



**International Conference on agricultural innovation
systems in West and Central Africa**

CORAF/WECARD, DFAT, CSIRO and CoS-SIS

**Facilitating change in agricultural systems in West and
Central Africa through application of Integrated
Agricultural Research for Development (IAR4D)**

25-27th February 2015

Saly-Portudal, Senegal

Call for Papers
Second announcement
Closing Date: 10th February 2015

Introduction

Multiple drivers are shaping food security and the livelihoods of smallholder producers and the rural poor in West and Central Africa. Increasing population, urbanisation and increased demand for crop and livestock products, provide market opportunities. Land degradation, climate change, poor infrastructure and weak institutions, however, raise concerns about the ability of the region to respond to these numerous challenges and especially increase its agricultural productivity capacity.

The predominant farming systems in West and Central Africa are small-holder, mixed crop-livestock systems. These systems will change dramatically in the coming few decades. They therefore, represent major research for development opportunities, which will make the transition a positive one. Sustainable intensification of these systems is a pathway that can lead to achievement of both livelihood goals of small farmers and market demand opportunities of growing populations.

The application of integrated Agricultural Research for Development (IAR4D) is seen as an approach that facilitates change in agricultural systems in West and Central Africa. IAR4D integrates the following four “defining principles”¹:

- Perspectives, knowledge and actions of different stakeholders around a common theme;
- Learning by stakeholders achieved through working together;
- Analysis, action and change across the economic, social, environmental, spectrum and livelihoods and welfare of end users and consumers;
- Analysis, action and change at different levels of spatial, economic, and social organisation.

IAR4D fundamentally encourages multi-stakeholder Innovation Platforms (IP) which comprise stakeholders and/or collaborators of various social and economic strata and the institutions that govern their functioning, all working towards a common objective. In principle, the platform considers the innovation as a systemic and dynamic process and it recognises that innovation can emerge from many sources of complex interactions, and knowledge sharing.

Over recent years, CORAF/WECARD, DFAT, CSIRO and CoS-SIS have promoted IAR4D principles in exploring opportunities for the smallholder producers and the institutions in West and Central Africa. This conference provides the opportunity to gather these institutions and others stakeholders together to make a situational analysis on the current state of agricultural systems in West and Central Africa, to assess the successes and weaknesses of the IAR4D approach and jointly explore its future.

CORAF/WECARD – www.coraf.org

CORAF/WECARD developed its *Strategic Plan* [2007-2016] following the principles, objectives, and focus of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) and the guidelines for its implementing it provided by the FAAP, as well as the agricultural policies of the Regional Economic Communities in West and Central Africa. A second Five-year Operational Plan 2014-2018 [OP2] will focus on a strategy of institutionalizing IAR4D in the following three themes:, considered as major opportunities or challenges facing agricultural transformation in the sub-region :

1. Food, Health and food Security;
2. Markets and Trade;
3. Sustainable Agriculture.

CSIRO- DFAT Africa Food Security Initiative (2010-2015) – <http://www.coraf.org/csiroV2013/>

In 2010, CORAF/WECARD issued a competitive call for research projects to be supported by the Australian Government on sustainable intensification of integrated crop-livestock in West and Central Africa. The call was based on the assertion that integration of crops and livestock at the farm and landscape scales can be used for stimulating higher productivity that is also environmentally sustainable. It also recognised the importance of innovation across the value chain based on the principles of IAR4D.

¹ Taken from http://www.coraf.org/database/publication/publication/IAR4D_Brochure.pdf

The selected farming systems projects commenced in 2011 and were designed to work within local systems in order to improve intensification and diversification of agricultural products, to improve the income of men and women farmers. They were also geared towards increasing links to the private sector and across the value chain to improve trade and market opportunities and reduce financial risk. The research projects have incorporated a strong element of capacity strengthening across the range of partners, enabling CORAF/WECARD to enhance its reach through the NARS across West and Central Africa. It has also encouraged working with different value-chain stakeholders to identify and tackle a range of issues inhibiting productivity and access to food.

Project results featuring learning on the implementation of IAR4D, will be presented during the conference.

Convergence of Sciences (2001-2014) – <http://www.cos-sis.org/>

The Convergence of Sciences programme aims at improving the livelihoods of West African smallholder farmers by exploring new pathways for agricultural innovation. It strives to integrate agricultural research in the exploration of specific opportunities and conditions that suit the needs of these farmers. The programme also strives to achieve convergence between farmers and scientists as well as between natural and social scientists.

