Africa RISING in West Africa: Sustainable intensification of crop-livestock farming systems in the Guinea Savannah zone

The Guinea and Sudano savannah zone of West Africa is dominated by small-holder farmers who depend mostly on rain-fed crop, livestock, and crop–livestock farming systems. Main staple crops are cereals (maize, rice, sorghum, pearl millet), legumes (groundnut, cowpea, soybean, Bambara nut, pigeon pea), and vegetables (roselle, okra, pepper) grown in pure stands or mixtures. Trees and shrubs are used for food, feed, and soil conservation.

Cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, chicken, guinea fowl, turkeys, and ducks are reared for meat, milk, land preparation, transport, manure, and cash under extensive and semi-intensive systems with limited feed, shelter, health care, and breeding management. Farmers have limited access to veterinary services, and improved livestock breeds.

Diet of farm households are often dominated by staple foods which are deficient in micronutrients resulting in poor nutritional status, especially among pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers, and children below 24 months of age.

Farmers have limited access to input and output markets, and enabling institutions and policies are also lacking. Traditional knowledge sharing methods are inadequate, leading to lack of information on improved technologies and best-bet agricultural practices, especially among women.

### Research-for-development focus
In West Africa, the project is building multi-stakeholder partnerships to identify and validate solutions to the above challenges experienced by smallholder crop-livestock farmers.

The research-for-development focus is on:
1. Building research-for-development platforms
2. Economic validation of sustainable intensification technologies
3. Intensification and diversification of crop-livestock farming systems
The Africa Research In Sustainable Intensification for the Next Generation (Africa RISING) program comprises three research-for-development projects supported by the United States Agency for International Development as part of the U.S. government’s Feed the Future initiative.

Through action research and development partnerships, Africa RISING will create opportunities for smallholder farm households to move out of hunger and poverty through sustainably intensified farming systems that improve food, nutrition, and income security, particularly for women and children, and conserve or enhance the natural resource base.

Mali partners