



WAAPP Côte d'Ivoire

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE INTENSIVE RICE FARMING SYSTEM (SRI): ASSESSMENT FOR 2014 AND PROGRAMMING FOR 2015, ABIDJAN, COTE D'IVOIRE: 16-19 FEBRUARY 2015

SUMMARY REPORT



FAMILY PHOTO

1. Introduction

As part of implementation of the commissioned project entitled "Development and Wide Dissemination of the Rice Intensification System (SRI) in West Africa" funded by CORAF/WECARD and coordinated by CNS-Riz/WAAPP based at the Institute of Rural Economy (IER) in Mali, two regional workshops were organized in February 2014 in Porto Novo (Benin) and in August 2014 in Kpalimé (Togo) respectively.

One of the recommendations of the last meeting concerned clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the various actors and mechanisms for smooth and efficient project implementation so as to achieve the expected outcomes. In compliance with this recommendation, the Regional Coordination Unit organized this regional workshop in Abidjan from 16 to 19 February 2015 at Hotel BELLECOTE, Riviera Palmeraie, Cocody.

The main objective of the workshop was to enhance discussions between the representatives of all categories of actors in the project implementation. More specifically, the objectives were to take stock of 2014, programme the 2015 activities, share the existing mechanisms, and take practical steps to improve the efficiency of their implementation, particularly monitoring-evaluation and the communication platform.

It was expected that during this workshop: (i) the 2014 outcomes and budget activities scheduled for 2015 (country and regional coordination unit) would be presented, discussed and a summary report produced; (ii) the implementation mechanism documents would be presented and consensual arrangements made to improve their efficiency, (iii) improved additional SRI training elements, especially the implementation of monitoring and evaluation, country baseline studies, preparation of fact sheets adapted to the local conditions and the communication platform would be presented, discussed and made available to the participants.

The meeting was attended by all delegations of the thirteen current WAAPP member States, the Regional SRI Project Coordination Team (CNS-Riz/IER), the SRI-Rice Centre of Cornell University (USA), and CORAF. The attendance list is attached.

2. Conduct of the Workshop

This workshop was held in two stages, one in a room for three days (from 16 to 18 February) and the second devoted to a field trip on 19 February.

The workshop started with the reception, registration of participants and installation of officials. The first day of the workshop was marked, in particular, by the official opening and presentations by the various delegations, in accordance with the agenda.

2.1 Workshop Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony was graced by the presence and speeches of the Regional WAAPP Project Officer (TTL) at the World Bank, the Deputy Director-General of IER, the Institute hosting the Regional CNS-Riz Coordination of SRI project, the WAAPP Manager at CORAF/

WECARD, and the Director of SRI-Rice Centre of Cornell University, the scientific and technical partner of CNS-RIZ.

The representative of the World Bank congratulated the workshop organizers for the effective participation of all the countries, including those affected by the Ebola virus disease, for whom he wished a quick end to the disease. He also stressed the importance of rice in the sub-region, and therefore the importance of such a project in national strategies for rice farming development of the countries concerned, as well as the determination of all governments to achieve food security as from 2017.

The other speakers thanked the various delegations for their participation and Cote d'Ivoire for co-organizing the workshop and for the warm welcome, as well as underscored the genesis of this regional initiative for the special programme and the goals and expectations of the workshop. They also welcomed the significant achievements obtained in the first year of the project implementation, and expressed the desire to witness wide dissemination of the system and a second phase of the project as soon as possible.

The welcome and opening address was delivered by the Assistant WAAPP Coordinator of Cote d'Ivoire.



From Left to Right: Dr. Lamien Niéyidouba (WAAPP/CORAF), Dr. Abdoulaye Touré (World Bank TTL Regional WAAPP), Jean Paul Lornng (FIRCA/WAAPP, CI), Dr. Abdoulaye Hamadoun (CNS-RIZ/IER, Mali), and Dr. Erika Styger (SRI-Rice CORNELL, USA).

