Joint Initiative by the French Presidency of the European Union and the Economic Community of West African States Commission

The Regional Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) and the Offensive for food production and against hunger

Operational sequence: Progress on preparation of ECOWAP programmes and the Regional Offensive for food production and against hunger

Preparatory note prepared by ECOWAS Commission

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Summary

1 Introduction

West African agriculture is a vital component of the regional economy, through its contribution to wealth creation, to export earnings, to employment and to meeting the populations' food requirements. As such, a good many discussions are centred on agriculture, which leads to numerous strategies being pursued, both nationally and regionally. The most visible strategies are to be found either at the level of intergovernmental organisations such as the Permanent Interstate Committee for drought control in the Sahel, known by its French acronym as CILSS[1], or at the level of institutions in charge of cooperation and regional integration (WAEMU[2], ECOWAS[3]). It was not, however, until after the year 2000 that strong coordination of agricultural development policies and strategies truly got under way, linked with the emergence of the NEPAD agricultural programme and ECOWAP.

2 ECOWAP: the West African component in NEPAD's agricultural programme

2.1 The orientations of the NEPAD agricultural programme

At the dawn of the third millennium Africa has an overarching development strategy known as the "New Partnership for Africa's Development" (NEPAD). NEPAD's agricultural agenda, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), is designed to provide a continent-wide implementation framework for development policies and strategies in this sector. African Heads of State, who pledged, in Maputo in 2003, to allocate at least ten per cent of their respective national budgetary resources to funding for the agricultural sector, have shown their genuine commitment to implementing the initiative. The CAADP identifies four major areas for action, or pillars, for accelerating agricultural growth, reducing poverty and achieving food and nutritional security:

- *First pillar:* Extend, in a sustainable manner, the area of land under cultivation and irrigated by reliable water control systems;
- *Second pillar:* Improve rural infrastructure and trade capacities so as to facilitate market access;
- *Third pillar:* Increase food supply, reduce hunger and improve responses to food-related emergencies;
- *Fourth pillar:* Improve agricultural research and the dissemination and adoption of technologies.

2.2 ECOWAP: Objectives, vision and axes for action

The central aim of the Economic Community of West African States' Agricultural Policy, (ECOWAP), adopted in January, 2005, in Accra, after a long participatory process involving all of the region's stakeholders, is to *"contribute in a sustainable way to meeting the food needs of the population, to economic and social development, to the reduction of poverty in the Member States, and thus to reduce existing inequalities among territories,*

1. The strategic framework on food security was adopted in 2000.
2. WAEMU agricultural policy (WAP), adopted in 2001.
3. ECOWAS agricultural policy (ECOWAP), adopted in 2005.

zones and nations." Given the sector's structure (diverse productive systems and high atomicity of farms, which are still mostly smallholdings), the vision of the ECOWAP is *"a modern and sustainable agriculture based on effective and efficient family farms and the promotion of agricultural enterprises through the involvement of the private sector. Once productivity and competitiveness on the intra-community and international markets are achieved, the policy should be able to guarantee food security and secure decent incomes for agricultural workers."*

Three major axes for action have been identified:

1. improvement in agricultural productivity and competitiveness;
2. implementation of the intra-community trade regime;
3. adaptation of the external trade regime.

2.3 Complementarity between the NEPAD agricultural policy and ECOWAP

Implementing ECOWAP means seeking synergy not only with the national agricultural policies of each of the fifteen ECOWAS member States, but also with NEPAD's agricultural component, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). In West Africa, members head of states and government have gathered in Yamoussoukro and gave ECOWAS the mandate to coordinate and monitor the implementation of NEPAD and in particular its agricultural segment.

