

CERFAM'S BULLETIN

MARCH 2022 9TH



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“ PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AGRI-FOOD VALUE CHAINS

TO ACHIEVE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 2 IN AFRICA

2 “ZERO HUNGER”



République de Côte d'Ivoire



CERFAM
CENTRE D'EXCELLENCE REGIONAL
CONTRE LA FAIM ET LA MALNUTRITION



ÉDITORIAL



“ The transformation of agri-food value chains at the heart of food security and nutrition strategies

One third of the world's population faces hunger and/or malnutrition. The development of agri-food value chains can be an effective way to get millions of households in developing countries out of poverty, by contributing to improve incomes and living conditions. According to the African Development Bank (AfDB), processing agricultural products in Africa will pave the way for larger-scale progress on the continent and will clearly improve the quality of life of African households. In its article on page 4, the Bank shares an assessment, carried out across 9 African countries of 15 priority agricultural value chains, whose organisation and improved functioning will allow them to be better valued and structured in terms of production, processing, and marketing services.

Africa, despite being important pillars of production systems, smallholders are often minor participants in value chains, facing major handicaps that limit their added value. Some of these handicaps include: (i) the organisational deficit, (ii) the lack of information on markets, and the challenge of complying with international standards and product quality norms, or (iii) the absence of appropriate policies to improve the value chains' environment.

In an article on page 9 on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on agricultural value chains in East Africa, the FAO Representative in East Africa recalls the challenges, faced by smallholders, that have emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including logistical challenges, movement restrictions, limiting farmers' access to input markets, and the difficulty of processing agricultural products, with the closure of small and medium enterprises, the closure of wholesale and retail markets, along with the increase in prices.

The matter of processing agricultural products and the promotion of agri-food value chains remains a current concern in West Africa. In Côte d'Ivoire, the government has initiated

an ambitious programme called “Une Côte d'Ivoire solidaire” (A United Côte d'Ivoire)¹, from 2021 to 2025 and which aims to support producers to improve the profitability of their land and to install processing plants, to create jobs and increase producers' earnings. The Interprofessional Fund for Agricultural Research and Advisory Services, supports the processing of agricultural products through support projects for the development of agricultural sectors, the training of processors in good manufacturing and hygiene practices, and the installation of semi-industrial processing units, with financial support from development partners. Details on these actions can be found on page 6 of this newsletter.

In the Republic of Guinea, the transformation of the agricultural sector, rural development and food self-sufficiency supported by sustainable food systems are at the centre of the Government's priority actions. The Guinean agricultural sector offers several profitable investment opportunities, such as the creation of processing units, the construction of infrastructure and equipment for conservation and packaging, or the creation and development of agricultural poles to revitalise agro-industrial value chains. In the article on page 16, you will read about the country's efforts and initiatives in formulating and developing policies and strategies to achieve the Zero Hunger objective, with the support of partners including CERFAM.

The transformation of agri-food value chains must be placed at the heart of food security and nutrition strategies by enabling access to healthy, diversified, and nutritious diets. It will contribute to strengthening the resilience of communities to climate and socio-economic shocks, to poverty reduction and to the long-term well-being of countries' populations.

Enjoy your reading.

¹ https://www.gouv.ci/_actualite-article.php?recordID=13051

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01 AFDB'S NEW STRATEGY: STRENGTHENING THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS TO FEED AFRICA

Agriculture is the keystone of food security, and its main function is to provide sufficient and steady supplies of safe and nutritious food. Some 60 percent of Africans live in rural areas, areas that rely heavily on agriculture for their livelihood. The agricultural sector has always been a priority for the African Development Bank. According to Akinwumi A. Adesina, President of the African Development Bank, the way forward to improving the quality of life in rural areas is to transform agriculture². Mr. Adesina suggests that the need to achieve agricultural transformation in Africa will clearly improve the quality of life of Africans, supporting the development of countries, and helping economic growth.

Developing agricultural value chains to better address food security in Africa

The goal of the Bank's interventions in value chain development is to reduce poverty, improve food security and help Africa, among others, become a net food exporter. The development of agricultural value chains is part of the Bank's 2016-2025 strategy to Feed Africa and to eradicate hunger and rural poverty in Africa. To achieve this, the Bank aims to transform agriculture into a competitive and inclusive agri-food sector that creates wealth, improves livelihood, and preserves the environment.

The transformation strategy as developed by the bank identifies 15 priority value chains for commodities, based on specific agro-ecological zones. The aim is to achieve self-sufficiency in products such as rice, wheat, fish, palm oil, horticulture, and cassava; to move up the value chains for products mainly destined for export such as cocoa, coffee, cotton and cashew nuts; ensure food security in the Sahel through sorghum, millet and livestock; and exploit the potential of the Guinean savannah for maize, soybean and livestock production.



