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LEARNING EVENT

WEST AFRICA SEED PROGRAM

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Final report

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ACRONYMS

AFSTA	: African Seed Trade Association
AGRA	: Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
ASIWA	: Alliance for Seed Industry in West Africa
ASSESS	: Analytical Support Services and Evaluations for Sustainable Systems
CGIAR	: Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
CILSS	: Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
COASem	: West Africa Seed Committee
CORAF/WECARD	: West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development
ECOWAS	: Economic Community of West African States
FAO	: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
ICRISAT	: International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
IFDC	: International Fertilizer Development Center
IITA	: International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
MOFA	: Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MTE	: Midterm Evaluation
NARI	: National Agricultural Research Institute
NASTAG	: National Coordinator of National Seed Trade Association of Ghana
ROPFA	: Réseau des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs de l’Afrique de l’Ouest
SME	: Small and Medium Enterprises
USAID	: United States Agency for International Development
WAAPP	: West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program
WASP	: West Africa Seed Program

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID/West Africa Mission, and the West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WE CARD) organized a two-day learning event (LE) from 13 to 14 June 2017 to share lessons from a Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) of the West Africa Seed Program (WASP). The LE aimed to share with a broad range of stakeholders the experiences the WASP program and findings and conclusions from the MTE. It affirms the commitments of USAID/WA and CORAF to a systematic and deliberate approach to facilitating collaborative learning for improved policies, and programs to advance economic growth and environmental resiliency in the region. The learning event was supported by the USAID/WA Analytical Support Services and Evaluations for Sustainable Systems (ASSESS).

The WASP LE brought together major stakeholders in the seed sector of West Africa including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA/WEAMU), the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), Ministries of Agriculture, regional and international seed and fertilizer Organizations and Initiatives, National and International Agricultural Research Institutions, Universities, Private Sector, Farmer Organizations, Financial Institutions, Financial and Technical Partners, CORAF/WE CARD (including WAAPP and WASP), USAID and other technical and financial partners. In all, 137 participants attended the event.

The WASP LE was officially opened by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture (Food Crops), Dr. Sagre Bambangi who reiterated the importance of seeds in agriculture and the premium that the Government of Ghana places on seeds. In his statement on behalf of USAID, the USAID/West Africa Mission Director, Alexandre Deprez recalled the support that USAID has provided which has helped the region to take significant steps toward improving the seed sector through the harmonization of seed regulations, building partnerships for greater private sector opportunity to contribute to seed supply, developing regional seed catalogue, etc.; he urged the different partners to learn on the achievement and focus on the way forward for greater economic growth in the West Africa region. Statements were also made by representatives of key partners ECOWAS, CORAF, CILSS, AfricaSeeds, and AGRA.

The general thrust of the learning event was that, as pointed out in the MTE, WASP has achieved its set objectives, but the seed sector of West Africa still faces considerable challenges which call for continued interventions along the lines shaped by WASP that increase growth in the seed industry. There are still several pockets of grossly underdeveloped seed sectors in the region which need to be addressed. The desired level of seed industry entrepreneurship is yet to be attained, and more must be made to bring about a sustained period of private seed sector growth. The delivery of seed certification has suffered from serious lack of capacities in several of the countries and require to be boosted through innovative ways shown by WASP. Furthermore, although the Program of Harmonized Seed Regulation has been very entrenched, hindrances at country level, particularly at the land borders, tended to negate the benefits that could be gained in the regional seed trade.

Key outcomes of the event include: 1. A credible validation of the work and the results of WASP over the 5-year period of its implementation, 2. A set of findings and conclusions from the learning event which supports this Validation, 3. Clear recommendations and guidelines by which to establish a road map for the way forward for a further period of seed sector development to take the West African seed industry to the next anticipated level.

The WASP LE recommended options to incorporate other crops in a future program, widen the responsibility for the seed certification process by tapping on the advantages that the private sector possesses, inject more entrepreneurial dimensions into the seed sector and strengthen access and use of instructional credit, including the institution of viable national seed development fund schemes and credit guarantee arrangements. Participants lauded the models initiated by WASP in the areas of regional seed

resilience, business model and the seed demand forecasting tool and recommended their upscale for wider use. The use of innovative information and communication approaches will be vital in up-scaling successful models and in widely sharing experiences among stakeholders and partners.

Stakeholder needs for information are enormous. In this regard, a section was devoted to information-communication approaches, whereby the virtual platform www.wasix.net (which is in the processes of improvement) was demonstrated. Exhibitions were mounted by national, regional and international organizations and CORAF/WECARD to showcase new advances in crop improvement, university program, and seed sector development.

In the way forward, the WASP LE endorsed the following:

1. Seed Regulation

Enhancing implementation of the Seed Regulation at the country level. There is need to deepen the implementation of the ECOWAS Seed Regulation through the higher involvement of the public sector, building and mentoring country certification teams, strengthening certification facilities and establishing cost-effective certification procedures.

Expanding quality assurance through the use of alternate quality control models. There should be the pursuit of alternate quality control systems, such as quality declared system and use of accredited private internal seed testing facilities to make the cost of seed certification less prohibitive and widen the benefits of seed testing to cover a wider range of crops.

Minimizing hindrances to cross-border seed movements. There should be concerted efforts to minimize hindrances to cross-border trade, through training of non-traditional actors and advocacy among policy makers and other national and regional partners.

Clustering by stage of advancement. It was thought that when the participating countries are grouped according to their degree of advancement in the Seed Harmonization process, particularly in terms of capacity, facilities, and results, faster overall results would be achieved since targeted interventions, regarding the different needs, would lead to better results for each group.

2. Agribusiness

Expanding the use of the WASP Business Model. The WASP Business model has been found to be an appropriate tool and needs to be consolidated, up-scaled, adopted more widely and made more accessible to partners through promotion and sharing of the model among ASIWA stakeholders.

Enhancing Quality Seed Demand. Quality seed demand creation was considered a weak link. In a possible follow-up to WASP, a major demand raising component should be incorporated, involving extension, research, and the private sector empowerment, aimed at growing seed demand and the strengthening of the seed value chain of all the covered crops to establish a robust basis on which the industry will thrive.

3. Financing

Enhancing Credit and Funding Support to the Seed Industry. The private sector needs to advocate for the enhancement of credit for the seed industry as well as the full institution of the Seed Sector Support Fund enshrined in the Regulation and its sustainable applicability to the range of components that are critical to the growth of the industry in the participating countries.

Finally, in his speech to close the event, the Deputy Minister of Agriculture (Crops) entreated all participants to make good use of the recommendations that the WASP LE had yielded in order to ensure that the seed industry of West Africa achieves the level of development that will lead to farmers in the region having access to quality seeds and properly using them to fulfil the Region's goal of agriculture transformation.

2. BACKGROUND

The seed sector in West Africa is characterized by low supply of certified seeds by the private sector due to major bottlenecks, including weaknesses in the functions of the regional and national associations, low access to credit and equipment, under-developed seed markets, weak capacity of the SMEs, weak extension services, unfavorable policy environment, trade barriers, low access to breeder and foundation seeds, among others.

In view of the critical role that quality seeds play in improving agricultural productivity, ECOWAS, UEMOA and CILSS initiated a process of inclusive sub-regional consultations. This process was concluded with the adoption of the “Regional Seed Regulation” on ‘Harmonization of Rules Governing Quality Control, Certification, and Marketing of Plant Seeds & Seedlings in the ECOWAS-UEMOA-CILSS region. The harmonized Regulation was adopted by each Organization according to its proper procedures; in 2006 by CILSS, in 2008 by ECOWAS, and in 2009 by UEMOA. Its main objective is to facilitate the trade of seeds of standard quality amongst ECOWAS-UEMOA-CILSS countries towards improved agricultural productivity.

Knowing the complexity of ensuring an adequate supply of quality seeds to farmers in the region, ECOWAS designated CORAF/WECARD as its technical arm to implement a West Africa Seed Program (WASP). The WASP is currently being funded by the USAID/West Africa Mission, and by the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program (WAAPP) supported by the World Bank.

At the regional level, the program is piloted through a Consortium comprising ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS, Hub-Rural, the NARIs, regional CGAIR centers (IITA, ICRISAT, AfricaRice, and AVDRC), AFSTA, ROPPA, Syngenta Foundation, FAO, AGRA, and AfricaSeeds.

WASP objective is to increase the supply of quality seeds from 12% in 2012, to 25% in 2017, with particular emphasis on cereals. WASP stresses on the use of market-driven mechanisms to effectively promote the access to and use of high-quality seeds, and to enable local seed companies, enterprises and farmers’ based organizations (FBOs) to respond to the anticipated increases in demands for improved seeds. The geographical coverage is the seventeen ECOWAS-UEMOA-CILSS countries, for seed policy, with a specific focus on Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal, for all WASP activities.

The Program’s objective is to be achieved on the basis of four axes namely, building an Alliance for Seed Industry in West Africa (ASIWA), supporting the implementation of the regional harmonized seed legislation and regulatory framework; collaborating with the NARS and CGIAR seed units to produce and supply quality breeder seeds and new genetic materials; and strengthening the organizational, technical and agri-business capacities of the private sector to ensure a regular supply, in sufficient quantity, of quality foundation and certified seeds at affordable prices.

