



Taking a Regional Approach to Agricultural and Food Challenges in West Africa? Opportunities and Difficulties

West Africa is the region of the continent that has made the largest strides towards implementing a regional agricultural policy. In 2005, it adopted an agricultural policy—the ECOWAP—the necessity of which was reaffirmed by the 2007-2008 crisis that brought back to the foreground the importance of the regional dimensions of agricultural and food stakes within the area. Three mobilising programmes that notably addressed the promotion of agricultural production and improving populations' access to food were defined after the crisis and have been turned into a series of concrete actions. Despite this progress, States still struggle to fully integrate these regional challenges in their national policies; in most countries, thematic and sub-sectoral investment plans are piling up based on a vision of the agricultural economy operating within the national framework. Without a clear and forward-looking vision of the regional dimensions and challenges of national agricultural systems, agricultural investments have primarily been guided by an approach focusing on individual countries' self-sufficiency. This brief attempts to analyse consideration of regional challenges in national agricultural investment plans (NAIPs) and identify the opportunities that a truly regionalised approach to agricultural prospects would offer.

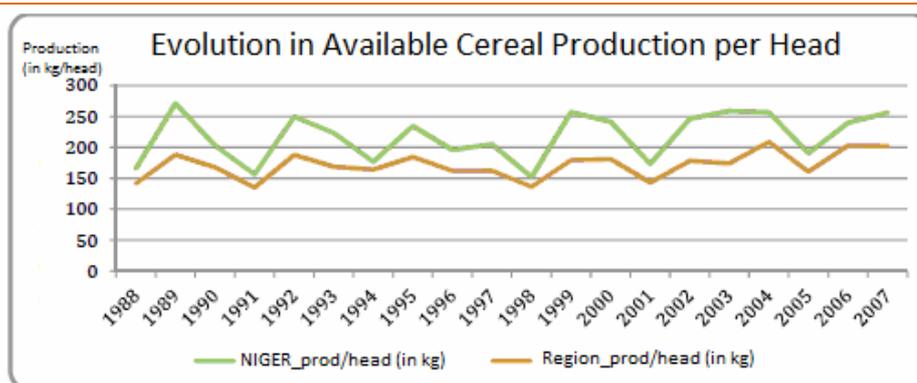
I. The Interest of a Regional Approach to Agricultural and Food Stakes

A. Regionalise to Expand Outlets and Stabilise Prices

Narrow domestic markets. The analysis of the domestic agricultural economies of West African States reveals the stakes behind greater integration of agricultural and food economies. Only Nigeria with its population of more than 140 million people and, to a lesser extent, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana with populations of approximately 25 million people each have consequential domestic markets. Most West African countries have small populations: a few hundred thousand to 15 million people. In this context, regional markets represent a large growth margin for domestic producers. The room for progress on extra-African markets is for its part limited because of slow population growth, stagnating per-person consumption of tropical African products, increasingly strict standards, and intensifying competition with other exporter regions (South

America, Asia, the Caribbean, East Africa and Southern Africa).

Volatile agricultural prices. National ecologies are heavily dependent on weather events, especially in areas that receive less than 800-900 mm of rain per year. This vulnerability has an impact on production levels, which trigger high inter-annual price variations, with strongly negative impacts on the food and nutrition security of populations in the region. Contributing to uncertainty, it also discourages long-term investment in farming. Given the spatial and temporal dispersion of hazards and risks, these production variations are often offset or mitigated on the regional scale (see figure). Increasing the size of the market to the regional level would make it possible to lessen market instability.