ECOWAP became operative essentially thanks to the creation of an Action Plan in 2005, the launch of certain regional programmes, and, above all, the formulation of agricultural investment programmes both at the national level (National Agricultural Investment Programmes – NAIPs), and regional level (Regional Agricultural Investment Programmes – RAIPs). Since the start of its rollout, its ambition has been to embody the synergy among the three levels of agricultural policies (continental, regional and national). For this reason implementation of PRIAs and PNIAs is focused on six major themes:

1. *Improved water management*, including: (i) the promotion of irrigation; (ii) integrated management of water resources;
2. *Improved management of natural resources*, incorporating: (i) the organisation of transhumance and management of herding routes; (ii) sustainable management of forest resources; (iii) sustainable management of fishing resources;
3. *Sustainable development of farms*, taking into consideration: (i) integrated management of soil fertility; (ii) enhancement of support services to producers; (iii) the propagation of improved technologies;
4. *Development of agricultural sectors and promotion of markets*, covering: (i) the development of different sectors (food production, peri-urban agriculture, export cropping, short cycle breeding, agro-forest food products, traditional fishing and fish farming); (ii) the development of food processing; (iii) enhancement of support services to operators; (iv) the promotion of national, regional and international trade;
5. *Prevention and management of food crises and other natural disasters*, focused on: (i) the promotion of early warning systems; (ii) development of crisis management systems; (iii) support for post-crisis rehabilitation of affected areas; (iv) the development of disaster compensation/insurance mechanisms;
6. *Institutional consolidation, comprising*: (i) gender mainstreaming; (ii) support for capacity-building in agricultural and rural policy and strategy formulation; (iii) sustainable funding for agriculture; (iv) communication; (v) steering and coordination capacity-building; (vi) monitoring and assessment capacity-building.

3 The Process of Drafting NAIPs/RAIPs

3.1 The Principles

The aim of PNIAs and PRIAs is to outline development options and strategies that are crucial for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, building on a thorough analysis of the economy's growth rate and prevailing trends in, especially, the agricultural sector. In particular, the goal is to define the agricultural development options that will reduce poverty by half at the national and regional levels. PNIAs and PRIAs endeavour to provide a quantitative analysis of the various agricultural development options that are to be implemented by the countries or region if they are to achieve an annual agricultural sector growth rate of at least six per cent and halve poverty by 2015 As part of their PNIAs, States in the region are to allocate at least ten per cent of their national budget to funding initiatives aimed at improving agricultural productivity and competitiveness.

3.2 The Overall Approach

In order to foster ownership and internalisation of results and optimise the likelihood that public authorities will take said results into account, PRIAs and PNIAs are drafted in a participatory manner. The drafting process involves all stakeholders who are at the interface of agricultural development issues: senior officials from the Ministries of Agriculture, Finance, Economy and Development, Trade and Industry, the Environment, representatives from professional and consular bodies and from the private sector, as well as technical and financial partners.

3.3 NAIPs

a) The Process

At the national level the process comes under the responsibility of a steering committee, chaired by the Ministry of Finance via the ECOWAS unit and a technical committee that operates under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture. These committees conduct their work in six thematic groups, which are to document each of the six axes for intervention identified (see above).

There are four main stages to drafting the programmes:

(i) diagnosis and formulation of working hypotheses;

(ii) simulations[4] are then conducted and the sectors contributing the most to accelerated growth are highlighted;

(iii) formulation of investment programmes so as to promote the sector's development;

(iv) drafting and signature of the ECOWAP/CAADP/National Agricultural Policy Pact.

Approval for this final stage is arranged by inviting technical and financial Partners to a Round Table.

The process gets underway during a brainstorming workshop in which the challenges, objectives and the approach for defining programmes are tabled both at the national and regional levels. The workshop is the forum for identifying documentary sources and for assigning working document drafting responsibilities to the thematic groups.

4. With the assistance of a model developed by the IFPRI.

The modelling component was an important innovation that enabled the creation of the PNIAs. Indeed, the use of a computable general equilibrium (CGE) model makes it possible to conduct provisional analyses in order to assess the contributions of different sectors and their respective gains under different scenarios. The modelling work focuses on:

– Current trends in terms of economic growth and poverty levels;
– The outlook for reaching the CAADP's agricultural growth objective of 6% per year;
– Alternative scenarios for speeding up growth and poverty reduction;
– Long-term finance needs required to speed up growth and achieve MDG 1;
– Knowledge systems to facilitate planning, implementation and review of development policies.

The availability of a social accounting matrix makes it possible to construct CGE models. All models are adjusted and the hypotheses and scenarios are discussed with the main stakeholders. One the simulation work done, the results are discussed in a series of validation meetings. The modelling report gives an interpretation of the results and identifies potential growth sources. The investments and ongoing development efforts will have to concentrate on it.

b) The Final Products

At the end of the process a series of five documents, summarised in informative brochures, are to be produced. They shall comprise:

Brochure 1: Review of Ongoing Agricultural Development Efforts – A retrospective analysis of current and past development strategies and programmes in the agricultural sector, aiming to identify predominant trends.

