



Developing Agriculture from the Ground Up



ACTIVITIES REPORT

2022

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Association Benin Soja
ACMA	Communal Approach to the Agricultural Market in Benin
ACMA2	Approche Communale pour le Marché Agricole au Bénin - phase 2
ACMA3	Approche Communale pour le Marché Agricole au Bénin - phase 3
C4CP	Country 4 Cotton Partnership
EnGRAIS	Enhancing Growth through Regional Agricultural Input Systems
GIFS	Integrated Soil Fertility Management
GIZ	German Technical Cooperation
IEM	Infrastructure and Merchant Equipment
IFDC	International Fertilizer Development Center
PAM	World Food Programme
PAPAPE	
/ SAPEP	Program to Improve Smallholder Agricultural Productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa
	Smallholders Agricultural Productivity Enhancement Program
SAE	Entrepreneurial support structures
SFD	Decentralized financing structures
SIM	Market Information System
SIFT	Information and technical training system
TAAT	Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation
TDL	Local Development Tax
UNCPS	Union Nationale des Coopératives des Producteurs de Soja (National Union of Soybean Producers' Cooperatives)
2SCALE	Toward Sustainable Clusters in Agribusiness through Learning in Entrepreneurship

VISION

VISION OF HENK, PRESIDENT & CEO OF IFDC

On January 1, 2023, Henk van Duijn was installed as the new President and CEO of IFDC. Henk's vision is: "One mission, one team" with the ambition to return to the center court of IFDC's expertise areas while building on IFDC's strategy 2020 - 2030.

To help address the challenges facing global food systems, IFDC has developed its Strategy 2020-2030, which outlines four pillars of its work: (1) *developing better technologies*, (2) *catalyzing agricultural productivity*, (3) *strengthening markets*, and (4) *enabling impact*.

"Under my leadership, in the coming years, the four pillars of our strategy will strengthen the core of IFDC's research and interventions. Together, the four pillars of our work will help farmers improve the health of their soils, agricultural productivity, and household incomes, thereby contributing to the food security and economic development of their villages, their nations, and the world." Henk van Duijn

Henk brings a philosophy of soil health as the basis of a holistic to agricultural development. The realization of this vision will be achieved through staff and capacity development, special projects, the establishment of a Fertilizer and Soil Health Innovation center, and broad-based consulting services.

With the leadership of Henk van Duijn, IFDC wants to return to the forefront of soil health and fertilizer worldwide in the next 3 to 5 years.

"IFDC will intensify its efforts to find solutions to future challenges through research on soil fertility and nutrient use efficiency. We have the knowledge and expertise to make a significant impact in sub-Saharan Africa, where soil nutrient depletion, both natural and human-induced, is an ongoing challenge."

Henk van Duijn,
President & CEO of IFDC





WORDS FROM IFDC COUNTRY DIRECTOR

Dear Partners,

Like every year, it's useful to take stock of the actions carried out by our organization in the country, the results achieved, the challenges and the lessons we need to learn in order to improve our interventions. **This IFDC BENIN Annual Report 2022**, which I have the honour and pleasure of presenting to you, has been drawn up with this in mind, and presents the various results achieved organization in the country by our organization with the support of our dedicated and diverse partners.

The year 2022 has presented us with even greater challenges than those encountered in 2021, both nationally and internationally. Indeed, following the contingencies of **COVID 19**, and the negative ripples of the **Ukrainian-Russian war**, the development factors of the local economy, necessary for the development of vulnerable communities, continue to suffer.

However, thanks to the determination of our **IFDC Benin** team and the renewed confidence of our various donors and traditional partners such as the Beninese government, and in particular the **Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAEP)**, the **Kingdom of the Netherlands**, **USAID**, the **IDB**, the **FAO**, and many others, we have been able to impact millions of Beninese to achieve food security and optimal mobilization of means of subsistence. To achieve this, we have contributed with them to the generation of technologies conducive to soil health and fertility, the improvement of agricultural productivity, the facilitation of market access for agricultural inputs and products, the promotion of agricultural value chains, the development of new technologies for the production of agricultural products, and the development of new technologies for the production of agricultural products adapted to low-income consumers (BoP), facilitating access to financing for actors in agricultural value chains, promoting good agricultural practices, promoting climate-smart agriculture, to name but a few.