The key challenges, as revealed by the MTE, included weak capacity and low commitment of resources in enforcing the seed regulation at the national level, low capacity for the production and marketing of various classes of seeds, low private sector investment and weak synergy among West Africa seed stakeholders, inadequate collaboration between CORAF/WECARD and IFDC for the use of a holistic approach in promoting the agricultural-input package, and insufficient connection between CORAF/WECARD-WASP and the ECOWAS Commission.

3. EVENT SCOPE AND APPROACH

The WASP LE was held in Accra, Ghana from 13 to 14 June 2017 as a follow up to the MTE and had the objective to spur the growth of the regional seed industry by consolidating successes for upscale, guided by past challenges and lessons.

The expected outcomes from the WASP LE included increased regional and national stakeholders' commitment to consolidation and sharing of best practices for the growth of the regional seed sector; provision of incentives and mechanisms to support seed private sector development and investment; strengthening of the Regional Seed Alliance to address seed sector constraints for sustainable growth and strengthening regional resiliency to curb crises such as the Ebola Virus Disease.

With the collaboration of CORAF/WECARD, USAID-ASSESS conducted a series of pre-LE consultations to discuss the scope of the LE including determining the objectives, expected outcomes, target audience and key deliverables. The preparatory meetings held among the National Organizing Committee (established by the Ghana's Minister of Food and Agriculture), USAID-ASSESS and CORAF/WECARD also discussed logistical issues related to travel arrangements for international participants and modalities relating to exhibitions which was part of the "Ghana Day" of the WASP LE. As well, key partners and collaborators were identified and engaged to ensure the participation of major national and regional seed sector stakeholders, key technical institutions, multilateral development partners and private sector stakeholders.

The event was held to demonstrate best practices and share experiences with a wider audience. It provided suggestions to address the issues identified in the WASP MTE which are vital for advancing the regional seed industry. Through presentations in plenary sessions, knowledge sharing was encouraged. Panel discussions helped to deepen solutions to the main bottlenecks in the seed sector. A Ghana Open Day showcased the new agricultural technologies and innovations. Exhibition through video documentary, print, and physical materials showcased the state of the seed industry in West Africa and facilitated intra-regional collaboration. The event benefitted from simultaneous translations in English and French.

Participants came from a broad range of stakeholders in the seed sector including the ECOWAS, CILSS (Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel), Ministries of Agriculture in the ECOWAS-UEMOA-CILSS Member States, Regional and International Seed and Fertilizer Organizations and Initiatives, National and International Agricultural Research Institutions, Universities, Private Sector, Farmer Organizations, Financial Institutions, Financial and Technical Partners, CORAF/WECARD (including WAAPP and WASP), USAID and other technical and financial partners. In all, 137 participants attended the event.

The WASP LE employed the dual methodology of specialist presentation in plenary of the main topics listed on the agenda, which set the stage for group and panel discussions. To achieve a greater learning impact and effective knowledge sharing at the event, ASSESS, in collaboration with CORAF/WECARD, developed key questions to guide discussions at the event (Annex 1).

In addition to developing the key questions, the learning objective of the event was further enforced through the use of break-out groups which enabled a broad range of opinions to be generated on each question and then, through plenary discussions on the contributions from the groups, the workshop consensus on each issue was achieved.

The recording of the event was a collaborative process from the notes of the rapporteurs and summaries of the moderators which were synthesized by the Event Facilitator.

4. EVENT PROCEEDINGS

4.1. OPENING SESSION

Statement by CORAF/WECARD Executive Director Dr. Abdou Tenkouano



The CORAF/WECARD Executive Director Dr. Abdou Tenkouano giving the speech

The Executive Director of CORAF/WECARD commended the regional institutions (ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS) for confiding in CORAF/WECARD the roles as their Technical Arm.

He further commended the Technical and Financial Partners including the USAID, the World Bank, the EU, AfDB, DFID, DFAT, IDRC, etc. and other Stakeholders for the support given to CORAF/WECARD in the implementation of the CAADP and Regional Agricultural Policies. He was thankful to partners and stakeholders for having entrusted the coordination role of WASP and WAAPP to CORAF/WECARD and added that CORAF/WECARD also coordinates the Multi-National Trust Fund and the Regional Competitive Commissioned Projects. By working

together, the synergy created by WAAPP and WASP has been significant in achieving an overwhelming outcome. He stressed on the numerous successes recorded by WASP in the areas of innovative approaches to the implementation of regional regulations. The Executive Director touched on the models that were recommended during the WASP Mid-Term Evaluation in 2016 and emphasized that the implementation of the Regional Seed Regulation needs to penetrate to the grassroots to make an impact there. He congratulated the President and People of Ghana on the on-going “Planting for Food and Jobs” initiative and pledged CORAF/WECARD’s support to this flagship program.

Statement by ECOWAS Commission

The representative from the ECOWAS Commission, speaking on behalf of the President of the Commission, extended greetings from the President of the Commission (Mr. Marcel A. de Souza) to participants. He said the Learning Event had provided a unique opportunity for the sharing of WASP best practices carried out over the years and that the importance of seeds cannot be overemphasized.

He mentioned that in 2009, the ECOWAS Commission adopted the ECOWAS Seed Regulation and the central objective was to facilitate seed trade among the member states and thanked WASP for operationalizing its implementation. He thanked the U.S government in funding the WASP as well as ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS, CORAF/WECARD and

all the technical and financial partners for rolling out the WASP successfully. He made reference to successes stressed, as identified in the WASP Mid-Term Evaluation report, and advocated for the need to upscale them. Towards the end, he appealed for support for a WASP second phase. On behalf of



ECOWAS representative, Ernest Aubee delivering the speech

ECOWAS, UEMOA, and CILSS, he thanked the Government and the People of Ghana for hosting the Learning Event.

Statement by USAID/WA Mission Director, Alexander Deprez

In his address, the Director of USAID/WA mission, Alexandre Deprez observed that West Africa needs to grow more and better food. He admitted that the presence of the large number of participants at the WASP LE showed their commitment to the West Africa Seed Program. He further mentioned that increasing agricultural productivity and improving food security and nutrition are pillars of the U.S. Government's Feed the Future strategy and the new Global Food Security Strategy, which are also priority objectives of ECOWAS as enshrined in the ECOWAS agricultural policy.

He pointed out that the role of USAID/WA mission is to support West Africa to achieve development objectives by fostering partnerships among the Region's own institutions i.e. ECOWAS, CILSS, UEMOA, CORAF/WE CARD, the Private Sector, to stimulate the growth of the seed industry.



USAID/WA Mission Director, Alex Deprez delivering the speech

He recounted USAID/WA Mission support to the region in taking necessary steps toward building the seed sector through harmonization of regulations, building partnerships for greater private sector opportunity to contribute to seed supply, developing regional seed catalog, etc.

He wished participants two days of fruitful discussions that would lead to a robust West African seed industry. On behalf of the U.S. government and USAID/WA, he thanked the Government of Ghana, CORAF/WE CARD and all the organizations and persons who had made the WASP LE possible.

Statements by other representatives of organizations

The Executive Director of AfricaSeeds, Dr. Kouame Miezang congratulated all stakeholders who had taken the bold initiative to strengthen the regional seed systems. He recalled that in 2007, the African Union Heads of State and Government approved for the implementation of the African Seed and Biotechnology Program (ASBP) of which AfricaSeeds is lead implementer and coordinator with partnership being seen as a key mechanism to drive the program. He looked forward to seeing the two-day event bringing the concept of partnerships to bear in moving the seed industry forward. He urged all participants, in the context of ASBP, to stimulate the continental seed sector. He called for all relevant organizations to join forces with AfricaSeeds to achieve the objectives that Africa has set.

Mr. Shawn McGuire, FAO Seed Security Officer, on behalf of FAO, emphasized on Sustainable Development Goal number two (SDG2. Ending hunger) which FAO coordinates and monitors. He said the foundation of food security is seed security and informed participants about some of the FAO activities in the seed sector which include: genetic resources, strengthening of seed systems, harmonization of rules and policies at both country and regional levels, development of business models for both the formal and informal seed sectors, etc. He pledged FAO contribution in exploring further support to the seed sector.

In a speech read on behalf of Dr. Agnes Kalibata, the President of AGRA, the AGRA Country Lead in Ghana, Mr. Forster Boateng informed participants that the WASP was in line with AGRA's transformation drive which aims to impact 30 million farmers, with a focus on farming as a business. He said AGRA was founded with a mission to catalyze the transformation of smallholder agriculture into a

highly productive, efficient, sustainable, and competitive system, while also protecting the natural resource base on which agriculture depends. He added that quality seed is key to the achievement of productivity improvement of small holder farmers. AGRA had chalked some achievements including the development of close to 500 seed varieties, built capacities of various actors including the private sector. AGRA's training efforts are distinctive because more than 90 percent of the trainees go to support the NARS or private seed and soil initiatives, resulting in actual systems strengthening. He acknowledged the role of USAID and ECOWAS in supporting CORAF/WECARD to develop the upstream solutions to catalyze agricultural transformation at the sub-regional level. That was why, he added, AGRA calls for strategic partnership with USAID, ECOWAS, CORAF/WECARD, UEMOA, CILSS, AfDB, etc. to chart a path towards inclusive agriculture transformation in West Africa.

