the operations and activities of the WAPSRC Permanent Secretariat, it was suggested that a multi-year action plan and budget be drawn up for statutory activities and capacity building and country support programs, with a proposal for funding from IGOs and development partners.
- 🍌 On the cooperation agreements on agri-inputs, five (5) years after they were signed, the participants all agreed on the need to revise them.

CORAF is committed to organizing an IGO meeting, which will mobilize senior IGO officials (Commissioners) to (i) review the cooperation agreement, (ii) review and update commitments and clarify the roles, responsibilities and mandates of all parties, and (iii) define the funding mechanism for statutory activities and operating costs of the Permanent Secretariat the Regional Seed Committee.

## Adoption and dissemination of the 2022 Edition of the Regional Catalog of Plant Species and Varieties

The development and release of new varieties is a key element of the seed sector in the ECOWAS region. In fact, it is one of the main ways of ensuring that farmers have access to improved seeds, which are more resistant to disease and pests, and can produce higher yields with less water and fertilizer input.

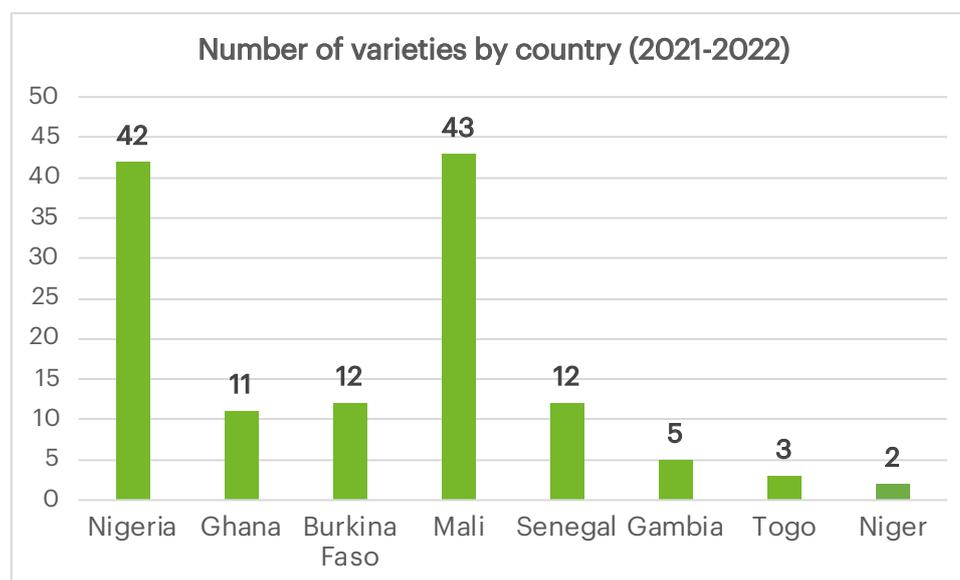
The Catalog of Plant Species and Varieties of West Africa (COAFEV) is listing all the plant varieties released and registered in the national catalogues of the 17 Member States of ECOWAS - UEMOA - CILSS. It is constantly updated and the 2022 edition capture newly released varieties from May 2021 to December 2022 in the region. The catalog is a regulatory instrument aimed at facilitating access to new plant varieties and seed marketing in West Africa and the Sahel. Its development and updating process is governed by the seed regulations of ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS.

Before the Regional Committee approves the dissemination by, the variety authorized for marketing must comply with the international standard of DUS and VCU.



Photo 5 : Photo de famille Réunion CRSPAO

The 2022 edition of the regional catalog established by the regional seed committee includes 128 new varieties from a wide range of species: maize, rice, cowpeas, sorghum, wheat, sweet potato, onion, soybean, tomato, groundnut, cassava, cotton, millet, okra and yam. The most advanced countries in terms of development of new varieties are Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Gambia, Togo and Niger.

**Figure 7. Number of varieties per country**

Source: CAADPXP4 2023 data

The Regional Committee commended the quality of the work done by CORAF and recommended a wide dissemination of the catalog among actors in the seed value chain to further (i) support RECs and Member States in the domestication of harmonized procedures, (ii) strengthen systems and actors' of, and (iii) expedite the variety release process.

### **Development and adoption of the regional manual of harmonized procedures for the import and export of seeds in the ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS region.**

CORAF has made notable progress in developing and facilitating the formal adoption by the ECOWAS Commission of Supplementary Protocols, Executive and Implementing Regulations, Manuals to support the full implementation of harmonized regulations in the region.

Import and export of seeds in the region is expensive, cumbersome and time-consuming due to adversarial procedures and technical barriers existing between Member States. With the support of ECOWAS and other partners, CORAF has developed a regional

manual to govern the harmonized procedures for the import and export of seeds in the sub-region. Development of the manual has been an inclusive process, involving regional consultative and expert meetings attended by experts from (i) national seed committees and seed services, and (ii) national plant protection organizations, and representatives of (iii) international organizations and development partners (FAO)(iv) the private sector, including seed companies and national seed trade associations and representatives of the RECs (UEMOA, ECOWAS).

The manual will (i) streamline procedures to facilitate intra-community trade in plant seed by reducing the volume of documentation required and the processing time for seed import and export applications at the different levels of approval in the countries and (ii) provide guidance to Member States to comply with regional and international regulations -administrative and operational provisions- for ease of import and export of plant seed.

The Regional Manual of Harmonized Procedures for the Import and Export of Seeds in the ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS region comprises four chapters: (i) Definitions, (ii)

General import procedures, (iii) General export procedures, and (iv) General complaint and appeal procedures. It also includes nine (9) annexes which set out the additional information required from the applicant, the model documents to be provided and various related provisions.

The Regional Seed Committee held in Bissau noted with satisfaction the inclusiveness of the process that led to such a high-quality and consensual document. The Committee therefore adopted the document and recommended its expeditious implementation by officials and Governments as well as seed traders.



