



West Africa Seed Program (WASP) Program Inception Report



In support of the

**Economic Community Of West African States
(ECOWAS) Regulation C/REG.4/05/2008 Implementation**

**Submitted by:
CORAF/WECARD**

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1. Introduction

- The USAID grant of US\$ 9,000,000 approved over a period of five year (2012 – 2017) is supporting WASP to expand the availability of quality seeds from the current 12 to 25% over the five year period with a goal to contribute to the sustainable improvement of agricultural productivity. The program seeks to achieve its objectives by building an Alliance for Seed Industry in West Africa (ASIWA) involving all partners working in the seed sector, which will ensure a sustainable production and use of quality seeds of the major staple crops. The program will allow ECOWAS and CILSS countries to share experiences across the sub-region and with other regions of the world while minimizing duplication of effort among programs, and building synergies.
- The Program draws upon the combined expertise of the CGIAR centres, NARS including the National Seed Services, Quality Control and Certification Agencies, NGOs, Farmers' organizations, Universities, Local and National Private Sector Organizations and Companies, Seed initiatives, Sub-regional organizations and International private sector organizations and companies to achieve the following expected results: i) an inclusive West Africa Consortium established and operational; ii) national and regional seed laws and regulations implemented; iii) sufficient quantities of breeder, foundation and certified seeds to meet required demands produced and used; iv) private sector participation in the seed industry enhanced, and; v) capacities of National Seed Trade Associations strengthened. At the national level, WASP will work with the existing governmental organizations and the private sector, including (i) National Agricultural Research Institutions for breeder seed production, conduct of variety trials and training; (ii) Agricultural Extension Services in the promotion of new varieties and fostering linkages between farmers and seed entrepreneurs; (iii) National Seed Services on coordination activities; (iv) National Seed Committees in governance issues; (v) National Variety Release Committees in the release and cataloguing of new varieties; (vi) National Seed Quality Control and Certification Agencies in carrying out the implementation of seed policy and regulatory activities; (vii) Plant Protection and Regulatory Services in carrying out general regulatory activities relating to plant health; (viii) Universities in training and development of new varieties and in seed technology, and (ix) NSTAS in the production and marketing of seeds.
- The project supports the CAADP, ECOWAP and the USAID FtF programs to improve agricultural productivity in attaining the expected 6% growth by 2015 (CAADP target). An alliance bringing stakeholders, creates synergies, facilitate complementarily of action, mobilization and pooling resources to pursue a common vision to support the objectives of CAADP. Organizational, technical and agri-business capacities of key actors will be strengthened in variety testing, releases, maintenance breeding, production, processing, storage, quality control and certification, and marketing. The private sector will be transformed and empowered to play a key role in the delivery of certified seeds. It is envisaged that within a time frame of five (5) years, 25% of seed supplied to farmers in the sub-region will come from certified sources¹. The expected impacts will include improvements in rural household incomes, through increase in average yields of target crops, and the creation of an enabling environment for well functioning private sector participation in seed business. The cooperative agreement of WASP signed on 1st August, 2012, facilitated the

¹ Request for Application (RFA) Number: USAID/WA-RFA-624-12-00005 entitled

implementation of the program. Between August 2012 and February 2013, preparative activities were carried out in relation to institutional arrangements, alliance and partnership which has paved the way for the effective implementation of the program.

2. Institutional Arrangement

2.1. Signing of Cooperative Agreement: The WASP Cooperative Agreement No. AID-624-A-12-00007 was signed on 31st July, 2012 which facilitated the commencement of the program on 1st August, 2012.

2.2. Post-Award Orientation: Following the signing of the agreement, a post-award meeting was held on 11th September between CORAF/WECARD Management and the USAID/WA Officers, Mr. David Wobil (Senior Acquisition and Assistance Specialist) and Mr. Naveen Srivastava (Senior Contracts Specialist) . This enhanced understanding of the contents of the award documents for smooth implementation of the program.

2.3. Inventory of WASA Equipment and Material: Upon request in September, 2012, the USAID provided CORAF/WECARD with inventories of equipment and materials of WASA from Mali, Senegal, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Niger and Nigeria. These were to be verified to determine which equipment and material are in good condition to be transferred to WASP. CORAF/WECARD Commissioned WASP Partners through WAAPP offices to carry out this task. Signed reports have been received from all six countries indicating that the work has been done and the equipment and materials are in safekeeping for decision to be taken. The reports are being compiled to be sent to the USAID/WA. These will be transferred to the new WASP offices, once the Seed Specialists take their posts.

