



## Support Project to the Agro-ecological Transition in West Africa

An ECOWAS project funded by



And implemented under the Coordination of the ECOWAS Regional Agency for Agriculture  
and Food (RAAF)

With technical Support from the consortium:



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## 1. Background information

Considering the current global warming and climate variability, scaling up production techniques that are based on agro-ecological approach regarding the use of resources (land, water, plants, wildlife, etc.) gives a unique opportunity to West African countries to tackle the resilience challenges they are faced with in terms of food insecurity and nutritional deficiencies affecting poor households. Agro-ecological intensification provides a top reference for implementing agricultural techniques and practices as well as livestock ones that promote biological mechanisms for increased, healthy and sustainable production.

As part of the implementation of its regional agricultural policy, ECOWAS, through its Lomé-based Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF), with financial support from the French Development Agency (AFD), empowers local, regional and international organisations in the development and implementation of innovative pilot projects on agro-ecological practices aimed at improving food and nutrition security in West Africa.

The Support Project to the Agro-ecological Transition in West Africa (PATAE) is an integral part of the implementation of this regional agricultural policy. It seeks to contribute to ECOWAS efforts towards stimulating the development of innovative practices that optimise the mobilisation of ecological processes in the area of agricultural production and food and nutrition security in West Africa, particularly in areas affected by the deteriorating nature of farmlands, rainfall concerns and natural resources degradation.

## 2. Objectives

The main objective of PATAE is to provide support to the agro-ecological transition in West Africa in order to promote not only, emergence, adoption and dissemination of ecologically intensive practices among farming families, but also the adoption of management and organisation modes that facilitate this adoption.

More specifically, PATAE provides practitioners, policymakers, and cooperation institutions with:

- ✓ On the one hand, techno-economic, social and environmental references concerning these agro-ecological techniques and,
- ✓ On the other hand, ideas for the analysis of barriers and levers for their development feeding dialogue among actors, their reflections and their decisions.

## 3. Components

PATAE is divided into the following components:

### *Component 1: Agro-ecological transition support to local actors*

The objective of this component is to organise a call for project proposals system during the first semester of 2018, to support the development of proposals in accordance with the expectations of respondents, to select and undertake, at least, two field projects per targeted country. Besides, the project provides the necessary and desired supports for a successful

implementation of selected projects (training, exchange visits, demonstrations, pilot actions etc.) and monitoring and internal evaluation procedures and capitalisation for projects.

*Component 2: Exchanges, capitalisation and contribution to the development of public policies*

This component seeks to put in place systems aimed at promoting exchanges among field projects and examine existing networks, integration possibilities of these exchanges within one or several networks on agro-ecology. Also, through concrete experiences from field projects, the component identifies topics for which a public policy evolution is necessary to facilitate agro-ecological transition (regulatory framework for the management of natural resources, marketing, training and agricultural advisory systems, etc.). The organisation of national and regional consultations on these thematic areas will result into advocacies and recommendations for decision-makers.

*Component 3: Coordination and management*

The coordination and management unit of the project defines the work procedures for all participants and provides the framework for the monitoring and evaluation of field projects (external monitoring and evaluation) and consultation frameworks. It will set up a steering committee that meets once a year with the possibility of holding extraordinary sessions when necessary.

#### **4. Implementation Strategy**

Inasmuch as the project implementation strategy is to disseminate innovative agro-ecological techniques, it first and foremost supports the agro-ecological transition that farmers may decide to undertake. This decision can be the creation of their own initiative but also initiatives promoted by advisory, research and development institutions. In this case, the steps and levels of intervention will be more complex than those relating to technology transfer or extension technology.

Four main principles back up this implementation strategy:

- Participation and empowerment of local actors (agriculturalists, farmer-based organisations, local communities, sector operators), meaning the main target groups of the project, constitute one of the intervention bases of the project.
- Approaches used to support farmers and other local actors (at the village, community and sector levels) must be diversified and complementary. Beyond the commonly used approaches for project implementation (training, farm schools, demonstration plots, etc.) it is advised to mobilise original farming advisory methods, consultation support and, if need be, alternative marketing systems.
- Collective action supposed to, not only, continue with the co-development of innovation efforts but also to tackle systems and approaches that promote their adoption (consultation framework for the management of spaces and of natural resources, incentive measures to remove some constraints, etc.)
- Capitalisation of results achieved as well as lessons learnt from successes and failures will lead to diverse products facilitating exchanges at the local, national and regional levels. This capitalisation and these exchanges will serve as useful elements to help decision-makers advance public policies.

PATAE provides financial and methodological support to development operators linked to farming communities that engage in agro-ecological transition on the basis of results already achieved. These operators can be NGOs, public institutions or private advisory firms, researchers and chain actors, etc.

A summary report on field studies together with other documented experiences from the sub region will be produced and broken down into two capitalisation products to be disseminated at the end of the project:

- a capitalisation document meant for agricultural development agents and,
- a synthetic report promoting dialogue and advocacy with political institutions of the region and donor agencies.

In the end, the results of this capitalisation work will facilitate a better consideration of these innovative agro-ecological techniques and their development conditions in public policies and support systems for farmers to help build the resilient capacities of farming families.

### **5. Geographical coverage, duration, funding and technical partners for implementation**

Planned for a period of four years (2018-2021), PATAE currently covers Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal and Togo with the possibility of extending to other West African countries. It is funded by AFD (French Development Agency) at an amount of 8 million Euros with a co-funding of Nine Hundred and Sixty Thousand Euros (960,000 Euros) from ECOWAS and implemented under the Coordination of the ECOWAS Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF) with technical support from the consortium Association of Veterinarians Without Borders (AVWB), the Institute of Research and Development Methods Application (IRAM) and the African Institute for Economic and Social Development (INADES FORMATION).

### **6. Expected results and direct effects**

The expected results and direct effects of PATAE include the following among others:

#### For component 1:

- Validation, by partner farming communities, of the innovative agro-ecological projects that they have conducted through a full-scale testing and/or demonstration plots,
- Identification and implementation of support measures promoting the adoption of these innovations,
- Enrichment of farmers' knowledge through learning in their farming activities and exchanges among peers,
- Improvement of technical references for the conduct of ecologically intensive crop and livestock systems,
- Synergies among various components of agro-ecosystems (agriculture, livestock, annual tree and crops, rain-fed crops, irrigated crops on small land surface areas),
- More resilient productions systems capable of facing climate change.

For component 2:

- Improvement of knowledge on the processes of agricultural innovation that are based on the principles of agro-ecology,
- Strengthening of knowledge and reflection capacities and actions of farmers, PO leaders, officers of advisory support bodies and decision-makers,
- Renewal of advisory supports approaches (technical advice, production advice and support for community actions),
- Support measures to promote agro-ecological transition,
- New regulations or application of rules already adopted by countries that facilitate the agro-ecological transition in West Africa.