#### IV.2.2.2. **Result 3: Strengthened institutional and human capacities in agricultural research for development.**

CORAF has partnered with AFAAS to organize the 6th AAEW 2023 in Nigeria. The Africa Agricultural Extension Week (AAEW) is a unique opportunity to rethink and reshape AEAS for inclusive and resilient agrifood systems in Africa. It provides a space for sharing experiences and learning between professionals from different backgrounds, strengthening interactions with policymakers and investors and developing strategic

partnerships. In addition, the AAEW is a forum to discuss strategic and operational directions, new developments, emerging needs, paradigms, and setting new directions for AEAS for the coming years.

A one-day side event was also organized to promote the research-to-extension agenda and involved researchers, farmers and extension workers across the CORAF region.

It yielded the following main conclusions:

- 🍌 Video production appears to be a promising way to make research knowledge accessible to farmers. It encourages an inclusive approach, using ICTs, photos and videos as they are user-friendly to low-literate producers and can be easily shared through platforms such as WhatsApp and YouTube.
- 🍌 Innovation platforms (IPs) are effective models for formalizing partnerships between research, extension and agricultural value chains (AVCA). They contribute to the transfer and adoption of technologies and innovations, leading to actual improvements in productivity, incomes and competitiveness of the so promoted agricultural sectors.

### IV.2.2.3. Result 4: Demand for agricultural knowledge from target clients is facilitated and met

The Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators (ASTI) aim to reduce the knowledge and information deficit on agricultural research system inputs, performance and outputs, and to establish a sound basis for long-term monitoring of agricultural research and development (R&D) investment and capacity. During 2023, seventeen (17) countries carried out surveys.

The table below summarizes the status of each country, with the number of validated forms in brackets.

The Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators (ASTI) aim to reduce the knowledge and information gap on inputs, performance

and results of the agricultural research systems and to establish a solid basis for the long-term monitoring of investments and capacities in agricultural research and development (R&D). Seventeen (17) countries conducted surveys in the course of 2023.

The Table below summarizes the status of each country as well as the number of validated forms in parentheses.

National data files were generated for the 17 countries to check general trends against historical data, to make additional adjustments to the actual data, or to add missing information from external sources.

**TABLE 3: COUNTRY STATUS ON ASTI DATA COLLECTION**

<i>Countries that validated their data</i>	<i>Number of forms validated</i>
Benin	6
Burkina Faso	10
Cameroon	7
RCA	5
Côte d'Ivoire	16
Gabon	2
Gambia	6
Niger	4
Liberia	8
Togo	10
Chad	5
Cabo Verde	1
Mauritania	1
Sierra Leone	1

Source : ASTI, 2023

**TABLE 4: COUNTRY STATUS ON THE ONGOING ASTI DATA COLLECTION**

<i>Countries that continue to submit form or validate data</i>	<i>Number of forms under review</i>
Congo (3)	3
Ghana (22)	22
Nigeria (54)	54

*Source : ASTI, 2023*

A regional conference was organized from 1 to 2 August 2023 in Lomé (Togo) to discuss recent data and future strategies for sustainable data collection in agricultural research in the region.



Photo 7: ASTI meeting in Lomé



## IV.3. PID 3: GENDER, YOUTH AND SOCIAL EQUITY

The objective of this PID is to ensure equal access to the resources, opportunities and benefits of agricultural research and development for both men and women, in particular for vulnerable groups, namely women and young people in WCA.

The main challenges of this PID include:

- 🟡 Strengthening leadership and capacity of women and young researchers and monitoring their appointment to decision-making positions in agricultural research systems.
- 🟡 Building capacity of women and young farmer organizations in agricultural value chains.
- 🟡 Capacity building and management of agribusinesses, while developing soft skills through incubation centers, NCoS and RECs.
- 🟡 Support for the Regional Gender Alliance to coordinate gender mainstreaming initiatives in IAR4D in West and Central Africa.
- 🟡 Creating favorable conditions for youth entrepreneurship in small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises (SMEs) and encouraging their participation in the World Bank's "Doing Business" project.
- 🟡 Facilitating access to finance and markets by involving young people in relevant innovation platforms.

### IV.3.1. Analysis of DIP 3 results

#### TABLE 5. PID 3 RESULTS: GENDER, YOUTH AND SOCIAL EQUITY

<b>PID 3: GENDER, YOUTH AND SOCIAL EQUITY</b>	
<b>Planification / Activités menées en 2023</b>	<b>Progrès réalisés Produits &amp; Résultats obtenus en 2023</b>
<b>With the ABEE project: training a new generation of breeders in the concepts and use of the tools necessary for the modernization of varietal improvement.</b>	<p>36 students, including 07 girls in Master II, recruited and supervised for their research work as part of the project, 18 of whom have already defended</p> <p>09 students, including 2 PhD students, recruited and supervised as part of the project. Their work on varietal improvement is currently being implemented</p>
<b>With the BIORIKS project: organizing scientific and leadership training programs, as well as impact evaluation for graduate students and other professionals</b>	13 socio-economics students, including 05 women, trained in impact evaluation in December 2023
<b>With TARSPPro and FSRP: building capacity of women and young researchers</b>	<p>The management of 50 contracts for PhD scholarships (including 9 women) and master's scholarships (including 7 women) illustrates CORAF's ongoing commitment to developing skills at the postgraduate level.</p> <p>8 students will be recruited for doctoral studies in 2024, approved at the meeting of the CORAF Scientific and Technical Committee, highlighting CORAF's commitment to contribute to capacity building on a larger scale</p>
<b>Institutional Capacity Building on Gender in National Agricultural Research Systems in 21 Countries</b>	<p>CORAF has begun the institutional capacity building of 20 National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) in West and Central Africa.</p> <p>The Gender Focal Points of these NARS have received training and technical supervision for the development of the Gender Action Plans currently being revised for finalization.</p>
<b>As part of the implementation of the ECOWAS Youth Jobs project, support the capacity building of young people in the National Agricultural Centers of Specialization in Burkina Faso, Togo, Senegal, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Nigeria.</b>	<p>The percentage of young people trained varies between 59% and 100% for all courses.</p> <p>Of the 445 young people targeted, 390 have been trained, i.e. an average rate of achievement of 87.64%</p>