Brochure 2: Agricultural growth, poverty reduction and food security – An examination of the agricultural sector's performances in the past, and, using this as a base, a definition of sectoral objectives required for attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

Brochure 3: Strategic options and sources for agricultural growth, poverty reduction and food security – An examination of the development options most likely conducive to agricultural growth and poverty reduction, in an equitable manner for the various different categories of rural households and for the general population. An identification of sub-sectors or components that offer the greatest acceleration in growth.

Brochure 4: Long-term funding requirements for agricultural growth, poverty reduction and food security – An overview of the levels of investment required for attaining the goals of agricultural growth, poverty reduction and food security outlined in Brochure 2, in accordance with the strategic options identified in Brochure 3.

Brochure 5: A system of strategic analysis and monitoring-assessment to guide implementation – A presentation of the technical instruments that ensure monitoring so that policies, strategies and programmes may be adapted as required during rollout of the strategic agricultural revitalization plan.

These documents come with a leaflet introducing the programmes, outlining the objectives, activities, expected outcomes and costs.

The process may be approved at the national level when the Government tables a charter to all agricultural sector partners, namely the private sector, rural organisations, civil society and technical and financial partners. The signing of this charter, known as the "ECOWAP/CAADP Pact", heralds the Government's and its partners' commitment to undertake the PNIA, the unique crucible for the ensemble of each country's agricultural development strategies. The National ECOWAP/CAADP Pact must list:

– the investment policies and strategies and their costs;

– the country's budgetary commitments and the political measures to be taken;
– the private sector's commitments as well as those of socio-professional organisations and civil society;
– development partners' commitments, in terms of technical and financial assistance;
– the mechanism for monitoring-assessment, political dialogue and peer review.

c) Implementation Progress.

The formulation of NAIPs and RAIPs, an innovative strategic agricultural development planning process, is not without some technical difficulties in certain countries. These difficulties are due to availability shortfalls in levels of data and also relate to the technical framework and monitoring. The process is relatively more advanced at the national level than at the regional level.

Because of the complexity of the process and the approach, the countries in the region have been divided into two groups. The first group, comprising seven countries (Benin, Nigeria, Togo, Niger, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Ghana), launched the process in 2007, and is due to complete it in the first half of 2009 with the organisation of national Round Tables and signature of the national ECOWAP/CAADP Pacts.

The second group of countries is currently starting the process with the organisation of national workshops. With the advantage of having observed the problems encountered by the countries in the first group, the second group should make faster progress in the formulation of their NAIPs. Two major difficulties have hindered the speed with which the first group of countries could formulate their RAIPs: contractual issues and problems mobilising local expertise. Indeed, some aspects of the exercise, especially the simulation of development scenarios, require technical skills that are not always easily mobilised in every country.

ECOWAS has funded most of the operations relating to the formulation of the RAIPs and NAIPs as well as the initial rollout of preliminary programmes. It has recieved the technical support of IFPRI, FAO and of ReSAAKS/IITA. A group of partners (USAID, DFID, SIDA) has given an additional financial support.

The following table indicates the programmes progress in the countries of the first group.

Table 1: Preparation progress of the first group NAIPs

Countries	Step 1: Launching		Step 2: Diagnosis			Step 3: Modelisation			Step 4: Final products		Step 5
	Brainstorming workshop	Composition of the different groups	Draft report	Validation workshop	Final report	Adjustment ended	Simulations ended	Modelisation report	Final report approved	Communication documents	Round table
Benin							Validation			Preliminary notes	
Burkina Faso							Validation			Preliminary notes	
Ghana										Preliminary notes	
Mali											
Niger							Validation			Preliminary notes	
Nigeria											
Senegal							Validation			Preliminary notes	
Togo							Validation			Preliminary notes	
Sierra Leone		current?									