Our interventions have mainly targeted vulnerable groups such as small-scale producers, low-income consumers, women's groups and young people.

In 2022, IFDC had the privilege of celebrating **20 years** of presence in Benin, with a series of Open Days on our current and past programs. It was also the occasion for the official launch of our major program, **Approche Communale pour le Marché Agricole (ACMA3)**, which we are implementing in collaboration with our partners **CARE International Benin-Togo** and **KIT**, with funding from the **Dutch Embassy**, to whom we would like to reiterate our thanks. **We salute the innovations and achievements of our outgoing Country Representative, Madame Lema Sayi**, who has welcomed and passed the baton to **IFDC's new Country Director in Benin**, in our person, **Mr Adodo Abalo**.

This report, which we strongly recommend you read, shows in detail our results and the interventions that enabled these results during 2022.

We can't end our speech without mentioning the fruitful collaboration that our institution, IFDC, has enjoyed with the **Government of Benin**, through its various Ministries, in particular our supervisory Ministry, the **Ministry in charge of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MAEP)**, and also with other Ministries such as: the **Ministry of Digital and Digitization**, the **Ministry of Trade**, the **Ministry of the Living Environment and Transport, in charge of Sustainable Development**, and not forgetting the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the **Government of Benin**, and in particular to the **Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries**, for their frank and fruitful collaboration.

Our thanks also go to our various backers who, despite the economic and monetary upheavals linked to the **Ukrainian-Russian war** and the **horrors of COVID 19**, have renewed their confidence in us by agreeing to finance our activities in 2022.

We cannot end our message without thanking our colleagues and collaborators at various levels of our organization, our implementation partners and beneficiaries in the field, with whom we are now one family, for their efforts. We would also like to thank Mrs Lema Sayi for her efforts on behalf of our organization throughout 2022.

I hope you enjoy reading this report.

1. INTRODUCTION

IFDC (International Fertilizer Development Center), founded in 1974 and based in Alabama, USA, is a public international institution working for food security and poverty reduction in developing countries through the development and dissemination of efficient soil fertility management technologies, and the development of agricultural input and output markets.

IFDC is recognized as a global center of excellence, with offices coordinating the implementation of activities in several countries in North and West Africa, East and Southern Africa and Asia. IFDC uniquely addresses the global issues of food security and poverty by bridging the gap between

research and impact, combining innovations based on science, the development of holistic market systems, an enabling policy environment and strategic partnerships to help farmers and countries identify and scale up sustainable agricultural solutions, including improved nutrient use efficiency. These approaches are needed to boost soil health and crop productivity while reducing the environmental impact of fertilizer use. IFDC translates research into action using local, environmentally friendly and impact-oriented solutions. Together with our partners, we seek to close the yield gap, eradicate world hunger, safeguard the soils on which our lives depend, and generate economic resilience for farm households and the countries in which they live.