Source: Issala/OXFAM based on CILSS and FAO data

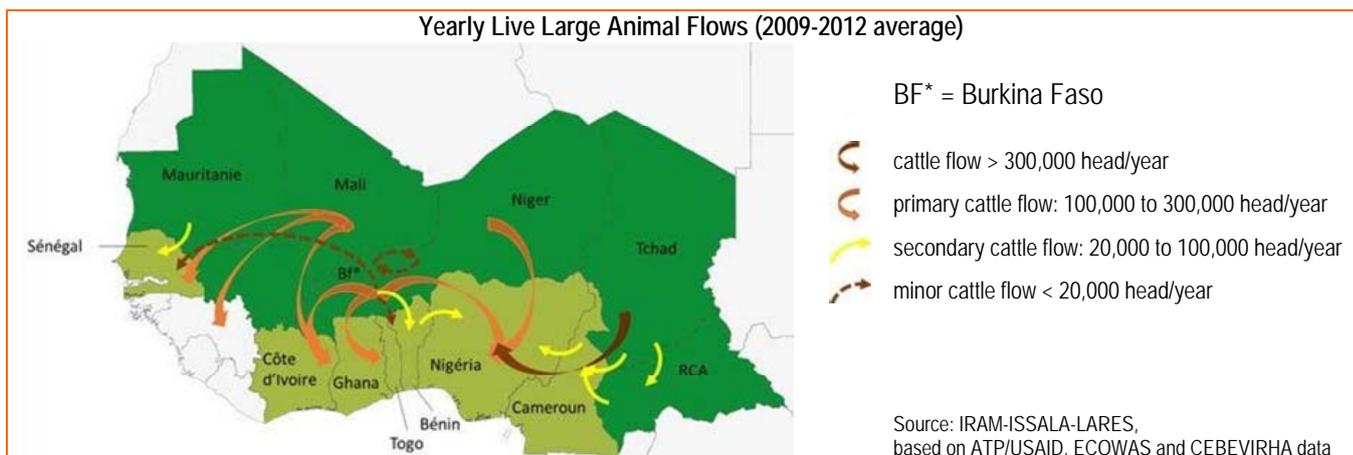
B. Take Advantage of Complementarities Between Zones

Complementary zones. West Africa is characterised by a wide variety of agricultural productions on the regional scale in conjunction with the diversity of agro-ecological zones due to a precipitation gradient ranging from 300 millimetres annually in the north of the region to nearly 4,000 in the south. This diversity has encouraged agricultural specialisation within the region: millet and sorghum are grown mainly south of the Sahel belt (Burkina Faso, Mali, on the border between Niger and Nigeria), maize, rice, tubers, roots and tropical fruit further south. The Sahel zone is also an important livestock basin (see table pg. 6). This regional specialisation gives rise to large cross-border flows in the region. Cereals and cattle from the Sahel are sought in coastal countries, while products from the forest zone, tubers and plantation crops move towards consumption centres north of coastal countries and the Sahel. Production and consumption basins are highly complementary in the region, which allows for more diversified diets than domestic production alone would allow.

Intense intra-regional trade. This complementarity triggers large and very diverse trade flows. Excluding hydrocarbons, agro-pastoral products make up the main goods traded within the regional zone. While it is difficult to assign a precise quantity to the agrifood product trade within the regional space, these flows (3 billion dollars according to official data, much more in reality [R1], [R2]) concern a wide range of products: livestock and cereals in particular but also horticultural produce (tomatoes,

onions, fruit, etc.), roots and tubers, oilseeds, spices, and even some processed products (fruit juice). This trade stimulates domestic production. The border zone between Niger and Nigeria is one of the most intense cross-border trade zones in the region. According to some estimates, Niger is said to export more than 95% of its livestock produce to Nigeria and meet nearly 70% of its dry cereal import needs from Nigeria [R3]. Cross-border trade allows Niger and Nigeria to take advantage of their comparative advantages, use their resources more effectively, and increase their wealth.

The regional dimensions of the meat cattle value chain. The regional dimension is particularly central in the meat cattle value chain. The only product able to utilise the pastoral areas in Sahelian countries, the security of pastoral and agro-pastoral livestock systems is based on herd mobility. In 'normal' rainfall years, hundreds of thousand head of cattle cross the borders of landlocked Sahelian and coastal countries when available fodder runs short during the dry season in pastoral zones. During pastoral crisis years, transhumance is the main adjustment and crisis management variable: the number of heads of cattle migrating towards coastal countries increases considerably. Trade complementarity combines in this way with a seasonal complementarity in pastoral land. Sahelian livestock are 'finished' on the abundant passages in coastal countries before being sold on the market.



C. Ensure Sustainable Natural Resource Management and Food Security

Shared natural resources. Agricultural development strategies are based on exploiting countries' natural resource potential—in particular water and land. For West African countries, two issues are crucial: (i) management of river water, in particular in connection with developments destined to irrigate rice crops; and (ii) the passages taken by transhumant herders in the south of Sahelian countries and north of coastal countries, with the competition over the use of these land resources. These resources require vigilant joint management given their inherent potential for competition and conflict between stakeholders and countries.

The regional dimensions of food and nutrition security. Food and nutrition security in West African countries is closely tied to regional factors, as the 2005 crisis in Niger showed. Despite far from disastrous cereal production that year, with a cereal balance

sheet some 200 to 250 thousand tons in the red, Niger faced an epic food, pastoral and nutritional crisis. This shows that market availability depends on the domestic supply and also on the productive performance in neighbouring countries over several successive years (volume of carryover stocks). Food availability depends on household incomes, which themselves are linked to the vitality of the regional economy (income from agro-pastoral operations, opportunities available to temporary and permanent migrants, etc.). This accessibility also depends on prices, which are influenced by the domestic and regional supply levels. Supply and price stability is, for its part, dependent on properly operating markets, their physical accessibility, the fluidity of trade, and transaction costs throughout the production and trade basin. Finally, regional trade plays an important role in diversifying the food supply and the nutritional status of household members [R2], [R3].