Welcome Remarks by Chairperson, National Organizing Committee



WAAPP Coordinator, giving the opening remarks. Photo credit ASSESS

In her welcome address, the National Coordinator of WAAPP in Ghana Mrs. Azara Ali-Mamshie who Chaired the National Organizing Committee of the Event, thanked the WASP Consortium for choosing Ghana to host such an important seed learning event and the ECOWAS and UEMOA for their endorsement. She congratulated the participating countries that had worked hard in achieving excellent results for increased supply and use of certified seeds of the targeted crops. She added that participants should participate to the valuable contributions that would emanate from the LE discussions to improve the seed systems in the Region to ensure that quality seeds are available, accessible and affordable to all farmers.

Address by the Hon. Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Food Crops) on behalf of the Minister of Food and Agriculture

In his keynote, the Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture in charge of Food Crops, Hon. Dr. Sagre Bambangi said that agriculture is the largest sector by which the economies of West African countries can be transformed to meet the growing demand for food, nutrition, industry, and jobs. He added that CORAF/WECARD, the ECOWAS Commission, the World Bank, USAID and the Governments of the fifteen ECOWAS Member States have ably supported the design and implementation of the two mutually reinforcing Flagship programs, WAAPP and WASP from which Ghana had benefited.



The Hon. Deputy Minister, Dr. Sagre Bambangi giving a speech

He pointed out that Ghana aims at being self-sufficient in food production. He explained the rationale behind the Government's current agricultural flagship program, "**Planting for Food and Jobs**" which seeks to increase production of the targeted crops.

He had no doubt that the deliberations on seed at the "Learning Event" would go a long way to make certified seeds of major crops available, accessible, and affordable in the ECOWAS-UEMOA-CILSS Region and also serve as support to the flagship program in Ghana.

On behalf of the President and People of the Republic of Ghana, he thanked all the participants for making the LE possible and declared the event opened.

4.2. SESSION 2: INTRODUCTION AND FRAMING



ASSESS facilitator Josiah Wobil introducing on the learning event objectives and expected results

The Learning event facilitator, Josiah Wobil, explained the concept note, context objectives and expected results of the Learning Event (LE) to set the stage for presentations and discussions as outlined in the agenda (see Annex).

WASP Overview

The WASP Chief of Party (COP) gave an overview of the WASP. He informed participants about the various WASP interventions in member states with regards to the WASP four result areas as follows: **Result 1:** Alliance for Seed Industry, **Result 2:** Seed Regulation, **Results 3:** Breeder Seeds & New Genetic Materials, **Result 4:** Supply of Quality Foundation and Certified

Seed under which Africa Seed Trade Association.

Recounting the Success Stories from WASP, the presentation was summarized as follows:

- WASP was one of the eight innovations selected among 150 initiatives evaluated in Africa by Rockefeller Foundation for upscale
- Under the influence of WASP, CGIAR & NARS are systematically subjecting seed fields to quality control and certification
- WASP outcomes are exerting Influence on university curricula
- WASP was ranked relevant by stakeholders, according to the WASP Mid Term Evaluation, 2016
- WASP M&E system is being held up as a good model for regional Partners and is allowing to share experiences with the partners
- Very significant levels of gross revenues are being achieved from production and marketing of certified seeds



WASP Chief of Party Dr Ernest Asiedu discussing with his team on approaches to present WASP overview

4.3. SESSION 3: MID-TERM EVALUATION

Outcomes of the Mid Term Evaluation

Two ASSESS Experts, Musa Mbenga and Professor Richard Akromah, presented the results from the WASP Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) conducted across the four WASP result areas. The overall objective of the MTE was to assess and document the extent to which WASP was achieving its objectives.

The presentation highlighted challenges in the West African Seed Sector to explain the basis of the objectives established for WASP.

Successes noted by the MTE: The MTE concluded that WASP had been successful in all four result areas: Under IR1: Alliance for Seed Industry in WA for Effective Coordination had been established; under IR2: ECOWAS Seed Regulation had been successfully implemented; Under IR3: Supply of quality breeder seed had been increased, and under IR4: Supply of Quality foundation and certified seed by the private seed sector had increased.

WASP Areas Requiring Strengthening: The presentation identified areas in the WASP that needed to be strengthened before the close of the program. These areas included 1) ECOWAS-UEMOA-CILSS Tripartite agreement; 2) WASP partnership with AGRA, AfricaSeeds, WACCI, etc.; 3) Growing need for improved seeds among producers; 4) ECOWAP (the Regional Agricultural Investment Plan and the National Agricultural Investment Plan) willingness to support the seed sector and the Private Banks readiness to fund seed businesses; 5) Sustainability.



ASSESS Expert, Evaluation team member, discussing with ECOWAS representative on the WASP evaluation outcomes

Level of Implementation of MTE Recommendations

The WASP Monitoring and Evaluation Officer made a presentation which showed the level of implementation of the MTE Recommendations. The activities being implemented included the following:

- Managing of ASIWA - Regional and Local Steering Committees have been established and working on the action and sustainability plans.
- Meetings had been held to define roles and responsibilities of WASP and WAFP (Dakar meeting of the WASP Consortium and the Accra meeting between ECOWAS, IFDC, and CORAF to develop Concept Note for an agri-input initiative based on a package approach)
- Advocacy for COASEM and ASIWA action plans to be funded through ECOWAS, UEMOA, the Regional Agricultural Investment Plan and the National Agricultural Investment Plan.

Sessional Discussions

During plenary debates on the session's presentations, the following emerged from comments and observations by participants:

Addressing needs of late developers: Relating to questions on how to ensure late developers like Liberia are rapidly assisted to achieve acceptable levels of seed industry development, assurance was given that no country will be left behind. It was explained that following recent visits to Liberia by CORAF/WE CARD, IFDC, ECOWAS and CILSS, a clear roadmap for Liberia was established. Further, CORAF/WE CARD through the Ebola Seed Initiative has presented processing equipment to Liberia and has facilitated the acquisition of laboratory equipment by the country. The advice was given to Liberia to explore national partnerships to secure further support to strengthen the seed sector.

Land Border Hindrances: On the issue of border hindrances identified by the MTE, it was explained that two dimensions of cross border trade are to be given important consideration: First and foremost, the Customs Officers need to be sensitized on the cross-border trade issues in collaboration with the ECOWAS Department of Customs. Secondly, the Alliance needs to bring along other stakeholders such as Customs, Agro-industries, and Banks, etc. for better appreciation of the situation and develop interactive solutions which will align with the WASP procedures within the Seed Harmonization program.

Lapses in seed field inspections: In response to questions on lapses in seed field inspection, particularly the practice of reducing from the mandatory four to only one field inspection in most countries, it was agreed that the practice is unacceptable and negated the achievement of full seed certification status. Since this lapse has come about largely because of manpower and mobility constraints, it was suggested to develop innovative ways that the private sector could assist in. It was agreed that since the Private Sector is a direct beneficiary of seed certification, it will be in the latter's interest that their input leads to satisfactory resolution of this problem. The example of Senegal where the private sector was accredited to undertake control of seed fields for rice and groundnuts was cited. This collaboration has led to four inspections being accomplished in seed fields. It was recommended that other countries could adopt and adapt the Senegal model.

It was also suggested that in most of the countries, the field inspection personnel lacked the needed skills in conducting certification procedures. There is the need to train more personnel in the districts and give them the necessary logistics to perform.

Measuring Seed Sector Performance: Relating to making the contribution of WASP more evidence-based, an important recommendation which emerged was that there is the need for WASP to establish a system of reporting on the average increase in yield attributable to use of quality seeds/crop varieties used, in the next five years, which will then form the basis for measuring the usefulness of WASP.

Climate Change: Climate change was identified as a threat to the seed industry and consequently a threat to the overall food production system. The participants' concerns were captured in an appeal to have all hands on deck to address the challenges posed by climate change in order to maintain as credible, the goal of enhancing varietal performance, quality seed production and subsequently crop productivity. Participants advised that climate change should be confronted by releasing early maturing and drought tolerant varieties (end of season drought). In this regard, the CGIARs and the National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs) should be supported to deliver.

The Seed and Fertilizer Interaction: It was pointed out that the synergy between seed and fertilizer is key in achieving crop productivity and must be taken very seriously. This should propel operators in the two sectors to constantly strive to collaborate and jointly plan and implement their activities to achieve the potential synergistic effects.

Access to Funds: There is a need to have a Credit Guarantee Fund that will help seed operators access to credit. This can be considered as a policy issue which can be discussed with Governments.

Sessional Conclusions and Way Forward

Discussions from the session established that WASP has gone a long way to address its objectives. However, significant gaps remain in the West African seed sector and need to be addressed as follows:

Regional Seed Mapping: There remain a few pockets of underdevelopment with regards to the four WASP results areas based on country situations, which need to be addressed. Regional seed mapping and specific baseline studies will aid in establishing gaps and requirements.