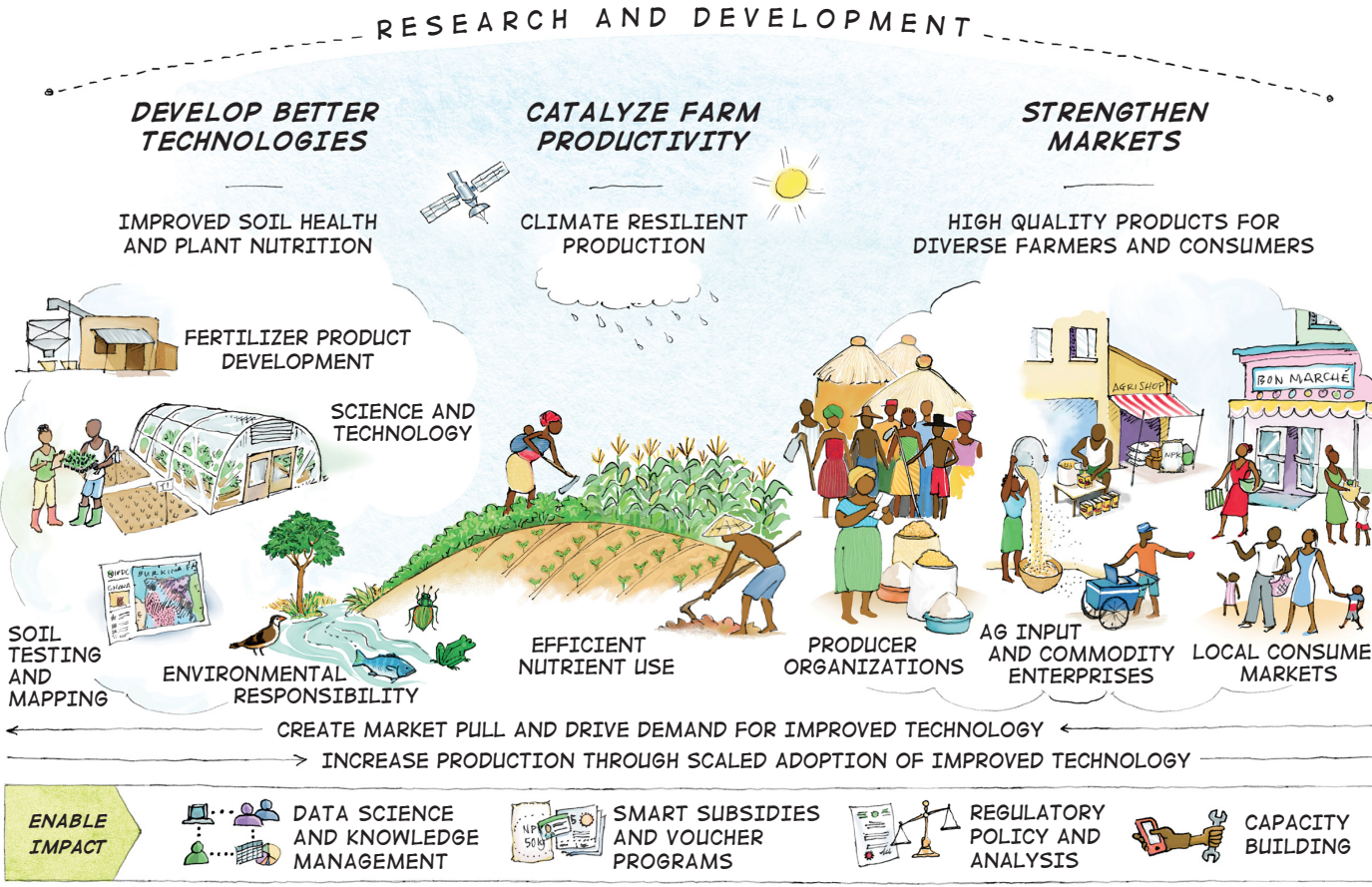


FIGURE 1. IFDC 2020-2030 strategy for feeding the world

A BRIEF HISTORY OF IFDC'S WORK IN BENIN

Since it opened in Benin in 2003, IFDC has contributed to rural development through the implementation of various projects and development programs, including the **Regional Market project of the TAAT (Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation) program and the Programme d'Amélioration de la Productivité Agricole des Petits Exploitants en Afrique subsaharienne (PAPAPE), inputs (MIR), the WACIP project (West African Cotton or Smallholders Agricultural Productivity Enhancement Improvement Program), the C4CP (Country 4 Cotton Partnership) project, the Thousands to Millions (1000s+) project, the Toward Sustainable Clusters in Agribusiness through Learning in Entrepreneurship' (2SCALE) program, the Approche Communale pour le Marché Agricole (ACMA) phase 1**

and 2 program and other projects relating to integrated soil fertility management.