II. Regional Stakes Difficult to Take into Account

A. *The Progressive Elaboration of Regional Approaches to Agriculture and Food Security*

A relatively longstanding regional dynamic. These different regional stakes have led States to implement joint approaches on the regional scale. Management of shared river resources (the Niger, Senegal, Gambia and Mano rivers) has been the subject of cooperation and integration since even before decolonisation. Joint river management by intergovernmental agencies targeted the irrigation of farm land and hydroelectric production simultaneously. Later, in 1973, the creation of the Permanent Interstates Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) by Sahelian countries in reaction to food crises made it possible to roll out regional approaches to food security and the fight against desertification [R4].

The elaboration of a West African regional agricultural policy. The ECOWAS agricultural policy (ECOWAP) is part of the process to re-launch regional integration driven by the reform of ECOWAS in 1993, with the adoption of the Revised Treaty. In January 2005, ECOWAP was officially adopted by the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government. In compliance with the Revised Treaty, ECOWAP favours an approach based on States' subsidiarity and cooperation. In this way, it focuses on three categories of interventions: (i) managing interdependency between countries; (ii) cooperation around issues shared by several countries for which the regional level can allow significant economies of scale (research and innovation, analysing and documenting practices and knowledge management, information and early warning, capacity building); and (iii) managing the region's relations with the outside, in particular as regards trade [R5].

Two regional policies. ECOWAP adds to but does not replace WAEMU's agricultural policy (APW) adopted in December 2001 by

eight countries in the CFA zone, all members of ECOWAS. The main objective of the APW is to make a lasting contribution to meeting the population's food needs, the economic and social development of member-States, and rural poverty alleviation. This main objective is broken down into three lines of intervention: (i) adapting agricultural value chains to the rules of the regional and international market by fostering the intensification of production and making it more competitive; (ii) deepening the common market in the agricultural sector and management of shared resources; and (iii) integrating the WAEMU zone's agriculture into the regional and global markets. In May 2004, a cooperation agreement between ECOWAS and WAEMU provided for the elaboration and application of harmonised policies across the two institutions. Starting in 2007, a joint technical secretariat was set up [R6].

Late recognition of regional stakes in the CAADP. In parallel with the ECOWAP elaboration process, the African Union provided itself with a comprehensive development strategy in July 2001, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the agricultural component of which—the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)—was adopted in July 2003. Initially, the CAADP favoured a twofold logic: national (with National Agricultural Investment Plans, NAIPs) and continental. [R7]. This approach placed the African Union in the position of favoured interlocutor for African countries, leaving the regional economic communities the role of technical support for their member States. In West Africa, ECOWAS was given the mandate of coordinating and monitoring the implementation of NEPAD and its agricultural component in 2002. The ECOWAP and CAADP processes are therefore connected but they both initially started from two distinct processes (see sidebar).

CAADP and ECOWAP: Two Initially Unconnected Processes

The CAADP sets four major fields of intervention ('pillars') to increase agricultural growth, reduce poverty and attain food and nutrition security: (i) lastingly increase the amount of cultivated land served by reliable water management systems; (ii) improve rural infrastructures and marketing capacities to facilitate market access; (iii) increase food supply, reduce hunger and improve responses in the case of food emergencies; and (iv) improve agricultural research, dissemination and the adoption of technology. Overall, the CAADP makes little reference to agricultural policies in the strict sense and favours an approach through investments (irrigation, equipment, etc.) and development programmes.

For its part, the ECOWAP elaboration methodology sought to reveal shared issues and the regional dimensions of national agricultural and food issues. This process made it possible to reveal the priorities of ECOWAS's regional policy, reformulated as three mobilising programmes following the 2008 crisis: (i) promote value chains that are strategic to food sovereignty; (ii) promote an overall enabling environment for regional agricultural development; and (iii) lessen food vulnerability and promote stable and lasting access to food [R5].

The CAADP coordination process was entrusted to ECOWAS, and ECOWAP implementation is based on two levels of intervention: (i) the national level with the definition of NAIPs in each of the 15 ECOWAS countries; and (ii) the regional level with the definition of a Regional Agricultural Investment Programme (RAIP). The NAIP elaboration methodology is based on the approach developed by the CAADP using a four-pillar logic, whereas the RAIP favoured three mobilising programmes.