Source : African Development Bank.³

² <https://www.afdb.org/fr/news-and-events/transforming-agriculture-in-africa-17432>

³ https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Generic-Documents/Brochure_Feed_Africa_Fr.pdf



15 PRIORITY VALUE CHAINS

identified by the African Development Bank in its transformation strategy

An assessment of the development of agricultural value chains in 9 African countries

The production and value-added potential of value chains in Africa, and mainly in the West African region, is still under-exploited, given the technical (yields) and economic (transformation, marketing, exports) margin for improvement in the region. Over the period 2005-2016, the Bank initiated a study/assessment of value chains in 9 countries, selected according to regional coverage, scale of agricultural value chain development activities. These countries are Morocco, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia, and Mozambique. The main value chains assessed were: wheat, cassava, cocoa, fish, tomato, meat, milk, rice and also cashew nuts. This analysis helps to understand how the value chain is organised (stakeholders, governance, etc.) and how it operates. The studies have shown the relevance of developing value chains in harmony with country strategies. However, strategies for the development of agricultural

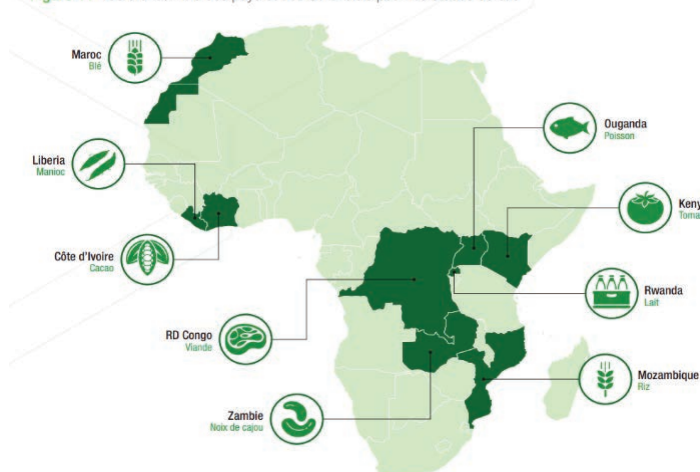
value chains are not always up to date or are still being developed. In many cases, strategies seem to have been developed without external participation, often focusing on technical aspects of production and transformation, excluding other processes such as marketing or consumption. Studies in countries also reveal that little effort had been made to strengthen farmers' organisations, and no support had been provided to train these organisations to better structure the value chain in areas such as production, transformation, and marketing services.

What recommendations for the development of sustainable, efficient, and inclusive agricultural value chains?

The assessment carried out in the 9 countries highlighted constraints but also lessons learned that can help the Bank achieve its strategy to feed Africa and the long-term development of the agricultural sector in Africa. Among the lessons learned were: the need to consider profitability along the value chain; the need for realistic planning that takes into account the scope in terms of time required to allow for the maturation of activities; the value chain stakeholders selected for support; and ensuring inclusiveness in agricultural value chain development, i.e., sustained, concerted and focused efforts at all stages of the design and implementation of agricultural value chain development, which are essential to ensure inclusiveness.

For the African Development Bank, agricultural transformation of commodities in Africa will pave the way for larger-scale advances on the continent, providing poor people with opportunities for decent jobs and additional added value in local and global markets. This will have a significant impact on poverty reduction and hunger eradication, the first two Sustainable Development Goals.

Figure 1: Vue d'ensemble des pays et des CV choisis pour les études de cas



Source : African Development Bank⁴.

4 https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/IDEV-4- Evaluation_groupee_Chaines_de_valeur_agricoles.pdf



02 THE NEED FOR LOCAL PROCESSING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND THE PROMOTION OF AGRI-FOOD VALUE CHAINS

Local processing of agricultural products, a global vision

The issue of processing agricultural products and the promotion of agri-food value chains remains a current concern at the global, regional, and national levels. This is reflected in all the development strategies enacted to date.

As a matter of fact, on 25 September 2015, in parallel with the United Nations General Assembly, 193 world leaders committed themselves to 17 goals to be achieved over the next few years (2015-2030). These global goals, known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are part of the new post-2015 development agenda, titled "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". SDG 2, which seeks to eradicate hunger and famine, ensure food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture, is a good example of how local processing of agricultural products can be integrated.

The processing of agricultural products at the heart of strategies of countries and development partners

At the regional level, the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group has since 2016 placed processing of agricultural products at the heart of its strategy. In fact, on Monday, September 19, 2016, at its headquarters in Abidjan, it launched its "Strategy for Agricultural Transformation in Africa 2016-2025". The objective of this launch, by the institution's agriculture and agribusiness department, is to present the above-mentioned strategy to a wide range of stakeholders on the continent. The strategy has four specific targets :

contribute to the eradication of extreme poverty in Africa by 2025;

eradicate hunger and malnutrition in Africa by 2025;

make Africa a net food exporter;

and, position the African continent at the top of export-oriented global value chains where it has a comparative advantage.



04 SPECIFIC TARGETS

targeted by the Strategy for Agricultural Transformation

In Côte d'Ivoire, the Government has developed the second generation National Agricultural Investment Programme (PNIA 2), a consensus document launched in November 2016, compiling interventions in the agro-sylvo-pastoral and fishery sectors over the period 2018-2025. The PNIA 2 is part of the sectoral implementation of the National Development Plan (PND) aimed at creating the structural transformation of the Ivorian economy. In its Programme 2 : Improvement of added value and market performance, the PNIA 2 attaches great importance to the transformation of agricultural production, according to its expected result 1: the strengthening of the capacity to promote agricultural products is effective for all actors in the sector.

FIRCA and the local processing of agricultural products

The importance of processing agricultural products was materialized at FIRCA in 2016, with the creation of the Processing and Promotion Programme Officer position. This initiative has enabled the support of two processing platforms: the Réseau des transformatrices des produits agricoles de Côte d'Ivoire" (RETPACI) and the Alliance des femmes entrepreneuses solidaires de Côte d'Ivoire (AFESCI-GROUP). The actions of these structures are oriented towards processing of cereal products (rice, maize), starchy foods (yams, bananas, and cassava) and oleaginous products (shea, sesame, groundnut, kernel of cashew nuts).



