USAID C4CP Project Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

WHAT IS THE PROJECT ABOUT?

The USAID C4CP project is a four-year activity (2014 to 2018) benefitting from $14.8 million in joint funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Bureau of Food Security (BFS). The goal of the project is to increase food security in targeted areas of the countries that are among the largest producers of cotton in Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali (collectively referred to as the “C-4” countries). The strategic objective of the project is to raise income for men and women cotton producers and processors in targeted areas.

The USAID C4CP project focuses on cotton and its rotational crops, mainly cereals and pulses. Given the national context for cotton production and the regional one as far as food crops are concerned, the C4CP project builds capacity and works to establish strategic partnerships for helping regional and national institutions achieve their organizational goals.

Another important aspect of the project is to increase women’s economic and social benefits by conducting value chain analyses, developing gender sensitive training tools and materials, and supporting extension training. This approach facilitates the efficient distribution of protocols, thereby ensuring that messages reach women producers.

WHY THE USAID C4CP PROJECT? WHAT IS THE RATIONALE OF THE PROJECT?

Cotton is cultivated on some of the best agricultural lands in the West African Sahel. As such, cotton provides a special opportunity to increase agricultural productivity, income and well-being to millions of farmers across West and Central Africa. Cotton serves as the major economic base for 10 to 15 million smallholder farmers.

To help meet the unique food production needs of cotton producing households in the four cotton producing countries of the C-4, the USAID signed a Cooperation Agreement with the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC), to continue working in the sector after the
completion of the predecessor project (the West Africa Cotton Improvement Program, or WACIP, which ran from 2006 to 2013).

Two partner organizations, Cultural Practice (CP) and the International Centre for development oriented Research in Agricultural (ICRA) assist IFDC in implementing project activities on gender and agricultural extension module development, respectively.

The project works to strengthen partnerships with a wide range of regional and national actors involved in the cotton and rotational crops value chains (cereals and pulses) in the C-4 countries, and to mobilize resources for the dissemination of agricultural technology packages developed by the project.

**WHAT IS THE CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT?**

The work of the USAID C4CP project builds upon previous investments made by the U.S. Government in the cotton sector in West Africa between 2006 and 2013 through the aforementioned WACIP, which was also implemented by IFDC. In 2014, USAID approved a new project to be implemented in the same C-4 countries to increase agricultural productivity, strengthening partnerships and increasing social and economic benefits for women in cotton-producing households.

To achieve its objectives, the USAID C4CP project assists men and women producers in the following activities:

1) Developing and disseminating new technologies;
2) Strengthening the technical capacity of the National Agricultural Research and Extension Services (NARES) to develop and deliver quality training;
3) Linking the NARES in each of the C-4 countries to farmers organizations involved in the production of cotton and/or its rotational crops;
4) Strengthening regional platforms and dialogue between stakeholders to support national and/or necessary processes, legal and administrative policies for fertilizers, seeds and biosafety regulations, both at national and regional levels; and,
5) Providing technical content for partners to develop and manage essential training tools for the producers reaching women and men producers.

**WHAT IS THE AREA OF INTERVENTION OF THE PROJECT?**

The project is implemented in the cotton belt of the C-4 countries, which covers the production areas in southern Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali, as well as northern and central Benin. The project
office is based in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and is represented by a national coordinator in each of its countries of operation, under the leadership of a Chief of Party. Through its work with regional partners, the project is disseminating extension modules and other technological packages to producers in the C-4 countries, with the potential of ultimately disseminating these materials as well to other cotton-producing countries in the region outside the C-4, including Côte d’Ivoire, Senegal and Togo.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT?

The project has three goals or intermediate results (IR) to facilitate the achievement of its strategic objective:

1) IR 1 - Support for increased agricultural productivity is promoted through regional, national and other stakeholders;
2) IR 2 - Partnerships that support the development of the cotton sector are strengthened; and,
3) IR 3 - A favorable environment for strengthening the economic and social power of women producers and processors is promoted.

IR 1 will be achieved through activities that encourage the use of sustainable agricultural productivity technologies, including post-harvest activities and improvements to the ginning process. This includes the development of innovative agricultural technology packages for dissemination to organizations engaged in the sector. IR 2 focuses on the development of strategic regional partnerships and improved coordination of activities related to the cotton sector, while IR 3 is to enable the effective participation of women in the cotton sector through training, awareness and advocacy.

