

**Project Name: Feed the Future Enhancing Growth through Regional Agricultural Input Systems (EnGRAIS) Project for West Africa**

**Monthly Highlights: October 1 - 31, 2019 (FY 2020 | No. 1)**

**Participation in West Africa Fertilizer Financing Forum (WAFFF)**

Between September 30 and October 1, 2019, EnGRAIS participated in the maiden West Africa Fertilizer Financing Forum (WAFFF), co-organized by the West Africa Fertilizer Association (WAFSA) and the Africa Development Bank/Africa Fertilizer Financing Mechanism. Under the theme "Fostering Fertilizer Future," the forum brought together over 200 participants including agriculture ministers, development partners, and private sector leaders. The objective was to find a sustainable solution to West Africa's fertilizer financing needs. Mr. Patrice Annequin, EnGRAIS Private Sector Specialist, made a presentation on "The West Africa Fertilizer Sector: Regional Outlook and Perspectives". He discussed the outlook of the global, Sub-Saharan, and West Africa fertilizer markets. EnGRAIS will monitor progress of the outcomes of the forum.



*Photo 1: Mr. Patrice Annequin addressing participants at the forum*

**Organizational Capacity Review Exercise**

EnGRAIS, in collaboration with WAFSA, conducted an Organizational Capacity Review (OCR) exercise for WAFSA in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, October 3-4, 2019, to help WAFSA improve its institutional and capacity building efforts. A consultant, Dr. Ernest Asiedu, facilitated the training program and took WAFSA executives through critical institutional areas covering governance, administration, human resource management, financial management, organizational management, program management, and project performance management. With recommendations from the OCR, WAFSA can develop activity plans, regularly review its performance, identify and address weaknesses, and improve its management procedures and processes, in line with the expected results of its strategic plan.

## Strategic Meetings

### Advisory Committee Meeting

EnGRAIS organized its second Advisory Committee Meeting (ACM) in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, October 2, 2019, to review the project's Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 results and discuss the FY2020 work plan. The ACM is used to review progress of project implementation and advise on priority activities to keep the project on track. At this, the AC members made some recommendations and suggestions which were incorporated to improve the quality of the project's FY19 report and the FY20 work plan. The Advisory Committee (AC) is comprised of the project's strategic regional partners, including ECOWAS (President), the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA, Vice-President), Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), CORAF, USAID/WA, WAFA, and ROPPA. Mr. Sékou Sangaré, Commissioner for Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources at the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) participated in the meeting with other key stakeholders including Mr. Alain Sy Traore, Director of Agriculture, ECOWAS; Dr. Seyni Hamadou, Director of Agriculture, UEMOA); Dr. Abdulai Jalloh, Director of Research and Innovation, CORAF; Dr. Mohamed Abdellahi Ebbe, Director General, INSAH, CILSS; and Mr. Moussa Diabaté, President of WAFA.

### Meeting with ECOWAS Commissioner for Agriculture, Environment, and Water Resources

On October 8, 2019, the EnGRAIS project held a meeting with the ECOWAS Commissioner for Agriculture, Environment, and Water Resources, Mr. Sekou Sangare, in the project's North



Photo 2: The Commissioner (far left) making a point at the meeting

and West Africa Regional Office in Accra. The meeting was a follow-up to discussions at the WAFFF, and for the Commissioner to share his thoughts with the EnGRAIS project team on expectations for the effective implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ECOWAS and WAFA. The meeting discussed solutions to the problem of financing fertilizer subsidy programs and agriculture in general in West Africa to create

opportunities and jobs for the 2020 agricultural season.

Other discussions include the challenges of smuggling fertilizers across borders because of the subsidy program. The Commissioner observed, among other important things, that subsidy programs in the ECOWAS region generally did not achieve their objectives of increasing productivity or even the adoption of more appropriate technologies by smallholder producers. EnGRAIS has taken note of the discussions and will follow up on some key issues with other partners.

## **WAFA Signs MOU with ECOWAS**

A key partner of EnGRAIS, WAFA, signed a new MoU with ECOWAS. With the new agreement, WAFA has become a key partner to ECOWAS to improve and increase the flow of quality and adapted fertilizers in the West Africa region. The agreement aims to strengthen the fertilizer value chain in West Africa and set the scene for the implementation of the regional agenda on sustainable agriculture across the region, and strengthens WAFA's position as the official voice for the fertilizer industry in the region.



## **Upcoming Activities for November 2019**

- Participate in ECOWAS/CORAF review meeting on draft integrated regional agro-input strategy in Dakar, November 6-8, 2019
- Facilitate the handing over of data collection responsibilities from AFO to WAFA
- Follow up on post-WAFFF activities to enable key financing for WAFA members
- Begin implementation of the Senegal Dundël suuf Fertilizer buy-in
- Continue implementation of seven-country assessment of fertilizer testing laboratories to determine reference laboratories and capacity building needs
- Complete WAFA OCR and facilitate development of action plan to respond to recommendations
- Finalize first 40 agro-input packages and plans for their dissemination
- Prepare English and Portuguese versions of the draft ECOWAS Directive on Subsidy Program Guidelines