66 PROCESSING UNITS

brought up to standard by FIRCA for the processing of cassava, in the form attieke and dough



Processing and promoting local products

+ 300 BAKERS AND 150 PASTRY CHEFS

benefited from training and provided with production equipment

With the financial support of development partners and resources mobilised from the which sectors? (solidarity fund), FIRCA has made significant progress in processing and promoting local products. With funding from the European Union, FIRCA has implemented the project to support the development of the cassava and market garden sectors in Côte d'Ivoire (PRO2M), with particular emphasis on cassava processing, in the form of attiéké and dough (placali), bringing 66 processing units up to standards, and training processors in good manufacturing and hygiene practices. Eventually, more than 60,000 tonnes of by-products will be produced.

Furthermore, with funding from the World Bank Group, FIRCA implemented the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme (PPAAO/WAAPP - 2013-2017). The programme activities generated and disseminated to stakeholders more than thirty efficient technologies covering the entire value chain of seven priority staple foods: plantain, maize, yam, rice, cassava, pork, and traditional poultry.

Under its transformation and enhancement (of local agricultural products) component, local flours from high quality cassava, maize have

been developed and disseminated to produce "composite breads", dishes and other bakery and pastry products, accepted by the Ivorian consumer. To achieve this, a technology transfer was initiated thanks to the agreement signed between the National Union of Bakery Owners of Côte d'Ivoire (UNPBCI) and the Federation of pastry chefs of Côte d'Ivoire (FEPACI). This support involved more than 300 bakers and 150 pastry chefs throughout the country who benefited from trainings and production equipment.

In addition to these training initiatives, in order to increase the availability of local flour in sufficient quantity and quality, in August 2018, FIRCA installed and put into operation a semi-industrial unit to process roots, tubers and starchy foods into flour at the National Polytechnic Institute Félix Houphouët-Boigny (INPHB) in Yamoussoukro. This unit has a minimum processing capacity of :

+ 3000 kg of fresh cassava per day, i.e. producing 750 kg of flour.

+ 1000 kg of fresh plantains per day, i.e. producing 200 kg of flour.

+ 1000 kg of fresh sweet potato per day, i.e. producing 200 kg of flour.

+ 1000 kg of yam per day, i.e. producing 250 kg of flour.

Based on the importance of processing, the position of Processing and Promotion Programme Officer has been transformed into the "Innovation, Processing and Promotion Department (SITV). This new vision should enable a better understanding of processing issues within the agricultural sectors.



The Interprofessional Fund for Agricultural Research and Advisory Services (FIRCA), a recognised public interest legal entity, is a body of the official institutional system for the development of agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire.

- Its mission is to mobilise financial resources from the State, agricultural sectors, and technical and financial partners, to ensure, in all sectors of agricultural production (plant, forest, animal and fisheries), the sustainable financing of programmes for the provision of agricultural services to farmers, including technological research for the improvement of agricultural and processed products.

FIRCA: invest for the future, anticipate, innovate



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03 THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS IN EAST AFRICA

How did the COVID-19 pandemic hit agrifood systems in East Africa and what are post-crisis policy options?

The COVID-19 pandemic hit East Africa at a particularly critical time when the economies of several countries in the subregion were recovering from the impacts of recent droughts and severe flooding and dealing with the worst desert locust invasion in 25 years.

From the onset, FAO's clarion call was to prevent the health crisis from becoming a food crisis. All governments in East Africa declared agricultural products essential to ensure movements. However, COVID-19 containment measures, stay at home advice, and travel and transport restrictions led to logistics-related difficulties for traders. Notwithstanding this prioritization of agriculture, in practice there were impacts felt at different segments of the agricultural value chain, especially at the beginning of the pandemic.

When the pandemic started in 2020, logistical challenges related to cross-border controls enacted by countries to prevent the spread of the virus challenged the importation of agricultural inputs. At the local level, initial restrictions on movement curbed farmers' access to input markets in some locations.

Further along the agricultural value chains, farm labor shortages affected production. The processing stage had reduced capacity with small to medium enterprises closing. Post-harvest losses occurred. Wholesale and retail markets were closed. Price hikes coupled with loss of jobs and income affected the purchasing power of the poor.

The impact of COVID-19 on production

Maize prices increased by 6 to 14 percent in April 2020, as the pandemic hit, compared to the previous month in Burundi, increased by 2 to 41 percent in 8 out of 11 monitored Somalian markets, and by 18 to 45 percent in 5 out of 7 monitored markets in South Sudan.

In Somalia, though no government-imposed restrictions were reported, agro input vendors experienced challenges accessing seeds and veterinary inputs. Other COVID-19 impacts on farming households in Somalia included loss of income sources, inadequate veterinary resources, rising food and transportation costs, and sickness of household members. Commercial farmers of high-value crops that tend to be labor-intensive also experienced farm labor shortages due to restrictions on people's movements.