The workshop continued with:

- the installation of the Workshop Bureau:

- * Overall Chairperson of the Workshop and the first day: Mrs. Angela BELLA, Cote d'Ivoire;
- * Vice-Chairman: Dr. Lamien NIEYIDOUBA, CORAF/WECARD;
- * Chairman of the second day: Peter KAINDANEH, Sierra Leone;
- * Chairman of the third day: MUHAMMED Ahmad Adamu, Nigeria;
- * Rapporteurs: Gina ODARTEIFIO, Ghana; GASSAMA Ibrahima Sambégou, Guinea; and DJELE Dahouda, Togo.
- * The regional coordination team (CNS-RIZ and SRI-Rice) also provided technical assistance to the Bureau.

- the presentation and adoption of the draft programme and general information on the organization; and

- presentations.

2.2 Workshop Presentations

The methodology adopted was to present a series of three successive presentations, interspersed with discussions.

The presentations began with that of the SRI (CNS-Riz) Project Coordination, which focused on upscaling information on the Project: Objectives, expected outcomes, budget, duration, and implementation mechanisms. It was followed by the presentations of the 13 WAAPP member countries on project implementation assessment for 2014, and the constraints and prospects for 2015, particularly the Annual Budget Work Programme (ABWP). The series of presentations ended with that of the regional coordination (CNS RIZ and SRI-Rice) on an assessment of 2014 and the ABWP for 2015.

The presentations helped to enrich discussions on the following points:

- the analytical results of the 2014 fiscal year (technical, administrative and institutional): strengths and weaknesses, suggestions for improvement;
- the budget work programme for 2015 (SRI ABWP), as integrated aspects of the ABWP of the National WAAPP and prospects for 2016;
- concrete proposals to improve project implementation with an adequate financing mechanism and ensure SRI sustainability in rice farming systems in West Africa, particularly by establishing "National SRI Champions Advisory Groups";
- the target areas of the SRI/WAAPP project are identified and validated on the basis of the map already drawn during the Kpalimé workshop in Togo.

During the discussions, the questions, suggestions and comments were summarized in the following key points:

- difficulties in coordinating SRI activities at national level;
- institutional anchoring and recognition of the role of national WAAPP coordinators in

the overall coordination and synergy of the resources of the various actors involved in SRI in the country concerned;

- the problem of conducting the baseline study and implementation of the monitoring and evaluation manual;
- the reliability of statistics;
- the involvement of big rice producers in upscaling SRI;
- the establishment of champions' councils on SRI and increasing their number;
- gender mainstreaming in reporting by disaggregating all data for men, women and youths;
- analysis on improving yields according to levels of application of SRI principles, as well as cost/benefit analysis and harmonization of approaches so as to accelerate wide dissemination;
- the problem of high demand for labour and organic matter in SRI practice;
- rice varieties adapted to SRI;
- SRI sustainability and financing issues per country;
- the impact of the Ebola virus disease on the affected countries' production systems;
- the problem of access to minor equipment, adapting it to local contexts, and harmonization of methods of distribution to farmers;
- adaptation and streamlining of SRI manuals for wide dissemination;
- the need to integrate SRI into innovation platforms for the rice sector.

Special congratulations were sent to all the countries, since each country stood out for a specific action that served as an example to be followed by the others. The countries were also requested to be very ambitious in their respective SRI dissemination programmes.

After fruitful discussions, specific topics were presented and discussed, in particular:

- updating of the monitoring and evaluation system and conduct of the baseline study;
- online data collection and the dynamic mapping platform;
- gender mainstreaming in research projects and agricultural development;
- mapping of target areas for SRI activities;
- the new training manual adapted to each country; and
- communication on SRI.

The presentations generally showed significant progress in sub-regional implementation of the SRI. However, the following aspects were noted:

- constraints due to mechanization and the technical specifications of minor equipment and its accessibility;
- difficulties relating to the cost of labour for rice transplanting and access to safety

nets against birds;

- understanding the concept of "SRI champion", who is none other than the model farmer who, by his own efforts, is recognized as such. It is by no means an institutional designation, but the actor's capacity to work towards successful SRI implementation on his farms and those of his neighbours (ToRs were sent to all WAAPP coordinators in each country);
- the need to involve policymakers of each WAAPP country in SRI adoption;
- delays in the approval of financial and technical documents for timely transfer of funds to the regional coordination;
- strong involvement of WAAPP coordinators for the successful financing of SRI activities.

