

# Discussion Paper

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## **Regional approaches to food security in Africa**

The CAADP and other relevant  
policies and programmes in ECOWAS

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The study is also available in French. It is available at: [www.ecdpm.org/dp128dfr](http://www.ecdpm.org/dp128dfr).

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## Acronyms

AfT	Aid for Trade
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
AU	African Union
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CCAA	Advisory Committee for Agriculture and Food
CDP	Community Development Programme
CET	Common External Tariff
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIDAA	Inter-departmental Committee for Food and Agriculture
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
CMA/AOC	Conference of West and Central African Ministers of Agriculture
CTF	Child Trust Fund
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DfID	Department for International Cooperation (United Kingdom)
DGIS	Directorate General for International Cooperation (Netherlands)
DPTT	CAADP Development Partners Task Team
DWG	Donor Working Group
EBID	ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWADF	Regional Fund for Agriculture and Food
ECOWAP	Economic Community of West African States' Agricultural Policy
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
EIF	Enhanced Integrated Framework
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement
EPADP	EPA Development Programme
ETLS	ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEWACCI	West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NPCA	NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency
MFP	Mobilizing and Federating Programs
MTDF	Multi Donor Trust Fund
NAIP	National Agricultural Investment Plan
NSA	Non-State Actor
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OSBP	One Stop Border Post
PRIA	Regional Agricultural Investment Plan
RAFA	Regional Agency for Food and Agriculture
REC	Regional Economic Community

SOP	Strategic and Operational Plan for Governance, Coordination and Monitoring and Evaluation of the ECOWAP/CAADP 2011 – 2015
SPS	Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
SWARIP	Support to West African Regional Integration Programme
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## Executive Summary

In 2003 the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) was established by the assembly of the African Union (AU). Its aim is to raise agricultural productivity by at least 6% per year and increase public investment in agriculture to 10% of national annual budgets. After an initial phase focused primarily on interventions at the national level, there is growing awareness on the need to work more on the regional dimensions of the CAADP. In this context, the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) has undertaken a policy analysis of regional CAADP processes in various African regions, focusing on the issues at stake as well as its linkages with the broader regional integration processes. The underlying study focuses on the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).<sup>1</sup> It is intended to stimulate further discussions among stakeholders and to contribute to the consultative processes around the implementation of the regional CAADP compact and related investment plan in the region, as well as to contribute to lessons-sharing across regions, to strengthen food security in West Africa and beyond.

### **The ECOWAS Agricultural Policy: pioneering regional CAADP**

Considerable progress has been made in West Africa in relation to the regional component of CAADP. The process began in 2001 when the ECOWAS Ministerial Commission on Agriculture and Food adopted a framework of guidelines for the creation of a common regional agricultural policy for West Africa (ECOWAP). The development of ECOWAP coincided with the period when CAADP gained momentum and global interest. In this light the Heads of State adopted ECOWAP as the reference framework for CAADP implementation at the regional level in 2005. This was followed by the adoption of a CAADP Regional Partnership Compact (2009) and a Regional Investment Plan (PRIA) 2011-2015, estimated at USD 900mn, of which ECOWAS member states have committed to contribute USD 150mn. To facilitate implementation of the PRIA, a Regional Agency for Food and Agriculture (RAFA) and a Regional Fund for Agriculture and Food (ECOWADF) will be set up, a process that is currently ongoing. In the meantime, the implementation of certain sub-programmes and activities planned in the PRIA has been initiated, albeit at a slow pace, for which stakeholders mention causes such as capacity issues and limited funding of development partners so far. Hence, with the policy framework in place, the main challenge going forward is to ensure that the ECOWAP/CAADP and related food security initiatives are effectively and fully implemented.

### **The national-regional nexus: synergies created but further opportunities should be exploited**

After the development and launch of the regional compact, national compacts followed. Considerable progress has also been made at the national level. All 15 ECOWAS member countries have signed national Compacts and validated National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs); many have built on their NAIPs to define a more detailed investment plan and have held business meetings to mobilise resources and are currently implementing NAIP-related programmes and activities. It is widely accepted among stakeholders that regional-level initiatives have been instrumental in progress made at the national level. To advance the process at the national level, it was decided regionally (ECOWAS Commission with its own resources) to provide financial assistance of over USD 0.4mn to each member state to organise the NAIP formulation process (studies, modelling, consultation workshops) and define national compacts. In collaboration with other institutions such as IFPRI, the ECOWAS Commission also provided technical support to its member states. Therefore, many stakeholders perceive the ECOWAS Commission as a

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<sup>1</sup> Similar studies are available for other African regions, including COMESA, EAC and SADC.

driving force behind both regional and national processes. However, it is noted that coherence and synergies between the national and regional level could be strengthened. At the national level, regional perspectives and commitments could be better taken into account. A measure that could be taken in this regard is the organisation of activities in member states to raise awareness about the benefits of regional approaches in every proposed regional cooperation area relevant to food security and about the results achieved so far. At the regional level, it should be ensured that regional initiatives focus on addressing cross-border issues, in line with the subsidiarity principle.

### **Non-State Actor engagement: mixed experiences and the issue of regional representation**

The ECOWAS Commission has been commended by stakeholders for promoting an inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach, which has generated a sense of ownership for the CAADP process among stakeholders. Participation of Non-State Actors (NSAs) at the national level differed considerably across member states. In some countries a genuine dialogue took place and shaped the investment plans, while in other countries NSAs had difficulties to have their voice heard. Cited causes for these difficulties include a lack of political will in some cases, time constraints and a weak methodology for a multi-stakeholder dialogue. In terms of the way forward, it is felt by stakeholders that engagement with NSA has to be pursued and deepened in the implementation and monitoring of the national and regional investment plans, to keep the momentum for genuine multi-stakeholder participation. It is felt by some that particularly regional representation of farmers' and agro-business could be strengthened. This would involve bringing together national farmers' organizations and agro-business employers' associations more regularly at the regional level.

### **The role of the ECOWAS Commission: capacity and coordination challenges**

Another key actor in the regional food security processes is the ECOWAS Commission. A number of stakeholders are uncertain about the extent to which the ECOWAS Commission, in particular its Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), and even the proposed agency RAFA and the Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) that is expected to manage the ECOWADF, are capable of fully delivering on their mandate related to the implementation of the ECOWAP/CAADP. The Commission's capacity issues could be addressed in the ongoing institutional assessment and related internal capacity building efforts. As for the RAFA, it will take time to set up such an agency; so all stakeholders involved should count in a transition period. Once RAFA is operational, it will be particularly important that the Commission, the RAFA and the EBID are clear on their respective role and responsibilities and communicate and cooperate effectively, avoiding competition and duplication of efforts. It is also felt by stakeholders that effective coordination and cooperation with the wider group of regional bodies (e.g. UEMOA, CILSS, IITA, CMA/AOC, Hub Rural etc) will be essential for the ECOWAP to achieve its agricultural development and food security objectives.

### **Involvement of development partners: a well functioning regional Donor Working Group**

As regards international development partners, they generally view the ECOWAP/CAADP process as a good rallying point for them to align to the region's priorities and strengthen donor harmonisation. A key donor coordination structure is the regional Donor Working Group (DWG) supporting ECOWAP, which development partners and the ECOWAS Commission overall consider to be a well-functioning and useful body. The DWG meets once a month, currently under Spanish leadership, and serves primarily as a

platform to share information among donors and formulate joint positions for discussions with ECOWAS. Further steps to improve its functioning could include broadening participation (e.g. get emerging economies on board); deepening participation (e.g. development partners' headquarters give their representations in the DWG better input, information and a clearer mandate for decisions); and strengthening linkages with the continental and national level (e.g. ensure that members of national level agriculture DWGs link and contribute to the ECOWAS DWG). More generally, donors could step up efforts to move away from a plethora of programmes and projects, as currently still exists, and use the DWG for further alignment and harmonisation, possibly through joint programming. As well, in developing regional strategies and programmes, development partners could more strongly exploit linkages between sectors and on this basis undertake programmes which have cross-cutting value.