- 5.5 PERCENTAGE POINTS

of 2020 GDP growth rate in sub-Saharan Africa due to COVID-19

Eastern Africa's livestock sector supports over 30 million people. These livestock owners and pastoralists faced interrupted access to rangeland and watering points. Disruptions to livestock markets reduced incomes for livestock-rearing households. In Somalia, where the livestock sector is the largest contributor to livelihoods and employs more than 65 percent of the population, COVID-19 impact assessments found that movement restrictions and market shutdowns affected livestock export markets, especially to the Middle East during hajj. This in turn reduced the income of livestock-keeping households. Similarly, an FAO COVID-19 impact assessment in South Sudan found that livestock markets were affected, hence reducing the sale of livestock and livestock products for traders and households.

According to the COVID-19 impact assessments in both Somalia and South Sudan, challenges for fisheries included difficulties accessing fishing inputs, expensive labour and challenges accessing fuel. This sector also faced increased post-harvest losses due to imposed curfews and a lack of cooling or refrigeration facilities.

Indeed, small to medium enterprises and value chains with perishable goods were disproportionately affected by the pandemic, especially horticultural produce, fish products, milk, and meat. The closure of many informal markets in urban and peri-urban areas to avoid crowding disrupted food supply systems, especially for fresh products, such as meat, eggs, and milk. For countries that imposed curfews, key wholesale markets for fruits and vegetables and other food items operated at a reduced capacity.

Policy options to build inclusive pathways out of the pandemic

Before the pandemic, food insecurity levels in Africa were high. COVID-19 has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, and both chronic and acute food insecurity levels increased. The pandemic is also estimated to have significantly reduced the 2020 GDP growth rate in Sub-Saharan Africa by 5.5 percentage points and increased extreme poverty.

As countries grapple to recover from COVID-19, a severe drought has also impacted the region, particularly Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. The drought has withered crops and killed livestock, further threatening the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable rural families.

Building inclusive, resilient pathways to stronger rural livelihoods and agrifood systems that withstand multiple shocks such as these is a vital next step out of the pandemic.

Strong regional cooperation, enhanced partnerships, cross border coordination and sharing of lessons learned are corner stones in this endeavour.

We must also stress the importance of building institutional and technical capacity to better anticipate and cope with future shocks.

Furthermore, we must continue to find innovative solutions in our supply chains, such as mobile money, online transactions, apps, and contactless payments, to be more agile and adaptive during the next shock, and to reduce the spread of viruses through contact. Just as urban dwellers can order food and pay for it using an app, rural communities could adopt the same systems to support agrifood supply chains.

Countries should revisit their national and regional trade policies to ensure alignment with the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) to advance regional cooperation and cross-border coordination. This includes the exploration of opportunities for digital cross border trade and services.

To build resilience from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, recovery policies must be inclusive, particularly of women, youth, and other marginalized groups.



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04

SHOWCASING WFP'S "CHANGING LIVES" WORK THROUGH A GOOD PRACTICE:

IMPROVING THE CASSAVA VALUE CHAIN IN THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO FOR BETTER FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

WFP's footprint in the global development assistance arena

Has WFP implemented interventions with real and proven impact on food security and nutrition and contributed decisively to increase the revenues of smallholder farmers and other actors of vital staple crop value chains in Africa?

At a time of unprecedented uncertainty and complexity resulting from multiple combined crises ranging from climate change, conflict, food price volatility compounded by the coronavirus pandemic, government donor funding which forms the bulk of WFP resources is becoming increasingly uncertain, particularly for development interventions. What is WFP doing concretely to make its development work more visible? Has WFP laid foundations robust enough and paved the way for walking the talk from "delivering to enabling", bridging the humanitarian-peace-development nexus?

The path to recovery from the pandemic is opening new opportunities for WFP's positioning, partnering, and resourcing on areas such as national health systems, social protection, and economic recovery. Governments partners, International Financial Institutions, and other untapped donors such as the private sector are stepping up their investments to meet the unprecedented needs resulting from the multiple crises.

WFP needs to reframe its narrative of "all for humanitarian" to make space for a bolder positioning and engagement on issues of interest and priority in the international development ecosystem: rural transformation, integrated community resilience, climate change adaptation, youth and women's empowerment, sustainable food systems and human capital development, thematic in line with national and international development partners financing priorities.

On the path from "delivering" to "enabling", from "saving lives" to "changing lives" WFP can capitalize on its deep field presence, robust strategic policy framework, an array of mutually reinforcing programmatic modalities and tools, a skilled workforce and the mechanisms and tools brought by South-South and triangular cooperation and country capacity development.

WFP should leverage ongoing work to document success stories and good practices and invest in their dissemination to showcase impactful interventions that are "changing lives".

Reaping the benefits of good practices through South-South and Triangular Cooperation and Capacity Strengthening

Since 2019, CERFAM has been facilitating the mobilization and deployment of Côte d'Ivoire and Benin's experts to support the Republic of Congo (ROC) farmers to strengthen the weakest links of the national cassava value chain. This initiative has promoted institutional exchanges among the Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development of these three countries and helped leverage country capacity strengthening efforts by providing training in the fabrication of improved equipment and building of technical skills in the processing processes. This south-south cooperation resulted in increased quantity, better quality of final product, new market opportunities and better skilled smallholder farmers and craftsmen. This gender-transformative initiative has focused on creating a conducive environment for the empowerment of women and youth from the targeted communities and has impacted the daily lives of many households and communities engaged in the process.



In the Congo, cassava-based products contribute to addressing the populations' energy requirements.

