

# Bridging the climate science-policy gap through exchange platforms in West Africa



## Policies and Institutions:

The Flagship on 'Policies and institutions for climate-resilient food systems' under the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) supports the development and implementation of equitable policies that integrate climate change into agricultural policies, and vice versa. The Flagship works to better understand governance mechanisms, institutions and power dynamics that affect climate and food systems governance, and to integrate innovative climate tools and knowledge into decision making processes for more climate-resilient food systems.

Learn more: [www.ccafs.cgiar.org](http://www.ccafs.cgiar.org)

Project is led by:



*This project organizes platforms for scientists and policy-makers to exchange climate information and create better policies to build climate-smart food systems in West Africa.*

Understanding how to best deal with climate change impacts using available resources and data can be a real challenge for developing country ministries. Often, these ministries lack human capacity, funding and information to develop efficient policy responses to new, unforeseen challenges. These countries are also the most vulnerable to climate impacts and in dire need of strong policy and development support.

With this in mind a project led by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) is providing support for better climate and food security policy planning through knowledge exchange platforms in West Africa. Set up in 2014, district-level platforms in Ghana, Senegal

and Mali have been designed to provide science-based support and intensify interactions between scientists and policy actors for more climate-resilient food systems policies. The work forms a crucial part of the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) policies and institutions research in West Africa.

## Science-policy exchange platforms

Members of the nine district-level platforms, three in each country, consist of local policy-makers, scientists, private sector representatives, farmers' associations and traditional and religious authorities. The common ground is that they are all engaged in the food industry or dealing with climate and environmental issues within agriculture production. Everybody wants to find joint, sustainable solutions to climate impacts on food security for their districts.



Photo: E. van de Grift

The platform activities build upon previous work by the CCAFS West Africa program, which set up national science-policy exchange platforms in the region in 2012. The new district-level alliances help complement the national ones through providing useful local insights that can help guide policy development.

### Platform activities

The participants examine potential policy gaps for local food systems and based on what they find suggest how to further improve current food and climate change policies and investments. These discussions take place during regular face-to-face meetings held throughout the year, where members can share their own experiences and express needs related to food and agriculture development.

*"Through the platform, I am able to meet technicians and researchers, and discuss very directly what concerns we have and how we can work together to find solutions to our climate change-related problems,"*

Mamadou Cissé, President of the Regional Union of Milk Producers' Cooperative Societies and a platform member in Mali.

Members also get the latest information on climate-smart agriculture practices and participate in trainings on how to use climate

tools and data. This helps build their capacity to engage in policy processes.

To ensure food systems policies are flexible enough to deal with uncertain, climate-related impacts, platform members also engage in building future scenarios. The future scenarios processes help provide district-level stakeholders with the opportunity to jointly explore what their communities will look like under climate change, combined with other socio-economic factors.

### Deliverables and targets

- Set up and facilitate nine district-level platforms with key stakeholders in Mali, Ghana and Senegal
- Reviews of existing policy instruments and processes in the project countries
- Analysis of national and district-level policy gaps
- Capacity enhancement to craft equitable and climate-resilient food systems policies
- One sectoral climate-smart agriculture policy instrument released in each country.

### Outcome:

This four-year project will support climate adaptation planning in Mali, Ghana and Senegal and increase the capacity of the platform members to address climate-related

issues. Involved ministries will use the platforms' compiled knowledge to inform and enact climate-resilient food systems policies, and members will disseminate climate-smart farming options in their respective districts. The team expects that at least one policy will be enacted in each country, and that the local communities will be involved in the process for designing a food system and climate-related policy.

The project 'Bridging the science-policy gap through climate exchange platforms in West Africa' is led by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT). The project is part of the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) policies and institutions research in West Africa.

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Learn more: <http://bit.ly/ICRISATWA>

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