C. *Limited Progress in Managing Regional Interdependency*

Territorial management still not very regional. As there are multiple interdependencies between countries in the region, economies do not operate within a territorial framework represented by States. The hub made up of the cities of Bobo Dioulasso (Burkina Faso), Sikasso (Mali) and Korhogo (Côte d'Ivoire), for example, is a dynamic local economy. In addition to societal history, the mobility of people and the density of cross-border trade, the promotion of cotton production has played a driving role in rural development and crop diversification (livestock, cereals) conducive

to the promotion of the local economy and cross-border trade. The Niger-Nigeria border animated by networks of Hausa traders is another example of a dynamic cross-border economy driving strong integration of agricultural economies on both sides of a border [R2]. In these two cases, and despite the promotion of cross-border cooperation frameworks involving local governments, States' modes of governance are struggling to enter these territorial dynamics. In the case of cotton, ECOWAP displays the ambition of developing cooperation between national companies and developing a regional

strategy based on harmonisation (subsidies, prices), pursuing gains in competitiveness, and even promoting a regional processing industry. This domain has not yet found concrete application in ECOWAP action plans, undoubtedly because of the strategic nature of this value chain for the States concerned—which are little inclined to share sovereignty—and the limited number of countries concerned.

Little harmonisation in production support policies. Production policies are primarily a matter of State responsibility. Little harmonised, they often lead to a splintering of the space. For example, most States have developed input (fertiliser and seed) subsidy programmes to stimulate rice production. Not harmonised within the same production and trade basin, these policies distort competition and these distortions fuel cross-border flows from countries with high subsidy levels to countries with little public production support. To prevent subsidised rice from leaving the national territory, States are tempted to set up export restriction measures. There is ultimately little effect on consumer prices because trade barriers drive up transaction costs.

Nationally structured agrifood value chains. Efforts to structure agrifood value chains favour setting up consultation frameworks (value chain tables, inter-branch associations, etc.) involving national stakeholders from different links in the value chain. Only the meat cattle value chain (COFENABVI) and the cereal value chain (ROAC) have drafted the outlines of such systems on the sub-

regional scale. For now, these systems are struggling to include Nigerian organisations and operators, favouring advocacy targeting national and regional authorities, notably regarding the free circulation of merchandise. While playing the regional card, the national organisations that are members in these regional systems generally support options aiming to achieve domestic self-sufficiency.

The difficulties of a regional trade policy. Unlike sectoral policies, trade policy is a matter for regional sovereignty. All national customs policies must align themselves with the common external tariff (CET) set for 5,899 products (see sidebar). This regional integration is, however, not without difficulty and there are particularly strong disagreements around three products. For rice, there is a general hesitation to go beyond 10% because of this product's political sensitivity. Countries have expressed uncertainty as to the region's capacity to supply the market despite theoretical production potential. The decision was ultimately made in the name of consumers' interests. Powdered milk has also been a source of tension, with arguments on the nutritional aspect of the product in the context of child malnutrition and the difficulty ensuring regular supply from dairy processing industries with local milk value chains (seasonal nature of production, sanitary quality, etc.). Finally, the sugar issue opposed producer countries (Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire) who wished to protect themselves from imports from other countries that, specialising in sugar refining, see raw sugar as an input [R8], [R9].

Connect Agricultural and Trade Policies

Beyond the 'peace and security' dimensions behind the revival of ECOWAS, the two regional integration institutions (WAEMU and ECOWAS) have built their regional strategies on trade. In both cases, market opening (elimination of customs duties on local products and industrial or processed products with sufficient local added value, elimination of non-tariff barriers at borders) was supposed to drive specialisation of national economies and be the main vector of economic growth. For a long time, the regional integration process did not build explicitly on the productive sectors, especially agriculture. WAEMU's CET was thus set before the orientations of the Union's agricultural policy (APW) were determined. It took until ECOWAS adopted the ECOWAP for the ties between agricultural and trade policies to be clearly established, leading notably to the creation of a fifth tariff band (35% customs duties for products that are 'specific goods for economic development') and the re-classification of products within the five tariff bands (0%, 5%, 10%, 20% and 35% customs duties) [R8]. Many agricultural and food products were placed in the fifth tariff band with customs duties of 35%. These products were also excluded from the liberalisation of trade between the African Union and the European Union in the framework of the EPA.