### **CAADP regional plans and linkages with the overall framework for regional integration**

A very important dimension related to the progress of regional approaches to food security that emerges from consultations with ECOWAS stakeholders is the relationship between ECOWAP/CAADP and the overall framework for, and status of, regional integration initiatives. The implementation of the ECOWAP/CAADP and related PRIA should continue to take into account key underlying bottlenecks to regional integration and lessons learnt, which will contribute to the likelihood of ECOWAP/CAADP achieving its objectives. Conversely, delivering results in a crucial sector such as agriculture could also be a real contribution to the overall integration and cooperation in West Africa. Bottlenecks for regional integration in West Africa discussed in this study include a mismatch between bottom-up regional integration processes and dynamics (often driven by the private sector) and top-down moves (such as policy frameworks and protocols generally adopted by governments); the gap between regional commitments and their application at the national level; limited capacities of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions; the socio-linguistic division between the group of anglophone and francophone countries; and a lack of peace and security.

### **Other regional initiatives relevant to food security and possible linkages with ECOWAP/CAADP**

The study specifically analyses regional policies and programmes in place in the area of trade, infrastructure and natural resource management that are important to achieve food security objectives, as linkages between ECOWAP/CAADP and regional initiatives and instruments in such areas are crucial to avoid duplication and to create synergies. For example, the ongoing elaboration of the Aid for Trade Strategy should take into account and seek synergies with the ECOWAP/CAADP, not least in terms of financial instruments and (sub)programmes. Another example is that ECOWAP/CAADP offers opportunities to address natural resource management issues, placing initiatives in this area in the context of an overall framework aimed at improving agricultural development and food security in a sustainable manner. More generally, linkages could be strengthened by stronger inter-departmental and cross-sectoral information exchange and coordination, within the ECOWAS Commission, across regional and national bodies, as well as within and across development partners' departments and agencies. While the study provides a brief overview of possible synergies between ECOWAP/CAADP and other relevant regional initiatives and instruments, it is stressed that these could be explored in more detail during the ECOWAP/CAADP implementation process and other multi-stakeholder dialogues, when actors will be able to discuss coherence, complementarity and coordination of specific ECOWAP/CAADP actions with other policies and investments.

In sum, major steps have already been made in the ECOWAP/CAADP process. Nevertheless, ample opportunities still exist for actors to step up efforts and join forces to move towards stronger regional food security in West Africa.

## 1. Introduction

After an initial phase focused primarily on interventions at the national level, there is growing awareness on the need to work more on the regional dimensions of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). This was also formally recognised at the 7th CAADP Partnership Platform meeting in Yaoundé, Cameroun (March 2011): of particular importance was the acknowledgement by all CAADP stakeholders that the development and implementation of regional CAADP compacts should be accelerated. This would require greater involvement of all CAADP partners at the regional level and effective harmonization of their interventions, including bringing countries together to share lessons, providing support to link regional and country processes, identifying and addressing cross-border issues.

The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) works actively with African institutions on how to better integrate agriculture, trade and aid policies and processes. The importance of improved coordination, coherence and complementarity between agriculture, trade, regional integration processes and development partners' support is key for Africa's development agenda. While CAADP implementation at national level has gained momentum in recent years, implementation at the regional level has been slow, and progress differs between regions. For example, ECOWAS articulated and launched a regional CAADP compact, the ECOWAP and its regional investment plan (PRIA); and a well functioning regional donor group exists in West Africa for CAADP. On the other hand, COMESA, EAC and SADC started preparations but currently still lack a regional CAADP compact and structured regional donor coordination for CAADP; but they have made significant advancements on other policies and programmes which are key for food security, such as trade corridors.

The rate and degree of progress emphasise the need for lesson-sharing between Regional Economic Communities (RECs). To contribute to the CAADP, ECDPM undertakes policy analysis on regional CAADP processes -and issues at stake- as well as on its linkages with the broader regional integration processes in Africa, including by facilitating deeper dialogue and lesson-sharing among and between the RECs and development partners working on CAADP in various African regions. In those regions where regional CAADP compacts are being prepared or implemented, ECDPM's work included in 2011, in collaboration with RECs, development partners, and other key CAADP actors such as the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA), the analysis of:

1. progress made in implementing and supporting CAADP Regional Plans and other relevant regional programmes linked to CAADP Pillars (natural resources management, trade, infrastructure, etc.);
2. how regional integration is dealt with within the CAADP (including related expectations by different stakeholders) and the linkages between CAADP and other regional programmes (and whether these are effectively utilised to achieve CAADP objectives).

This paper outlines the results of such 'mapping exercise' for ECOWAS, and is meant to stimulate further discussions among stakeholders and to contribute to the consultative processes around the implementation of the regional CAADP compact and related investment plan in the region. Indeed, a key step is to make important information about regional strategies and plans available to everyone to contribute to multi-stakeholder ownership.

This paper, a contribution in this direction, is part of a series of publications, made possible by the financial support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, presenting an independent assessment by ECDPM on the status of regional approaches to food security. It is the outcome of: extensive and regular consultations and interviews with stakeholders in the regions (including RECs Secretariats, the NPCA, government officials, donors, civil society, the private sector, and other experts from regional institutions); ECDPM's different

types of informal contributions to the formal CAADP-related processes; as well as deep investigation of the existing literature (which is already very extensive on regional integration and growing rapidly on CAADP).

Section 2 of this paper describes progress made in implementing and supporting CAADP at the regional level in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), highlighting the role played so far by key involved stakeholders and the relationship between food security processes and the overall progress on regional integration. Section 3 analyses other regional initiatives relevant to food security and the possible synergies between CAADP and such policies and programmes. Taking into account these existing challenges and opportunities, Section 4 presents some ideas and recommendations on the way forward for regional food security plans, particularly in terms of what each actor could do to contribute positively to their implementation.

## 2. CAADP in ECOWAS

### 2.1. Progress made in implementing and supporting CAADP at the regional level

#### **The ECOWAS Agricultural Policy: pioneering regional CAADP**

Agriculture plays an important role in most West African economies. The sector represents on average 36% of national GDP and employs over 60% of the active labour force in the region.<sup>2</sup> In this context, West African's regional integration agenda identifies regional agricultural development as a key component to achieve the goals of ensuring food security and sustainable development. This is reflected in the region's overall Vision 2020 and its more specific Regional Agricultural Policy of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAP/CAADP).

The birth of the **ECOWAP** and transition to an instrument for implementing CAADP at the regional level has come a long way since the early 2000s. The process began in 2001 when the ECOWAS Ministerial Commission on Agriculture and Food adopted a framework of guidelines for the creation of a common regional agricultural policy for West Africa. The development of ECOWAP coincided with the period when CAADP, the agricultural component of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), adopted in Maputo in 2003, gained momentum and global interest. ECOWAP was therefore perceived as timely, and provided an opportunity for ECOWAS to link up to the CAADP process. This was thought particularly appropriate as the ECOWAS Secretariat had been given the mandate by West African Heads of State in 2001 to coordinate and monitor the implementation of NEPAD in the region.

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<sup>2</sup> ECOWAS Commission (2011).

**Box 1: CAADP in brief**

CAADP is the agricultural programme of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which is a programme of the African Union. Established by the AU assembly in 2003, CAADP's goal is to eliminate hunger and reduce poverty through agriculture. To do this, African governments have agreed to increase public investment in agriculture by a minimum of 10 percent of their national budgets. CAADP identifies four key pillars for food security improvement and agricultural investment: (1) Sustainable Land and Water Management; (2) Market Access; (3) Food Supply and Hunger; and (4) Agricultural Research.