© WFP / Eva Gillam

Through actions that are simple, concrete, replicable and scalable, WFP can have high and lasting impacts in the lives of many Congolese, paving the way towards Zero Hunger. Investing in the identification and dissemination of good practices such as the Congo example can be a powerful means to foster community engagement, increase government commitment and mobilize financial and technical support from development partners. Capitalizing on its deep field presence, knowledge of local context and realities, expanded partnership beyond traditional boundaries and the trust of its donors, WFP has been pioneering a refreshing and inspiring success story in Congo, leaving vivid and tangible marks on the lives of many Congolese women, men, boys, and girls.

What is new and why is this “new gari” booming since cassava has always been the main staple in the Republic of Congo?

The Republic of Congo (ROC) is a resource-rich, food-deficit, middle-income country categorized as having “serious” hunger challenges in the 2017 Global Hunger Index. Food insecurity in the country stems from limited agricultural productivity, widespread vulnerability, recurrent social and political conflict, and gender inequalities. The Republic of the Congo is a large producer and consumer of cassava. Despite cassava's importance for food security and nutrition in the country, most of the population still rely on traditional, manual methods to process and transform it in derived products such as gari. The rudimentary processing method is very time-consuming, exhausting, and inefficient in terms of profitability for rural farmers. Some of the processes, such as roasting and grating, require intense physical labour with high risks of injury. In addition, there is a lack of diversity of cassava-derived products, which limits access to markets and income.

Holistic approach to bridge humanitarian–development–peace nexus

In response to Congo's hunger challenges, WFP has articulated a Country Strategic Plan-CSP (2019-2023) that adopts a holistic, nationally driven, shock-responsive, and long-term strategy in the Congo that prioritizes work at the humanitarian–development–peace nexus. Through this approach, WFP aims to address the immediate and underlying causes of vulnerability while facilitating the development of national capacities to ensure sustainability, national ownership and a progressive handover of interventions to the Government. Gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive programming is mainstreamed in all activities. In line with the New Way of Working, WFP Congo has been investing on enhanced strategic and operational partnerships for greater impacts through its support to emergencies but also in development activities such as home-grown school feeding, support to smallholder farmers and capacity institutional capacity strengthening.



© WFP / Alice Rahmoun

The 'new gari'

Anne-Marie, a single mother heading a family of six, is busy replenishing her stacks...



Gari, is a toasted cassava flour that finds its origins in West Africa

the products on her stall sell quickly. For the last three-months, her small business located at a major intersection of Bouansa, a town in the south of the Republic of Congo, located in the department of Bouenza, more than 200 km from the capital Brazzaville. Her business is right at this intersection, a vital road that links Brazzaville and Pointe Noire, the second major City of the Republic of Congo, is buzzing. Many cars stop by the roadside and people reach the strolls to buy a snack "the new gari", a tasty and affordable take-away snack that you see disposed on small plastic bags. 'Gari', is a toasted cassava flour that finds its origins in West Africa. In Congo and in many other countries of West and Central Africa, cassava is among the main staples. Anne-Marie is smiling because she feels proud to be associated with a "new" trendy product which is generating so much interest among customers and more importantly "making money". Her sales have tripled with the "new gari". This makes a huge difference for her and her family. She is already thinking of growing her business and buying a few basic things to improve her daily life. Ann-Marie is one of the growing number of vendors who get their supplies from local smallholder farmer cooperatives of which many are composed and led by women.



The gari you find at Bouansa and many other spots in Congo is produced by local cassava processing cooperatives mainly led by women. These local cooperatives have been producing and marketing the product as the 'new gari' because it's more homogeneous and appealing than the traditional product. A kilo is sold for 450 CFA francs or 75 USD cents. The market for this product is growing rapidly because the quality of the product justifies the premium. This is being achieved thanks to improved techniques and equipment and training these smallholder farmers' cooperatives have received from WFP Congo and its partners.

Embracing an open-minded learning approach towards solutions and innovations from neighbouring countries

In response to the challenges hindering the cassava value chain, WFP ROC decided to support the Government in looking for solutions and good practices from other countries. The query was simple yet powerful: are there technologies and products in neighbouring countries that would adapt to the Republic of the Congo's context and specific demands? Could more effective machines be manufactured locally, and people trained to acquire the skills required to improve the whole cassava value chain? Could these actions increase the incomes of smallholder farmers and other actors of the value chain, particularly in rural areas and contribute to improving food and nutrition security? With those questions in mind, the Government of the Republic of Congo, through WFP, requested the technical assistance of CERFAM to facilitate a process that capitalizes on south-south cooperation and country capacity strengthening, two key components of WFP's work on development, to support the development of the cassava value chain in Congo.

South-South Cooperation and Country Capacity Strengthening as drivers to WFP's enabling work in Development

Facilitated by WFP Congo and CERFAM, a South-South and triangular cooperation initiative among the Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and Benin was put in motion with the aim to strengthen the resilience of target rural communities, especially women and young men, creating equal opportunities to benefit from agri-food business including the processing of cassava, commercialization, and safe consumption of its derived products. CERFAM organized a technical assistance process that brought together experts from the Ministries of Agriculture of Côte d'Ivoire and Benin, and the Institute of Technology in Côte d'Ivoire (I2T).

The initiative aimed at strengthening their capacities and skills to diversify and improve their food systems, vary their sources of incomes, and improve the quality of food produced using of local agricultural raw materials in their regions with the manufactured equipment and tools.