3.4 RAIPs

Regional and international cooperation and integration organisations (AfDB, WAEMU, ICDC , CMA/WCA, WECARD, WARDA, IITA and IFDC), West African socio-professional organisations (the ROPPA, RECAO, ROESAO and Interface) and technical and financial partners (USAID, DEFID, SIDA, European Commission, World Bank, IFAD, FAO, WFP, Global Donor Platform for Rural Development), and coordination structures (The Rural Hub, CSAO) are all considered by ECOWAS to be at the very core of the drafting process of the RAIPs. Depending on their respective fields of expertise, these organisations are tasked with formulating the RAIPs following a breakdown of responsibilities along the following lines:

- improving water management *(WIMI and WARDA and UCRE/CEDEAO)*;
- the sustainable development of farmland *(WECARD and IITA)*;
- improving management of other natural resources *(ECOWAS, SWAC)*;
- the development of agricultural sectors and the promotion of markets *(CMA/WCA and IFDC)*;
- the prevention and management of food crises and other natural disasters *(ICDC and SWAC)*;
- institutional consolidation *(ROPPA and The Rural Hub).*

The task of drafting the PRIAs has started and, according to initial forecasts, should be completed by mid-2009. They have been delayed a little to focuse on specific actions and be complementary to countries actions.

4 The Regional Offensive for Food Production and Against Hunger

Given the sudden price rise in staple products and the international financial crisis, ECOWAS launched in June, 2008, its "Regional Offensive for Food Production and Against Hunger". This initiative is a way of accelerating the implementation of ECOWAP/CAAADP process. It's approach is conceived for emergency response to the price crisis to dovetail into mid and long terms NAIP/RAIP measures.

4.1 Food price spikes during the 2007/2008 harvest season

In late 2007 and early 2008, West Africa bore the full brunt of the crisis stemming from the sudden price spikes in basic commodities and staples. The shock was especially quick and burdensome for this region, home to one-third of the world's poorest inhabitants, which has seen the implementation of market-focused policies over the last twenty years as part of a structural adjustment process. Such policies meant that West African agriculture failed to receive adequate support, which would have ensured food security for its communities and enabled it to resist the often unfair international competition. While the situation varies from country to country in the region depending on their agro-ecological specificities and their degree of dependence on imports, the price spike has had severe repercussions on the populations' living conditions and social fabric: accentuated household food-supply vulnerability, erosion of solidarity within families, socio-cultural groups and between urban and rural areas. While the trickle-down effect of the price ri-

ses for imported goods on the prices of local goods was not systematic, the price spike nevertheless contributed substantially to reducing the purchasing power of the people, the vast majority of whom spend 60 to 80 per cent of their income on food.

4.2 Managing the crisis

In managing the crisis, the region had to deal with two differing and not easily reconcilable concerns in the short term: (i) take advantage of the high prices which offer an historic opportunity for remunerating the labour of food producers and for funding the transformation of West African agriculture; while in the meantime (ii) ensuring access to food for poor communities, be they urban or rural.

States tried to combine two types of measures: (i) a cluster of emergency measures aiming essentially at reducing the cost of food; and (ii) targeted measures for boosting agricultural production. They received varied support from IGOs. ECOWAS focused above all on defining a medium-term strategy for a sustainable revitalisation and increase in agricultural and food production.

4.2.1 Responses from the States

The emergency measures, for the most part the exclusive domain of the States, aimed at:

– *Mitigating the effects of the price spike:* suspension of customs duties on essential foodstuffs, price control; fuel consumption subsidy in some countries;
– *Supplying the market:* reducing stock and facilitating imports, establishment of stores offering specially-authorised discount on certain goods and price-controlled sales;
– *Access to food for the most vulnerable:* free distribution of foodstuffs, "food for work" operations especially in the Sahel countries; specific financial support for rural areas; (iv) stepping up school canteen support programmes.

In parallel to these emergency measures, almost all of the countries hurriedly devised programmes for revitalising food production. These initiatives, which go by a variety of names (Initiative Riz in Mali and Guinea, GOANA in Senegal, PUASA in Benin, etc.) are intended, for the most part, to give renewed vigour to cereal production, especially rice, the price hike of which was cruelly felt by urban populations. States therefore adopted a range of different incentives: subsidies for agricultural inputs (fertilisers and seed), allocation of harvest season credits, summary adjustments of agricultural zones, guarantee of product collection and so on.