The CAADP is centered around the definition of national and regional plans ('Compacts'), an agreement between all stakeholders (public, private as well as donors) serving as a framework for partnerships, alliances, and dialogue to design and implement the required policy interventions and investment programmes. The formulation of national and regional investment plans is one of the most important activities to implement CAADP after the definition and signature of the Compact (to date more than 25 countries in Africa have signed the CAADP Compacts, 18 have reviewed Investment Plans and 12 have convened Business Meetings; for more information: [www.caadp.net](http://www.caadp.net))

CAADP therefore is not a (donors') programme, it is a common framework for stimulating and guiding national, regional and continental initiatives on enhanced agriculture productivity and food security which each region and country can develop and implement as preferred. CAADP is a very advanced attempt at fully implementing the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action on Aid Effectiveness. It is difficult to identify similar partnerships, even sector-wide approaches (SWAps), that can claim to have the same: degree of African ownership (at political-bureaucratic-experts level), including at national level (unlike other AU/regional initiatives such as FTAs); robust plans for mutual accountability (serious monitoring & evaluation is built into CAADP); outreach to other sectors (trade, capacity development, natural resources, infrastructure, research and technology, safety); level of ODA predictability (substantial commitments of funds and relatively advanced alignment by donors) and regular donor coordination (e.g. headquarters focal points work together via teleconference every other week to task-divide and harmonize their CAADP activities).

The clear linkages between trade and agriculture within CAADP are confirmed by the fact that around thirty percent of the investment needs included in national CAADP investment plans formulated so far relate to the development of market access and value chains. Weaknesses remain, with CAADP criticized by some stakeholders for lacking sufficient: private sector involvement; regional level implementation; and clarity on the continental-regional-national nexus.

Formulation and implementation of CAADP-related initiatives is driven by a broad range of actors. CAADP being a continental framework, the African Union, and particularly the NPCA, is tasked with its coordination. Designated Pillar Lead Institutions oversee and support work that falls under the 4 CAADP pillars. RECs facilitate the formulation and implementation of a regional compact and a regional agricultural investment plan, while supporting their member states with CAADP initiatives on the national level. At the national level, governments facilitate the formulation and implementation of a national compact and investment plan. Bilateral and multilateral donors provide financial and technical support to CAADP processes and investment.

One specific financial donor vehicle to support the CAADP processes (not investments), is the CAADP Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MTDF) hosted at the World Bank. The MTDF aims to strengthen institutional capacities of African drivers of CAADP, particularly on the continental and regional level, to effectively lead, implement, monitor and evaluate CAADP processes. Beneficiaries of so-called 'Child Trust Funds' include the NPCA, Pillar Institutions and the RECs. Among the contributing donors are UK's DFID, the European Union, France, Ireland, the Netherlands and USAID.

In this light the Heads of State adopted ECOWAP as the reference framework for CAADP implementation at the regional level in 2005. The policy's general objective, in line with CAADP, is to:

*"contribute in a sustainable manner to satisfying the food needs of the population, to economic and social development and to poverty reduction in Member States as well as to address inequalities between territories, areas, and countries."*

The importance attached to food security was further emphasized with the adoption of the Regional Initiative for Food Production and the Fight Against Hunger by the Heads of States in June 2008. This was followed in 2009 by the adoption of a CAADP Regional Partnership Compact, signed by the ECOWAS Commission, member states, the African Union, producers' organisations, the private sector, civil society and development partners.<sup>3</sup> The Compact recognises the ECOWAP as the overarching regional agricultural policy framework.

Subsequently, a **Regional Agricultural Investment Plan** (PRIA, according to its French acronym) was designed in 2010 to implement the regional compact and agricultural development program for 2011-2015. The PRIA is estimated at USD 900mn, of which ECOWAS has committed to contribute USD 150mn from its own resources. PRIA includes three thematic 'Mobilizing and Federating Programs' (MFP), focusing on:

1. promotion of strategic food value chains for food sovereignty (399 mn USD)
2. promotion of an overall environment favorable to regional agricultural development (283 mn USD)
3. reduction of vulnerability to food crises and promotion of stable and sustainable access to food (176 mn USD).

This is complemented by a horizontal support program dealing with ECOWAP's overall governance, funding and monitoring and evaluation (40 mn USD). To operationalise this horizontal programme, the ECOWAS Commission defined a Strategic and Operational plan for Governance, Coordination and Monitoring and Evaluation of the ECOWAP/CAADP 2011 – 2015 (SOP) in 2011, which is being used as a basis for discussions and negotiations with development partners. It is for example used as a point of reference to negotiate funding from the MTDf Child Trust Fund (CTF)<sup>4</sup> to support the implementation of the SOP's monitoring and evaluation component. The SOP has the potential to facilitate the ECOWAP's implementation by providing a horizontal connection between the different programmes and activities of each MFP.

To facilitate implementation of the PRIA, ECOWAS member states have decided to create a Regional Agency for Food and Agriculture (RAFA), a Regional Fund for Agriculture and Food (ECOWADF), an Advisory Committee for Agriculture and Food (CCAA) and an Inter-departmental Committee for Food and Agriculture (CIDAA). Now that specific regulations have been adopted for the establishment of these structures, the ECOWAS Commission is in the process of setting them up. RAFA's role is to ensure implementation of the PRIA and its MFPs, for which it is expected to mainly work on a contract basis with technical agencies and companies. ECOWADF, to be hosted at EBID and overseen by a supervisory board, should serve to attract and channel most internal and external resources for the MFPs.<sup>5</sup>

In the meantime, the implementation of certain sub-programmes and activities planned in the PRIA has been initiated. This includes the review and adoption of the Charter for the Prevention and Management of Food Crises. Compared to the initial 1990 charter that focused on food aid management, it has become a comprehensive food crisis prevention and management tool, which covers more West African countries (beyond the Sahel) and actors (beyond states, to include regional organizations and non-state actors). The

<sup>3</sup> ECOWAS Commission (2009).

<sup>4</sup> ECOWAS Commission (2011).

<sup>5</sup> ECOWAS Commission (2011).

charter stresses the importance of the regional level to avoid and tackle food crises.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, also as part of the third MFP to reduce vulnerability to food crises, progress has been made to establish a system of regional emergency humanitarian food reserves, particularly through the conduct of a feasibility study by the FAO. This initiative has full support of the G20, who committed to support a pilot to establish a regional food reserves system in West Africa that should provide lessons for other parts of Africa and the rest of the world.<sup>7</sup> Other PRIA-related activities initiated by the ECOWAS Commission include progress towards a regional agricultural information system called AGRIS<sup>8</sup>, the formulation and implementation of several cooperation projects (AFD, DGIS, CIDA, Spain, USAID etc) and the establishment of a framework for accelerating the dissemination of effective agricultural technologies.<sup>9</sup>

On the whole, the ECOWAP is widely endorsed as the pioneer for actualizing the regional dimension of CAADP. However, ECOWAS now faces the challenge of ensuring that the compact through the PRIA is effectively and fully implemented and provides added value, by complementing CAADP initiatives undertaken by member states at the national level. The first year of implementation of the PRIA shows slow progress only; explanatory factors put forward by stakeholders include capacity issues (ECOWAS Commission and other regional bodies) and lack of commitments made by development partners to fund PRIA-related activities.

### **The national-regional nexus: synergies created but further opportunities should be exploited**

Considerable progress has also been made on the national level. All 15 ECOWAS member countries have signed national Compacts and validated National Agricultural Investment Plans (NAIPs). Many have defined project information documents and have held business meetings in 2010 and 2011 to mobilise resources and are currently implementing NAIP-related programmes and activities.<sup>10</sup>

It is widely accepted among West African stakeholders that regional-level initiatives have been instrumental in progress made at the national level. In terms of process, the ECOWAS Commission adopted a two-sided approach (national and regional) in the elaboration of CAADP. Developing and launching a regional compact was the starting point, followed by national compacts. The Commission initiated the compact process at both national and regional levels, ensuring that consultations were held with member states, farmers' organizations, civil society, private sector, and other key stakeholders. The formulation of the regional compact and investment plan in ECOWAS took place in stages, parallel to the roundtable processes at the country level. Financial assistance of over USD 400,000 has been provided to each member state to drive the national processes through the conduct of studies, modelling and the organisation of seminars to consult stakeholders and conclude national compacts. The Commission also financed national CAADP processes to a large extent with its own resources. USD 400,000 was provided to each member state for consultation workshops and planning of the national compacts. Active engagement of national stakeholders and support provided by the ECOWAS Commission has contributed to the adoption of national CAADP compacts in all ECOWAS member states. This approach is different from that of other African regions, where there is a more bottom-up, country-led process: national compacts are developed first before contemplating the regional compact. For these reasons, the ECOWAS

<sup>6</sup> CILSS/ECOWAS/OECD/RPCA (2011). The revised charter covers all ECOWAS member countries as well as Mauritania and Chad.