**TABLE 5. PID 3 RESULTS: GENDER, YOUTH AND SOCIAL EQUITY**

<b>PID 3: GENDER, YOUTH AND SOCIAL EQUITY</b>	
<p><b>Strengthen the capacities of women and youth in seed production, multiplication, processing, marketing and seed business management.</b></p>	<p>The “Gender and Seed Business” training program recorded 191 participants from Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal; 62% of the beneficiaries are women, i.e. 118 women, and 45% are young people, i.e. 86 young people. The training courses recorded more young women (53%) than young men (47%).</p> <p>Participants in the training learned about seed policies and regulations, seed quality control and how to develop sustainable businesses along the value chain of drought-tolerant and biofortified seeds (production, processing and marketing), as well as seed business management.</p>
<p><b>With AICCRA: capacity building for women’s leadership in agriculture and climate research.</b></p>	<p>A total of 27 participants, including one man, from 15 African countries, including non-AICCRA member countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Eswatini, Côte d’Ivoire, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria and South Africa), AICCRA member countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Senegal and Zambia) and the United States of America.</p> <p>Participants came from 18 institutions from across Africa, including GC centers (ABC, AfricaRice, ICRISAT, IITA and IWMI), NARS (ARCN, INRAB and ISRA), universities (IRI, HU, UDS, UG, UFHB, UAM), public agencies (ANCAR and ANACIM), civil society (CAMYIRD) and regional organizations (CORAF and WASCAL).</p>
<p>Mainstreaming gender in ProPAD-Chad</p>	<p>A mission of CORAF’s led by the Regional Gender Advisor was organized in Chad in February 2023. This mission was conducted in support of the Project Coordination in accordance with the Work Plan entrusted to CORAF to ensure systematic gender mainstreaming in the implementation of all components and activities of ProPAD. The mission revealed that, despite the efforts of the ProPAD team, challenges related to the social inclusion of women and youth remain. Corrective actions have been identified to improve the gender performance of the project.</p>

**TABLE 5. PID 3 RESULTS: GENDER, YOUTH AND SOCIAL EQUITY**

<b>PID 3: GENDER, YOUTH AND SOCIAL EQUITY</b>	
<b>Identifying gender-sensitive technologies</b>	<i>21 gender-sensitive T&amp;I to be scaled up at the national level (07 in Benin, 07 in Burkina Faso and 07 in Niger) were selected. The National Gender Action Plan was presented and the 2023 AWPB was discussed to facilitate implementation.</i>
<b>Organization of a Gender-responsive and Nutrition-Sensitive Agricultural Innovation and Technology Market (MITA)</b>	<i>The MITA organized from September 12 to 15, 2023 in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) enjoyed 190 participants registered, 30% of whom were women (57), 27% young people (51). 17 countries participated and 105 institutions and companies were represented.</i>
Revision and validation of the Gender Action Plans of the FSRP countries	<i>All FSRP countries had their Gender Action Plans reviewed, validated and operational.</i>

The next section highlights the achievements of the projects executed against the four CORAF results during the year 2023.

PID 3 cuts across all projects in one way or another by addressing the issues mentioned above. The section will highlight the main gender and youth orientations with regard to the various project interventions. In 2023, the Gender, Youth and Social Equity Program continued to provide the necessary technical support for mainstreaming gender and youth in the various projects of the CORAF Secretariat as well as in the initiatives carried out by CORAF's partners, including the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS), the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), CGIAR and other agricultural research and development partners. It is now accepted that all concept notes and projects are moving to gender screening, to ensure that these dimensions are systematically mainstreamed in projects and programs

## IV.3.2. Progress made per CORAF results

### IV.3.2.1. Result 3: Strengthened institutional and human capacities in agricultural research for development

#### Capacity Building for Women Leadership in Agriculture and Climate Research

During the year, a capacity-building session on women leadership in agriculture and climate research was organized from 20 to 24 March 2023 in Dakar (Senegal) in collaboration with the Gender and Social Inclusion Program of the AICCRA project.

The objective of the workshop was to acquire knowledge and skills among learners to promote women leadership in agricultural R&D and particularly in climate research. The main outcomes of the workshop are as follows:

- Women leadership in agriculture and climate research is developed, to promote their access to decision-making positions in regional and national research organizations, and agricultural advisory services, with a view to fostering an inclusive climate-smart agriculture.
- Promotion of women in climate research with strategies to support career development in agricultural research institutes in the countries implementing the AICCRA and FSRP projects.

The training brought together 27 participants, including one man, from 15 African countries, (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Eswatini, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria and South Africa, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Senegal and Zambia and Latin America). Participants came from 18 institutions from across Africa, including CG centers (ABC, AfricaRice, ICRISAT, IITA and IWMI), NARS (ARCN, INRAB and ISRA), universities (IRI, HU, UDS, UG, UFHB, UAM), public agencies (ANCAR and ANACIM), civil society (CAMYIRD) and regional organizations (CORAF and WASCAL).

A follow-up webinar was held

after the workshop on 26 July to share experiences on the relevance of the training and the challenges faced after the training in relation to their leadership roles in their respective research institutes. The feedback will be used for planning the next phase of AICCRA. The webinar recorded 23 participants from East, Southern, West and Central Africa, and 1 from North America.

The joint AICCRA-FSRP Gender Action Plan has been drafted for implementation within the framework of the FSRP and the AICCRA Additional Fund.

### Capacity building for women and young researchers.

CORAF supported 95 students, including 25 women (see table below).