Understanding the context, identifying the gaps, and tailoring the response

A joint assessment mission was undertaken to have an in-depth understanding of the local production methods, challenges and develop adequate and locally based solutions for improving the cassava value chain. These exchanges contributed to a better tailoring of the training and adaptation of the equipment to local context.

The experts and beneficiaries collaborated by sharing resources and techniques. There was also cross-fertilization as women and men who were trained and are now sharing their new skills with other cooperatives. New cassava-derived products recipes have also been developed, contributing to a better marketing, distribution and diversification of products for consumption.

The inclusive participatory approach is key for the sustainability of the initiative by involving the local government and community in designing the assistance that meet the needs of local population with context-relevant solutions. An African-to-African learning and exchange approach played a crucial role as Côte d'Ivoire and Benin have faced these challenges and knew the path to overcome them.

Harvesting immediate results

This south-south cooperation project has had multiple benefits: it has introduced new products of enhanced quality for consumption, increasing access to markets and revenues for smallholder farmers, women's agriculture cooperatives and retailers. The new techniques have also reduced the burden on women and enriched and diversified the diet of target communities with a product of better quality. The artisans trained have received requests to produce similar equipment from a new clientele, fostering local youth entrepreneurship. The fortification of cassava is another opportunity to consider as it may play a key role to address micronutrient deficiencies. A capitalization workshop was organized in November 2020 in Brazzaville to take stock of the achievements, draw lessons, and leverage the impact of good practices in strengthening local food systems.

Extend the assistance to the banana value chain. The promising results of the first phase triggered a second technical assistance that extending the support to the banana supply chain. This second phase incorporates innovative aspects that focus on greater economic empowerment of women - more than half of the staff of the beneficiary groups are women -, financial inclusion through electronics cash transfers, the creation of new markets for processing by-products with stronger linkages to the WFP school feeding program which already plays a key role in promoting education, health, and nutrition.



What lays ahead?

The horizon seems rather promising. The success of this WFP's initiative has resonated with the national and local authorities, and communities. Traditional development partners have shown enhanced interest to fund such initiatives. The Promanioc (proCassava) initiative is part of the diversification of the economy and support for the post-COVID19 response of the Congolese government.

- The results achieved in such a limited period and the level of engagement have also inspired other countries, generating a great deal of interest within WFP and outside of the organization as well. There is much to be learned to promote the replication and expansion in other parts of Congo and in neighbouring countries. CERFAM, which will continue to document the lessons learned and good practices resulting from the project, has already disseminated them widely through its dedicated digital knowledge exchange platform-KEPT.

This value for money initiative illustrates what can be achieved when good design, planning, multifaceted collaboration, innovative approach, and seed investment are met. WFP can capitalize on the right combination of in-house and partner expertise and know-how, programme excellence, innovative approaches, and leadership to find the agility to bring about gender-transformative solutions that support local communities and governments in their quest to accelerate progress towards zero hunger on the continent.. This is the way towards "changing lives".



© WFP / Yeni Soh

A roadmap to optimise rice value chain and achieve food security in Guinea

THE PLACE OF RICE IN WEST AFRICA AND THE CONTINENT

Cultivated in 40 of the 54 African countries, rice has become the most consumed cereal in West Africa. It accounts for more than 25 percent of total cereal consumption, second to maize. It is also the source of income for more than 35 million small-scale rice farmers in Africa. . How can we ensure that rice, one of the continent's most important food crops and a strategic contributor to food security in West Africa, is available in sufficient quantity and quality and accessible to all throughout the year to achieve the goal of 'zero hunger' in the region?

African governments have ambitious rice self-sufficiency targets and are continually looking for ways to strengthen their countries' capacity to meet the growing demand of their people. However, despite various policies to develop the sector and many assets of African countries in rice production, around 25 million tonnes, countries must resort to massive imports to cover their needs, exposing them to shocks that have led to large-scale public "hunger" protests as revealed during the 2008 food crisis. This crisis highlighted the region's heavy dependence on rice imports and its exposure to price volatility on the world market, as well as many constraints faced by local industries in terms of (i) technology and other inputs and (ii) post-harvest loss management, the negative effects of climate change - which affect agricultural value chains - (iii) financing and (iv) coordination, making African rice production insufficient to meet the needs of its population, under the triple pressure of population growth, urbanisation, and rapidly changing diets in West Africa. In addition, recurrent conflicts, and sanitary measures, including restrictions on the movement of goods and people in the context of the Covid-19 crisis, have had a negative impact on input supply chains.



**40 OF 54
AFRICAN**

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**RICE
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**90 KG OF RICE
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on average per year and
per inhabitant in Guinea

RICE IN GUINEA: WHY IS THE COUNTRY UNABLE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ITS PEOPLE DESPITE ITS SIGNIFICANT AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL?



ONLY 50% OF ARABLE LAND

in Guinea is exploited on a potential of 6.2 million hectares of very fertile land available in the country

Guinea has very fertile land with an estimated potential of 6.2 million hectares of arable land, of which only 50 per cent is exploited⁵. Rice is the main food crop in Guinea. It plays an important social and economic role by providing an income-generating activity along the value chain, particularly for women and youth who produce, process and market it. Due to its widespread consumption, rice is the main source of nutritional energy, playing an important role in reducing hunger and improving nutrition. Average consumption varies across natural regions, with a national average of about 90 kg of rice per year per capita⁶. The average is 80 and 100 kg/year in Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal and drops to 35 kg in Ghana and even 32 kg in Nigeria⁷.