<sup>7</sup> G20 (2011).

<sup>8</sup> Progress made on AGRIS includes the identification of indicators as well as capacity building activities on data collection. See for example [http://www.fifng.org/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=374:ecowas-holds-expert-meeting-on-agris&Itemid=87](http://www.fifng.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=374:ecowas-holds-expert-meeting-on-agris&Itemid=87).

<sup>9</sup> ECOWAS (2011).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Commission is perceived by many stakeholders as the driving force behind both regional and national processes, and has been commended for promoting an inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach, which has generated a sense of ownership for the CAADP process among both regional and national stakeholders.

National CAADP actors- the focal points and farmers' organizations - are generally positive towards the regional CAADP process. ECOWAP and the PRIA are seen as useful instruments to identify and address cross-border dimensions of West Africa's agricultural development. The PRIA is considered to complement the NAIPs by tackling regional issues.

It was noted by some however that although **ECOWAP and the PRIA** make for a good first step, the national and regional components **still lack some degree of coherence and synergies** between initiatives at the national and regional level could be further exploited. Some actors indeed noted that the national compacts are often inward-looking and do not take into consideration the inter-linkages which exist between sectors and among member states, particularly issues related to cross-border trade, natural resource management and disaster risk management (drought, climate change effects, etc). This is confirmed in a recent study commissioned by the West Africa Trade Hub, which notes that national agricultural policies in some cases undermine regional food strategies.<sup>11</sup> Conversely, there has been some criticism, particularly from national actors and development partners, that the PRIA does not necessarily address only regional issues, but includes interventions that could be better dealt with at the national level, for example, co-financing of social safety nets. In other words, they argue that the subsidiarity principle that actors have committed to in the Regional Compact is not fully respected.

Hence, in the further ECOWAP/CAADP implementation process, the regional – national nexus can be further strengthened. The Advisory Committee for Agriculture and Food (CCAA) could play a role in this effort. The Committee is an advisory body established in the context of ECOWAP/CAADP that brings together representatives of West African regional institutions and member states, as well as representatives of the ECOWAS Parliament, the private sector and donors.

### **Non-State Actor engagement: mixed experiences and the issue of regional representation**

One of the crucial 'process' dimensions of regional food security plans is 'ownership' by stakeholders, and arguably farmers and other private sector actors are the most important groups to be involved in the design and implementation of these policies and investment, both as key contributors to food security and as beneficiaries of support programmes.

Generally, the perception of stakeholders is that ECOWAP/CAADP has served as a platform to bring together regional and national Non-State Actors (NSA), giving them thereby a somewhat stronger role and voice, compared to the past, in the agricultural development process at the regional and national level. Farmers' organizations and agro-businesses have interacted with the Commission and other key stakeholders to identify agricultural policy priorities and programmes.

However, **NSA participation differed considerably across member states**. In some countries, with support of the ECOWAS Commission, a genuine dialogue took place and shaped the NAIPs while in other

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<sup>11</sup> USAID West Africa Trade Hub (2011).

countries NSAs had difficulties to have their voice heard. Causes presented for these difficulties are a lack of political will, time constraints and a weak methodology for a multi-stakeholder dialogue.<sup>12</sup>

Another bottleneck in NSA participation relates to the actors' interests. From discussions with some national farmers' organizations, it appears that quite a number of these actors are not keen on pursuing regional goals but rather focus on national and local markets. This seems to be the case for bigger countries like Nigeria, where despite a high level of informal cross-border agricultural trade, farmers' organizations generally prioritize accessing and exploiting national rather than regional markets. Similar thinking from a primarily national perspective has influenced the drafting process of national compacts. Some national actors have promoted a focus on developing their country's agricultural sector rather than utilizing the potential benefit that could accrue from regional economies of scale. However, it is important to clarify that while more self-sufficient member states might be less active in pursuing regional opportunities, smaller and landlocked countries are more dependent on regional exchanges. Furthermore, most ECOWAS member states have multiple farmers' organizations with diverse, and usually competing interests. Opinions on the regional dimension will also differ depending on individual interests. Reconciling these differences seems to be a challenge for some countries. There also seems to be contention between Anglophone and Francophone farmers' organizations. A number of Anglophone national farmers' organizations do not feel that the regional farmers' organization, ROPPA fully represents their interests. Another factor that comes into play is that in many cases primarily agricultural sector stakeholders have been involved, rather than the broader NSA community interested in trade, natural resource management and other issues relevant for food security.

In the further implementation process of the PRIA and the NAIPs, it will be important to maintain and strengthen (where needed) the participative dynamics. To improve farmers' representation, it is recommended by some that regional representation of farmers' and agro-business is strengthened. This could involve bringing together national farmers' organizations and agro-business employers' associations more regularly at the regional level.

### **The role of the ECOWAS Commission: capacity and coordination challenges**

Another key actor in the regional food security processes is the ECOWAS Commission. Despite acknowledging that the Regional Compact and PRIA are well formulated, a number of stakeholders are uncertain about the extent to which the Commission, in particular its Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), and even the proposed agency RAFA are capable of implementing the PRIA. It is estimated that the RAFA would need a budget of US \$10.4 million to be operational over the next five years. DARD is currently understaffed and riddled with institutional weakness and capacity deficits. Strengthening capacities in a sustainable manner is complicated by the fact that a hiring freeze is currently in force, while even under regular circumstances recruitment procedures of the ECOWAS Commission are slow and cumbersome, inciting the Commission to solicit technical assistance from development partners rather than recruiting staff through the regular procedures.

The capacity issues affect resource mobilisation and absorption capacities, which are low. While several donors contribute to a 'pool fund' to strengthen the ECOWAS Commission, capacity issues are nevertheless a contentious issue in ECOWAS – donor relations. The EU conducted a four-pillar audit in 2010, which was critical on the Commission's ability to manage funds and has led the EU to stop signing Contribution Agreements directly with the ECOWAS Commission. The ECOWAS Fund for Agriculture and Food (ECOWADF) is to be managed by the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID), but

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<sup>12</sup> Crola & Sauliere.(2011).

some donors have also expressed concerns about the Bank's weak institutional capacity. Capacity issues have also led some donors to channel funds through non-governmental organisations, UN-type or multilateral institutions rather than the ECOWAS Commission or the EBID. Others, such as Spain and USAID, have expressed their intention to contribute to an EBID-managed Regional Fund for Agriculture and Food Security. Spain will also provide funding to support the functioning of the RAFA, but will channel this fund through the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) by means of a technical assistance project. The hesitance of some donors to directly fund the ECOWAS Commission and the EBID is a source of contention.

At the same time, some donors stress the need for member states to put in sufficient own resources to drive the process. Some are of the opinion that financing the institutional capacity of regional bodies such as the ECOWAS Commission, the RAFA, etc should be the responsibility of member states and not donors, especially in the interest of ensuring that home-grown initiatives such as ECOWAP are sustainable. More broadly, some development partners express the opinion that regional organizations should not depend mainly on donor contributions for their institutional capacity *nor* the programmes they implement, such as is currently the case for the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS).

In relation to the ECOWAP/CAADP process, the ECOWAS Commission has primarily a coordinating, governance and 'monitoring and evaluation' role, particularly once the RAFA will be operational. Coordination proves to be a challenging task, both within the Commission between different departments and programmes, as well across the plethora of relevant regional and national bodies.