4.2.2 ECOWAS' position

ECOWAS initiated, during the community's extraordinary meeting for Ministers of Trade, Finance and Agriculture, a regional initiative in order to mitigate the effects of rising prices, especially on people's food security. Designed as a region-wide response to the price explosion, the "Regional Offensive for Food Production and Against Hunger" is structured around three thematic axes:

– *Rapid and sustainable increase in food production*
  This first axis seeks to significantly increase agricultural production so as to reduce region-wide dependence on imports. By developing its production, the region is opting to rely on its agriculture to combat the food insecurity and poverty that still weighs very heavily on rural populations.

– *Structuring of sectors and regulation of markets*
  The goal of this second axis is to guarantee a market outlet for agricultural produce by regulating the food product markets, between seasonal production and daily demand. The idea is to bring price instability on the markets under better control and develop products that are adapted to consumer demand and lifestyles. This pillar is a strategy by which West African farmers may recover their natural market.
– *Food and nutritional security of vulnerable communities*
  In the short term, the price rise causes great suffering among populations because they have low incomes. The success of the regional offensive will reside in the ability of States and regional organisations to quickly assuage the vulnerability of the poorest people by establishing safety nets as well as a raft of complementary measures.

4.3 Short term action plan

Following the extraordinary meeting of Ministers of May 2008, the ECOWAS Commission took several measures to boost the ECOWAP/CAADP process. The Commission:
– Formulated an action plan to implement recommendations;
– Initiated support activities to boost production for the 2008-2009 crop year;
– Launched the process to implement the recommendation regarding grouped purchases of strategic foodstuffs;
– Accelerated implementation of existing programmes that contribute to increasing agricultural production;
– Committed to monitor more closely the agricultural and food situation in the region, in collaboration with ICDC and other institutions (FEWSNET, WFP, FAO, OAS/ECOWAS etc.);
– Confirmed its support of the process to formulate action plans to implement the country and regional recommendations that resulted from the extraordinary meeting of Ministers in Abuja, May 2008.

As part of efforts to boost production for the 2008-09 crop year, the ECOWAS Commission contacted several development partners to solicit support in implementing urgent actions targeting production increases. Some actions have already been initiated (for example, the FAO is supplying inputs and off-season crops). The EU has committed 40 million Euros and discussions are underway to mobilise more resources from a special facility and from the 9th and 10th European Development Funds. The regional programme that has just been signed fully accounts for this issue. Contacts are underway with USAID in view of tapping into its new US$ 700 million facility. Finally, different agencies plan to reinvest in agricultural and food programmes as well as in crisis management and prevention, and are currently conducting identification studies (AFD and UNCTAD, for example).

The Ministers of Trade in particular have mobilised around the issue of grouped purchases of strategic foodstuffs. A number of actions are underway. A working group has been set up to make recommendations to create a mechanism that will enable group purchasing of rice. It includes experts from ECOWAS, ECOBANK, EBID, WARDA and the private sector. The group issued a memorandum that gives guidelines for this group purchasing mechanism, the technical and financial monitoring measures to accompany it, the recommended institutional framework as well as immediate possibilities and long-term recommendations.

Headway has been made in a number of areas:
- Commitments from the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development and ECOBANK to open credit lines to finance the group purchasing of rice;
- An agreement with the International Trade Centre based in Geneva to offer technical support to ECOWAS in view of creating a platform between West African importers and Asian exporters of rice;
- ECOWAS availability to unite importers from West Africa and exporters from other countries in order to draw up a firm contract for purchasing rice, with the help of the ITC;
- The organisation by ECOWAS of a forum on rice prior to the Business Forum in Ouagadougou in early 2009 to encourage the West African private sector to get involved in rice production.

4.4 Coordination

In order to create a framework to manage and monitor the implementation of recommendations and decisions from the Abuja Summit held in June 2008, an action plan was formulated to (i) better ensure coherency and consistency between ECOWAP/CAADP and the regional initiative for food production and against hunger (ii) accelerate the formulation of key structuring programmes addressing the urgent food situation.

Within this framework, the ECOWAS Commission set up a Task Force to reinforce coordination efforts and the political and technical leadership of the process. In addition to the National Programme on Agricultural Investment (NAIP) and the Regional Programme on Agricultural Investment (RAIP), the ECOWAS Commission funds the formulation of national and regional plans to implement the recommendations that came out of the extraordinary meeting in Abuja on the high cost of living. The Inter-Governmental Organisations, trade organisations and private sector in the region are all participating in the process.