**TABLE 6: NUMBER OF STUDENTS SUPPORTED BY CORAF**

Indicator	Total	% women
PhD student	29	38%
Master's students	66	21%
Total	95	26%

Source: M&E Data 2023

In the framework of CORAF's ABEE project, a review of the current situation reveals that important steps have been taken to strengthen the scientific capacities of young researchers. During the year 2023, 9 PhD students, including 2 women, were supervised in varietal improvement; 36 master's students received financial support for their research work, with 18 dissertations having been defended.

The international recruitment of 13 socio-economics students, including 5 women, in 10 countries testifies to CORAF's desire to broaden the impact of its actions. These efforts aim to meet the specific needs of different regions, while strengthening skills and knowledge in the field of agronomy (BIORISK).

The management of 50 contracts for PhD scholarships (including 9 women) and master's scholarships (including 7 women) (TARSPRO) also illustrates CORAF's ongoing commitment to developing skills at the postgraduate level.

Finally, thanks to funding from the World Bank, 8 students will be recruited for PhD studies in 2024, approved at the meeting of the CORAF Scientific and Technical Committee, highlighting CORAF's commitment to contribute to larger-scale scientific capacity building (FSRP).

## Regional training on mainstreaming gender and youth in the Food System Resilience Program.

### CAADP-XP4 and the Food System Resilience Program.

A training on gender and CSA was organized for the Gender Focal Points from the National Agricultural Research Systems of 20 West and Central African countries in; as well as national coordinators and FSRP Gender Focal Points, and representatives of women and young farmers organizations. The training was held from April 25 to 28, 2023 in Dakar, and brought together 44 participants, including 26 women, from Cameroon, Gabon, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Senegal, Guinea, Benin, Congo, Nigeria, Niger, Togo, Liberia, Ghana, Mali, Chad, Cabo Verde, Mauritania, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone (20 countries out of the 23 covered by CORAF).



Photo 8. Training on gender and youth mainstreaming in Dakar

## Participation in regional and international events on gender equality

-  AWARD Workshop on Theory of Change - May 2, 2023, Nairobi
-  Webinar jointly organized by AWARD and CORAF on Policy Dialogue: Towards Gender-Responsive Agriculture and Food Policies in Africa, May 5, 2023.
-  8th edition of the African Agribusiness and Science Week in Durban, CORAF Gender Advisor panelist at the AWARD parallel session entitled: Making African Food Systems Gender-Responsive for Equitable Livelihoods Theme: Nutrition sensitive and gender-responsive food systems.
-  CCARDESA Side Event on Agribusiness and Gender- and Youth-Sensitive Food Systems – Durban June 5-7, 2023; a gender activity of the CAADP-XP4 led by CCARDESA, recorded the presence of the CORAF Gender Advisor, Lead of the Gender Working Group of CAADP-XP4.
-  Panelist in the “Science Women Voice” initiative organized by All for Sciences, to promote gender-responsive science for sustainable development, May 27, 2023.
-  Panelist in the webinar on poverty, hunger and employment, Wednesday, June 28, 2023, organized by the Chronic Poverty Advisory Network, the Institute of Development Studies, Southern Voice and IFPRI.
-  Participation in the African Risk Capacity Policy Dialogue Series on Gender, Disaster Risk Reduction, Epidemics and Food Security on the African Continent, in Addis from July 4 to 5, 2023.
-  Panelist at the UNGA78 session of the UN Science Summit: How to bridge the gaps between science and policy and science and practice and prioritize agricultural research in the post-SDG agenda for climate resilience and sustainable food systems (Gendered perspectives), 14 September 2023.
-  Panelist for the World Bank Webinar on Advancing Gender Equality in Agrifood Systems: Insights from FAO’s Report on The Status of Women, October 05, 2023.

## Empowering Youth in Agriculture Project -ECOWAS

CORAF facilitated the implementation of the ECOWAS Youth Employment Project. The objective of the project is to strengthen the capacities of young people in the incubations of national centers of specialization, for the development of agro-industry along the agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries value chain. The project was implemented in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo, at attended by 390 young beneficiaries out of 445, or 87.64% in achievement of the objectives. The training programs provided by the National Centers of Specialization (NCoS) - Fruits and Vegetables in Burkina Faso have recorded more young women (28 women and 9 men).



## IV.4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION, KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND FORESIGHT

### IV.4.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

During 2023, two major activities were carried out under monitoring and evaluation:

- The deployment of CORAF's monitoring and evaluation system (MEL) and expert database: The community of evaluation practitioners set up by CORAF for the 23 countries in 2022 was trained on this MEL system in August 2023 in Burkina Faso.
- Final evaluation of the Operational Plan (2018-2022): CORAF has committed to a performance approach by implementing strategic plans broken down into operational plans. Thus, the current Strategic Plan (2018-2027) and its Operational Plan (2018-2022) give pride of place to the development, promotion of ways to scale up and disseminate high-impact agricultural technologies and innovations. With the 2018-2022 OP coming to an end, CORAF commissioned a final external evaluation to identify the results, gaps, challenges and lessons learned that will inform the implementation of the new OP 2023-2027. The evaluation focused on the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, visibility, gender and youth sensitivity and equity at the government level, governance and sustainability of the OP 2018-2022.

Two (02) main lessons were drawn to attention during the implementation of the 2018-2022 OP: (i) the strategy for scaling up CORAF's technologies and innovations and (ii) flexibility in the implementation of CORAF's various interventions.