For the implementation of ECOWAP, a specific institutional structure is proposed to ensure linkages between different departments and organisations within the Commission: the Interdepartmental Committee for Agriculture and Food. The Committee brings together officials of several departments of the Commission secretariat to discuss issues related to the ECOWAP. General coordination within the Commission is addressed through the Internal Coordination Mechanism. The objective of the Internal Coordination Mechanism is to help ensure a better strategic orientation for the mobilisation and use of resources. The mechanism brings together the Executive Assistants of the Commissioners (head of departments) as well as key programme and project managers. The Department of External Relations animates the mechanism. The mechanism is supposed to meet at least once a year and more if needed. The effectiveness of the mechanism has been limited so far; it meets on a very irregular basis. Ensuring effective functioning of both general as well as ECOWAP specific coordination structures will be essential to ensure and exploit linkages between the agricultural policies, programmes and funding mechanisms with those in other areas.

It is felt by stakeholders that effective coordination between the ECOWAS Commission and other regional bodies (e.g. UEMOA<sup>13</sup>, CILSS, IITA, CMA/AOC, Hub Rural etc) will also be essential for the ECOWAP to achieve its agricultural development and food security objectives. Focussing on coordination between the ECOWAS Commission on the one hand and the RAFA and ECOWADF on the other, it was noted that this may be challenging due to geographic separation, with the former based in Abuja while the latter will operate from Lomé, the home base of the EBID. Various stakeholders stress that it is particularly important that the Commission, the RAFA and the EBID are clear on their respective role and responsibilities and

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<sup>13</sup> Eight of the ECOWAS member states also belong to the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA). To facilitate ECOWAS – UEMOA coordination and harmonisation, a Joint Technical Secretariat has been set up. It is composed of one person based at the ECOWAS Commission and one or more staff from UEMOA. The Secretariat organises two UEMOA – ECOWAS meetings per year.

communicate and cooperate effectively, avoiding competition and duplication of efforts through mission creep (e.g. the Commission acting as an implementing agency, which is a role assigned to the RAFA).

### **Involvement of development partners: a well functioning regional Donor Working Group**

Another important actor in the regional food security process is the group of development partners comprising all major international donors which support with substantial funds and other inputs the CAADP and other related programmes.

Regardless of the shortcomings of the ECOWAS Commission, development partners are pleased with the progress made and the role played by the Commission to drive the process at the regional and national level. In their opinion, the ECOWAP/ PRIA provides a good rallying point for donors to align to the region's priorities and strengthen donor harmonisation.

A key donor coordination structure is the regional Donor Working Group (DWG) supporting ECOWAP, which is generally perceived by donors and the ECOWAS Commission to be a well-functioning and useful platform. The advancements on the regional compact, driven by ECOWAS raised the need for improved donor coordination on agriculture and spurred the formation of the DWG. Under Spanish leadership, it started off with a few donors, but has increased to over twenty donors, and is trying to bring on board non-traditional donors such as China. The DWG has adopted its own rules of procedure, meets on a regular basis; once a month, and as such presents a good platform to share information among donors and formulate joint positions for discussions with ECOWAS. Representatives of the ECOWAS Commission, particularly staff members of DARD, often attend the working group's meetings. Most identify the strong leadership provided by Spain as a key to the DWG's success. Yet, some development partners suggest a system of rotating chairmanship rather than a permanent chair.

Efforts are made by the DWG to link up to the continental and national level. As for the continental level, the DWG communicates regularly with the global donor platforms working on CAADP, by sharing minutes of their meetings with the CAADP Development Partners Task Team (DPTT) that brings together development partners at Headquarters level. As for the national level, the DWG plans to create an ECOWAP Network of national lead donors on agriculture. This is to be a virtual group, which interacts primarily via Internet/mail on a regular basis and meets once a year, allowing for information sharing across countries and with the regional level. So far, national lead donors have been contacted and rules of procedures circulated, but little response has been received. One challenge is to find a budget to animate the network. Efforts could be stepped-up by the DWG in collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission to strengthen continental-regional-national linkages. The DPTT could also play a role to help strengthen such linkages.

The functioning of the DWG should also be looked at in relation to other (formal and informal) ECOWAS - donor coordination mechanisms relevant for the realisation of the ECOWAS' Vision 2020 in general, and the ECOWAP/CAADP objectives more specifically. The value of informal coordination efforts should not be underestimated, such as development partners contacting each other when designing a new programme, to ensure there is no overlap. Such coordination has been facilitated by the contacts established through the DWG on agriculture. Other examples of bilateral donor coordination and cooperation is the EU – US High Level Agreement on support to food security and agriculture in the West African region.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The EU and US have agreed to coordinate their efforts to promote food security at the global, regional and country level. Concretely, at the regional level in West Africa, this has resulted in USAID and the EU delegation

Furthermore, DARD invites Spain as the DWG lead to some departmental meetings. ECOWAP is also discussed in broader formal coordination structures such as the ECOWAS-development partners annual meeting and bi-monthly meetings. Regardless of the name, the latter are organised rarely and on an ad-hoc basis. Efforts are currently being undertaken to rethink and revamp such regional coordination structures. The effectiveness of coordination mechanisms has been limited so far. Causes include insufficient human resources to manage the coordination systems, absence of collaboration and synergies between the different mechanisms, lack of an overarching system to coordinate the different mechanisms.

The general view is that the DWG has contributed to donor alignment and harmonisation. Examples of donor alignment are USAID and FAO, who consulted DARD when developing their 2011-2015 support plans and who refer in those plans to the specific PRIA components their respective interventions will contribute to. Nevertheless, an Oxfam study notes that ECOWAP alignment is hindered by a continued prevalence among donors of a project, rather than a more holistic, approach.<sup>15</sup> To facilitate harmonisation, the DWG has initiated a quantitative mapping exercise which gives some clarity of what donor support is currently available and as such is lauded by stakeholders. However, it is noted by some that so far the **DWG has been primarily a platform for information exchange, with only limited impact on strengthening complementarity and coordination** among development partners' interventions, which is also confirmed in the Oxfam study.

As regards to the way forward, many stakeholders stated that the starting point for donor collaboration on agriculture-related support at the regional level should be the formal recognition of the compact. Some development partners have not signed the regional compact yet, such as the EU, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Japan. Without signing the compact, donors still have the leeway not to align with the ECOWAP/ PRIA. Also, with the mapping exercise, some donors feel that the final result of the exercise would most likely reveal that few donors have initiatives of regional value. Donors would need to clarify what interventions are actually of a regional nature and benefit, particularly if they are to move forward with joint programming or division of labour. Other suggestions made to improve donor coordination include a better communication between representatives of development partners at the continental, regional and national level, as well as a stronger drive from the REC side to facilitate and lead donor coordination efforts. For this reason, some stakeholders insist that the DWG involves ECOWAS from the beginning on proposed initiatives and assures the REC's buy-in. It was also proposed to extend DWG participation to development partners' staff members assuming a leadership role in other related sectors (e.g. trade, infrastructure, peace and security).

Some differences of views emerge among the ECOWAS Commission and development partners about how alignment could best be strengthened when moving forward with the PRIA. DARD is of the opinion that donors need to further clarify what ongoing and proposed activities would help implement different aspects of the PRIA by updating and improving the quantitative mapping, and use this information to further align to priorities identified in the PRIA. However, to strengthen alignment some donors expect a more concise annual work plan for the PRIA to be developed first, possibly jointly by West African stakeholders and development partners in a workshop organised for that purpose. Some others suggest that ECOWAS should develop fundable programme proposals, as the next step to implement the PRIA. It could be considered to combine these suggestions by refining the quantitative mapping while further elaborating PRIA (sub)programmes and projects.

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coordinating their comments on the PRIA. They also seek to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure complementarity between USAID- and EU-funded interventions, particularly related to USAID's West Africa Seed Alliance and the EU's Food Facility.