The difficulty grasping regional stakes in the cattle value chain. Although the rearing of ruminants is one area in which the regional dimension is central, the States in the region have great difficulties adopting a regional approach to meet the challenges of this value chain. The NAIPs of landlocked Sahelian countries give little consideration to the transnational dimensions of livestock issues, and the NAIPs of coastal countries clearly show the ambition of self-sufficiency in animal protein (see the sidebar on Côte d'Ivoire)—despite much higher production costs than in pastoral or agro-pastoral systems. Countries do not truly coordinate their national action plans with the ECOWAS action plan for livestock, which the countries helped elaborate and that contains important components on securing pastoral mobility by managing cross-border transhumance, structuring value chains within the regional space, preventing and managing pastoral crises, and finally health issues. Today, it is mainly the regional institutions and

networks of livestock farmers' organisations (RBM, APSS) that carry regional concerns, while States favour the sedentarisation of animal productions and a form of retreat into the national arena [R7].

Mainly national food security strategies. While there is a broad consensus on the importance of an integrated regional market to meet the challenge of long-term food sovereignty, this option runs up against many obstacles in the short term. Fear of a shortage of staples haunts public decision makers. Uncertainty as to the production outcomes (linked to the weakness of information systems) of any given country, combined with the prospect of a shortfall in a neighbouring country, often leads the former to close their borders, or refuse to issue export certificates or certificates of origin. Unable to put an effective end to exports, these measures fuel informal trade and drive up the price of staples via the costs generated by the corruption of public offices at borders.

Ivorian Imports and NAIP Orientations

Côte d'Ivoire is one of the main importers of livestock from landlocked Sahelian countries. Côte d'Ivoire's official data speaks of 660,209 head of cattle and 1,384,000 small ruminants imported between 2004 and 2009. The NAIP emphasises this dependency on imports and the production potential in the country to develop a target focusing on improving coverage of needs with domestic production. It does not mention issues relating to the transhumance of Sahelian herds or the stakes linked to stabilising and securing livestock rearing in a regional framework [R7].

III. Multiple Obstacles to a Truly Regional Approach to Agricultural and Food Stakes

A. A Historically Fragmented Space

Approaches historically focused on the national space.

Several factors allow one to understand the difficulties of a truly regional approach to agricultural and food stakes. The drawing of borders and the formation of States born out of rivalries and then colonial division explain a large proportion of the spatial fragmentations that are as many impediments to integration: linguistic, monetary, political and administrative organisation, cohabitation of economic (non-LDC) and demographic giants and very small countries (LDCs), landlocked countries and countries with ocean access, etc. There is also fragmentation (rupture or continuity) in how relations with former colonial powers are approached politically, economically, monetarily and commercially. In addition, the formation of Nation States 50 years ago was generally accompanied by strategies relying on a strong State and, in the agricultural field, approaches based on national self-sufficiency and the continuation of

colonial specialisations for export products. This approach has turned countries away from true regional cooperation and towards bilateral approaches, with each country envisaging its international integration in an isolated framework (cotton, coffee, cocoa, etc.).

Local, regional and international markets: multiple and specific challenges that do not encourage regional cooperation. Analysis of national specialisations, the destination of production, the relative importance of self-consumption, the nearby or national market, and finally the international market shows that the region is facing a panoply of fairly specific national interests that does not facilitate joint approaches (see table pg. 6) Regional stakes are diluted in a range of concerns and their importance is generally underestimated compared to other, usually more technical stakes.

B. Administrations' and Institutions' Limits

Agricultural administrations' limits. The bulk of human resources in Ministries of Agriculture consist of technical profiles: agronomists, veterinarians, hydrologists, etc. Because of this, skills in the realm of value chain economics are generally externalised and agricultural development approaches favour technical issues to the detriment of socioeconomic dimensions and dimensions pertaining to the structural financing of agriculture and institutional development. This last element is often reduced to training various categories of stakeholders (multiple capacity building programmes whose impact is little assessed).

or regional institutions. Yet, the majority of aid agencies, both bi- and multilateral, favour the national framework to structure their interventions. When they explicitly support regional programmes, they favour areas pertaining to politics, economic and trade integration, or multi-country programmes that do not concern the entire region as several aid agencies favour their 'countries of focus'. In all cases, the volume of resources mobilised for the region is considerably smaller than the support delivered in the framework of cooperation with countries. For example, the European Commission commits the bulk of EDF resources on the national level. While it has the capacity for joint and complementary programming on the regional level, its procedures and organisation modalities make it so that, in practice, programming is disjointed and very little thought out in terms of complementarity and synergy. Going with the programming and assessment of aid, expertise also reasons in the limited field of the national space.