2.4. Establishment of Regional and National Offices: In October, 2012, in-country competitive calls were launched for suitable candidates to assume the positions of (i) Policy and Advocacy, (ii) Seed Production, (iii) Agribusiness Development and (iv) Monitoring and Evaluation). In December, 2013, terms of reference was shared with the national authorities of the seven WASP countries to competitively recruit the National Seed Specialists; all the seven specialists from the seven countries are expected to be recruited by 15th February, 2013. The recruitment processes for two positions for (i) Finance, Grant and Administrative Officer one (ii) Bilingual Secretary are on-going.

3. Alliance Building, Partnership and Collaboration

3.1. Stakeholder Commitment to WASP: Beginning from April, 2012, letters of commitment were received from major stakeholders pledging their support for WASP and indicating areas of contribution to the objective of WASP. Such letters were received from ECOWAS, CILSS, the CGIAR institutions (AfricaRice, IITA and ICRISAT), Hub Rural the private sector seed enterprises, the Africa Seed Trade Association (AFSTA), the National Seed Trade Associations (NSTAs), the National Quality Control and Certification Agencies, the Seed Services from the

target countries and others. Negotiations with the Iowa State University for long and short term trainings in seed science and technology are on-going. In addition, negotiations are underway to get UEMOA on board; UEMOA has expressed commitment to the WASP-ASIWA and support through an initiative being developed with CORAF on cereals and other commodities. Arrangements are underway to expand the partnership to cover more national, regional and international stakeholders. The AFSTA congress in Mauritius will provide a great opportunity to expand such partnerships to international partners.

3.3. Stakeholder Consultative Workshop: From September 12 to 13, a stakeholder consultative meeting was held in Abidjan to initiate the alliance building and to improve project implementation. Sixty-one participants from the USAID, ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS, CGIAR, NARS, ROPPA, WAAPP national offices, National Seed Trade Associations, Africa Seed Trade Association, Universities, national and international Seed Companies, National Quality Control and Certification Agencies, CORAF/WECARD Secretariat and others participated. Stakeholders were sensitized on WASP objectives which facilitated program ownership and buy-in. Stakeholders provided inputs and suggestions to improve project implementation, establish national alliances for effective public-private-donor dialogue, increase investment, increase supply of quality seeds, and for the establishment of the WAAPP/WASP units at national levels.

3.4. Identification of major Gaps for Intervention at Regional Level: A meeting was held at Ouagadougou on 9th December with regional seed initiatives (ECOWAS, CILSS, ROPPA, AfricaRice, IITA, ICRISAT, Hub Rural) to identify major gaps for WASP's intervention. The meeting was facilitated by Dr. Yamar MBODJ of Hub Rural with seventeen participants in attendance, including the ECOWAS Commissioner for Agriculture and the Director of Agriculture. It was re-emphasized that all seed partners and initiatives (regional and international) should be encouraged to get involved in the activities of the ASIWA in order to achieve its objectives. ECOWAS, taking cognizant of the importance of ASIWA, re-expressed its strong support for the establishment of this alliance and requested CORAF / WECARD to coordinate and govern this alliance on its behalf. The establishment of an Alliance for seed industry in West Africa (ASIWA) is in line with the implementation of ECOWAP. Through WASP, ECOWAS will strengthen the political and financial environment, providing a safe base for the development of the seed sector.

It was concluded that ASIWA remains the first key tool, an ideal framework involving the sub regional seed systems stakeholders, to drive the WASP. The West African Seed Committee (COASem) is the second key tool to work together with the first, to coordinate the national seed committees of the ECOWAS Member States, in accordance with Article 5.3 of ECOWAS implementing regulation 01/06/12 (on the functions, organization and operation of COASem). The establishment and operationalization of these two tools should create the conditions for a real revitalization of the ECOWAS / CILSS seed systems and thus contribute to the development of the agricultural sector as a whole. It was agreed that the governing body of ASIWA be hosted by CORAF / WECARD.

A call was launched in December, 2012 to recruit a consultant to help build the alliance on sound principles; CVs have been received to that effect for evaluation.