5 Reflection and proposals for the next stages in implementing ECOWAP and the Offensive

Implementing ECOWAP presents the ECOWAS Commission, West African governments and their technical and financial partners with four challenges:
- How to maximise the complementarity between actions by member states and IGOs;
- How best to articulate short-term actions, especially those defined when prices rocketed at the beginning of 2008, with medium- to long-term actions;
- How best to coordinate efforts by West African public actors and their technical and financial partners;
- How to ensure that all the non-governmental actors concerned are genuinely involved in the formulation and evaluation of these public interventions.

This final chapter presents the thoughts and initial proposals from the ECOWAS Commission as to how these challenges can be overcome. What follows is a brief summary of the main points discussed as a list of shared tasks for participants at the Paris conference was drawn up.

5.1 Complementarity between the national and regional levels

There has been solid international consensus around the principle of subsidiarity in public action for some years now. In terms of processes of regional cooperation and integration, this means that regional institutions limit their interventions to areas where they can be more effective or efficient than individual governments, such as:

a. Managing linkages between countries (shared natural resources, intra-regional trade and a single agricultural market, cross-border conflicts, rights of establishment and competition law, regulations relating to investments, property and land ownership rights, fiscal convergence, etc.);
b. Cooperation around problems that affect several countries, where the regional level offers significant economies of scale (research, information systems, health and climatic risk management, etc.);
c. Managing relations between the region and the outside world (trade negotiations, formulating international social and environmental standards, negotiations over migratory flows, etc.).

The ECOWAS Commission believes that the principle of subsidiarity should be applied with flexibility. This means that certain responsibilities are specific to regional organisations, while others are shared between regional organisations and national governments. The table below shows how ECOWAS envisages the distribution of these two types of responsibilities across the three themes retained in the agenda for the Paris conference. This initial proposal will need to be amended and refined at this conference and throughout the subsequent process.

Table 2: Distribution of responsibilities between the regional and the national levels

Themes	Areas of responsibility specific to the regional level	Areas of responsibility shared between the regional and the national levels
Sustainable intensification of agricultural production	– Programming research – Defining standards for inputs and finished products – Coordinating actions against epizootic diseases – Coordinating management of shared natural resources (protected areas, rivers, pastures, etc.)	– Information on production systems
Market regulation	– Common external tariff – Trade negotiations (bi- or multi-lateral) – Coordinating intra-regional negotiations over the development of priority food supply chains – Harmonising national policies on inputs (seed, fertilisers, pesticides, veterinary medicines) and credit – Reinforcing the handling of economic dossiers by the ECOWAS Parliament and Court of Justice – Tax harmonisation – Harmonisation exchange rate policies through macro economic convergence	– Freeing up trade flows – Making agri-food supply chains more competitive – Market information system
Access to food for vulnerable people	– Coordinating actions against locusts (and other cross-border crop pests) – Driving and building on innovative actions to reduce vulnerability – Coordinating the establishment of regional foodstocks	– Food insecurity early warning systems
Cross-cutting		– Capacities to monitor the economic situation and analyse trends

Complementarities between the regional and national levels: Questions for the round table

How can the regional level help harmonise the priorities set out in each country's NAIP? ➡ Increase analytical capacities; clarify what the regional-level mandate entails.

How best to articulate the regional synthesis of NAIPs and the results of the six thematic RAIPs?

5.2 Articulating short- and medium- to long-term actions

The effects of the global economic downturn on the foodstuffs and hydrocarbons markets over the last few weeks have confirmed the need for the ECOWAS Commission to have the capacities required to analyse the economic situation, swiftly adapt regional policies (such as the CET) and harmonise national policies. This system or mechanism for analysing the economic situation should be supplemented by a (retrospective and prospective) mechanism for analysing trends in the region's agricultural and food economy. The process of synthesising NAIPs in the first quarter of 2009 should logically constitute the first stage in establishing such a regional capacity for analysis, as each country's options and priorities are harmonised to avoid pointless duplication or glaring inconsistencies in their choice of agricultural investments.