## IV.4.2 Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is an essential aspect of CORAF's activities, as the organization, through its programs and projects, has garnered a substantial amount of information and intellectual capital. Without effective mechanisms to capture and redirect this wealth of knowledge to the areas that need it, there is a risk that it will remain underutilized. To address this, CORAF recognizes the importance of having a robust knowledge management system in place that meets the diverse knowledge needs of stakeholders, and aligns with the organization's strategic objectives. Key elements include the production and dissemination of lessons learned, good practices and other knowledge products, as well as the sharing of knowledge related to food security, nutrition and resilience analysis. CORAF's integrated approach to knowledge management, which combines communications, monitoring, evaluation and learning services, and knowledge communication, aims to establish an inclusive structure that positions knowledge management (KM) as a cross-cutting service within the organization.

Therefore, during the year 2023, CORAF recruited a knowledge management consultant to develop, implement and manage the knowledge management (KM) system. The Knowledge Management

Manager will be in charge of identifying, collecting, processing, presenting and promoting the use of knowledge among CORAF's key stakeholders, as well as coordinating the organizational processing of information and the dissemination of knowledge in a way that addresses knowledge gaps and achieves the objectives set out in CORAF's Strategic Plan.

In 2023, the progress report includes the sharing of the diagnostic report, the benchmarking note and the draft knowledge management policy. The activities and their respective status are described, including interviews with CORAF team members, a workshop on knowledge management challenges, knowledge management benchmarking, self-diagnosis, and ongoing knowledge needs analysis. The presentation of the draft knowledge management policy involved a workshop that facilitated a session with staff to define a vision and principles for knowledge management based on CORAF's strategic plan. In addition, some ancillary activities have been carried out. These include participation in knowledge management and communication support activities, the process of hiring a consultant for a documentation archiving system, hiring a Big Data expert, and participating in the production of various products.

### IV.4.3 Foresight

In 2023, the forecasts were supported by associate researchers based at CORAF as part of the synergy of actions with the NARs. Based on the capacity building needs assessment workshop, CORAF with the support of the Bioversity Alliance and CIAT represented by the regional cluster AICCRA West Africa organized from 12 to 13 April 2022 in Saly, Senegal, a training of trainers on the application of prospective analysis in West and Central Africa (WCA). Through this training, CORAF aims to provide leadership in foresight strategic planning in the region beyond individual projects, as outlined in its

Strategic Plan 2018-2027. At the end of this training, a Community of Practice (CoP) - expert facilitators - in the field of foresight was created. This community of practice applied the foresight analysis in 2022 to develop a roadmap for a regional pest and disease outbreak preparedness and response plan in the region. This preparatory work led to the development and validation of a regional pest and disease outbreak preparedness and response plan for West and Central Africa. The Community of Practice (CoP) on foresight analysis set up in 2022 was formalized in June 2023 during the plan validation workshop.



Photo 9 : Atelier régional de finalisation du plan de préparation et de réponses aux épidémies et des ravageurs et maladies

## IV.5. OVERVIEW OF CORAF PROJECTS

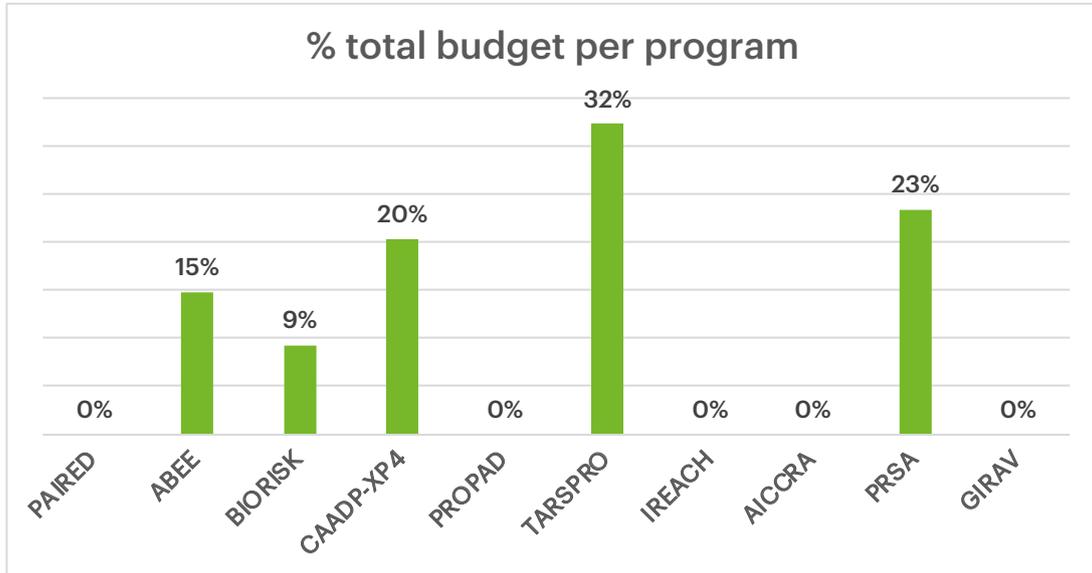
### IV.5.1. Status of program implementation

Table 7 below summarizes the programs implemented in 2023 and the corresponding planned budget in the Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB).

**TABLE 7: PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED BY CORAF IN 2023**

	<b>Titre du projet</b>	<b>Budget 2023 (\$US)</b>	<b>Pays</b>
1	Scaling up agricultural technologies and innovations to increase the resilience of production systems and family farms in West and Central Africa (TARSPPro)	4,455,887	Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali et Niger
2	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) ex-Pillar IV African Regional and Subregional Organizations for Agricultural Research and Innovation (CAADP-XP4)	2 798 629	AOC
3	West Africa Breeding Networks and Extension Empowerment (ABEE)	2 045 925	Burkina Faso, Niger and Senegal
4	Anticipating and managing biological risks to strengthen farmers' resilience to climate change in West and Central Africa (BIORISKS)	1,274,166	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria, RDC, Sierra Leone et Togo
5	Innovation, Research, Extension and Advisory Coordination Hub (iREACH)	242 445	Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal.
6	Strengthening Climate Resilience and Sustainable Agricultural Productivity in Chad (ProPAD)	376 487	Chad
7	Accelerating the Impact of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa (AICCRA)	411 667	Ghana, Mali and Senegal
8	The Gambia Inclusive and Resilient Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (GIRAV)	396 894	Gambia
9	West Africa Food System Resilience Program (FSRP)	3 160 767	Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Togo (phase 1); Ghana, Sierra Leone, Chad (phase 2); Senegal (phase 3)
<b>Total</b>		<b>15 162 866</b>	

**Figure 8. Breakdown of the total budget per program**



## IV.5.2. Performance in physical and financial execution of CORAF projects

Significant progress has been noted in the implementation of projects, with a physical execution rate of 70%. However, the financial execution rate stood at 54.2% as of December 31, 2023.