More recently, IFDC has been assigned the role of leader of the consortium implementing phase 3 of the ACMA program (ACMA3), the fertility component Program (SAPEP). Benin is also one of the countries covered by the Feed the Future Program "Enhancing Growth through Regional Agricultural inputs Systems" (EnGRAIS) in West Africa. This report provides an overview of IFDC's interventions in Benin for the year 2022, the related investments, the alignment of activities with the Government's Action Plan and the major results achieved.

2. Current IFDC interventions in Benin

MISSION

With a view to contributing to rural development in developing countries, IFDC's mission is to develop, through a combination of innovative research, agricultural market expertise and strategic public-private partnerships, sustainable technologies for managing soil fertility and increasing agricultural productivity, which improve the income and well-being of both producers and entrepreneurs, while preserving the environment and natural resources.

Projects & programs implemented in 2022

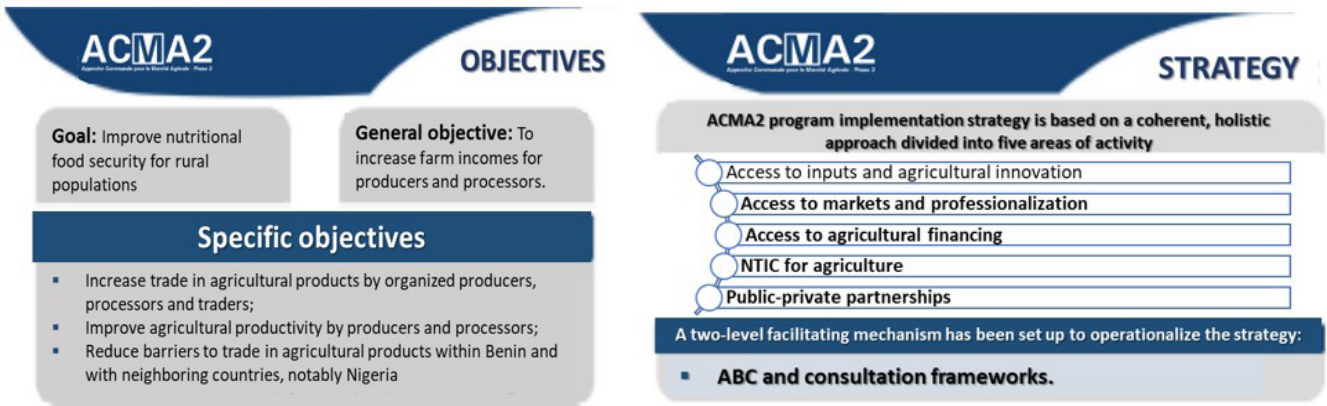
IFDC Benin is currently implementing **two (2)** projects and programs, including: **(i)** the development of agricultural value chains and market systems to facilitate producers' access to the agricultural and financial services they need to improve their productivity, and **(ii)** the improvement of producers' productivity through agro-ecological intensification and

professionalization.

Communal Approach to Agricultural Markets Program - Phase 2 (ACMA2)

Financed by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Benin to the tune of 21.1 million euros for a period of 5 years (2017-2022), the ACMA2 program aims to contribute to improving food and nutritional security for rural populations in Benin by improving the incomes of direct economic players at grassroots level. The program's target groups are producers, processors and traders, with a particular focus on young people (aged 18 to 35) and women in 28 communes in Benin's four departments: Ouémé, Plateau, Zou and Collines. The agricultural products targeted are: palm oil/palm nuts, corn, soybeans, groundnuts and their derivatives (oil and klui-klui), chillies, cassava and its derivatives (gari, tapioca, lafun, cossettes), and fish (fresh and smoked)..