During the second phase (CoS-SIS; 2008-2013) entitled "*Convergence of Sciences: Strengthening Agricultural Innovation Systems in Benin, Ghana and Mali*" experiments were carried out to develop, apply and assess the capacity of the IAR4D approach in ensuring sustainable rural poverty alleviation and food security.

In 2014, collaboration was established between the CoS-SIS program and CORAF/WECARD to constitute a large group of representatives from agricultural research and university faculties in West and Central Africa practising, through projects, the use of Innovation Platforms based on the IAR4D approach. The new initiative of Converging to Innovate (C2I) was planned to establish a new program, which is aligned with the CORAF/WECARD OP2 ((2014-2018). This alignment focussed on sharing experiences and learning is core to this conference.

Conference objectives and outputs

The conference aims at facilitating change in agricultural systems in West and Central Africa through application of IAR4D.

This objective will be achieved through the delivery of the following outputs:

- Knowledge on the historical evolution, in theory and practice, of an integrated Agricultural Research for Development (IAR4D) approach to delivering impacts are improved;
- Achievements and challenges of IAR4D implementation in Africa and elsewhere are better understood;
- Recommendations for implementing IAR4D within the context of second five- year Operational Plan 2014-2018 [OP2] of CORAF/WECARD are formulated;
- An updated frame of investment prospectus for IAR4D in West and Central Africa are presented.

Conference organisation

The organization of this conference will be managed by the following two committees:

Organising Committee:

CORAF/WECARD: Issoufou Kollo (chair), Julienne Kuiseu, Khady Lo Ba, Anatole Koné, Soukeyna Cissé, Isabelle Cabral-Grunitsky

CSIRO: Ian Watson, Caroline Bruce

Program Committee

CORAF/WECARD: Aboubakar Njoya (chair), Ernest Asiedu, Abdulai Jalloh, Hamade Kagoné, Ousmane Ndoeye, George Muluh,

CSIRO : Ian Watson (co-Chair), Andy Hall, Jocelyn Davies

CoS-SIS : Jan Brouwers, Richard Hawkins, Bart Steenhuijsen Piters

Contributions to the conference

The conference will be a mix of invited keynotes (~30 min presentations), contributed talks (~15 min presentations) and posters. Contributions will be sought from the networks of CORAF/WECARD, CSIRO and CoS-SIS, with the expectations that projects supported by these networks use the conference as a vehicle to present the results of their work. CORAF/WECARD will ensure connections to other networks including those of FARA, AGRA, ECOWAS, CGIAR, Universities, and other networks (private sector, farmer-based organisations and NGOs) in West and Central Africa.

Projects supported by the CSIRO-DFAT Africa Food Security Initiative including the Policy Pathways for Food Security project, will report the results of their work at the conference. These reports will concern biophysical research undertaken within projects and the operations of Innovation Platforms. Reports on impacts from the projects, quantified and articulated through the framing of the Partnership's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan, will also be presented. Consequently, each project will support the participation of several delegates of including IP members, in the conference.

You are invited to submit **2 pages extended abstract** using the abstract form from CORAF website (www.coraf.org) by E-mail, to the following address: **innovation2015@coraf.org**, not later than the **10th of February 2015**. Proposals sent after this date will not be taken into consideration. Assuming that you are notified of acceptance (on 15 February 2015), **revised 2 pages extended abstract as necessary and resubmit to CORAF by 20 February 2015**. Particular attention will be paid to representation by female delegates and including gender in the design and implementation of IAR4D.

Conference timetable

Registration opens:	1 st December 2014
Contributed paper submission deadline:	1 st December 2014 to 10 February 2015
Notification of selected papers:	15 February
Contributed paper final submission deadline:	20 February 2015
Final programme:	22 February 2015
Conference	25-27 February 2015

Conference publications

A conference program and book of paper abstracts will be produced for distribution at the conference. This material will also be made available via the CORAF/WECARD website. A proposal for a special issue of a published journal on "Facilitating change in agricultural systems in West and Central Africa through application of integrated Agricultural Research for Development (IAR4D)" will be developed to contain selected papers from the conference. While this arrangement is yet to be negotiated, it is expected that arrangements for the special issue will be published by the end of 2015. Other publications from the conference will include:

- i. A conference proceedings containing summaries of presentations made at the conference;
- ii. A report to CORAF/WECARD and its stakeholders containing recommendations for the implementation of OP2.

Sponsorship

The Conference sponsors have resources to support a limited number of international and African participants. Those interested in attending the conference can request support from CORAF/WECARD if their paper is accepted for presentation.

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