



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

– Active participation of OPPAs in formulating the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy –

I. Background

1. Name of innovation

Active participation of farmers' and agricultural producers' organizations (OPPAs) in formulating the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP)

2. Country – Region

Western Africa

3. Organization

Network of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organizations of West Africa (ROPPA)

4. Who is the innovator?

ROPPA

5. Actors involved

10 National Confederations of Farmers' Organizations (CNOPs) and the Network of Chambers of Agriculture of West Africa (RECAO), with support from a number of partners

6. Implementation date

7. Type of innovation

Policy

II. Key issues

8. Summary

The innovation consists of building the awareness of the ECOWAS authorities, who have involved the OPPAs from the start of the process, for ROPPA was a member of the Regional Task Force that completed the process of formulating the ECOWAP. This approach was shrewdly chosen. The experience gained with the West African Economic and Monetary Union's (WAEMU's) agricultural policy was capitalized on so that ROPPA was able to facilitate contacts among its members and the OPPAs of Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone. ROPPA not only helped these OPPAs to reflect and advance suggestions, but also acted as the link in consultations to define positions and proposals shared by the OPPAs and chambers of agriculture and in national surveys with the support of experts from different backgrounds and disciplines, thus enriching the national consultation workshops for the various actors in rural development. A subregional wrap-up workshop, providing an overview of the national consultation workshops, was organized in Cotonou in 2005, and the fruits of this meeting were taken into account in the ECOWAP. The involvement of ROPPA also meant that small-scale farming was taken into greater account. The ECOWAP lays particular stress on family farms, giving them priority over agribusiness, and on the regional market as against exports. It also adopts the principle of guaranteeing the food security of the subregion's inhabitants through exercise of their right to food sovereignty.

9. What issues does the innovation address?

The innovation seeks to counter the failure to take small farmers' interests into account in the ECOWAP, through active participation of the OPPAs in formulating the policy. The concerns of the OPPAs have thus been taken into account through the recognition of small-scale farming and the right to food sovereignty.

10. Key success factors for replication

- The proposals of the OPPAs taken into account in the ECOWAS agricultural policy.
- ROPPA's acquisition of an audience and major credibility with ECOWAS and other regional organizations.
- ECOWAS's appointment of ROPPA to pilot the action plan, with the following aims:
 - Modernization and security of family farms in the subregion;
 - Capacity-building for the staff of agricultural socio-professional organizations;
 - Increase in food production by improving the supply of traditional dry cereals;
 - Development of the productivity of family rice farms;
 - Improvement in the production and competitiveness of meat production systems;
 - Capacity-building for OPPA leaders in various spheres (information and negotiation concerning international trade rules, techniques for analysing agricultural policies, adoption of good farming practices).
- Apart from this assumption of responsibility for implementation, ROPPA also participates actively in subregional monitoring of the ECOWAP and has the status of observer within ECOWAS's statutory bodies.

11. Main results

- Training of the leaders of farmers' organizations through studies and workshops
- Existence of a critical mass of farmers' leaders in the various sections of ECOWAS
- Taking of farmers' leaders' concerns into account in the ECOWAP
- ROPPA's wide audience and credibility with regional organizations and development partners

12. Target groups

The OPPAs of ECOWAS member countries

13. Difficulties encountered

14. Financial aspects

III. Technical summary

15.

The innovation of ROPPA's participation is a result of the participatory methodology adopted:

- Support of expertise from a range of backgrounds and disciplines in carrying out national and regional studies;
- Organization of national wrap-up, study and dialogue workshops attended by farmers' leaders and their national/political authorities;
- Regional workshop providing an overview of the national studies and documents produced by wrap-up and dialogue workshops;
- Proposal of a regional overview document presenting the OPPAs' positions and views with solid arguments;
- Participation in the various meetings of experts and ministers with the regional overview document in hand.

IV. Follow-up

16. Key contacts

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17. Internet link

18. Key documents (document title + link or contact or other details)