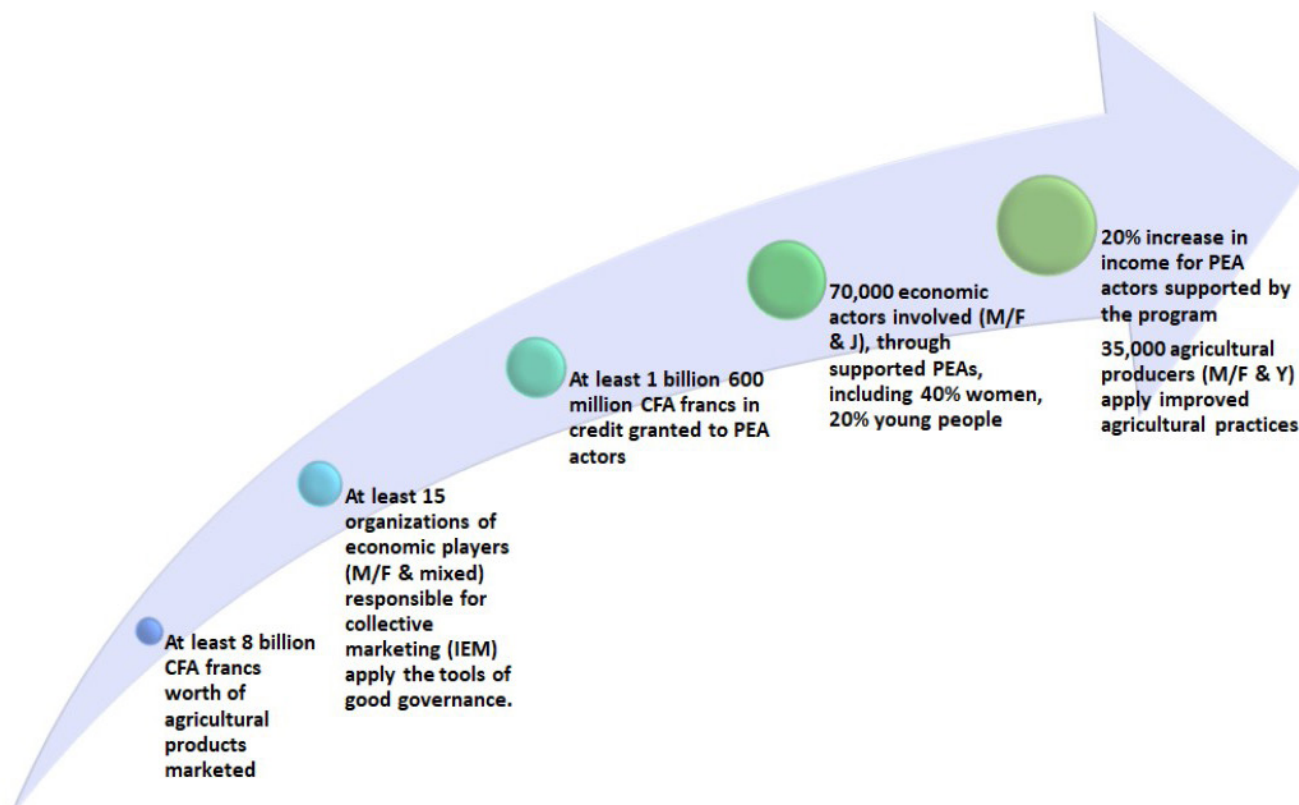
The program is implemented by IFDC in consortium with CARE International Benin-Togo and KIT.



The program's intervention strategy is based on facilitating mechanisms that will support the dynamics underway to strengthen the role of local stakeholders in adopting and adapting innovative, climate-resilient agricultural and agrifood practices, and in their business relationships. The strategy is based on a range of support including training/capacity building, facilitation and other interventions in five integrated result.