Synthesising the NAIPs will also be a good opportunity to determine how individual country's investment decisions fit in with the more immediate challenges facing the region. Therefore, it would be useful if the works undertaken in each country as part of the "Initiative on Soaring Food Prices" (launched by the FAO in December 2007, and subsequently coordinated by a special high-level team set up by the Secretary General of the United Nations to deal with the global food security crisis) were synthesised at the regional level. International support in formulating these emergency plans is primarily delivered at the national level, and is therefore unable to address two key issues:

– The regional dimension of action plans, particularly in terms of trade (facilitating imports) and production. At present (the end of 2008), the combined effects of good rains across the region and initial efforts to re-establish production confirm that markets cannot be obtained within a strictly national framework of action;
– How emergency action plans harmonise with long-term guidelines adopted by countries within the regional framework of ECOWAP: managing complementarities between areas of production and consumption, organising supply chains across the region, joint management of shared natural resources, etc.

In order to achieve the greatest possible coherence between the national- and regional-level emergency plans formulated in 2008 and the long-term guidelines drawn up by ECOWAP, ECOWAS will present a selection of priority actions for discussion at the Paris conference. Elements of the agricultural policy will be prioritised over time, on the basis of responsibilities being shared between the national and regional levels, as discussed above (see Table 3).

Table 3: Priority actions for the implementation of ECOWAP

Themes	Areas of responsibility specific to the regional level	Areas of responsibility shared between the regional and the national levels
Sustainable intensification of agricultural production	–Programming research: Implement the first stages of the WECARD strategic plan for 2007-2016. – Standards for inputs: Extend the mandate to place pesticides created by WAEMU on the market across the whole region; do the same for veterinary products distributed by CILSS. – Coordinating actions against epizootic diseases. – Coordinating management of shared natural resources (protected areas, rivers, pastures, etc.).	– Information systems: Finalise the AGRIS mechanism.
Market regulation	– Finalise the Customs Union (CET, rules of origin, measures to protect trade, standardisation of products and monitoring systems) and ensure that it is put into practice. – Continue and conclude negotiations with the EPA. – In conjunction with the EPA's 'development' component, coordinate intra-regional negotiations on the development of priority food supply chains. – Ensure that different sectors coordinate decisions on economic and trade policies.	– Prepare to put in place an EBID investment fund targeting agri-food processing SMEs and SMIs. – Prepare to put in place a regional support fund for food stocks. – Harmonise the methodologies for market information systems and data sharing.
Access to food for vulnerable people	– Improve the effectiveness of regional actions to combat locusts (and other cross-border crop pests). – Drive innovations in identifying food risks and actions to reduce vulnerability; organise efforts to build on these initiatives at the regional level. – Prepare and put into effect a regional initiative to purchase certain foodstuffs (rice, wheat and wheat flour, milk and dairy products, vegetable oils).	– Food insecurity early warning system.
Crosscutting	– Draw up a regional action plan that corresponds with areas of regional responsibility for urgent matters. – Coordinate monitoring of the formulation of RAIPs. – Organise the synthesis of RAIPs (harmonisation, setting priorities). – Organise articulation between RAIPs and the synthesis of NAIPs. – Put in place a mechanism for the ECOWAS Commission's department of 'Agriculture, environment and water resources' to monitor and evaluate ECOWAP. – Consolidate the organs of ECOWAS (Commission, Parliament, Court of Justice, EBID).	– Help countries finalise emergency plans by: i) providing specific support for countries that have yet to draw up emergency plans; ii) ensuring that all stakeholders are involved (administrations and non-governmental actors). – Ensure the coordination and harmonisation of national emergency plans, through a regional synthesis based on a shared grid structured around the three axes of the Offensive (production, markets, access to food for vulnerable people). – Help countries formulate NAIPs (a 2-speed process involving 2 groups of countries). – Organise the harmonisation of NAIPs.

Articulating short- and medium- to long-term actions: Questions for the round table

How to ensure that the action plans finalised by various governments in the region when prices soared at the beginning of 2008 better harmonise with regional policy guidelines and modalities (ECOWAP, Customs Union, etc.)?