These figures reflect the continuous commitment to and efficiency in carrying out the planned activities, highlighting a dynamic and proactive management of the resources allocated by the CORAF team. However, it also emerges that there is a need to improve the financial execution rates of CORAF projects as highlighted in the evaluation of the OP2018-2018.

## V. CORAF PARTNERSHIPS

In 2023, CORAF renewed its partnership with the International Potato Center (CIP). CORAF and CIP therefore recognize their common interest and the benefits of collaboration in achieving their respective missions, goals, and objectives. The parties have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to regulate their relationship, define the scope of collaborative research, capacity building and provision of innovations in adapted potatoes and sweet potatoes (climate-adapted, high-yielding, nutritious, disease- and pest-tolerant germplasm; interventions in the seed system; good agricultural practices (GAP); post-harvest and storage technologies; that support the sustainable use of natural resources, agricultural productivity and resilience to climate change challenges in the West and Central Africa region.

Diversifying and sustaining partnerships is

important in an environment that is always facing new challenges. CORAF should develop partnership strategies for resource mobilization, particularly in correlation with existing and emerging issues relating to the OP 2023-2027. The recent reorganization of the member institutions of the One CGIAR offers opportunities to consider the options for their representation on the Board of Directors of CORAF. This initiative should contribute to strengthening the Institution and enhance its visibility.

In 2023, partnerships have been signed with REACH/USAID-KSU, PYD [USAID/Positive Youth Development [PYD], CEA-FIRST (Consortium Europe Africa on Research and Innovation for Food Systems Transformation, StEPPFoS (Strengthening Evidence-Based Policy and Practice of Sustainable Food Systems Under the EU-AU Partnership) for a total amount of USD 3,966,281.



## V.1. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL PARTNERS

Scientific and technical partners are involved in the planning, design and implementation of CORAF's research and development activities. This category of partners includes the CGIAR, international research institutions and non-governmental organizations. Existing partnerships have been maintained and strengthened, while new ones have been developed and include:

- Partnership with the Bioversity Alliance and CIAT (ABC) for the implementation of the Climate-Smart Village
- Partnership with AfricaRice as part of the One CGIAR (Integrated Regional Initiative for West and Central Africa / Agribusiness Systems Transformation in West and Central Africa) initiatives.
- Exchange of technologies, including seeds and crop varieties, with CGIAR centers in the framework of the MITA initiative.
- Scientific publication on the achievements of AICCRA between CORAF and ABC.
- Participation of IWMI in the World Bank's FSRP/PRSA meeting in Saly (Senegal).
- Partnership with ICRAF and ABC for GCF accreditation and resource mobilization.
- IITA participated in the CORAF workshop in Bangui to define the guidelines and structure of a regional program to support the development of CSA to improve the resilience of agricultural and food systems to climate shocks in Central Africa.



## V.2. THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF) and its constituent National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) have contributed to sustainable improvements in the productivity, competitiveness and markets of the food system in West and Central Africa (WCA).

NARSs are the pillars of the transformation of agriculture in WCA. They include (i) the National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs); (ii) the extension services; (iii) the higher education institutions; (iv) technical departments of certain ministries or development agencies that conduct adaptive research programs; and (v) non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and producer organizations.

CORAF, through its ongoing Strategic Plan (2018 - 2027) continues to engage NARSs in different ways, including: elaborating a theory of change for technology development and scaling-up, promoting private sector engagement, establishing models of mutual benefits between NARSs and the private sector, disseminating innovative technologies through ongoing regional programs, strengthening the links between R&D and the private sector through incubation platforms as a means of promoting the commercialization of research products, as well as facilitating an enabling policy environment for increased

private sector involvement and effective participation along the value chains of the food system.

Environmental, health and socio-economic challenges across the region continue to affect the agricultural research and development sector. CORAF is therefore seeking to strengthen its approach to improve the effectiveness of its engagement and partnerships with private sector entities, including but not limited to existing and newly established private sector platforms, as well as its role in regional mechanisms, such as ECOWAP.

Moreover, two editions of the RLF (Annual Agricultural Research Leaders Forum) were organized in Cameroon in 2022 and in Cabo Verde in 2023 to discuss on the opportunities and challenges that impact the involvement of the private sector in agricultural research and development; and suggest partnership/collaboration approaches for better integration of this group.

The Cameroon meeting aimed at building the technical capacity to increase resilience to evolving challenges that are impacting agricultural productivity in West and Central Africa, while the Cabo Verde meeting aimed to engage the private sector and strengthen partnerships to transform agrifood systems in West and Central Africa.

## V.3. DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

In 2023, there was no engagement with a new development partner. However, USAID-WA organized the PAIRED Learning Event in April 2023 in Dakar, Senegal, followed by a co-creation workshop. The main objective of the learning event was to provide an opportunity to share implementation experiences around the key themes of the PAIRED results. The learning event was also an opportunity to present the results of

PAIRED's final performance evaluation. As for the co-creation workshop, it focused on next steps to guide USAID's future programming in West Africa on seeds and agricultural inputs. The event engaged stakeholders towards solutions that will pursue the necessary systemic changes and continue to produce sustainable results at the local level after the end of the PAIRED program.