Despite the efforts of the Guinean government, through successive annual subsidies for agricultural campaigns, the rice sector is characterised by major constraints, notably: poor irrigation, lack of control over water resources, poor mechanisation, and other factors related to transport, the road network, lack of financial resources, illiteracy, low yields, low paddy production, and significant post-harvest losses. In addition, the poor quality of rice offered for consumption due to difficulties in preservation, processing and storage of the harvest, the lack of preservation and storage infrastructure and the low level of mechanisation of processing operations (parboiling, husking, winnowing, drying), lead to significant post-harvest losses estimated at more than 20 percent⁸.

5 <https://www.invest.gov.gn/page/agriculture?onglet=presentation>

6 <http://hubrural.org/IMG/pdf/guinee-etude-biblio-filiere-riz.pdf>

7 <https://www.agenceecofin.com/riz/0210-80914-comprendre-le-marche-rizicole-en-afrique-subsaharienne-en-9-points-cles#:~:text=La%20consommation%20grimpe%20entre%2080%20et%20100%20kg%20en,importations%20pour%20couvrir%20ses%20besoins.>

8 [L'Agence Nationale des Statistiques Agricoles et Alimentaires](#)



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Rice is the main food crop in Guinea. It plays an important social and economic role by providing an income-generating activity for the women and youth who produce and process it.

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These constraints not only make the work more difficult for farmers (especially women) and make local rice less competitive (qualitatively and quantitatively), but also do not contribute to reducing rice imports, estimated at more than 500,000 tonnes of rice at an estimated cost of US\$300 million per year, to make up for the lack of locally produced rice.

HOW TO IMPROVE LOCAL PRODUCTION AND OPTIMIZE THE RICE VALUE CHAIN, MAIN STAPLE FOOD FOR GUINEANS, THROUGH BETTER POST-HARVEST LOSS MANAGEMENT?

The Republic of Guinea has adopted a "Guinea 2040"⁹ vision which aims to build an emerging and prosperous country by 2040, master of its own destiny, ensuring a high level of well-being for its people and guaranteeing the future of future generations. This vision will allow the building of an open and respected Guinea, fully contributing to the dynamics and transformation at the sub-regional, regional, and global levels. In its policy orientation, the Guinean government wants to achieve food self-sufficiency for its people, particularly with rice. This commitment has resulted in the development of national programmes essentially focused on rice production, but also on the implementation of sustainable solutions to certain constraints, including the reduction of post-harvest losses, which negatively impact national production and constitute a major factor in achieving food self-sufficiency.

ASSISTANCE FROM TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL PARTNERS

The reduction of post-harvest losses, the transformation of the agricultural sector and food self-sufficiency supported by sustainable food systems are at the centre of priority actions for Guinea. With this in mind, and with the support of CERFAM, WFP, development partners and stakeholders involved in the rice sector, the Guinean government is mobilising and states they are ready to take up the challenge of rice self-sufficiency through concrete actions aimed at reducing post-harvest losses and other dysfunctions inherent to the sector.

An assessment of post-harvest losses in the rice sector in Guinea

In June 2021, the Government of the Republic of Guinea, through the Minister Delegate in charge of Agriculture and Livestock, requested technical support from CERFAM and WFP to support the Government's efforts to build the capacity of smallholders' groups to manage post-harvest losses and optimise the rice value chain in connection with school canteens based on local purchases.

⁹ <https://pndesguinee.org/images/documents/pndes/Vision-Guinee-2040.pdf>



Rice plays an important social and economic role by providing an income-generating activity along the value chain, particularly for women.

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Exchanges took place with producers and stakeholders of the rice sector in the Nzérékoré Region as well as with key stakeholders of the rice sector in Guinea, June 2021.

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Photo de famille avec le Gouvernement de la République de Guinée, le PAM, le CERFAM et leurs partenaires lors de la validation des résultats de la mission d'évaluation et d'analyse des pertes post-récoltes pour la filière riz

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Thus, with the collaboration of partners including HELP Logistics¹⁰, a non-profit organization that provides consulting, training, education and research services and whose mission is to be a catalyst for supply chain and logistics knowledge transfer, and WFP's Supply Chain Division, an integrated assessment mission of post-harvest losses in the rice sector and the capacities of smallholders was carried out and solutions were proposed after analysis of the results. Recommendations for reducing post-harvest losses in the local rice sector and improving local production were made following this assessment and analysis of supply chain data, as well as exchanges with producers and stakeholders in the country's rice sector. The main recommendations concern better structuring of collection, parboiling, storage and transport activities, the provision of technical assistance to producers, with innovative equipment for processing and improving local rice, or knowledge building by training farmers and other stakeholders in the sector in good post-harvest management practices.

A ROADMAP TO OPTIMISE RICE VALUE CHAIN IN GUINEA

Following the post-harvest loss assessment and analysis mission carried out in June 2021, the results of the mission, including an action plan, were presented at a validation workshop chaired by H.E. Mamoudou Nagnalen Barry, Minister of Agriculture and Livestock in February 2022 in Conakry. This workshop, facilitated by CERFAM and attended by about 40 participants, mainly officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, officials from other Ministries and entities involved in the implementation of the project, validated the results of the mission, and developed a roadmap for the implementation of the action plan prepared by CERFAM and experts from HELP Logistics and WFP's supply chain division. This roadmap identifies potential funding sources and partners for the implementation of the said action plan and should contribute to a better management of bottlenecks in the sector, including the significant reduction of post-harvest losses and the strengthening of smallholders and other stakeholders involved in the rice sector in the country.