Performance Measuring Indicators: There is need to have proper definition and identification of indicators for measuring seed sector performance which can assist in measuring how useful WASP has been in a possible future phase.

Building Partnerships: In areas where there are gaps, it would be useful to dialogue and use partnership methodologies in addressing constraints e.g. funding, mobility, etc. Strengthening the organization and roles of Regional oversight and coordinating structure will be helpful in this context.

Combating Climate Change: Challenges of climate change are real, and so researchers should be supported to come out with new varieties that would be more adapted to the changing climate and agro-ecological specificities, including being early maturing and drought tolerant.

Setting the next goals for the seed sector: The current certified seed utilization rate that WASP has achieved, though a marked improvement over the 2012 rate, still falls short of needs of modern agriculture. Therefore, a much more ambitious target needs to be established which will then be the new target for a future WASP. Moreover, the scope of the program should be widened to cover more of the important crops. Further, seed quality control systems other than certification which might also be more adaptable for several indigenous crops should be explored in a possible next phase to bring the benefits of modern crop improvement to more crops and more farmers.

4.4. SESSION 4: REGIONAL SEED REGULATION AND TRANS-BORDER SEED TRADE

This session was devoted to sharing experiences in the implementation of the Regional Seed Regulation and discussions of issues relating to cross border seed trade. Also featured was the experience with the Ebola Initiative to serve as an example of regional resilience. Summaries of papers presented are as follows:

Seed regulation in the ECOWAS-UEMOA-CILSS region: orientation, state of implementation and perspectives

The Regional Seed Regulation derives from the Fundamental Agricultural Policy Options (ECOWAP, UEMOA-PAU, CILSS-CSSA), i.e. “to create an enabling environment for a strong regional seed industry.” The presentation explained the protocols and procedures relating to the implementation of the Regional Regulation.

The procedure of Seed Quality Control and Certification is based on agreed standards for each seed class (Breeders, Foundation and Certified) and contains steps from varietal release to the marketing point of cleared seed lots. These steps were explained in the presentation. To engender the implementation of the Regulation, WASP had created a number of management entities, draft templates of the main provisions were prepared and consensual templates were validated and adapted. The approach for implementation of the regulation, mechanism, tools, modules and resources needed to strengthen capacities for the implementation of the seed regulation at the national and regional levels have been outlined in an Action Plan, which has been developed alongside procedure manuals, complementary regulations and a software (for the development of plant variety catalogue).

Lessons learned have shown that political reforms cannot be achieved solely by the efforts of Member States. It was recommended that Member States need technical assistance provided by the Seed Policy Task Force of WASP. In addition, some Political Reforms were required, and these were in the form of measures taken by the Commissions. The presentation illustrated the status of implementation by the Member States showing overall a high level of implementation by a majority of the countries.

Regional Resilience – The Ebola Initiative

The presentation made by the WASP Chief of Party covered the systematic actions that were taken by WASP and a large number of partners in 2014 and 2015 to mobilize seeds, largely of rice, maize, and cowpea, in response to the emergency seed needs of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia during the Ebola epidemic in those countries.

The presentation highlighted the steps relating to in-country producer mobilization, seed production and supply, quality assurance, food grain supply as well as financial and technical support by partners such as WAAPP, FAO, NGOs, the private seed sector, certification agencies, WFP, World Bank and USAID. Further, the presentation explained the movement and monitoring of the seed stocks, communication, permits, and branding. Modalities of reception and distribution in the recipient countries were also

explained. The model for the Ebola Seed Response Initiative has been packaged in a monograph and in a film, which is available on the CORAF/WE CARD website and on the YouTube.

Production and other Outcomes: Statistics of quantities of seeds and food produced were shown which indicated that at the national level, high yielding new genetic materials were introduced, seed systems were strengthened, and food security improved. At the Regional level, key results were that a Regional crisis management model was developed, a protocol for regional seed trade was established, and over two million Individuals would have food by the end of 2016.

Lessons & Way Forward: Regional approaches complementing national systems was key to success. With that type of collaboration, in-country production of seed was much more efficient. In the way forward, it was recommended as follows:

- There is a need to conduct a comprehensive Impact assessment following such an initiative
- There is a need to have a strategy to strengthen seed systems in the affected countries
- There should be effective implementation of the regulatory framework
- There should be pursuit of increased sensitization and advocacy to include Customs and other border entities
- There is a need to increase advocacy for Investment and financing to strengthen the seed industries of the Region

Panel Discussion 1: Challenges of implementing regulations on Inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides) and cross border trade

Moderator: Mamadou Felix Sagne, Head of the National Seed Service, Senegal, and Chairman of the ECOWAS-UEMOA-CILSS Regional Seed Committee

Panelists: Panelists from CILSS, CORAF/WE CARD, ECOWAS, AGRA, IFDC-West Africa Fertilizer Program and FAO.



Panelists, Challenges of implementing regulations on Inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides) and cross border trade

As a way of introduction, the Moderator reiterated the achievements of WASP. This was followed by self- introductions by the Panelists. Responses provided to the questions are summarized below:

Q1i. What can be innovative ways in ensuring adequate application of seed quality control at the grass-root level in the light of limited financial and logistic support?

Collaboration with the Private Sector: Private Sector operators could be licensed to carry out quality control activities, as is the case in Senegal, under referee supervision of the national certification agency. For the Private Sector, profitability is the key in seed business and therefore the onus lies on the Private Sector to display credibility in their own internal control systems such as Quality Declared Seed and Truth in labeling as practiced in Burundi and Tanzania, to eventually gain accreditation from the central certification authorities. The Government needs to encourage this by creating the necessary enabling environment for the Private Sector. Related to that, Governments should subsidize certification fees just on the same basis as seeds are sometimes given out to farmers for free. When certification fees are subsidized, quality control will be enhanced, and this will encourage the private sector to increase production, as has been found in Tunisia.

Funding the Seed Certification Effort: To minimize the funding constraint faced in seed certification in West Africa, it was revealed that in some Francophone countries, the seed certification processes generate internal funds (royalties) to the Government and the Regulatory body has some percentage (though small) to support its operations. This can be emulated by other countries.

Making Quality Seeds More Cost-Effective: There is a need to decentralize seed production and improve markets and distribution networks so that seeds supply points get closer to the farmer in order to make quality seeds more cost-effective and accessible.

Q1ii: What Mechanism should we put in place to ease cross-border restrictions and barriers to regional seed trade?

Advocacy, Capacity Building, and Training: Since all member states participated in the signing of the Regional Instrument, there is the need for Governments to show political commitment to its implementation. There is a need for awareness creation and building of capacities on the ECOWAS Protocols on seed, especially for the personnel at the borders e.g. customs and immigration officers, policy makers, etc. It was suggested that capacity building efforts should be made at both Regional and country levels. It was further recommended that Phytosanitary Regulations should be harmonized, linked to international norms as well as validated and disseminated in the Region for implementation to allay the fears of member states, regarding quarantine contaminants in seed lots. Private sector entities such as AFSTA and COMESA should be involved in discussions relating to border problems and other hindrances impeding regional seed trade.

Q1iii: How do we identify and strengthen two or three regional laboratories for upgrading and accreditation for reference tests?

Capacity Assessment: There is the need, first, to know the capabilities of the laboratories in the sub-region and then determine the requirements for their upgrading as required. It is also necessary to check the standards for seed control for appropriateness. Before one can proceed to establish referee testing stations, all the countries should be assisted to have a minimum level of human resources as well as equipment to make the seed laboratories function as required and then the best of them can be selected to perform a referee role. Nevertheless, all the seed laboratories should strive towards wider accreditation so that their test results can widely be accepted. Additionally, the private sector should be given a chance to set up accredited internal seed laboratories since some private operators have the resources to make an excellent contribution through this channel.

Q1iv: What are the key policy issues in early generation seed (EGS) production and supply – roles of key stakeholders?

The role of the Private Sector: Special skills are required to produce EGS, and both the private and public sectors must make their contributions in EGS production and supply. This collaboration is generally lacking in West Africa. The example of Ghana was cited: in Ghana, the public body charged with foundation seed faces constraints which limit its production of the desired products, with research

increasingly attempting to extend its mandate for breeder seed production also to produce foundation seed, while the private sector is asking to be allowed to produce its foundation seed needs. While the seed law now permits the involvement of the private sector in EGS production and supply, the guidelines by which this will be implemented are not yet concluded.

It was pointed out that generally, the private sector has no interest in EGS production and supply of the food security crops such as cassava, sorghum, millet, etc. The Public sector, including research, therefore needs to ensure that it maintains necessary capacity which will ensure there is adequate EGS production and supply for such crops.

The role of Research: The role of research in starting off EGS production was emphasized, and it was recommended that for research to play its role adequately, it needs to be market driven. Towards that, it was also suggested that strengthening the implementation of IPR would serve to enhance the role of research and improve the entrepreneurial dimension of the seed industry.

The functions of Seed Units at Research Institutions must be clear and the units must have adequate human resources and funds to deliver. For instance, In Nigeria, only a few breeders at the Public Institutes produce breeder seeds to meet the breeder seed demand for the entire country. In the interim, there may be the need to engage breeders outside the public research institutes, particularly those on retirement.