<sup>15</sup> Crola & Sauliere (2011).

## 2.2. CAADP regional plans and linkages with the overall framework for regional integration

A very important dimension related to the progress of regional approaches to food security that emerges from consultations with ECOWAS stakeholders is the relationship between ECOWAP/CAADP and the overall framework for, and status of, regional integration initiatives.

The ECOWAP/CAADP has regional integration of agricultural markets and synergies across different sectors of regional cooperation at its core, in line with the region's Vision 2020. The next section of this paper analysis possible synergies across different sectors of regional cooperation that are relevant for ECOWAP/CAADP's objectives to strengthen agricultural development and food security, such as trade, infrastructure and management of natural resources. However, here it is important to discuss some of the overall key challenges faced by ECOWAS on the prospects for effective regional integration, which are likely to also affect ECOWAP/CAADP implementation.

### *Mismatch between top down and bottom up regional integration processes*

Regional integration in West Africa, as in many other regions, to a large extent is a top-down process, with neat formal structures. Many seem to agree on the fact that for regional integration to work, including cooperation on ARD (and CAADP) at regional level, it is fundamental to better match:

1. bottom-up RI processes and dynamics, which tend to be driven by the private sector and various forms of investment; and
2. top-down RI moves, such as policy frameworks and protocols that are usually driven by the governments and the public sector.

Efforts of better matching such bottom-up and top-down processes would contribute to the achievement of regional integration objectives.

### *Regional integration commitments not fully reflected in national policies*

While commitments made by ECOWAS and UEMOA member states toward regional integration are far-reaching, application at the national level often lags behind. Stakeholders generally agree that this discrepancy can be partly explained by a lack of political support for regional integration, as stakeholders at country level tend to let national interests prevail, without fully taking the potential benefits of regional approaches into account. Another often-heard reason for this discrepancy is a lack of capacity at national level to honour regional commitments.<sup>16</sup>

### *Limited capacities of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions*

The ECOWAS and UEMOA Commission and their support staff are to encourage and assist member states in applying regional agreements, but have been given limited capacities to do so. They lack effective tools to incentivise countries by giving penalties or rewards. They are also understaffed, which limits their ability to monitor and support national implementation of regional commitments. Therefore, many stakeholders point to the need for the Commissions to scale up their capacity, to be financed by higher financial contributions of member states.

### *Socio-linguistic division*

Differences between the group of anglophone and francophone countries in West Africa complicate West African regional integration processes. A recent USAID Trade Hub study confirms that cooperation

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<sup>16</sup> ECDPM (2010).

between anglophone and francophone countries proves more difficult than cooperation within those spheres.<sup>17</sup>

#### *Lack of peace and stability*

Major upheavals and instability such as most recently in Guinea and Nigeria, affect the whole region and endanger any effort toward regional integration.<sup>18</sup> Risks assessments and response strategies can be used in order for regional initiatives to prevent and better cope with conflict and instability.

The implementation of the ECOWAP/CAADP and related PRIA should take into account these key underlying bottlenecks to regional integration and lessons learnt, in particular the need to strengthen regional – national coherence and to ensure that regional bodies have the necessary tools and capacity to deliver on their mandates. This will contribute to the likelihood of ECOWAP/CAADP to achieve its objectives. Conversely, delivering results in a crucial sector such as agriculture could also be a real contribution to the overall integration and cooperation in West Africa.

### 3. Other regional initiatives relevant to food security and possible linkages with ECOWAP/CAADP

Under the overarching framework of the ECOWAS Vision 2020, the ECOWAS region has already in place several policies and programmes which are very important to achieve food security objectives, in particular in the area of trade, infrastructure and natural resources. In many cases these initiatives precede the ECOWAP/CAADP. In order to assess the progress and future prospects of regional food security plans therefore it is important to analyse also the status of such policies and programmes, as well as the possible synergies with ECOWAP/CAADP.

As mentioned in the previous section, the ECOWAP/CAADP builds on existing sectors of regional cooperation, hence it includes actions on regional agricultural markets and transboundary water management. In turn, many of the areas where ECOWAS frameworks and processes – different from ECOWAP/CAADP – are ongoing or in the pipeline include among their objectives agriculture development and/or food security. The region's EPA Development Programme (EPADP) developed in the context of the negotiations of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU for example includes activities to increase the productivity of the agricultural sector.

Assessing the progress made by the other policies and programmes relevant to food security, understanding their strengths and weakness, what major bottlenecks they encounter, is crucial to:

1. avoid duplication and identify opportunities and challenges for the creation of synergies with ECOWAP/CAADP;
2. understand whether the implementation of ECOWAP/CAADP at regional level can build on the progress in other sectors and possibly contribute to removing current obstacles to other regional initiatives;
3. ensure coherence, complementarity and coordination between policies and investments across ECOWAS' different regional integration areas.

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<sup>17</sup> USAID Trade Hub (2011).

<sup>18</sup> Edi (2006).

This section provides a brief overview of **possible synergies between ECOWAP/CAADP** and other relevant regional initiatives and instruments. These could be explored in more detail during the ECOWAP/CAADP implementation process and other multi-stakeholder dialogues, when actors will be able to discuss coherence, complementarity and coordination of specific ECOWAP/CAADP actions with other policies and investments. In certain circumstances, even if potential synergies were clear, there may be challenges to exploit them, for example due to political sensitivities and potential conflict between institutions involved in those programmes, which will also be highlighted in this section.

### **Trade: need to reconcile regional policies with national practices; and synergies with ECOWAP to be exploited**

Promoting regional trade in West Africa is a key priority of ECOWAS regional integration strategy and is fundamental for food security. Regional trade allows movement of food from surplus areas to deficit areas. It can also lead to efficiency gains as producers gain access to larger markets and can thus benefit from economies of scale. Hence, any constraints to regional trade have severe implications for regional food security.

At the regional level the legal frameworks are in place to ensure free movement of goods within West Africa, in order to increase trade of goods across the region. To achieve this goal, ECOWAS member states established the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS). The ETLS adopted in 1979, initially focused on facilitating trade in agricultural products, handicrafts and crude products only. Since then, the ETLS has been progressively adapted to include industrial products (1990) and afterward, in 2003 to address WTO rules of origin criteria.<sup>19</sup>

However, ECOWAS' members have not implemented the ETLS uniformly. While some progress has been made in reducing tariffs, most countries are unwilling to adopt measures to fully eliminate tariff barriers. There is even less progress in removing non-tariff barriers. Border crossing posts throughout the region have been found to be under-staffed and lacking adequate technical capacities to manage regional trade in an efficient and standardised manner. Likewise, documentation and procedures differs greatly from country to country within the region and traders have been found to encounter harassment, delays, and being required to make payments without receipts. Despite having agreed upon regional rules of origin (RoO) policy, there are difficulties at border crossings as a result of different RoO being applied within the region. Further complications arise from the duplication of monetary and trade policies impacting ECOWAS member states that are also members of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA).