Scattered management of agricultural stakes. Since management of the agricultural sector in the broad sense is scattered across several technical ministries, crop production issues (agriculture), animal production issues (livestock), water and natural resource management issues, forest management issues, and fishery issues are compartmentalised. The problems caused by this compartmentalisation at the national level extend to the regional level. They hinder the ability to address the interconnectedness of issues and the complexity of agricultural systems, particularly in cross-border areas. Each ministry sets the target of attaining self-sufficiency in its sector and reducing shortfalls, in this way moving the country away from a form of consultative specialisation of agriculture within the regional space.

The paucity of knowledge. Regional dimensions are generally very little taken into account in the management of knowledge on national agricultural systems. Poor analysis of regional comparative advantages that could partially justify specialisation decisions is also an issue; they are very rarely available because they require in-depth monitoring of production and transaction costs that are only occasionally and partially monitored because of gaps in national information systems. Value chain development plans are generally founded on diagnostics that are limited to national (or international) markets and ignore sub-regional markets. For their part, regional information systems favour aggregating national data and provide little added value to understand the regional operation of agricultural and food economies. Trade is for its part strongly underrepresented in official statistics because of the magnitude of informal, unrecorded flows and corruption at borders. Despite multiple attempts, there is no general matrix of the agrifood product trade within the regional space allowing detailed analysis of these products' contribution to local agricultural economies and food security. Ultimately, the poor visibility of the importance of regional dynamics for national economies does not facilitate good consideration of these dynamics by national decision makers.

A quantitative approach to agricultural strategies. National agricultural strategies mainly privilege increasing yields and production to meet quantitative demand. This quantitative approach is extended to the regional scale, with the still too limited consideration of questions related to marketing, structuring and value chain competitiveness. With a market approach focused on domestic demand for food production or on extra-African outlets for commercial cash crops, national agricultural development approaches still make too little use of the potential offered by the regional space in regard to the market and food security management equally.

Aid focused on the national framework. As States have, overall, neglected public financing of the agricultural sector, international aid plays a major role in this field, whether countries

Main Products and Product Destinations for Different National Agricultural Economies

	Foodstuffs		Cash Crops
	Self-Consumption & Domestic Market	Regional Market	Export Outside ECOWAS
Benin	maize, rice, tubers, palm oil	maize, re-exported rice	pineapples, cotton, cashew nuts
Burkina Faso	millet, sorghum, maize, rice, cattle, cowpeas	cattle, maize/sorghum, onions	cotton, shea, sesame
Cape Verde	bananas, maize, beans, fishery products		
Côte d'Ivoire	maize, rice, tubers, plantains	maize, palm oil, tobacco	cocoa, coffee, bananas, pineapples, hevea, cotton, wood
The Gambia	rice, millet, sorghum, maize, groundnuts, tubers, cattle, fishery products	re-exported rice	
Ghana	tubers, maize, rice, sorghum, fishery products, cattle	maize, palm oil	cocoa, shea, hevea, coconuts
Guinea	rice, maize, tubers, fishery products	palm oil, potatoes	citrus fruit, hevea, wood, cocoa, coffee
Guinea-Bissau	rice, maize, millet, tubers, beans, groundnuts, fruit		cashew nut
Liberia	rice, maize, palm oil, tubers, fishery products		hevea, cocoa, coffee
Mali	millet, sorghum, maize, rice, sugar cane, cattle, fishery products	maize, millet, rice, cattle	cotton, shea
Niger	millet, sorghum, rice, cattle, groundnuts, dates	onions, sweet peppers, tigernuts, rice, cowpeas, cattle	
Nigeria	maize, millet, sorghum, rice, tubers, palm oil, citrus, shea, soy, cattle, fishery products	maize, millet, sorghum, tubers, palm oil	hevea, cocoa, wood
Senegal	millet, sorghum, rice, tomatoes, onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, tubers, cattle, fishery products	maize, rice	groundnuts, legumes, cotton

C. The Ambiguities and Inconsistencies of Regional Integration

Poor coordination between the regional and national levels. ECOWAP is implemented through the national and regional levels, following the subsidiarity principle. In practice, an analysis of the process by which these policies were elaborated and the connections between these levels provides an understanding of integration difficulties. The regional programme and the national programmes were drafted simultaneously, the former based on ECOWAS's priorities and the latter on the pillars formulated by the African Union in the CAADP. The simultaneous nature of the national and regional processes did not allow the policy dialogue with authorities and national and transnational stakeholders—crucial to 'manage interdependencies among countries'—to be built and conducted in sufficient depth.