Q1v: What are the key issues in sustainable variety and hybrid development?

Intellectual Property Rights: The issue of IPR in business is critical, and the situation with the seed industry should not be considered any less critical. It is important to ensure that breeders get due returns from their investment and talents. National policies and laws must address shortfalls in this area to open up the potential for variety development.

Appropriateness of Varieties: New varieties and hybrids are only useful and valuable if they adequately meet the needs of the end-user, and it is, therefore, necessary to ensure that a new variety responds to the needs dictated by the agro ecology where it is to be grown and the farmer circumstance to which it will be applied. In that respect, maintenance breeding must be a sustained feature of variety development to ensure sustained display of the original attributes of the variety.

Sessional Conclusions and Way Forward

1. Under the guidance of the mandated public-sector bodies, the private sector needs to be inducted into seed certification processes through licensing and use of internal quality control mechanisms.
2. There is the need to strengthen the fertilizer and pesticides collaboration with seeds since they are complementary inputs
3. All countries that have gazetted the common Regulation must apply them. Through advocacy at both regional and national levels, efforts should aim to sensitize/train the stakeholders to be aware of the free movement of seeds and the full implication of that political decision by their countries.
4. In pursuit of reference seed laboratories for the community, consideration should be given to assisting all laboratories to achieve a minimum level of equipping and staffing. Following that existing laboratory which have a higher status in terms of staffing and equipment can be considered for that role.
5. While pursuing collaborative involvement in research investment by both the public and private sectors, there is the need to be mindful of the fundamental role of IPR implementation for serving to incentivize researchers to excel in their work of technological innovations.

4.5. SESSION 5: MOBILIZATION AND STRENGTHENING OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Business Model Approach, Results, and Lessons Learnt by WASP on Private Sector Development

The presentation covered the Business Model that has been designed under WASP for the purpose of assisting the entrepreneurial development of seed sector entities in West Africa.

Background: The presentation explained the opportunities in the seed sector of West Africa tracing from the regional situation in 2012 when the value of certified seeds of major cereals and legumes was estimated at \$ 1.7 billion. Some of the early challenges were cited, and the business development overview was outlined.

The Agri-Business Model was developed through consultations with the private sector and experience gained in working with them to strengthen their organizational and individual capacities, accompanied by business plans and linkages to relevant institutions, networks, and platforms. The use of the Seed Demand Forecasting Tool demonstrates consultative approach in planning to estimate seed demand and supply more accurately. The role of ASIWA as a Platform for Business Opportunity was explained, and the functions in it that are required to be played by other Regional and National Platforms elaborated.



A participant contributing to discussions

Development goals for both public and private sectors were discussed, and key Regional achievements using the model were presented. Steps in the design and formulation of the Business Model were explained.

Challenges: Challenges using the business model included: Inefficient Seed subsidy programs that depressed seed prices and distorted markets; lack specific incentive and financial solutions for the seed sector; weak technical and organizational capacity of the private sector; and weak seed value chain (difficulty in linking seed entrepreneurs with seed consumers)

Way forward: In the possible continuation of the WASP effort, the recommendation is that i) a global seed market study to further develop seed business models should be conducted; ii) Incentive and Financial Solutions should be developed aimed at funding the private companies' business plans; iii) there should be promotion and sharing of the business models developed among ASIWA stakeholders to make it more accessible to partners; v) and incubation/mentoring in the development of local businesses should be considered.

WASP experience in seed demand forecasting: Experiences of Nigeria and Mali/Public–Private–Partnership

The presentation introduced and explained the **Seed Forecasting Tool** that has been developed under WASP and found most useful in Nigeria and Mali and a few other countries. The presentation explained the various aspects of the tool as follows:

Background and Rationale: The seed industry can only thrive when there is demand for its products. Therefore, knowledge of seed demand is crucial in seed industry planning as the sizes and complexities of the sector structures must be determined based on demand. Despite generally low demand for quality seeds in West Africa where the informal seed sector has been the predominant source of seeds for the majority of farmers, seed producers often experience substantial carry-over of seed stock, resulting from inadequate knowledge of the seed market.

It is also common to have situations of underproduction of the different classes of seeds because of poor planning and poor linkage between public producers and private users. These lapses can be exacerbated by inadequate manpower and Infrastructural capacities and result in inadequate farmer access to quality seeds of new genetic materials.

The Importance of the Seed Forecasting Tool: The Seed Forecasting Tool was explained as being important for the following reasons: Preparation of business plans; developing the sales promotion strategy; making financial arrangements; arranging storage and transportation and working out quantities of inputs to procure. The tool has been used in each of the seven WASP focus countries to estimate seed supply and demand.

The Seed Forecasting Tool is in the form of an excel spreadsheet that works on the basis of a series of basic assumptions such as potential area to be used for seed production, seeding rate and seed yield, to assist producers in planning the seed production effort through a process of demand projections and by examining past and present performance levels, combined with an assessment of available products and current markets.

Major achievements – The case of Nigeria: Nigeria has moved away from manual and cumbersome calculation procedures to an easier and faster way of estimating seed demand, made possible by the Seed Forecasting Tool. The tool has assisted in developing a seed roadmap for the country. Thus, Nigeria has continuously been able to track national seed supply against demand and monitor production by stakeholders, increased stakeholder knowledge on seed and achieved a drastic reduction in the quantity of carryover stocks as production is now targeted and planned. Using the tool has also facilitated access to genetic material as the relationship between the public research and private seed users is now robust with the introduction of contract production.

Challenges in the use of the Forecasting Tool include the fact that its processes require being supported by consistent planning and need to benefit from an adequate number of meetings involving the entire seed sector value chain.

Panel Discussion 2: Agri-Business Development and Regional Seed Market Expansion

Moderator: Justin RAKOTOARISOANA, Executive Secretary, AFSTA; **Panelists:** AFSTA, ROPPA, NARS, CORAF, AGRA, FASOKABA, FEPRODES

Panel Discussion 2 formed the climax, following the presentations of the Business Session, to develop a good consensus on the findings of the session to be able to make recommendations and the way forward.

Participants were divided into groups, each assigned to a specific question relating to the Panel 2 topic and asked to come up with their responses to the issues raised. The responses to the questions as recorded are summarized as follows:

Q2i: What will be the innovative approaches of getting the platforms for collaboration and Synergy (Consortium, ASIWA, COASem-CRSU) more functional in a sustainable way?

Harmonization and integration: It was recognized that the harmonization of roles and responsibilities of the bodies would avert duplication of efforts and foster efficient use of resources for maximum gains.

Additionally, integrating the functioning of the bodies into national systems would improve ownership by the countries who, while working towards a common goal, would be able to address peculiar country needs at the same time.

Visibility and Awareness creation: There is a need for improvement in the visibility of and awareness of the operations of these organizations to generate higher levels of support from stakeholders. The platforms should intensify their lobbying and advocacy activities to get ECOWAS, governments and political leadership to become more committed

Countries and seed companies/organizations need to be adequately informed about the functions of these bodies and the advantages of embracing them. The various platforms which have been formulated should find sustainable internal income generation avenues. e.g. Member States/companies/institutions need to pay annual levies/membership dues. Creation of an umbrella body to house and oversee the running of all the agencies will promote synergy and ease of management. E.g. The COASem secretariat, when set up could be made to take responsibility for all matters concerning seed in the region.

Q2ii: How do we enhance demand for certified seeds and empower farmers to purchase and use quality seeds?

Accessibility and Quality enhancement: Farmers need to be informed about the availability of improved varieties promoted and be assured of a consistent supply of the seed. Seeds need to be physically accessible (located close to the end user) instead of the current practice of having most outlets in big towns and cities. At the same time, the quality of the certified seed needs to be higher than the farmer-saved seed to make it worthwhile to invest in.

Bulk purchase arrangements: Farmer-based Organizations (FBOs) could be encouraged to enter into bulk purchase contracts with certified seed producers to ensure supply and at right negotiated prices. While education on the benefits of certified seed is ongoing, linkages with aggregators and other buyers of farm produce should be improved and prices offered should be competitive to encourage farmers to use quality seeds and obtain higher yields. This way farmers will always use the best seeds on the market: certified seeds.

Combatting adulteration of seeds: Seed producers/companies need to work hard in collaboration with security forces to remove fake seeds from the market. Punishment for the sale of fake seed should be harsh enough to deter culprits.

Q2 iii: How do we manage government purchases and subsidies for private sector growth?

Planning and collaboration: Large government purchases are often made in a rush which can encourage unscrupulous operators to pass off ordinary grain as seed. This practice goes to reduce the confidence of farmer in formal sector seeds. To avoid this practice, Government requests need to be properly planned, giving enough time for the production of the required amounts of all the classes of seed and appropriately involving the quality control and the security agencies. In the long term, the creation of seed reserve stocks within the context of a national seed security initiative is the most appropriate way to address the issues arising out of seed emergencies.

Seed Subsidies to the Private Sector: Generally, the thinking was that Government should not be in the business of subsidizing the private sector. It may be more beneficial for governments to focus on building appropriate enabling environments conducive to private sector growth. Further, Government subsidies, if provided could be geared towards providing production machinery and related inputs that lower the cost of seed production, thereby making seed cheaper to the end user, the farmer. It was advised that countries must always consider carefully the reason for the subsidies they provide and put the money where it will yield the desired results.