WHAT IS INNOVATIVE ABOUT THE AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY PACKAGES NOTED IN IR 1?

The project-developed agricultural technology packages consist of a series of training modules and posters. The modules developed are innovative in three ways:

1) Gender - Gender issues in general and women’s issues in particular have been integrated into all aspects of the materials developed, thus making them gender-sensitive;
2) Pedagogy – A creative pedagogical approach was used during module development, whereby principles of adult learning were used to solicit and include input from users during all stages of the process, from the identification of training needs to the finalization of the modules themselves;
3) Environmental – Practical risk mitigation measures have been integrated into the modules to protect human and animal health, as well as the environment.

WHAT SUBJECT MATTER IS COVERED BY THE MODULES?

There are five modules on “good agricultural practices” (GAP) as well as two on “post-harvest” (PH). The five GAP modules cover the following subject matter:

1) Improved Seed Production  
2) Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM)  
3) Integrated Pest Management (IPM)  
4) Organic Cotton Production  
5) Improving Cotton Seed Quality

The two PH modules cover the following subjects:

1) Storage and Conservation  
2) Food Processing

The modules are made up of sub-themes (or technologies) that have also been made into posters (one poster per theme/technology). There are a total of 52 technologies, including 35 for the GAP modules (7 on seed production; 11 on ISFM; 5 on IPM; 5 on organic cotton; and, 7 on improving cotton seed), and 17 for the PH modules (5 on storage and conservation and 12 on food processing).

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PROJECT TO DATE?

IR 1: Sustainable agricultural productivity

- Developed seven (7) training modules; including five (5) on good agricultural practices (GAP) and two on post-harvest (PH) technologies (storage and transformation).
- Organized two training of trainers’ forums (79 senior trainers of which 15 women) for the four countries on GAP and PH technologies.
- Provided sub-grants to 14 implementing partners for module dissemination and to the 4 NARES in each of the C-4 countries for the implementation of a three-year soil health study.
- Organized two regional workshops to build grant recipients’ capacities in terms of monitoring and evaluation and on administrative and financial procedures. This activity reached 50 participants, including financial and agricultural technicians.
IR 2: Strengthening regional partnerships in the cotton sector

- Organized the first meeting of the National Advisory Committees (NACs) and of the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) with 200 participants.
- Organized a soil fertility workshop for 30 soil scientists.

RI 3: Socio-economic benefits for women

- Established 22 demonstration plots for female, or mixed groups that were predominantly women, in the C-4.
- Collected footage for the production of a documentary film on women’s participation in the cotton sector.
- Developed the project gender strategy.
- Developed gender sensitive training guides.
- Conducted assessments on the role of gender in the value chains of cotton and its primary rotational crops in each of the C-4 countries.
- Created an inventory (database) of women entrepreneurs in the C-4.
- Established a Community of Practice on women in the cotton sector.

WHAT ARE THE FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR THE PROJECT?

For the remaining two years of the project we will scale-up our work by sharing best practices and lessons learned with regional partners. These partners, in turn, will continue to disseminate the achievements of the project, even after the project is completed. In this sense, our work would be made sustainable and investments in the cotton sector will be fully taken advantage of.

In 2016, as far as the gender aspect is concerned, the project will develop tools and materials for agricultural extension as well as to advocate for women in the cotton sector. We are also currently editing a documentary film as well as developing brochures showing the success of women in the sector for each of the C-4 countries.

Regarding partnerships, the project will focus on collaboration with regional partners including the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa (EMUWA, or UEMOA in French), the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (WECARD, or CORAF in French), the Network of West African Producer Organizations (ROPPA) and the Regional Integrated Protection of the Cotton Farmer Program in Africa (PR-PICA).
WHO ARE THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS OF THE USAID C4CP PROJECT?

The project is carried out in collaboration with 30 regional and national implementing partners. The main project stakeholders include actors from every link of the value chains of cotton and its rotational crops, as well as at regional, national and local levels.

The project establishes and strengthens the links at each of these different levels throughout the value chain, including input suppliers, cotton producers and producer associations, public and private extension services and advisory service providers, research institutions, cotton companies, Ministries of Agriculture, ginners, inter-professional associations and cotton fiber exporters.