5.3 Coordinating efforts by West African actors and their technical and financial partners

One of the major challenges in implementing ECOWAP is to coordinate efforts by actors from the region with those of their technical and financial partners. This is due to:

– the multiplicity of partners involved in support at the national level (and their diverse modes of support, which vary according to the partners and countries concerned[5]);
– the number of regional organisations undertaking actions associated with ECOWAP, each of which has a specific set of technical and financial partners;
– the wide range of technical and financial partners supporting the ECOWAS Commission.

In accordance with the principles and guidelines set out in the Paris Declaration on the effectiveness of aid (2005), ECOWAS believes that:
– all parties involved in the implementation of ECOWAP should agree on results-based testing, framework, modes of governance and evaluation;
– sub-regional actors' involvement in the implementation of ECOWAP should be calibrated according to an evaluation of their capacity to assume functions on behalf of ECOWAS and to report back on a regular basis (their institutional and human capacities, capacity for rigorous financial management, etc.). For its part, ECOWAS should ensure that it has sufficient capacity to evaluate the work undertaken in its name by various lead managers, operators, etc., so that it can steer the whole process effectively.

Coordination with technical and financial partners: Questions for the round table

In the extended Paris Declaration on the effectiveness of aid[6]:

How better to *align* national- and regional-level support from technical and financial partners on ECOWAP's orientations? To what extent are technical and development partners ready to subscribe to the NAIP/RAIP process?

How better to *harmonise* TFPs' national- and regional-level support for West African agricultural policies?

What arrangements or mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that support for West Africa's agricultural sector is *managed on the basis of its results*?

What do national governments, ECOWAS and their TFPs need to do to put the principle of *mutual accountability* for the results of development actions in the agricultural sector into practice?

5.4 Involvement of non-governmental actors

Economic liberalisation and the democratisation of political life over the last twenty years have seen socio-professional organisations and other civil society actors play an increasing role in the formulation and evaluation of economic policies, especially those relating to the agricultural sector. Thus, ROPPA has played an active part in formulating ECOWAP, and is now involved in preparing one of the RAIPs (see below); while ongoing decentralisation processes in several countries in the region have given local governments a role in agricultural development and food security.

5. Progress towards a programme approach varies from country to country.
6. The objective of appropriation is discussed in the first set of questions (regional/national complementarity), through the question on capacity building.

Involvement of non-governmental actors: Questions for the round table

What role should non-governmental actors play in implementing components of the regional agricultural policy?

How to ensure that non-governmental actors are involved in regular evaluation of the outcomes of the regional agricultural policy?

5.5 Which overall funding mechanism should be promoted?

In view of the International Conference on funding for ECOWAP, there is a clear need for global agreement on the financial architecture of ECOWAP. This will require a thorough review of existing funding arrangements (i) within ECOWAS, particularly through EBID, but also (ii) in other institutions working on integration and regional cooperation, and (iii) among member states. This will provide a general picture of existing funds, their aims, modes of functioning and management and limitations, and should lead to analysis of:

– Existing mechanisms;
– Funds that are being set up, such as the regional EPA Fund, one of whose prerogatives should be dealing with agricultural and food supply chains;
– The most appropriate funding tools to tackle the wide range of problems in hand (insurance funds, investment funds for loans and subsidies, funds to support market regulation, etc.|), identifying tools that are already available.

This exercise should be conducted under the auspices of ECOWAS, and complemented by work on financial resources:

– State contributions to fund regional aspects of the agricultural policy;
– ECOWAS contributions based on it's own resources;
– Bi- and multi-lateral donor contributions;
– Contributions from private foundations.

Finally, in parallel with this, we need to find out how donors propose to fund initiatives:

– through sectoral budget support;
– multi-donor regional funds;
– co-financing for specific programmes.

This exploratory work should address the specific issue of pooling the various financial facilities that donors have made available in response to the food crisis. And finally, there is a need to identify financial instruments other than subsidies that can be mobilised to help fund regional policy tools (guarantee funds, loans, etc.).

Which global funding mechanism should be promoted? Questions for the round table

Which procedure should be used between now and the end of the first quarter of 2009 to have:

– A state of play of the current arrangements;
– A state of play of the financial resources that can be mobilised within the region and by TFPs;
– An overall funding mechanism for West Africa and the principal development partners?

How should donors be involved in finalising RAIPs and reflection on their funding?