As regards data collection through an online platform under construction, there will be a pilot phase to harmonize any options that can help to operationalize it. The objective of this activity is to facilitate instant data collection through direct completion of online forms using a mobile phone, in particular.

The RSI project website was presented, with the following links:

- English: www.sriwestafrica.org
- French: www.sriafriqueouest.org

It should be noted that the plenary sessions were regularly animated by volunteer participants: cheers ("triplets", "locomotive train running", "Rain"), humorous stories, and relaxing movements.

1.3 Group/country meetings/ fine tuning of ABWPs for 2015 and proposals for improvement of implementation mechanisms and approaches

The third day was devoted to group sessions organized in two phases.

Country and inter-country discussions on cross-cutting issues.

The TORs of these group sessions were presented.

2.4. Field trip

On 19 February 2015 in the morning, the representatives of the 13 countries involved in SRI and CORAF/WECARD, attending the regional workshop, travelled by road to Tiassalé, a town 126 km west of Abidjan. They were welcomed by Mr. Assemian Koutou Apollinaire, Chairman of the Board of Directors, and his close collaborators of "Société des Productions Végétales" (SPV) including Mr. Nangolo Coulibaly (First Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of SPV), one of the two SRI champions in Cote d'Ivoire.

After the normal village compliments, Dr. Gaoussou Traoré (CNS-Riz Mali) thanked the SPV rice farmers, and introduced the workshop participants. Then Mr. ASSEMIAN K.A. introduced the professional agricultural organization he heads.

After this session of protocol exchanges, the participants visited a RSI one-hectare farm. The farm was in the earing to flowering stage and was appreciated by all the visitors for its SRI characteristic traits.



Visit to SRI Farm

The main concerns raised during the discussions after the field trip are:

- the cost of rice production: SRI and conventional practice;
- gender mainstreaming;
- the management of irrigation;
- regular and sustainable operation of the irrigation system and farmer organization (governance, difficulties);
- damage caused by birds and the fight against the birds; and
- the procurement of organic matter.

The participants were satisfied with the answers to their questions.

The visit ended with words of encouragement and appreciation to the rice farmers by Dr. Gaoussou Traoré on behalf of the visitors. Then Mrs. Bella Angela, on behalf of the Ivorian authorities, officially closed the workshop.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For all SRI implementation actors at national level:

- establish the RSI baseline situation in each country;
- harmonize and simplify data collection tools and their contents provided by the regional coordination, taking into account those used under WAAPP;
- upscale the sharing of SRI achievements with policymakers;
- systematically mainstream socio-economic aspects and ensure gender targeting when assessing SRI achievements;
- include SRI achievements in training programmes for extension workers in the countries;
- translate the manuals into the local languages of the country and enhance the contribution of community radios in disseminating messages on the RSI;
- develop local capacity so as to facilitate introduction and adaptation of equipment to the various agro-ecological zones;
- enhance exchanges and knowledge sharing: workshops for actors of countries that have adopted SRI, communication platforms (Facebook, Whatsup, etc.), exchange visits;
- further build the capacity of SRI actors;
- advocate and lobby for the SRI at national and regional levels;
- encourage SRI publications on yields and socio-economic data, and ensure their dissemination to the public and private sectors, as well as policymakers;
- promote the use of basic SRI principles in the growing of other crops; and
- widely publicize the actions and results of champions.

