



PRESS RELEASE

Food security and poverty reduction in West Africa

Launching of the Support Project to the regional plan for Fruit Flies monitoring and Control in West Africa in Dakar, Senegal

Dakar, February 23rd, 2016 - Dakar hosts the launching workshop of the support Project to the regional plan for Fruit Flies monitoring and Control in West Africa. The project is co-financed by European Union, Agence Française de Développement, ECOWAS and Member States for a total amount of EUR 23.5 million, and aims to improve the income of fruit and vegetable producers, especially small producers, to contribute to food security and poverty reduction in the sub-region.

The West African horticultural sector contributes to a balanced diet for millions of consumers at the local and regional level. It represents an important source of foreign exchange and employment for low income countries. Unfortunately, it continues to be handicapped by non-compliance with international phytosanitary standards particularly due to infestation of pulps by phytophagous flies. The interceptions at EU borders cause heavy loss of income for West African producers.

Aware of these challenges, ECOWAS has approved in 2008 a regional action plan for fruit flies control and, in December 2008, has sent a joint request with WAEMU for funding to the European Union. The Agence Française de Développement also wished to contribute to this regional initiative. Thus, in 2014, all financing agreements were signed.

Ten out of the fifteen ECOWAS member States are active in intra-regional and international trade of mangoes. Being the mainly affected, it is the sector to which the major project actions are oriented.

The project will help to increase the volume of fruits free of infestations available in local markets; to control fruit and vegetable losses due to infestation by fruit flies so that they are no longer a constraint for exports; to set up organizational structures for the control of pest risks; and to strengthen ECOWAS Commission capacities in its steering functions of the sector.

To achieve the project objectives, a monitoring system will be set up to organize the monitoring of incidence of fruit flies at national and regional levels and, when necessary, to launch early warnings to trigger quick actions. A control system will also be set up to coordinate and support a three dimensional control (preventive, intensive and integral). The project will strengthen the capacity of public and private national organizations and will support applied research to develop innovative techniques and will facilitate their transfer and their extension at national level.

Eight countries are already involved in the project, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Senegal. The first activities will be conducted in these countries this year.



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