A panelist from Fasokaba contributing to discussions

Q2iv: The PPP Concept helped the private sector to acquire quality breeder seeds and new genetic materials from the NARS and the CGIAR. How do we maintain this arrangement in the absence of external funding?

Enhanced Ownership of PPP: It was a general opinion that going forward, PPPs should be spearheaded by the users of the ensuing products and not donor agencies (which is the current norm). It was advised to employ licensing agreements with seed companies (exclusive or non-exclusive) depending on the type of crop clearly drawing up PPPs that clearly spell out the level of commitment of each party and the penalty for defaulting.

Research/Producer collaboration: Breeding institutions and the private sector need to work more closely and plan seed production activities together so that each party understands the specific roles/responsibilities. This way the right varieties and quantities of the breeder and following classes of seed will be made available.

Sessional Conclusions and Way Forward

The Role of Regional Bodies: Summarizing the session's discussions, the Facilitator pointed out that seed agribusiness and seed market expansion in Africa may best be achieved through implementing a holistic approach. Countries need to be more committed to ensuring the operationalization of regional bodies such as COASem and ASIWA. Cross-border seed trade challenges must also be tackled by assisting all stakeholders to understand the peculiarities of seed.

Growing the Seed Demand: There is need to expand seed demand through farmer sensitization, awareness creation, and other demand creation initiatives. This could be further assisted through stronger collaboration between research and the private sector for the formulation and operation of more business-like PPPs where each party is committed to deliver. More affordable credit and innovative funding sources including the Seed Sector Support Fund and greater involvement of private financial institutions would greatly serve to open up the seed industry to the financial institution and investors.

4.6. SESSION 6: SEED SECTOR FINANCING

Two presentations were made to set the stage for discussions on the theme by break-out groupings and a Discussion Panel as follows:

Advances and Challenges in Financing the Seed Sector: Nigeria's Case

Tracing the progress of development: The presentation traced the progress of the seed industry of Nigeria from the years of untapped potential until with recent government changes, huge seed business opportunities have started to be realized, putting Nigeria at the forefront of West Africa's seed industry.

The progress has resulted in seed companies supplying large quantities of quality seeds and farmers gaining access to them; the loans released to companies by commercial banks were being utilized and returned at zero default rate in most cases.

Challenges: Problems encountered along the way have included huge indebtedness to seed producers by Government for unpaid supplies resulting in loan repayment defaults and consequent reluctance of Banks to advance credit. The developmental lessons learnt are that i) with a sure market, there is a huge need for quality seed by farmers; ii) farmers are willing to pay for seed if they are supported financially, and there is a buyer who will buy their produce from them; iii) a good program can fail with inconsistencies in policies.

Supportive Actions by Government: The presentation explained the various facilitative interventions that have been conducted, including The Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL) which have propelled the growth of the Nigerian seed industry.

The Way Forward: In the view of SEEDAN, the way forward requires a strong public-private value chain with the main end users as buyers (ASIWA in practice) and strong support by government and donor projects like WASP. Types of assistance required are as follows:

- Reduction of interest rate to single digit for all players
- Provision of an insurance guarantee
- Setting aside a bail-out fund for the seed sector
- Ensuring that only competent individuals and organizations participate in the seed sector

Panel Discussion 3: Advances and Challenges of Financing the Seed Sector

Moderator: Ms. Sylvia Nyante, Agricultural Development Bank - Ghana

Panelists: ECOWAS, AFSTA, WB, AGRA, CORAF, SEEDAN, Bank of Agriculture - Nigeria

Q3i: What innovative approaches can we use to institute the Seed Sector Support Funds?

Advocacy and resource mobilization: It was recommended that seed sector groups should continuously intensify advocacy, lobbying, and dialogue to bring Banks to play or be part of the seed value chains. Traditional funding sources such as donors, Government, and Private Sector should be rejuvenated, and sensitization and advocacy campaigns reinforced for operationalizing the National Seed Sector Support Fund through Venture Capital System (low-interest rate and risk) should be pursued. In pursuing the National Seed Sector Support Fund processes, the benefit of the private seed sector must be taken into account, and as well, the

mandate, procedure, and mechanism for operating the fund should be clearly spelled out and incorporated into a guidance manual, which should include steps and protocols for fund raising.



Ms. Sylvia Nyante moderating the Panel 3 discussions

Q3ii: What are the available options for increasing private sector access to low-interest long Term Credit?

Policy and capacity building actions: There is a need for government intervention towards establishing an interest rate reduction scheme for the agricultural sector and the de-risking of agricultural financing. Need for massive capacity building for the financial sector to ensure a better understanding of agricultural financing was also identified. Buy-in of the insurance sector to provide insurance cover for seed sector

funding and the need for seed sector operators to adopt insurance measures were recommended. Towards those, a recapitalization of the Agriculture Banks was proposed to create a balancing competition to the commercial banks.

Establishment of special funding schemes: Participants called for support to the development of bankable quality business plans for seed enterprises to gain recognition for credit support and also advised that credit should be adapted to the specific needs of the actors of the value chain. The role of Government in the establishment of guaranteed fund and concessional interest rates were also discussed. It was advised that industry operators could facilitate the emergence of such schemes by forming legally registered groups and remaining in good standing and demonstrating sound financial operation.

The Government should be urged to consider adopting some policies favorable to the commercial banking sector in giving out credit to the agricultural sector. An example of this was proposed to be a guarantee fund granted to the private commercial banks for onward lending to private sector seed players under agreed terms.

The consistency of the seed market: It was pointed that agricultural financing could benefit from consistency in the availability of seeds on the market and that spasmodic availability of seeds does not allow for proper planning of procurement and other steps in the seed value chain.

Q3iii: The WASP model was judged by stakeholder as relevant to the region. What will be the extent of commitment Of RECs and Regional Partners to sustain a Regional Seed Program?

Collaboration with National Seed Programs: Regional partners and RECs, having benefitted from a useful output as a result of donor assistance, owe a duty to themselves to maintain the inherited structures when the external assistance is over. The extent that the RECs and partners will sustain the outcomes will largely depend on how useful the Regional seed program continues to be. The building blocks will largely be the national seed programs, and countries must ensure good budgetary support to ensure good performance of their seed programs. Then, with continued respect for the long term Regional Seed Plan as well as good and facilitative Regional oversight in which the RECs provide insightful leadership, supported by required Regional facilitative budget, the WASP outcomes can be perpetuated.

Exit Strategy: However, these dimensions themselves need considerable planning and designing to achieve an appropriate exit strategy, which was not done during the current WASP. This can be considered and made a part of a possible next WASP.

Q3iv: How do we leverage resources to build capacity/critical mass in seed science, technology, and business at all levels?

New research policy: It was the general opinion that in the modern era, research needs to be demand-driven and in collaboration with the Private sector and the financial Institutions. Attention to breeders' and farmers' right issues, the creation of centers of excellence to engender judicious use of limited resources was also cited. The involvement of policy makers in facilitating the cross-border movement of seeds was considered very important in facilitating Intra regional seed business.

Human resource development: The dearth of skilled manpower in the seed industry was observed and in response to that it was recommended to harmonize the training curricula of participating countries, adequately invest in training programs for managerial and technical level seed operators and facilitate students' movement within the region to rapidly develop the next batch of skilled manpower for West Africa's seed industry.

Sessional Conclusions and Way Forward

Regulation:

- Deepen the implementation of the ECOWAS Seed Regulation including higher involvement of the public sector
- Seek more participatory actions by the private sector
- Seek other quality assurance systems such as quality declared system and use of internal seed testing activities
- Assist in operationalizing the grass root steps required at country level, including adequate capacity building and development of facilities and structures
- Minimize border hindrances to cross-border trade

Agribusiness:

- The WASP Business model has been found to be an appropriate tool and needs to be consolidated, up-scaled and adopted more widely.
- Demand creation was considered a weak link. In a possible follow-up to WASP, a major demand raising component should be incorporated, involving extension, research and the private sector, aimed at growing seed demand and the strengthening of the seed value chain of all the covered crops to establish a credible basis on which the industry will thrive. In parallel establish higher targets for certified seed use
- Strengthen Regional oversight bodies and enhance their collaborative actions

Financing

- The private sector needs to advocate for the enhancement of credit for the seed industry and the full institution of the Seed Sector Support Fund and its sustainable applicability to the range of components that are critical to the growth of the industry in the participating countries.



A panelist from AGRA contributing to discussions

4.7. SESSION 7: MONITORING, EVALUATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, LEARNING, AND SHARING

Model of WASP Monitoring and Evaluation Accountability Learning and Sharing

Purpose: The presentation covered the Monitoring and Evaluation Model that has been designed under WASP for the purpose of guidance Support and oversight in the entrepreneurial development of seed sector entities in West Africa. The Model was developed with the involvement of seven WASP countries following planned steps in data collection and analysis; data quality assessment; data compilation; and learning. It demonstrates the intra-institutional linkages at CORAF/WECARD and aggregation of data from the national to the regional level. It also demonstrates perspective for future alignment with the ECOWAP-ECOAGRIS and the CAADP frameworks for upward information flow.