For CORAF/WECARD, the regional coordination of the SRI project, national WAAPP coordinations, and the World Bank:

- take steps to facilitate timely provision of funds as allocated in ABWPs and in accordance with the crop season schedules and other deadlines for planned activities;
- facilitate synergy and harmonious complementarity of SRI project activities with those of other projects and initiatives on rice at national and regional levels (ECOWAS rice offensive, WAEMU project, bilateral projects, etc.);
- systematically include SRI Project activities in the preparation and adoption of ABWPs for national WAAPP coordinations, and take appropriate corrective measures to incorporate the 2015 SRI budget items obtained from consultations with countries (intra and inter-country) during this workshop in the 2015 ABWPs already adopted;
- initiate the process for obtaining a second phase as provided for since the project design phase, and avoid a break in financing between the two phases;

- synchronize, as much as possible, the regional workshops of the SRI project so as to keep them on the sidelines of meetings of WAAPP monitoring bodies (WRAP-UP, Steering Committee).

The Rapporteurs

The Chairperson

ANNEXES

OUTCOMES OF FRANCOPHONE GROUP SESSIONS

OUTCOMES OF THE ANGLOPHONE GROUP SESSIONS

ATTENDANCE LIST

OUTCOMES OF THE FRANCOPHONE COUNTRIES COMMITTEE

I- SRI IMPLEMENTATION

CONSTRAINTS	PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT
Inadequate collaboration between structures involved in SRI	Establish a framework for dialogue between WAAPP and non-WAAPP actors for better synergy in actions
Inadequate WAAPP involvement in the SRI in some countries	Encourage the various national WAAPP coordinations to include the SRI in their ABWPs
Inadequate consolidation and sharing of specific innovations from the countries	Consolidate specific innovations introduced by each country into the SRI and share them
Inadequate involvement of FOs and extension structures in SRI implementation	Involve FOs and extension structures more in SRI promotion
Inadequate development of national and regional skills	Develop national and regional skills in conducting baseline studies
Difficulty in access to organic manure	Extension services should train farmers in the production of organic manure
Drudgery in weeding	Introduce equipment adapted to the various agro-ecological zones

II- SRI SUSTAINABILITY

PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT
Widely inform and sensitize policymakers and farmers on SRI achievements
Disseminate SRI to other rice farming development projects
Include some SRI practices in fact sheets in line with the country's vision
Undertake actions to operationalize the platforms or FOs
Involve extension structures more in SRI activities
Include SRI practice in the training curricula of students
Adapt the SRI approach to local conditions

III-RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Harmonization of data collection tools and their contents by the regional coordination,
- ✓ The SRI manual should be adapted to each country (in line with the disseminated parameters),
- ✓ Share SRI achievements more with policymakers,
- ✓ Take economic aspects into account when assessing SRI achievements.

English Country Presentation

Feb.18,2015

Content

- Country names
- Propose improvement for collaboration and implementation and mechanisms within the national SRI WAAPP project and other non-SRI WAAPP partners
- Reflection and proposal on the sustainability of the project after funding stops
- Concrete recommendation

SRI English Countries

1. Nigeria
2. Liberia
3. Ghana
4. Sierra Leone
5. Gambia

How to involve non-SRI WAAPP Actors

- Involved non-SRI WAAPP actors in all SRI WAAPP meetings, workshops, field day, and exchange visits both at national and regional levels now
- Visit them and make presentations on SRI at local and national level
- Include them in our SRI mailing list at regional and national level

Sustainability of SRI

- Availability of organic fertilizer at local and national level
- Making SRI less labor intensive
- Involved all actors through the out the life of the projects for ownership
- Establishing collation of mass adaption by both SRI WAAPP and non-SRI WAAPP
- Possible extension of current SRI regional project
- Integrate SRI with other crop
- Building capacity of all SRI actors starting now
- Allocation of incentives to farmers practicing SRI
- Promote economic analysis of SRI to all actors

Recommendations

- Strengthen knowledge sharing exchange meetings of SRI countries (like have been agreed to host one in Liberia this year for the English SRI countries)
- Build capacity of actors in SRI
- Advocacy and lobby at national and regional level
- Publications of yield and economic data to the public ,private sector and policy maker
- Promote the integration of SRI with other crops
- Make available labor saving device for SRI actors
- Show casing the work of champions