Competition among international institutions. As soon as the Heads of State carrying the NEPAD initiative gave the political green light, international institutions specialising in agriculture and food positioned their expertise in support of the African Union, which had limited capacities. The FAO offered to act as execution agency for the CAADP. The IFPRI, with USAID support, promoted an approach based on modelling to determine investment needs to attain 6% annual agricultural growth and help achieve the MDGs by 2015. The WFP mobilised its support to develop a system of food reserves and strengthen early warning and crisis management systems. Given the African

Union's legitimacy to pilot the CAADP process, the cooperation actions developed by these various institutions allows them to have a cooperation framework with each of the member States. In West Africa, collaboration with the international institutions and organisations that have 'AU mandates' has not developed smoothly. This is all the more true as bodies in the region—the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of WCA (CMA/WCA) and the CILSS—were recognised as the technical institutions of reference for the CAADP pillars. Mandated by the AU to run the CAADP process in the region, the ECOWAS Commission had to juggle the initiatives and agendas of these institutions: the relations between these institutional actors are characterised by cooperation intermixed with competition (over mandates and access to financial resources).

Incomplete structuring of regional integration stakeholders. The platform of donors united around ECOWAP implementation made it possible to structure and organise the international community's discourse in the ECOWAP elaboration process and in the framework of RAIP preparations. But, when it comes to mapping the interventions of various agencies and ensuring operational and concrete coordination of future interventions, it is facing much greater difficulty. The Global Alliance for Resilience (AGIR) – Sahel and West Africa reflects this. While there is a consensus that coordination is important, the main agencies

(World Bank, ADB, etc.) have all individually begun preparing programmes labelled 'resilience' without setting up joint programming mechanisms.

The ambiguous adventure of regional integration. While there is a very wide consensus that regional integration on the political, economic, trade and monetary levels is an inescapable path to create the conditions for the lasting economic take-off of West African economies, countries enrolment in integration areas is still hesitant. Once again, historical and contemporary factors figure into the mix. On its own, the very coexistence of two integration institutions—WAEMU and ECOWAS—when eight countries in the former belong to the latter is a perfect illustration of States' ambiguity and their mistrust of regional processes. Administrative bodies' survival challenges generate daily competition (despite purported coordination), which is a factor hindering integration. For example, how can WAEMU countries objectively inscribe their national agricultural development policies within two distinct regional policies? Only the authorities of member States could force rationalisation, but the interests at play do not encourage them to do so. In

reality, countries' short-term interests in regional integration are heterogeneous. West African States make up extremely diverse territories when it comes to size and geographic position (landlocked, coastal, archipelago, etc.), population, size and focus of economies, natural resource endowments, etc. The regional economy is dominated by three countries that account for more than 85% of the region's GDP, population and trade—Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. These countries are currently driving the regional economy. The success of the regional integration process will hinge on the interest that these countries have in it. The challenge for the region is how to make these countries into true leaders of regional integration and the region's insertion in the international market. However, LDCs do not really see these three leaders as opportunities, but rather as threats to their sovereignty. Beyond integration institutions, there are multiple technical cooperation organisations that cover sometimes identical skills and have variable geographic configurations. They find themselves in competition with each other, mainly over access to development aid financial resources. More than States, donors are the ones that implicitly determine their future.

Towards Greater Integration of Agricultural Economies and Trade?

Three factors of change are at work today and allow for a degree of optimism. First, the establishment of regional instruments such as the Regional Food Security Reserve should make regional initiatives more concrete and visible in the eyes of States and citizens. Second, the rise in power of stakeholders structured on the regional scale has speed up considerably in recent years. This is both a result of ECOWAP and a vector in the transformation of the balance of power. FOs' networks and networks of operators (the Borderless Alliance, inter-branch organisations, etc.) and civil society organisations now carry regional stakes alongside regional institutions and place strong pressure on States.

Finally, there is the increased pace of trade integration with the establishment of the Customs Union and its common external tariff starting on 1 January 2015, and the many efforts to lower internal barriers to trade. This progress, which can largely be credited to changes in the balance of power among stakeholders, shows promise for greater integration of agricultural economies and trade in the interest of the region as a whole. It is the surest way of attaining West Africa's displayed ambition of attaining food sovereignty by modernising family farming and optimising the diverse potential of agroecological zones.

RÉFÉRENCES RÉFÉRENCES RÉFÉRENCES RÉFÉRENCES RÉFÉRENCES RÉFÉRENCES RÉFÉRENCES

R1. L'état du commerce en Afrique de l'Ouest, Rapport annuel 2012, ENDA CACID, 2012, 122 p.

This report aims to provide an analysis of the state of trade in West Africa. The 2012 edition pays particular attention to the foundations of regional trade, the recent dynamics in general trade in the region, and intra-regional trade.

