

PEJERIZ: RICE, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND JOBS IN WEST AFRICA



CTA PROJECTS

The rice value chain in West Africa has huge potential to create new jobs for the region's youth. Young people in the region offer an innovative and dynamic workforce, demonstrating a high uptake of modern technology and the ability to take on significant levels of risk.

CTA's *Promoting youth entrepreneurship and job creation in the West African rice value chain* (PEJERIZ) project is creating sustainable entrepreneurial and employment opportunities for rural youths by actively engaging them in the improvement of rice value chains.

APPROACH

The PEJERIZ project is building and strengthening entrepreneurial capacities of rural youth, creating market linkages and promoting value-adding activities for rural youth in the rice value chains of Mali and Senegal. The capacity-building efforts will develop a pool of young professionals with the competence and skills to engage in sustainable business along the rice value chain.

ACTIVITIES

More than 300 young people from Mali and Senegal have participated in workshops to learn about **employment and income-generation opportunities** in the rice value chain, from growing rice to processing, marketing and provision of services such as mechanisation and consulting. Two hundred of these subsequently received further **training in business planning, financial management, credit management and decision-making**, as well as other aspects of the rice value chain.

The most promising participants and the youth-led micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) they are engaged in were invited to submit **innovative and competitive business ideas** supporting the rice value chain, and 80 (40 from each country) are receiving **incubation and acceleration support**.

Ten **Centers for Mechanized Services** (CEMA) have been established, five in each country, and are providing farmers with services such as soil preparation, harvesting and crop storage. The project has also trained 45 RiceAdvice service agents to help farmers use the RiceAdvice app to improve the management of their crops.

All new business ideas need **technical and financial support**, and the project is building partnerships with technical and financial institutions to improve access of the selected business proposals to financial support and to the markets. Some of the nascent businesses will receive small **grants** to support their start-up phase and cover a range of specific technical assistance services, such as legal, patent, intellectual property rights and the like.

IMPACT

The new business ideas supported by the PEJERIZ project are expected to create nearly 700 new jobs for rural youth in innovative rice-based businesses along the value chain and to increase the income of some 10,000 rice farmers thanks to innovative services provided by the youth-led businesses and CEMAs. This will increase incomes for all actors along the value chain, from rice farmers to retailers, as well as enhancing food security.

COUNTRIES

Mali, Senegal



PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

AfricaRice; Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture

Read more about CTA's projects:
www.cta.int/en/projects/rice-value-chain-west-africa

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