Non-tariff barriers caused by **Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS)** issues deserve specific attention. All West African states, with the exception of Liberia and Cape Verde, belong to the WTO and have obligations under the SPS Agreement. But the level of implementation varies across countries depending on the context of domestic policy and regulations, technical capacity, availability of finances, logistics and resources. Inadequate capacities and infrastructure impact the standardisation and implementation of SPS measures throughout the region. A recent review of border crossings in the region has raised serious concerns regarding the ability of border posts to implement agreed SPS measures for regional trade. UEMOA member states seem to be ahead in the process of regional SPS harmonization. UEMOA first adopted an SPS regulation in 2007 and further developed its SPS policy framework in 2009. Efforts are now being undertaken to harmonize UEMOA's SPS measures with policies in force in the broader ECOWAS region. ECOWAS adopted the Harmonization of the Structural Framework and Operational Rules Pertaining to the Health Safety of Plant, Animals and Foods in the ECOWAS Region in February

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.aidfortrade.ecowas.int/programmes/ecowas-trade-liberalization-scheme-etls>

2010. The region has ensured that this regulation is very similar to the UEMOA SPS Regulation adopted in 2007. ECOWAS is promoting SPS harmonization as a key component of increasing intra-regional trade in agricultural products. ECOWAS has also established an advisory committee to assist in implementing the policy within all fifteen member states.<sup>20</sup>

The resulting picture in terms of trade is that despite regional aspirations to enhance intra-regional trade, this represents generally only about 10% of total trade of its member states. This amounts to around 20% for West African landlocked countries.<sup>21</sup>

Currently a free trade area according to regional policies, ECOWAS is keen to transform itself from a Free Trade Area into a customs union. ECOWAS set out to establish a common external tariff to protect goods produced in the member states. The ECOWAS Common External Tariff (ECOWAS-CET) was adopted on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006. The full CET was to come into effect in 2008 but the process is slow, with ongoing discussions on CET Safeguard and Accompanying Measures.<sup>22</sup>

To strengthen trade policies and their application at the national level, ECOWAS is currently in the early stages of developing an ECOWAS Common Trade Policy. ECOWAS has trade directives, but there is no trade policy as such. An inventory will be made of existing agreements in different sectors that relate to trade. These common lowest denominators will be the basis to build the Common Trade Policy. It is hoped that a Common Trade Policy may encourage member states to apply at the national level what they have agreed on in the area of trade at the regional level. It will be key for the ECOWAS Department of Trade, Customs, Industry & Mines, Free Circulation and Tourism, who leads this process, to involve the agricultural department and take the ECOWAP/CAADP into account.

As mentioned earlier, in the context of the EPA negotiations the region has developed the EPA Development Programme to identify and address development support needs to allow the region to reap the benefits of the EPA and to mitigate the negative impact of the agreement. Similar to the ECOWAP, the EPADP has regional and national components (Regional and National Operational Plans). Part of the funds is to be channelled through an EPA fund that the region envisages to set up. To provide a framework for development support in the area of trade more generally, ECOWAS is in the process of defining a regional Aid for Trade Strategy. It will be crucial to ensure strong linkages and continuing coherence and coordination between EPADP, the regional Aid for Trade Strategy and the ECOWAP/CAADP, not the least in terms of financial instruments and (sub)programmes, projects and activities. To reduce fragmentation and avoid high transaction costs, a rationalisation of financial instruments and interventions should be aimed for by West African stakeholders and development partners alike.<sup>23</sup>

All this is very relevant for the implementation of the ECOWAP/CAADP. In the implementation process, progress and obstacles in the area of trade need to be taken into account. Conversely, the elaboration of the Aid for Trade Strategy should take into account and seek synergies with the ECOWAP/CAADP.

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<sup>20</sup> USAID West Africa Trade Hub. 2011. Regional Agricultural Transport and Trade Policy Study. West Africa Trade Hub Technical Report No. 41. Accra: USAID West Africa Trade Hub.

<sup>21</sup> African Development Bank (2011).

<sup>22</sup> Akosile (2011).

<sup>23</sup> ECDPM (2011).

### **Infrastructure: space to strengthen the corridor approach**

One of the most important barriers to economic regional integration as envisaged in the Vision and Strategic Plan is the **inadequate cross-border infrastructure**. The quality of existing (hard and soft) infrastructure (e.g. road, rail, air) presents serious weaknesses. Examples of soft infrastructure issues that hamper transportation are obstacles such as check points, and other informal road blocks, corruption, uncoordinated procedures at border-crossings, etc. As a result, West Africa has amongst the highest transport costs in the world.<sup>24</sup> Moving goods along West Africa's key trade routes is time-consuming and expensive, costing within an estimated range of USD 175 to 310 per tonne.<sup>25</sup>

There are many ongoing corridors and infrastructure development projects in West Africa. These focus on air, railways, road, and water based transportation, often supported by development partners, of which a few will be listed here for illustration. ECOWAS is currently engaged in an Africa Rail project which uses a PPP approach to link together Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad. Furthermore, ECOWAS and the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FEWACCI) has recently (2010) focused on understanding how to improve trade along the following three corridors: Abidjan-Lagos Corridor; Tema-Ougadougou Corridor; and Ougadougou-Bamako Corridor. Development partners' support is key for infrastructure development, and some donors have made the link between their initiatives on infrastructure to other programmes on agricultural development. Efforts to develop these corridors focus on creating one stop border posts (OSBPs), with streamlined customs and inspection processes. The USAID trade corridor efforts have been designed to complement the ongoing efforts made by the EU, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and World Bank. The Islamic Development Bank has been engaging in developing a West African water trade corridor, which stretches from Senegal to Mali. The African Development Bank, JICA, and World Bank are engaged in funding projects linking ECOWAS and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) as part of the Trans-African Highway Programme. To accelerate effective facilitation of road transport, ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions elaborated the Regional Road Transport and Transit Facilitation Programme for West Africa by harmonizing their transit facilitation programmes. The EU also provided the ECOWAS Commission with a €63.8 million grant for technical assistance to address the trans-border constraints. DFID through the Support to West African Regional Integration Programme (SWARIP) has invested up to US\$ 15m for regional integration initiatives, including infrastructure and corridor development; however the exercise is not yet operational, specifically for corridor development.

Regardless of the clear efforts of West Africa and development partners to strengthen West African infrastructure, a picture emerges of a somewhat fragmented (project) approach. Working in the context of a more comprehensive and multi-dimensional corridor approach could be considered (and the case of the North-South Corridor in East and Southern Africa could provide lessons). This would also represent an important contribution to tackling the infrastructure issues hindering agricultural development and food security in the region

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<sup>24</sup> USAID Trade Hub (2011).

<sup>25</sup> & Foster (2011).

### **Natural resources and the example of water: a strong role for ECOWAP/CAADP to provide the overall guiding framework**<sup>26</sup>

Natural resource management is crucial for food security, and this is recognised explicitly in the ECOWAP/CAADP process. The PRIA therefore includes activities related to building capacities for integrated management of shared natural resources. This particularly concerns cross-border forest ecosystems and water resources in major river basins.<sup>27</sup>

Such measures are highly relevant, given the current state of natural resources management and its implications for the agricultural sector and food security. Taking the example of **water**, although West Africa is endowed with ample water resources, including rivers and river basins, access to water remains a challenge and most small farms depend on rainfall. Only about 4% of total agricultural land is irrigated. Water infrastructure is still hardly developed in West Africa. The region is particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, which makes the regional role in managing shared resources very important. The ECOWAS Water Resources Coordination Centre (WRCC) provides assistance to member states in the area of water policy and design. In June 2011, ECOWAS sealed a €12 million pact with the French Development Agency (AFD) for water projects within the region. CILSS and the RAPA have been identified as two of the main organisations to benefit from technical assistance as a result of the 2011 pact, and the water projects are to be made coherent with implementation of the ECOWAP.

In March 2010, ECOWAS adopted the Framework of Strategic Guidelines on the Reduction of Vulnerability and Adaptability to Climate Change in West Africa. The Framework is designed to prepare the region by providing a framework for collaboration in the management of natural resources and preparation for climate change adaptation, but also to better coordinate a West African position at the international level. Climate change and its impact on agriculture and food security is also well reflected in the PRIA which includes measures to mitigate climate and environmental risks

Overall, it is generally recognised by stakeholders there is inadequate coordination of water resources management policies at the national, basin, and regional levels so far. Weak institutions and insufficient financial resources also add to the challenges of the region's water resources situation. ECOWAP/CAADP offers opportunities to address these issues and step up trans-boundary water management efforts, placing these measures in the context of an overall framework aimed at improving agricultural development and food security in a sustainable manner.