¹⁰ <https://www.help-logistics.org/>



Africa has a wealth of innovative experiences, quality local and regional expertise to improve agricultural development, food security and nutrition. Access to information on good practices, combined with expertise for their implementation could be the key to changing the way the continent, in general and Guinea in particular, deals with this issue, through South-South and Triangular cooperation and technical assistance

PATRICK TEIXEIRA, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CERFAM

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF GOOD PRACTICES THROUGH SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

In Guinea, losses range from 20 to 60 percent, due to limited access for producers to storage, packaging, and transport solutions. In the framework of South-South and Triangular Cooperation, CERFAM collaborated with the WFP Centre of Excellence for Rural Transformation (China CoE) to request the contribution of experts from Henan University of Technology (People's Republic of China), to share their technological expertise and experience on good practices for reducing post-harvest losses in the rice value chain. The Chinese experts recalled the main losses and potential causes in the rice sector and presented solutions and technologies to reduce rice losses, through drying, cleaning, hulling, packaging, and storage systems. Other presentations included: (i) the presentation of results of the mission to evaluate and analyse post-harvest losses in the rice sector in Guinea, carried out by two senior officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock with the support of CERFAM, Help Logistics and WFP (ii) the sharing of experience and expertise by Help Logistics through a group exercise on decision-making practices at the level of various stakeholders and links in the supply chain to meet the demand of clients/beneficiaries and minimize the cost of the supply chain; (iii) the sharing of experience and expertise by WFP's Supply Chain Division with the sharing of some solutions to reduce post-harvest losses and address factors that do not favour sufficient rice production in Guinea.

PARTNERS' COMMITMENT TO ZERO HUNGER IN AFRICA

CERFAM and the WFP office in Guinea, as well as their partners, are fully committed to supporting the Guinean government in the implementation of the action plan by mobilizing and coordinating efforts and by facilitating the deployment of the expertise of several partners and countries, for interventions likely to reduce losses in the rice sector in the Republic of Guinea. They are also committed to supporting smallholders in organizing, structuring, and professionalising the sector throughout the chain, with a view to guaranteeing an increase in the productivity and quality of rice.



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Since **25 March 2022, CERFAM is celebrating its 3rd anniversary. As the 1st Centre of Excellence of its kind in Africa**, CERFAM is at the service of African governments and development partners to support their efforts in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. As part of this celebration, Mr. Patrick Teixeira, Interim Director of CERFAM, gave an interview to **Média MEDI_1 TV Afrique**, with whom he recalled the history of the creation of the Centre, presented the main achievements from the 3 years of activities and outlined the perspectives for 2022 and beyond.

On 24 March 2022, CERFAM was a panellist on the theme **“The importance of documenting and disseminating good practices and lessons learned on agricultural value chains in Africa”**. This was on the occasion of the 1st webinar of the Centre for Prospective Studies (Centre d’Études Prospectives) on women’s empowerment in agricultural value chains. CERFAM was in attendance with FAO, UNIDO, UN Women, the African Development Bank and a private sector company.

From 15 to 20 March 2022, CERFAM organised a study visit to Côte d’Ivoire of a delegation from The Gambia, who came to learn and be inspired by good practices in school feeding programmes. This study visit took place in 2 phases: (i) online exchanges with focal points of the school feeding programmes of the WFP Office in Côte d’Ivoire, representatives from Senegal, Benin and Nigeria, the Government and ministries in Côte d’Ivoire; (ii) field visits and exchanges with members of rural groups and cooperatives in the North of Côte d’Ivoire.

On 24 and 25 February 2022, CERFAM supported the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of Guinea in the organisation and facilitation of a national workshop on the results of a post-harvest loss assessment and analysis mission in Guinea, which took place from 14 to 29 June 2021. The workshop was organised in collaboration with the WFP office in Guinea and HELP Logistics, and funded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China.

On 17 February 2022, Mr. Patrick Teixeira, Interim Director of CERFAM, presented the Centre and good practice experiences developed with countries in the sub-region to HE. Myss Belmonde Dogo, Minister of Solidarity and Poverty Alleviation of Côte d’Ivoire. These exchanges took place in the context of the search for avenues of collaboration, future joint interventions and types of support and assistance to the ministry’s projects that CERFAM could provide.

On 15 February 2022, with the collaboration of the WFP office in Senegal, CERFAM organised a webinar to share **experiences of advocacy for the financing and sustainability of school feeding programmes**, with actors and decision-makers from the West African region and beyond. This webinar was presided over by HE. Mamadou Talla, Minister of National Education in Senegal and over 150 participants attended.

On 10 February 2022, with the collaboration of the WFP Office in the Republic of Congo, CERFAM organised a webinar to exchange on the theme: **“Transforming and improving the cassava value chain to strengthen farmers’ livelihood in Africa”**. The webinar was attended by 80 stakeholders in the cassava value chain.

On the 18 and 19 January 2022 in Cotonou, CERFAM exchanged views with national stakeholders to review the progress and challenges of the school feeding programme as well as responses to the capacity building needs of stakeholders involved in this programme. This was done during a workshop to identify capacity building needs in school feeding in Benin.



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“Developing sustainable food value chains can provide pathways out of poverty for millions of poor households in developing countries.”

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

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