The ambitions of the ACMA2 program take into account the following aspects:



Feed the Future Enhancing Growth through Regional Agricultural Input Systems (EnGRAIS) Project

The Feed the Future Enhancing Growth through Regional Agricultural Input Systems (EnGRAIS) project for West Africa is a five-year project funded by the United States Agency for International Development. EnGRAIS seeks to address critical issues that limit the efficient supply and use of agricultural inputs in West Africa. EnGRAIS aims to bring about strong, positive and sustainable change to improve farmers' availability and access to appropriate, affordable and quality agricultural inputs. EnGRAIS works primarily with Regional Economic Communities, notably the Economic Community of West African States and the West African Economic and Monetary Union, as well as with public and private players in the fertilizer value chain in the region, to create the tools and environment necessary for farmers to increase their productivity.

The EnGRAIS project aims to contribute to sustainable agriculture productivity and improved inclusive growth for the people of West Africa. It promotes a competitive, inclusive and private sector-led regional fertilizer market.

ACMA3 Program

Officially launched on December 1, 2022, the "Approche communale pour le Marché Agricole - Phase 3" program is financed by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Benin to the tune of 20 million over a

5-year period from December 1, 2022 to November 30,

2027. The program operates in the Collines, Donga and Borgou regions, focusing on the following priority sectors: corn, cassava, soybeans, groundnuts, small ruminants, poultry and market gardening.

This program is implemented by IFDC in consortium with CARE Benin-Togo and the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT).

Its vision is as follows: "A dynamic and inclusive local economy (social cohesion) generating income and jobs and making a sustainable contribution to food and nutritional security, driven by a new class of young male and female entrepreneurs as vectors of transformation, based on an agricultural and agri-food sector resilient to climate change and economic shocks, and supported by an agribusiness and agro-entrepreneurship support system accessible to all (financial and technical support services, TIC4Ag, IEMs) and a conducive environment (business climate)."

The aim of the ACMA3 program is to facilitate systemic change aimed at sustainable income growth and job creation, supported by the emergence of a private agricultural and agri-food sector.

The quantitative and qualitative ambitions of the ACMA3 program are defined as follows:

200,000 economic actors (M/F & J), through the Agricultural Enterprise Poles (PEA) supported. 55% women, 40% young people.

At the end of the five-year intervention, 140,000 economic actors will have seen their incomes and/or agricultural yields increase significantly;

At least 50 billion CFA francs worth of agricultural products (processed or not) and inputs will have been marketed;

The ACMA3 program intends to create 5,000 new jobs for young people and women in the intervention zones;

At least 5 billion CFA francs in credit will have been facilitated for economic players in the value chains promoted;

80,000 ha of land will have been cultivated eco-efficiently;

40,000 economic players to make strategic business management decisions using information provided by TIC4Ag solutions;

At least 20 organizations of economic actors (M/F or mixed organizations) in charge of collective marketing (within SMIs) operate on the basis of good governance practices.

Alignment with Benin's agricultural policy & PAG

The above-mentioned IFDC projects/programs implemented in Benin address a range of issues, including soil fertility management and improved agricultural productivity, market access through the promotion of agricultural value chains and the development of competitive agricultural products, improved access to financing for players in agricultural value chains, management of the environment and risks linked to climate change, as well as taking into account vulnerable groups such as women and young people.

IFDC's actions in Benin reflect the strategic orientations and expected effects and impacts of the Government of Benin's Strategic Plan for the Development of the Agricultural Sector (PSDSA) up to the year 2025.

In general, IFDC's interventions in Benin are in line with most of the main thrusts on which the PSDSA is based. The projects implemented are in line with the priority programs drawn up under the PAG and integrate the PAG's target value chains (maize, cassava, fish and market garden produce)..

3. IFDC's main activities & results in Benin in 2021

2022 was the last year of implementation of phase 2 of the ACMA Program, and the start-up year of phase 3.