## V.4. RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE RECS

The positioning of CORAF in relation to the RECs still remains a challenge in the face of a certain tendency of regional communities to deal directly with the specialized centers or their host institutions and allocate financial resources according to their respective missions. Despite its role as the technical arm of the RECs (ECOWAS, UEMOA, ECCAS, CEMAC), in terms of Research and Development in the agricultural field, the Executive Secretariat of CORAF often feels circumvented in the implementation of projects and activities with R&D components.

For Central Africa, CORAF has decided to assign a high-level executive to represent the

Executive Director in this area. This strategy should strengthen CORAF's capacity to provide local support. An opportunity to do so has materialized with a €5 million initiative supported by the EU. The representative to be identified should be able to manage the various partnership strategies within the ECCAS countries. The Operational Plan (OP) 2023-2027 has set aside approximately USD 2,000,000 for activities to build capacity and engage stakeholders for the development and implementation of multi-country programs in Forest Africa.

## V.5. CORAF AND GGGI ACCREDITATION

As part of the research mobilization strategy, CORAF is resolutely committed to seeking accreditation from the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) for direct access to the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

On this drive, ISO certification in the Quality approach to transform CORAF into a Center of Excellence would be a plus.



## VI. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

The Executive Secretariat of CORAF in Dakar (Senegal) hosted the 33rd Ordinary Session of its Board of Directors (BoD33) from 17 to 19 January 2023.

As usual, the Board members met to consider two main items on the agenda, namely (i) the monitoring of institutional governance; and (ii) the review of Executive Secretariat performance.

Dr. Maria Angela P. Barreto Da Veiga MORENO, Chairperson of the CORAF Board, led the work of the session during the three days, which made it possible to consider and approve several documents of the 2022 financial year, including the report of the 32nd ordinary session of the Board (BoD32), the various reports of the Executive Secretariat and of the Executive Director, the draft Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB) for 2023, the report of the Scientific and Technical Committee, etc.

The 33rd ordinary session of the BoD was the first that the organization was holding as it begins to unfold its 2023 - 2027 Operational Plan, which is to “catalyze agricultural

innovations for food and nutrition security in West and Central Africa”.

Note that the BoD is part of CORAF’s governance system.

The Scientific and Technical Committee (STC) of CORAF held a special session in Dakar, from February 20 to 21, 2023, to review the scientific excellence of the activities planned for 2023. The twelve (12) STC members also agreed on the approach, opportunities and challenges related to the implementation of the West Africa Food System Resilience Program (FSRP). Indeed, CORAF has been mandated to lead component 2 of the West Africa Food System Resilience Program (FSRP) on the sustainability and adaptive capacity of the food system productive base.

In parallel, the STC members reviewed the achievements made under CORAF’s 2022 work plan, as well as CORAF’s roadmap for 2023.

There was also the organization of the 19th session of the Scientific and Technical Committee of CORAF on November 24 and 25, 2023 (in Lomé, Togo).

## VII. CORAF'S HUMAN CAPITAL

The most striking fact in 2023 was the departure of the Executive Director (Dr. Abdou TENKOUANO).

As of December 31, 2023, with an average age of 45 years, CORAF has a staff of thirty-one (31) employees, most of whom have fixed-term contracts (84%), supported by consultants and interns:

- 🟡 84% fixed-term contracts as of December 31, 2023;
- 🟡 83% average annual rate of use of fixed-term contracts.

CORAF mainly resorts to fixed-term contracts because of the nature of its mission based on projects that have a fixed or determinable term. This practice is also based on Ministerial Decree No. 1887 of the Republic of Senegal of March 6, 2008 establishing the list of sectors of activity in which it is customary not to use a permanent contract.

The average age (45 years) and average seniority or length of service (7 years) as of December 31, 2023 are an asset in agricultural research and pose a threat (risks of poaching, resignation because they have comparators). This offers the opportunity for older employees to facilitate the onboarding of new employees and to support interns (with

an average age of 26 years and an average seniority of about one year), juniors or agents in the early stages of their professional lives. This level of experience further legitimizes the implementation of a Knowledge Management (KM) system provided for in the Strategic Plan.

Most of the staff is positioned at the DRI (operational process) which represents 48% and the DCS (support) with 42%. The Executive Directorate represents 10%. This practice is relatively common in organizations that manage partner-funded projects.

As of December 31, 2023, CORAF's workforce is tending towards parity: 52% women against 48% men. The majority of staff are posted in the DCS (62%) and the DRI (57%). These data can be correlated by recruitment by gender. As of December 31, 2023, there was parity in recruitment from January 1 to December 31, 2023 (50% for male and female staff).

The implementation rate of the 2023 training plan, developed under the HR Policy Manual (Article 89 et seq.), has hit 70%. It represents an increase of 84% between 2022 and 2023. This quantitative improvement is positive and deserves to be strengthened.

The training actions carried out for the benefit of CORAF staff focused on:

- 🍌 Ethics and Professional Conduct (32%) with a view to strengthening ethical awareness in line with one of the challenges identified in the HR report presented to the Board of Directors at its 34th session from July 11 to 14, 2023.
- 🍌 Technical aspects (26%) covering coordination, project management and knowledge management.
- 🍌 Team management (11%).
- 🍌 Other training courses (32%) with training topics such as occupational health and safety and first aid.

In accordance with the HR Policy Manual (Article 9.6 et seq.), staff evaluations have been organized.

CORAF organized the annual medical check-ups in accordance with the legal requirements (Article L 176 of the Labor Code of the Republic of Senegal).



## VIII. ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

### VIII.1. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This section outlines the situation for the year 2023, in particular on the following aspects: (i) the situation of CORAF's financial resources, (ii) the situation of contributions of CORAF's member organizations, (iii) the cash situation, (iv) the audits of CORAF's accounts for the 2023 financial year, (v) organizational reforms, (vi) the status of the budget execution of the 2023AWPB.