3.5. Collaboration with the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program: At the stakeholder consultative and launching workshop of WASP in Abidjan on 13 and 14th September, it was the consensus of participants to use the West Africa Productivity Program (WAAPP) as an entry point to establish National Program Units for the WASP. This decision is justified by the importance of quality seed in improving agricultural productivity. The seed component of the WAAPP could fully embrace the WASP activities and the WAAPP governance system could oversee the adequate implementation of project activities and delivery of expected results. In this context, optimizing the use of resources of these two programs could enhance coordination and create synergies in strengthening national seed systems, and leveraging resources (human, financial and institutional). A meeting was held at Dakar on 13th December between CORAF/WECARD and the National Authorities of the seven countries, who were the WAAPP Steering Committee Chairpersons (who represent the Ministers of Agriculture) and the WAAPP National Coordinators to develop modalities of cooperation in establishing the WAAPP-WASP Unit. Areas of collaboration (implementation of the ECOWAS seed regulatory framework; support to the National Centres of Specialization in strengthening the capacity of breeder seed production, and support to the dissemination of quality seeds through agri-business development, among others where WASP has an enormous capacity. The administrative modalities for operating the WAAPP/WASP units were agreed upon.

3.6. Partnership with CILSS: A meeting held between CORAF/WECARD and INSAH/CILSS at Dakar resulted in INSAH/CILSS and CORAF/WECARD coming into a common understanding of WASP philosophy and implementation modalities. The WASP provides a comprehensive approach in addressing seed industry challenges and should be approached holistically to achieve a common objective. Activities under WASP Result II (Seed Policy and Regulations) are to be carried out by a Task Force (comprising CILSS, CORAF/WECARD and other identified experts were agreed upon within the context of the entire program. In line with CORAF/WECARD operations, implementation modalities will be further deepened at the stakeholder planning workshop scheduled to take place from 11th to 13th March, 2013, where roles, responsibilities and budgets will be defined.

3.7. Partnership with AFSTA: During the month of December, a special meeting was held with the AFSTA Executive Secretary at Dakar to discuss the modalities of collaboration between WASP and AFSTA. Areas for collaboration discussed were related to strengthening the organizational and agri-business capacities of the National Seed Trade Associations. An initial workshop to this effect has been scheduled for the week of 28th and 29th March, 2013. In line with the project objective, WASP is sponsoring the President of AFSTA-West and Central Africa NSTA Committee and a West African member of the AFSTA Governing Board to the AFSTA Congress scheduled for Mauritius from 3rd to 6th March, 2013. The WASP Chief of Party and AFSTA executives from West Africa will be sponsored by WASP to participate in the AFSTA Congress to share the program with a wider stakeholder, expand partnership for ASIWA. This is in line with the recommendation from the regional initiative meeting held in Ouagadougou on 9th December, 2012.

3.8. Collaboration with the USAID/WA and Bilateral Programs: WASP personnel (the Chief of Party and the Policy and Advocacy Specialist) participated in USAID/WA Regional Meetings

in Dakar during the month of November. The meeting sought to share information on various initiatives and bilateral programs funded by USAID and to explore areas of collaboration in creating synergies. The concept and activities of WASP were shared with partners who provided inputs and expressed interest for collaboration. The bilateral programs (from Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal) showed interest in WASP and pledged their collaboration. Follow-up meetings are being scheduled by the USAID/WA office. Other regional partners who attended the meeting included WAFP, CILSS, ECOWAS and other USAID Regional Initiatives.

3.9. Collaboration with IFDC-WAFP: Three separate meetings were held in November, 2012 and January, 2013 at Dakar and in February, 2013 at Accra with the managers of the West Africa Fertilizer Program (WASP) with the objective of collaborating to achieve USAID-FtF Intermediate Results 1.2 (increased availability of improved agricultural inputs). Areas of collaboration mapped out, included the conduct of demonstrations of new varieties at various fertility rates and in agri-business capacity strengthening targeted at Farmer Organizations and the Private Sector. Protocols for demonstrations were shared.

4. Conclusions

The initial institutional, administrative and partnership arrangements carried out from August 2012 to February 2013, has helped build a strong base for a strong Alliance. This has also paved the way for an effective implementation of the program.

Next Major Activities Planned for February – April, 2013: (Please see chronogram on the next page)

Chronogram for the Next Major Activities Planned for February to April, 2013.

	Activity	Feb	March						April			
		22	4 - 8	11 -13	14	18-19	21- 22	25-29	1-5	8-9	11-12	15-19
1	USAID/WA Partnership meeting											
2	USAID/WA meeting with Bilateral Program, Dakar											
3	AFTA Congress in Mauritius											
4	Regional Planning Workshop, Dakar											
5	USAID/WA Partnership meeting with CORAF, Dakar											
6	WASP-AFSTA Workshop, Dakar											
7	National Consultative Meetings											
	a. Mali (in suspension)											
	b. Burkina Faso											
	c. Niger											
	d. Nigeria											
	e. Benin											
	f. Ghana											
	g. Senegal											
8	USAID Partnership meeting in Nigeria (Date: TBD)											