### **The Community Development Programme: towards the systematization of different regional integration efforts?**

ECOWAS is in the process of developing the Community Development Program (CDP) to contribute to the realisation of the region's Vision 2020, which has the potential to strengthen overall coherence of different regional frameworks, including the ECOWAP, and to help donors streamline their support to the different regional priorities. The CDP will identify priority programs at the national and regional level. As a first step, the ECOWAS Commission has done an inventory of existing programmes at the national level (in all ECOWAS countries) and the regional level (collecting information from 36 regional organisations). The next step is to link these existing programmes to regional priorities, allowing the identification of duplication and funding gaps. This should then lead to the identification of priority programmes for which resource

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<sup>26</sup> This subsection focuses on the example of water. Regional initiatives related to the management of other natural resources (e.g. land) are also highly relevant for food security, and should therefore be taking into account in the ECOWAP/CAADP process.

<sup>27</sup> ECOWAS (2011).

mobilisation activities are to be undertaken. At the national level, cross-sectoral CDP national steering committees have been set up. The following structures are envisaged for coordination at the regional level:

1. Platform for regional inter-governmental organisations;
2. Regional Consultative Committee (bringing together regional inter-governmental organisations, CSOs and the private sector).

ECOWAP would be the agriculture component of the CDP. One of the outcomes would be to identify areas and programs which are under-funded or where there is multiplicity of funding. Some donors are providing support to the CDP elaboration process, notably GIZ, CIDA, DFID, EU. But not all donors are clear on the CDP process. Even within ECOWAS, not all departments are fully on board and the CDP is sometimes perceived as a competitor for funds or duplicating other departments' activities.

The existence of many overlapping/parallel CAADP relevant programmes within the region, as well as multiple/parallel regional information sharing and coordination efforts is indicative of the larger regional governance system and policy environment. Divergent national and international agendas, competition for increasingly scarce financial resources, and capacity constraints have all been cited as reasons for insufficient coordination and coherence between parallel development initiatives. Ensuring coherence within the Commission on different programmes is a major challenge. The Community Development Programme has the potential to provide a mechanism for coordination between ECOWAS offices, member states, donors, civil society and the private sector. The elaboration of the CDP could strengthen coherence and create more synergies between different regional frameworks that are all to support the realisation of Vision 2020 and promote regional integration. It is however too early to determine if the CDP will be able to play that role.

All stakeholders recognize that the question of coherence of regional policies is crucial for the regional integration agenda in West Africa. Benefits from regional integration will only be visible when ECOWAS, in collaboration with its member states, is able to achieve consistency and complementarity between different sectoral policies (horizontal coherence) as well as between regional and national policies (vertical coherence).

## 4. Concluding remarks

Previous sections analysed progress made in implementing and supporting CAADP at the regional level in ECOWAS, highlighting the role played so far by key involved stakeholders, the relationship between food security processes and the overall progress on regional integration, as well as the possible synergies between CAADDP and other regional policies and programmes. Taking into account these existing opportunities and challenges, the final part of this paper presents some ideas and recommendations on the way forward to strengthen implementation of regional food security initiatives. Given the complexities involved, such concluding remarks can only be considered preliminary, and have to be further discussed in more detail among stakeholders. Nonetheless, the clarifications and suggestions provided here can hopefully be instrumental in the way forward, as they emerge from a series of stakeholders consultations and reflect the current state of play of the ECOWAP/CAADP progress.

Considerable progress has been made in relation to the CAADP-compatible ECOWAP. At the regional level, a Regional Compact and PRIA have been defined; at the national level **all countries have signed National Compacts** and have adopted NAIP. ECOWAS now faces the challenge of ensuring that the

investment plans are effectively and fully implemented, to ensure that the ECOWAP/CAADP process goes far beyond paper work and delivers on its envisaged objectives.

It is widely accepted among stakeholders that regional-level initiatives have been instrumental in progress made at the national level. However, the national and regional components still lack some degree of coherence and synergies could be further exploited. A measure that could be taken is the organisation of activities in member states to raise awareness about the benefits of regional approaches in every proposed regional cooperation area relevant to food security and about the results achieved so far. The subsidiarity principle (global, regional and national level) should guide all ECOWAP/CAADP related interventions at the different levels.

The formulation of the ECOWAP/CAADP compacts and investment plans has served as a platform to bring together regional and national Non-State Actors, giving them a stronger role and voice in the agricultural development process at the regional and national level, although experiences differ across countries. It is felt by stakeholders that **engagement with NSA has to be pursued and deepened** in the implementation and monitoring of the investment plans, to keep the momentum for genuine multi-stakeholder participation. It is felt by some that particularly regional representation of farmers' and agro-business could be strengthened. This could involve bringing together national farmers' organizations and agro-business employers' associations more regularly at the regional level.

A number of stakeholders are uncertain about the extent to which the ECOWAS Commission, in particular DARD, and even the proposed agency RAFA, are capable of driving the implementation of the PRIA. DARD's capacity is weak and needs to be improved. This should be addressed in the ongoing broader ECOWAS Commission institutional assessment and related internal capacity building efforts. As for the RAFA, it will take time to set up such an agency, so all stakeholders involved should factor in a transition period. Once RAFA is operational, it will be particularly important that the Commission, the RAFA and the EBID (managing the ECOWADF) are clear on their respective role and responsibilities and communicate and cooperate effectively, avoiding competition and duplication of efforts through mission creep.

As regards development partners' support, the regional donor working group supporting ECOWAP is generally perceived by donors and the ECOWAS Commission to be a well-functioning and useful platform. Despite its success so far, further steps could be considered to improve its functioning:

- Those donors that have not done so yet could assign a representative to the DWG. In particular, representatives from the emerging economies such as China or Brazil should be brought on board the ECOWAP DWG.
- Development partners could ensure more proactive participation in the DWG by supporting their representative through better input, information, and a clearer mandate for decisions, and encouraging the members of national level agriculture DWGs to link and contribute to the ECOWAS DWG to ensure national-regional coherence.
- Development partners could provide the required information on national and regional programs in the context of the DWG exercise to map regional support to ECOWAP/PRIA and other relevant programmes contributing to regional integration. This should not be one-off but a continuous process, which could be updated regularly. However, the mapping needs to exclude purely national programmes and projects and focus on those activities that are of regional benefit. On this basis, development partners might want to discuss and come to an agreement within the DWG as to what they define/classify as regional initiatives. The DWG could also reflect on what donors intend to do and expand the mapping to cover programmes that support other aspects of regional integration beyond agriculture.

- Case studies could be commissioned by the DWG to identify success stories and draw lessons on how donor coordination is dealt with by the country-level agriculture donor working groups.
- Efforts should be intensified to make the proposed ECOWAP Network of national lead donors in agriculture and food security operational, in order to strengthen the links between regional and national DWGs and their corresponding programmes.

More generally, donors should avoid a plethora of programmes and projects and use the DWG for further alignment and harmonisation. Joint programming is an option, which development partners could also consider. As well, in developing regional strategies and programmes, development partners should make the link between cross-cutting sectors and on this basis undertake programmes which have cross-cutting value.

The implementation of the ECOWAP/CAADP and related PRIA should take into account key underlying bottlenecks to regional integration and lessons learnt, in particular the need to strengthen regional – national coherence and to ensure that regional bodies have the necessary tools and capacity to deliver on their mandates. This will contribute to the likelihood of ECOWAP/CAADP achieving its objectives. Conversely, delivering results in a crucial sector such as agriculture could also be a real contribution to the overall integration and cooperation in West Africa.

Under the overarching framework of the ECOWAS Vision 2020, the ECOWAS region has already in place several policies and programmes which are very important to achieve food security objectives, in particular in the area of trade, infrastructure and natural resources. Linkages between ECOWAP/CAADP and regional initiatives and instruments in such areas relevant for food security could be further strengthened. This could be facilitated by inter-departmental and cross-sectoral information exchange and coordination, within the ECOWAS Commission, across regional and national bodies, as well as within and across development partners' departments and agencies.

In sum, major steps have already been made in the ECOWAP/CAADP process. Nevertheless, ample opportunities still exist for actors to step up efforts and join forces to move towards stronger regional food security in West Africa.

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