#### VIII.1.1. Resource mobilization for the OP 2023-2027

The Strategic Plan (SP) 2018-2027 is broken down into two Operational Plans (OPs), the OP 2018-2022 (adopted by the GA12 in April 2018) and the OP 2023-2027 (adopted by the GA13 in January 2022).

The budget for the OP 2018-2022 was USD 60,896,586 and that of the OP 2023-2027 was about USD 50,000,000, or about USD 110,896,586 for the SP 2018-2027.

Resource mobilization actions took place in 2023 to contribute to the financing of the OP 2023-2027.

##### VIII.1.1.1. Project extensions

CORAF has negotiated a one-year no-cost extension without for the European Union-funded ABEE, BIORISKS and CAADP XP4 projects. These projects, which were supposed to be end in 2024, will finally be completed in 2025.

##### V.1.1.2. New initiatives

Two new projects funded by the European Union, under the Horizon Europe Framework Programme (HORIZON) and coordinated by FARA, were accepted in 2023. These are the CEA-FIRST project (Europe-Africa Consortium on Research and Innovation for Food Systems Transformation) and the StEPPFoS (Strengthening Evidence-Based Policy and Practice of Sustainable Food Systems Under the EU-AU Partnership) project, for a total amount of €3,999,473.73 and €3,973,115.31 respectively. What's special about these two projects is that they each involve a large number of partners (around twenty) from Europe and Africa, since they form part of the HORIZON-CSA initiative.

## VIII.1.2. Status of member NARS' contributions

Contributions received for 2023 total XOF 42,700,771.

## VIII.1.3. Cash situation

The Institution's cash flow has undergone a significant evolution due to the diversification of partnerships and the consequent support of new partners such as the World Bank through the FSRP project which has taken off this year.

Made up of resources domiciled in dedicated accounts, the cash situation includes funds allocated to ongoing programs or projects as well as staff rights, end-of-contract allowances and retirement allowances.

## VIII.1.4. Audits et Revues fiduciaires

On the audit of CORAF's accounts for the 2022 financial year, three audits were conducted and completed during the year 2023:

- Joint audits of the accounts for CORAF, the TARSPRO project, and the DeSIRA ABEE and AICCRA project by Mazars Senegal;
- Audit of the accounts for the PAIRED-USAID project by Ernst & Young Ghana;
- Audit of the accounts for CAADPXP4 project by COFIMA Benin;

All audit reports were received, and the accounts are certified with unqualified opinion, despite the few significant points of recommendation that were made by the auditors.

On the fiduciary review, a fiduciary support mission from the World Bank was also received at the Executive Secretariat in October 2023. After the assessment of the progress in the implementation of the FSRP project, the fiduciary management was found to be satisfactory.

## VIII.1.5. Budget performance to December 31, 2023

The overall budget execution of CORAF projects stands at a total level of 52% for the 2023 financial year, despite the disparities in budget execution rates between the different projects with a maximum of 100% and a minimum of 11%.

It should be noted that some projects funded by the European Union (Desira ABEE), BIORISK, CAADP-XP4 and the Swiss Cooperation will end in 2024. A no-cost extension is being prepared for the DESIRA ABEE and WAVE project. The Swiss Cooperation promises a new phase at the end of this stage. Some initiatives are also underway with the European Union and USAID. There is a need to improve the budget execution or burn rate of CORAF projects.

## IX. COMMUNICATION

CORAF continued to intensify its communication and marketing activities to support the efforts in achieving sustainable agricultural production and productivity, food security, leading to improved livelihoods of communities in West and Central Africa. In 2023, CORAF developed a new CORAF website with an improved interface and browsing.

Similarly, a new CORAF communication strategy for the 2023-2027 has been developed with a focus on promoting knowledge in the agricultural field, and improving CORAF's

reputation and visibility.

The drafting of the CORAF graphic charter was carried out and capacity building activities were delivered.

The Executive Secretariat of CORAF organized from September 25 to 29, 2023 a training workshop on monitoring, evaluation and learning, and communication for the managers of agricultural technology parks. 25 participants (including 5 women) from Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Ghana, Togo, Senegal and Sierra Leone participated in the training.



Photo 10: Communication training

During the year 2023, eighty-six (86) articles were published in English and French on the CORAF website to highlight CORAF's program and institutional activities.

Active use of social media was made to share relevant CORAF information, engage the public, and expand follower communication. To date, CORAF has a community of more than **283,000 subscribers**.

From January to December 2023, CORAF issued about **1,550 posts** on social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter), which had a reach of about **5,900,000 people**.

## X. CORAF EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT STAFF



**Abdou TENKOUANO**  
Executive Director



**Emmanuel NJUKWE KOUOPKWA**  
Director Research and Innovation



**Safouratou ADARIPARE**  
Director of Corporate Services



**Christel KENOU**  
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**Niéyidouba LAMIEN**  
FSRP Program Manager



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**Caroline M. SOBGUI**  
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**Dr. Fatou DIENG GUEYE**  
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**Monique NGOM**  
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**Nakina G. GNIGUE**  
Accountant



**Marianne S. KEBE**  
Accounting Assistant



**Mouhamadou Lamine NIASS**  
Accountant



**Franck G. NZOUATOU M YONGA**  
Internal Controller



**Mamadou D. TANDJIGORA**  
Driver of Executive Director



**Issa GUEYE**  
Driver



**Nina Tening FAYE**  
Secretariat Assistant



**DÉGUÈNE POUYE**  
Gender Assistant



**Kokoé A. EKOUE**  
Assistant DSG



**Haby TAMBEDOU**  
Bilingual Assistant



**Ndèye Réana M. FALL DIAGNE**  
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**Ndeye Bineta FALL**  
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**Amadou NGAIDO**  
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Capacity Development Assistant



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TARSPRO Coordinator

## XI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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