



**- International Fund for Agricultural Development –
- Scouting and Sharing Innovation in Western and Central Africa –**

- Development of Improved varieties for locally specific environments -

I- Background :

1. Name of innovation:

Development of Improved varieties for locally specific environments

2. Country - Region:

Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.

3. Organization:

International Institute of tropical Agriculture (IITA) in collaboration with the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) of Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria

4. Who is the innovator?

IITA in collaboration with the NARS of Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria

5. Actors involved:

IITA, (Institute for Crop Improvement in the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)), NARS, NGOs, Technicians, Producers, Universities

6. Implementation date:

2000 to present

7. Type of innovation: (Technological, institutional, policy or knowledge sharing)

Technological

II- Key issues :

8. Summary:

Although cowpea faces many constraints, it is one of the most profitable commodities in the fragile Sahelian and Savannah zones. Improving productivity and addressing constraints in the cowpea value chain remain key priorities in reducing poverty and malnutrition. The breeding program attempts to respond to the following needs:

- Pests, diseases and parasitic plants (Varieties resistant/tolerant to pests, diseases and parasitic plants);
- Low yields (Improved varieties with high yielding potential);
- Drought (Improved varieties resistant/tolerant to drought);
- Climatic constraints (Early and medium maturing varieties to escape climatic constraints);
- Food security (dual purpose varieties for human consumption and livestock rearing).

9. What issue does the innovation address?

The innovation mainly addresses the low productivity of cowpea due to various production and protection constraints such as pests and diseases, parasitic plants and climatic constraints.

10. Key success factors for replication:

The key success factors that favour the replication of the innovation include institutional factors (norms and standards, administrative support), performance factors (efficiency, effectiveness and relevancy), and climatic factors (characteristics of various agro ecological zones).

11. Accessibility: (Poor, gender, youth, migrants...)

- The improved varieties are accessible to poor resource farmers including women;
- The various varieties have been also diffused to youth through Farmer Field Fora ;
- NGOs and private operators have accessed and diffused the improved varieties to rural communities.

12. Difficulties encountered:

- Poor landraces;
- Scarcity of research and development funds.

13. Financial aspects:

Improving and diffusing cowpea varieties need reliable funding. IITA has managed the funds, provided backstopping of the technical activities and ensured monitoring and evaluation of the project in collaboration with a Steering Committee. IITA also carried-out all the administrative duties of reporting financial and management information to the steering committee and to IFAD. National coordinators served as financial and logistical links to the regional coordination.

III- Technical Summary :**14.**

Improved varieties are being developed to address low productivity of cowpea production. They are developed by researchers and tested on-station for their characteristics and performance. Through on-farm trials on-station lines are tested and validated across various agro ecological zones in collaboration with farmers and farmers' organizations, NGOs, private operators, and public agencies. After testing, the most promising varieties are multiplied and disseminated. During the 2005- 2006 cropping season, Pronaf countries produced 12 tons of certified seed.

IV- Follow up :**15. Key contacts:**

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16. Useful web link:

www.pronaf.info

17. Key documents: (Name of the document + Link or Contact or Co ordinates)

- Activity reports: http://www.fidafrique.net/IMG/pdf/Pronaf_TA_Notes_2005-2006-2.pdf
- Pronaf evaluation Report: http://www.fidafrique.net/IMG/pdf/PRONAF_Eval_20.12.2006.doc_final_.pdf
- Scientific papers: <http://www.fidafrique.net/rubrique568.html>