

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

**Monthly Highlights: November 2019 (FY 2020 | No. 2)**

**Workshops and Conferences**

***Participation in 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference on Adaption of African Agriculture (AAA)***

Between November 4-5, 2019, EnGRAIS's Private Sector Specialist, Patrice Annequin, participated in the second annual ministerial conference of the AAA, held in Benguerir, Morocco. Under the theme "Food Security Facing Climate Change", this conference advocated for sustained efforts to ensure food security in Africa against the backdrop of accelerating climate change. Patrice Annequin made a presentation on "Investing in Soils, Fertilizers and Agribusiness for Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) in Africa" on the "Financing the adaptation of African agriculture" panel.

He showcased the 2SCALE project model and successes, which attracted private sector investments and additional finances, while expanding farms and farmers using CSA good practices. His presentation was well received and led to many one-on-one discussions after the closing of the session. Twenty-three ministers of agriculture attended the African Ministers of Agriculture session. The AAA offered an opportunity to showcase IFDC/EnGRAIS.

***Participation in ECOWAS/CORAF Workshop on Agri-Input Packages Strategy***



As a member of the Task Force (TF) responsible for developing the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Regional Agri-Inputs Integrated Strategy for West Africa and the Sahel (RAIS), EnGRAIS participated in the TF meeting, November 6 – 8, 2019, held in Dakar, Senegal, to review and validate the first draft document submitted by a

During the review meeting, three EnGRAIS Intermediate Result Team Leaders including, Mr. Patrice Annequin, Private Sector Specialist; Dr. Sansan Youl, Agro-Input Package Development Specialist; and Mr. Emmanuel Alognikou, Policy Specialist, provided technical and strategic information on the three major areas of the fertilizer sector. These include the private sector; policy, including regulations development and subsidy program reforms; and improved seed and fertilizer recommendations and good agricultural practices (GAPs)/technologies to promote higher yields and agricultural productivity increases.

EnGRAIS's role in the RAIS development process is key because of the project's experience in facilitating the regional fertilizer private sector, working on regional fertilizer policy-related activities with ECOWAS and Member States, and currently developing the Fertilizer and Seed Recommendations for West Africa Map (FeSeRWAM)/agro-input packages to promote the use of appropriate fertilizers, improved seeds, and GAPs. EnGRAIS will continue to support the RAIS effort.

## **Strategic Meetings**

### ***Meeting with Government of Senegal Ministries/Agencies and the Private Sector***

As part of initial project activities, the EnGRAIS Senegal Dundël suuf Fertilizer buy-in project held several meetings with strategic partners, including Government of Senegal (GoS) Ministries and Agencies as well as key private sector players, to discuss various project-related issues. The meeting with ISRA focused on the development of a mutually agreed upon Scope of Work focusing on soil mapping, and arriving at a formal arrangement that will allow Dundël suuf to transfer the technical leadership for a set of activities and the corresponding budget to ISRA. The meeting with officials of MAER/DA discussed the fertilizer regulatory framework and the need for a review and reform of the current GoS national subsidy program. Dundël suuf will support efforts to improve the current fertilizer subsidy program.

The project also met individual fertilizer businesses (manufacturers, importers and distributors) and a group representing the soon-to-be created Senegalese fertilizer association (to be called APESEN – *Association des Professionnels des Engrais du Senegal*) to discuss their potential critical roles in the implementation of all three components of Dundël suuf.

### ***Meeting with African Development Bank (AfDB)***

Following discussions at the West Africa Fertilizer Financing Forum (WAFFF), organized by AfDB and the West Africa Fertilizer Association (WAFA), EnGRAIS met with officials of AfDB to determine the availability of an AfDB mechanism that could help resolve the late payment of suppliers for the Government of Ghana (GoG) "Planting for Food and Jobs" Fertilizer Subsidy Program (FSP). IFDC/EnGRAIS is working with the GoG to improve the latter's FSP. Discussions revealed that the AfDB mechanism that may fit the need of the GoG is the Partial Risk Guarantee, under which AfDB will serve as a guarantor to the suppliers' Letters of Credit. IFDC/EnGRAIS will follow up with the GoG and AfDB on this possible arrangement.

## **Assessment of Fertilizer Testing Reference Laboratories**

### ***Assessment Exercise in Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire***

During November, EnGRAIS continued assessing fertilizer testing laboratories in an assessment that will ultimately cover seven countries across the region. Initial assessments were done in Senegal, Mali, and Niger between August and October. The EnGRAIS team, led

by Job Fugice, researcher and head of the analytical laboratory at IFDC Headquarters, conducted the assessments in Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire in November. The remaining assessments will be carried out in February/March 2020 in Ghana and Nigeria.



EnGRAIS is conducting these studies to assess the current analytical capacity of existing laboratories of the region to determine reference laboratories and capacity building needs of those laboratories. Previous assessments had been done, so there is a baseline, but EnGRAIS is adding new laboratories, and developing a plan to strengthen and improve fertilizer analysis facilities, including recommendations for regional reference laboratories, against the

background that previous studies showed that limited analytical capacity of existing laboratories had the potential of influencing the availability and use of good quality fertilizers in West Africa. The following are some key laboratory characteristics that are assessed:

- Technical equipment and their maintenance,
- Methodologies used for analysis of fertilizer products;
- Human resource capacity;
- Financial resources; and
- Space for storage of samples, reagents, materials, etc.

#### ***Collaboration with Nigeria Institute of Soil Science***

IFDC/EnGRAIS's Lower Coast Sub-Regional Coordinator, Kido Kouassi, met with the Registrar of the Nigeria Institute of Soil Science (NISS), Professor Victor Chude, to discuss next steps for fertilizer quality control laboratory assessments in Nigeria, after the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between IFDC and NISS. NISS has a mandate from the Nigerian Government to assess all the soil and fertilizer laboratories across the country. EnGRAIS is seeking collaboration with NISS, through Professor Chude, to select the best candidate laboratories and conduct part of the assessment together.

#### **Upcoming Activities for December 2019**

- Continue the process of handing over West Africa fertilizer price data collection responsibilities from AFO to WAFA;
- Follow up on post-WAFFF activities to enable key financing for WAFA members;
- Ramp up implementation of the Senegal Dundël suuf Fertilizer buy-in with full team on board;
- Follow up on GoG/AfDB Partial Risk Guarantee mechanism discussions;
- Complete WAFA OCR and facilitate development of action plan to respond to recommendations;
- Finalize first 40 agro-input packages and plans for their dissemination; and

- Prepare English and Portuguese versions of the draft ECOWAS Directive on Subsidy Program Guidelines.