<http://endacacid.org/new/index.php/resume>

R2. Settlement, Market and Food Security, SWAC-OECD, 2013, 200 p.

According to current forecasts, West Africa's population should double by 2050. This publication studies how production systems and agricultural policies will need to change to support this growth.

http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/fr/agriculture-and-food/settlement-market-and-food-security_9789264187443-en

Inter-Réseaux has produced a summary (in French): <http://www.inter-reseaux.org/ressources-thematiques/article/note-de-synthese-de-l-etude>

R3. Nigeria's Role in Niger's Food Security. Maty Bao Diao. *Grain de Sel*/No. 51, Inter-Réseaux, September 2010, 2 p.

This article presents the trade between Niger and Nigeria. In particular, it analyses the role of cross-border flows of foodstuffs from Nigeria in Niger's food security.

http://www.inter-reseaux.org/IMG/pdf/p25-26_Diao.pdf

R4. Transboundary River Basins, Atlas on Regional Integration in West Africa, ECOWAS and SWAC/OECD, August 2006, 20 p.

This document emphasises the stakes and covers the process of implementing joint approaches to river resource management in West Africa.

<http://www.oecd.org/swac/publications/38409569.pdf>

R5. ECOWAP at a Glance - Make agriculture the lever of regional integration, ECOWAS Commission, December 2008, 12 p.

This document provides a succinct view of the context, challenges, vision, objectives and major orientations of regional and national programmes. It also contains a brief presentation of the Regional Offensive for Food Production and Against Hunger.

http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/01_ANG-ComCEDEAO.pdf

R6. La politique agricole de l'UEMOA, Inter-Réseaux, 2010

This webpage describes the objectives and content of WAEMU's agricultural policy. It also makes available a series of documents on the implementation of this policy.

<http://www.inter-reseaux.org/groupe-de-travail/gt-politiques-agricoles-560/article/la-politique-agricole-de-l-uemoa>

R7. CAADP's website: National and Regional Agricultural Investment Plans

The website for the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) contains the various documents on the implementation of the CAADP/ECOWAP process, notably the national and regional agricultural investment plans (NAIPs and the RAIP).

<http://caadp.net/>

R8. The Impact of Closer Regional Economic Integration on Food Security in West Africa: Focus on the ECOWAS Common External Tariff, ECDPM, 2014, 36 p.

This article presents the content and stakes of the CET adopted by ECOWAS. A summary is available in French.

<http://ecdpm.org/publications/impact-closer-regional-economic-integration-food-security-west-africa-ecowas/> <http://agritrade.cta.int/fr/Agriculture/Sujets/Accords-de-libre-echange-ACP/La-CEDEAO-convient-d-un-tarif-exterieur-commun-avec-une-protection-agricole-plus-importante>

R9. How to Promote Intra-African Agricultural Trade? Analysis of possibilities and impediments regarding the development of intra-African agricultural trade, Laurent Levard and Amel Benkahla (GRET), 2013, 186 p.

This study analyses the main factors limiting the development of intra-African agricultural trade. It was notably produced based on two regional studies, one of which in West Africa (focusing on trade in cattle and palm oil).

www.gret.org/wp-content/uploads/ETI36_integral.pdf

These *Food Sovereignty Briefs* are a joint initiative by Inter-Réseaux Développement Rural and SOS Faim Belgium. They aim to provide summaries of food sovereignty-related subjects based on a selection of a few particularly interesting references. They are published every quarter and distributed digitally.

SOS Faim Belgium (www.sosfaim.org) supports farmers' and agricultural producers' organisations in roughly fifteen countries in Africa and Latin America. Inter-Réseaux Développement Rural (www.inter-reseaux.org) aims to promote networked discussions, exchanges and reflection on the subject of rural development in developing countries.

This brief was written by Roger Blein (roger.blein@bureau-issala.com) and Liora Stührenberg (liora.stuhrenberg@inter-reseaux.org), with contributions from Vital Pelon and Joël Teyssier (Inter-Réseaux). We would like to thank Karl Schuler (DDC) for his contribution to the production of this issue.

You can subscribe to these briefs on Inter-Réseaux's website: www.inter-reseaux.org

Translation: Lara Andahazy-Colo (laracolo@gmail.com)

This brief was produced thanks to the financial support of the General Directorate for Development Cooperation of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, SOS Faim Belgium, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Inter-Réseaux is supported by the Agence Française de Développement.

If you would like to comment on the subject covered, give your opinion, provide additional information, or draw our attention to a document, please write to us at: inter-reseaux@inter-reseaux.org – Inter-Réseaux, October 2014.