Development stages: The steps in the elaboration of the WASP M&E system involved the development of PMP and designing of tools. Further, staff training was conducted, and partners are participating in Regional databases were assigned specific tasks. In the process, the system was upgraded, and the tools were refined, and both French & English versions were produced. Background and Justification for the model's development were explained as were the Learning Platforms which involved meetings and reviews at various levels and timings.

Benefits of the Model: The model yields important statistics on seed production and supply such as Volume (Tons) quality seed produced (Breeder seed, Foundation seed, and Certified Seed); and a number of hectares under improved technologies for the different classes of seed.

Challenges: The biggest challenges encountered in the development and use of the model are that it is a time-consuming system that requires high M&E capabilities of actors and requires timely data collection at grassroots business levels. Further, the system is currently featured to satisfy donor data needs and hardly serves regional strategical planning purposes. To the question of what information stakeholders would like future regional M&E system to provide, following answers were recorded:

- Rate of adoption of newly released varieties;
- Proportion of seed sold to individual farmers and to institutional buyers;
- Market information seeds
- Inventory of seed certification labs and their level of performance in the sub-region
- Data on seed support funds received from different sources (government, NGOs, FAO) and the mode of operation (free, seed vouchers, cash for seeds).

4.8. SESSION 8: INFORMATION-COMMUNICATION



USAID West Africa Agriculture Team Lead Catherine Hamelin, discussing with ASSESS Communication Expert on the WASP program and communication approaches

Background: Significant knowledge has been generated from the interventions of WASP and other partners covering seed alliances and platforms, seed regulation, seed production, seed agri-business development, crises management, etc. However, communicating this knowledge to target stakeholders had been weak.

Approaches: The engagement of the media houses helped promote the Event, created awareness in seed system, and increased the visibility of CORAF/WECARD and USAID. Some of the Press-Houses who participated were ZTV, Xinhua News Agency, Boss FM, Financial Post, Net-2 TV, ETV, Accra FM,

GBC Radio, Bloomberg, Daily Graphic, Oxzy FM, Eastern FM, Angel TV, WBLS Radio-UK and Joy FM.

At the Event, the www.wasix.net was demonstrated as a hub for seed sector information, dialogue, and market facilitation. In addition, films on the achievements in the seed industry development and experience from the CORAF/WECARD intervention to curb famine in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone during and after the Ebola epidemic were shown. An exhibition section was devoted to showcasing recent developments in crop breeding, university program, and seed sector development. Many documents (including plant variety catalog, seed regulation with its implementing manuals, agri-business guide, a monograph on Ebola Seed Initiative, brochures, etc.) and banners developed by WASP were on display and were shared with participants. Other exhibitors were AGRA, WACCI – University of Ghana,

WAAPP/WASP- Ghana; USAID-FtF-Ghana, IFDC, CSIR, Private Sector (AGRISEED, NASTAG, YONIFAH Seeds and Heritage Seeds, etc.).

A special electronic interactive platform has been created for discussion, sharing information and experiences and finding solutions to the challenges confronting the seed sector.

Perspective: The need to package information and tailor them to various stakeholders and partners - Regional Economic Communities/Monetary Unions, National level Policy Makers, Financial and Technical Partners, the Private Sector, Farmer Organizations, Universities, etc. was strongly expressed. To bridge the knowledge gap and sustain the enthusiasm of stakeholders, there will be the need to continually share information through an expanded seed sector Community of Practice using the electronic platform. CORAF/WECARD will continue to serve as a Centre of Reference for seed sector development in the region and will provide the needed information and guidance to various stakeholder and partner groups.



NASTAG exhibitors interacting with a participant

5. CLOSING SESSION

A brief closing ceremony was held, which was chaired by Ghana's Deputy Minister of (Food Crops), Hon. Dr. Sagre Bambangi. The Minister, as well as representatives of regional institutions including ECOWAS, CILSS, FAO, AGRA, AfricaSeeds and CORAF/WECARD, shared brief statements which underscored the relevance of the learning event and most importantly reflected stakeholders' commitment to advance further the regional seed sector development agenda. A communique (see Annex 4.2), outlining the key conclusions and way-forward actions emanating from discussions, was issued to mark the end of the two-day learning event.

Feedback from Participants

Participants completed evaluation forms to provide feedback on the event. This strategy is intended to contribute to evidence-based information for improving the planning and implementation of future learning events, to achieve greater impact.

Analysis of the responses revealed that generally, participants appreciated the importance of the learning event especially in creating a platform for regional stakeholders to deliberate on thematic issues that are critical to the growth and advancement of the regional seed sector. As noted by a participant: *"It is one of the events that assembled key and relevant stakeholders to address the issues on hand. This is commendable"*. Participants were particularly impressed with the high-level participation of key institutions and partners in the sub-region, as it has prospects for ensuring the commitment and support required to consolidate and sustain gains made in the seed sector through the collaborative efforts of stakeholders including the WASP.

In addition, 77 percent of participants rated as high or very high the extent to which their expectations were met, whilst 94 percent rated as either high or very high the relevance of the event to their institutions. Similarly, 90 percent rated as high or very high the overall usefulness of this learning event.

The table below shows the distribution of the responses.

Question	Number of Responses	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Extent to which your expectations of this event have been met	56	-	2%	21%	59%	18%
Relevance of this event to your institution or organization's focus	55	-	-	6%	38%	56%
Extent to which you have acquired information that is new to you	55	-	4%	33%	42%	22%
Extent of which you will recommend this event to colleagues and those in your network	55	2%	4%	9%	40%	45%
Overall usefulness of this learning event	54	-	2%	7%	46%	44%

Among the things that worked well, participants cited the "high level of active participation and contributions from stakeholders", "the panel discussions" and the "...well researched presentations..." which in their opinion "...provided useful information on the seed sector in West Africa." The simultaneous interpretation was also lauded by participants. Other comments from participants include:

“The sharing of experiences, exchanges have been profound and positive. The diversity of structures is important, allowing us to take into account the concerns of all stakeholders in the seed value chain”.

“The key questions for the panel discussion to a large extent helped to raise the level of the event and provided avenues for reflection on new directions.”

Most of the participants however expressed dissatisfaction with time management at the event especially on the first day which resulted in *“insufficient time for knowledge exchanges with the larger group.”*

Comments from participants include:

“Some Q&A sessions did not have enough time allocation; they were rushed through. Day 1 activities started late and affected the sequencing and time allocation of the day's activities”.

“The time allocated to the panel discussions did not allow for adequate interaction with participants.”

Others were also of the view that *“the seed exhibitions were a bit distant from the conference hall.”*

On recommendations for improvement, participants suggested that future learning events should *“encourage discussions in small groups”* as well as *“allow more time for questions, discussions and experience sharing.”* Some participants also recommended *“strict compliance with time management especially for the opening ceremony.”* Where exhibitions are organized alongside the learning event, *“the Exhibition center should be closer to the conference center so that patronage will be high.”* In addition, *“the presence and participation of financial institutions as well as policy makers from each of the ECOWAS member countries need to be increased in future events.”*

With the high interest expressed by participants, CORAF/WECARD should strengthen its mechanisms to tap into the expertise and resources of stakeholders. In this vein, joint planning sessions will be essential to share responsibilities to foster stronger synergy for greater impact.

6. ANNEX

6.1. KEY QUESTIONS FOR PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Panel Discussion 1: Seed Regulation and Cross Border Trade:

- i. What can be innovative ways in ensuring adequate application of seed quality control at the grass-root level in the light of limited financial and logistic support?
- ii. What mechanism do we put in place to ease cross-border restrictions and barriers to regional seed trade?
- iii. How do we identify and strengthen two or three regional laboratories for upgrading and accreditation for reference tests?
- iv. What are the key policy issues in EGS (early generation seed) production and supply – roles of key stakeholders
- v. What are the key issues in sustainable variety and hybrid development?

Panel Discussion 2: Agri-Business Development and Regional Seed Market Expansion:

- i. What will be the innovative approaches of getting the platforms for collaboration and Synergy (Consortium, ASIWA, COASem-CRSU) more functional in a sustainable way?
- ii. How do we enhance demand for certified seeds and empower farmers to purchase and use quality seeds?
- iii. How do we manage government purchases and subsidies for private sector growth?
- iv. The PPP Concept helped the private sector to acquire quality breeder seeds and new genetic materials from the NARS and the CGIAR; How do we maintain this arrangement in the absence of external funding?

Panel Discussion 3: Financing and Investment:

- i. What innovative approaches can we use to institute the Seed Sector Support Funds?
- ii. What are the available options for increasing private sector access to low interest long term credit?
- iii. The WASP model was judged by stakeholder as relevant to the region. What will be the extent of commitment of RECs and Regional Partners to sustain a Regional Seed Program?
- iv. How do we leverage resources to build capacity/critical mass in seed science, technology and business at all levels?

6.2. WASP LEARNING EVENT COMMUNIQUE

Accra, June 14, 2017

Introduction

The West Africa Seed Program (WASP), a Regional model in seed program implementation in Africa, organized a Learning Event (LE) in Accra, Ghana, from 13th to 14th June 2017. The main objective of the LE was to spur the growth of the regional seed industry by consolidating successes for up-scaling, guided by past challenges, lessons, and recommendations as identified in a Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) conducted in 2016.

At the end of the LE, participants of the event, representing stakeholders listed as follows:

- Ministries of Agriculture;
- Regional Organizations;
- National Agricultural Research Institutions;
- Research and International Organizations;
- Private sector;
- Financial and Technical Partners;
- CORAF/WECARD;

Having fully participated in the LE's plenary, break-out and Panel Discussion sessions, and

Having deliberated on the following seed industry topics:

- Introduction and Framing;
- Evaluation;
- Regional seed regulation and trans-border seed trade;
- Mobilization and strengthening of the private sector;
- Seed sector financing;
- Communication;

Adopt a communique as follows:

Justification of the LE

- That the LE was a most welcome opportunity to table the key issues on WASP successes, challenges, and related recommendations; and participants highly commend the decision and support to hold it.
- That the formats and methodologies employed were appropriate and served to capture fully the reactions of participants to the issues tabled as well as elicited their views and recommendations very creditably.
- That the main action learning points as per participants' consensus are as follows:

Mid-Term Evaluation

- That the MTE was well conducted and the outcomes are used to guide up-scaling and to chart a course for the future follow-up to current WASP activities.
- That, particularly, seed certification should be made more cost-effective through licensing arrangements with private seed sector participants and through the proper use of internal seed testing facilities.

Impact of Climate Change

That in view of the increasing impact of climate change, seed sector components should see the enhancement of resilience dimensions, particularly relating to variety development and the wider technological packages that accompany varieties.

Regional seed Regulation and trans-border seed Trade

That although preparations for participation in Regional Seed Harmonization have been well prepared, implementation is being hindered, particularly in terms of border-crossing issues; therefore there is a need to widen stakeholder awareness and acceptance of the obligation inherent in the national adoption of the various community protocols to ensure border authorities and others play their expected roles.

Mobilization and strengthening of the private sector

That the private sector development in West Africa, in spite of limited successes in Nigeria and a few other locations, is still not adequate to meet the increasing demand for quality seeds of the main crops as well as the minor and other food security crops and needs enhanced support of Governments and development partners as well as increased investments in an informed and aware private sector.

That the issue of the EGS production and supply constitutes a major challenge and must be urgently addressed, using PPP approaches as has been demonstrated by WASP, through the incorporation of more commercial dimensions to address shortages and enhance sustainability.

The concept of Consortium should be re-visited, and if maintained, its role minimized as part of an exit strategy to lead to the seed industry shedding its dependency on it.

That seed demand issues and a strong seed value chain should be prioritized and efforts made to enhance seed demand to create a credible basis for the seed industry through:

- Awareness creation
- Advocacy
- Quality improvement
- Adaptability of varieties to stresses, especially climate change
- Government review of subsidies and purchases to more directly engage the private sector in planning and implementation of production and marketing
- Enhancement of PPP to ensure equitable coverage of demand

That the business model and capacity building approaches involving the use of task forces was very successful and needs to be up-scaled and continued in future activities

Seed sector financing

That innovative approaches should be instituted by Governments to make more soft funds available to the seed sector and to de-risk credit funding for the sector, as well as provide investment incentives to encourage further seed industry investment.

That it is highly commendable that the Seed Sector Support Fund is widely endorsed by National Authorities, but its actual start-up faces difficulties in many countries. Ways to identify sources of funds for the Seed Sector Support Fund and modalities for mobilization and deployment of the funds need to be quickly determined. CORAF should look out for successful models for adoption by others. Advocacy, sensitization, partnerships, etc. should assist in the exercise.

Continuation of WASP

That in view of the resounding success of WASP and using, as basis, its achievement of the original objectives, which nevertheless falls short of the full dimensions the seed industry should attain to serve the needs of modern agriculture in West Africa, a follow-up project to WASP, covering another 5 years of

activities which respond to the gaps and up-scaling needs identified during the Learning Event, should be pursued.

Acknowledgement

That the participants express commendation to all stakeholders who in diverse ways have supported and sustained WASP in its five years of seed sector development activities, particularly to the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commission and the CILSS Executive Secretariat and the respective Ministries of Agriculture for political leadership. Participants are grateful to the USAID, the World Bank and the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program for generous provision of resources and insightful technical guidance throughout the period.

6.3. LEARNING EVENT AGENDA

THEME: CATALYTIC INNOVATION FOR AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION

DAY 1			
	Time	Activity	Responsible
Session 1: Opening	0900-0940	Opening Ceremony	ECOWAS/ UEAMOA/ CILSS/ CORAF/USAID/AGRA Minister of Agriculture
	0940-0950	Introduction of Participants	ASSESS facilitator
	0950-1015	Group Photograph, Official Visit to Stand, Coffee Break and Interviews	
Session 2: Introductory presentation and	1015-1025	Concept Note: Context, Objectives and Expected Results	Youssouf Camara (Director of Research and Innovation CORAF/WECARD)
	1025-1045	WASP Overview and Highlights of Successes	Ernest Asiedu (CORAF/ WASP Chief of Party)
Session 3: Evaluation	1045-1105	Outcomes from Mid-Term Evaluation	ASSESS expert
	1105-1115	Level of Implementation of MTE Recommendations	Kodjo Kondo (CORAF/WASP Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist)
	1115-1135	Discussion	ASSESS facilitator
SUCCESS MODELS READY FOR SCALE-UP, POST 2017			
Session 4: Regional Seed Regulation and trans-border seed Trade	1135-1155	Seed regulation in the ECOWAS-UEMOA-CILSS region: approaches and tools for implementation and perspectives	Paul Senghor (CORAF/ WASP Seed Policy and Advocacy Specialist)
	1155-1210	Regional resilience and approach of cross-border seed trade: Example of the Ebola initiative	Ernest Asiedu (CORAF/ WASP Chief of Party)

	1210-1300	Discussion Panel 1: Challenges of implementing regulations on inputs (seeds, fertilizers, Pesticides) and cross-border trade.	ECOWAS/UEMOA/CORAF/AGRA/IFDC /CILSS/FAO Chaired by: Mamadou Felix Sagne (Chairman West Africa Regional Seed Committee)
		Conclusion, Recommendations, and Actions for the Future – Session 4	ASSESS facilitator
	1300-1400	Lunch Break	
Session 5: Mobilization and strengthening of the private sector	1400-1420	Business Model: Approach, Results, and Lesson Learned by WASP on Private Sector Development	Magloire Kodjo Agbegnido and Yacouba Diallo (CORAF/ WASP Agribusiness and Marketing Specialist)
	1420-1440	WASP experience in seed demand forecasting: Experiences of Nigeria and Mali / Public- Private – Partnership	Folarin Okelola (Consultant for SEEDAN- Nigeria.)
	1440-1520	Discussion Panel 2: Business Model , forecasting Seed Demand / Public-Private Partnership and Integration of women and youth in the seed business	AFSTA/NARS/ROPPIA/ CORAF/AGRA /FASOKABA/ FEPRODES Chaired by Justin Rakotoarisaona (General Secretary of AFSTA)
	1520-1600	Conclusion, Recommendations, and Actions for the Future – Session 5	ASSESS facilitator
	1600-1630	Coffee Break	
	1630-1700	Key Conclusions for Day 1	ASSESS Facilitator
DAY 2			
Session 6: Seed	0830-0850	Advances and challenges of financing the seed sector	Richard Olafare (Chairman of SEEDAN-Nigeria)

	0850-1000	Discussion Panel 3: Financing and Investing in the regional Seed Sector.	WB/ AfDB/ AGRA/ AFSTA/ROPPA/ Chaired by: Agric. Dev. Bank, Ghana
		Conclusion, Recommendations and Actions for the Future– Session 6	ASSESS facilitator
Session 7: MEAL	1000-1020	Model of WASP Monitoring Evaluation Accountability Learning and Sharing	Kodjo Kondo (CORAF/WASP Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist)
	1020-1050	Discussion, Conclusion Recommendations and Actions for the Future- Session 7	Assess Facilitator and Rapporteurs
	1050-1100	Coffee Break	
Session 8: Communication	1030-1100	Communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CORAF approach - Demonstration of the WASIX - Presentation of the film - Discussions and conclusion 	Aziz Diedhiou (CORAF/ WASP Communication Specialist)
Session 9: Exhibition	1100-1300	Ghana Day: Exhibitions	MOFA/WAAPP/CSIR/AGRA/ NASTAG/IFDC & National & International Stakeholders/CORAF/FARA/WACCI
	1300-1400	Lunch Break	
	1400-1600	Ghana Day: Exhibitions	MOFA/WAAPP/CSIR/AGRA/ NASTAG/IFDC & National & International Stakeholders/CORAF/FARA/WACCI
	1600-1630	Coffee Break	
Session 10: Closing Ceremony	1630-1700	General Conclusions & Closing Ceremony	ECOWAS/UEMOA/CILSS/ AGRA/FTP Minister of Agriculture

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