ACMA2 PROGRAM

Nearly 93,500 people have been impacted by ACMA2. Beneficiaries are farmers, processors or traders (57% women, 33% young people and 43% men). The program has facilitated the adoption of good agricultural practices and promoted strategic information accessible on its ICT4Ag platform. Some 29,000 people (including 43.7% women and 44.4% young people) have subscribed to these services, some of which are chargeable. All in all, more than 75,000 hectares were cultivated in an eco-efficient way; more than 100,000 tonnes of agricultural products were marketed by the players for a sales value of more than 27 billion. Nearly 4.1 billion FCFA in credit has been facilitated, including around 250 million through digital finance, to support production, processing and marketing activities.

Activities

» Human capital is developed at producer level to increase their capacity

to innovate and their resilience in the face of climate change.

- » Skills are transferred to state, association and private agricultural structures (OPAs, NGOs and consultancies) in terms of intensifying agricultural production and adapting to climate change.
- » Multi-stakeholder committees are set up and trained to better manage the infrastructure that generates income for stakeholders.
- » Skills are being developed for infrastructure users to access institutional markets (WFP, IBCG).
- » The CPD (Pedagogical Demonstration Fields) scheme has introduced good farming practices to boost production.
- » "The systematic use of TIC4Ag, in particular the Technical Information and Training System (SIFT) of the ACMA2 program, has enabled the effective empowerment of thousands of players in the value chains of targeted products.
- » Appui spécial à l'Intensification Agricole (ASIA) has proved to be a relevant tool for supporting young people and women in the effective adoption of good agricultural practices.

- » Supported Professional Agricultural Organizations (PAOs) that have internalized the principles of good governance have mobilized and commercialized large volumes of agricultural produce.
- » The market information system works, and other institutions use it for their players through the Harmonized SIM facilitated by ACMA2, which is currently operating under the leadership of the MAEP.
- » In 2022, the program facilitated the implementation of a digital warrantage monitoring tool.
- » Financing has been an effective instrument for mobilizing product supply for the market. Digital finance has been a tool for financial inclusion.
- » The training of players in various areas such as marketing and commercial negotiations, product quality and good governance has contributed to the development of human capital.
- » The Collines inter-communal consultation framework (CCIC - Collines) is up and running. Mayors have supported PEA players in their search for cross-border markets.
- » The Zou inter-communal consultation framework (CCIC - Zou) is also functional. Advocacy campaigns for young people's access to arable land have been carried out in Zou. The cadre de concertation inter-communal Ouémé-Plateau (CCIC - Plateau-Ouémé) is also operational, bringing together 12 communes from the two departments. It has developed a high degree of autonomy in planning and implementing actions to improve the business climate.

Results

- » "Nearly 72,000 people trained in good agricultural practices - 40% of them women and 44% young people).
- » Tools developed and transferred to OPAs and other institutional players (ATDA, DDAEP, communes, etc.).
- » More than 200 multi-stakeholder committees have been set up and trained to improve the management of the infrastructures that generate income for stakeholders.
- » 285 Learning Plots (LPs) have been set up to disseminate 7 technologies and Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) to intensify agricultural production. These are (i) the practice of restitution of harvest residues; (ii) the practice of crop rotation; (iii) the use of organic manure/manure/compost; (iv) the use of mid-neral fertilizers (NPK, Urea); (v) the use of approved pesticides and improved seeds; (vi) respect for sowing density and (vii) sowing in rows.
- » Intensification of agricultural production on more than 84,000 hectares cultivated eco-efficiently, and improved yields for farmers, including women and young people.
- » 13 soil fertility maps produced in the ACMA2 program area.
- » More than twenty instructional videos and audios put online through the Technical Information and Training System (SIFT) on the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) of the technical production itinerary for the crops targeted by the program. Videos made and translated into 7 languages (including French and six local languages)
- » Effective adoption of good agricultural practices by 32,608 agricultural producers, including 6,866 young people and 18,681 women. This performance was also achieved thanks to the implementation of a

mechanism to increase the resilience of small-scale producers, known as "Appui spécial à l'Intensification Agricole (ASIA)", which has proved to be an effective tool for supporting the development of small-scale producers.

- » 16 Professional Agricultural Organizations (PAOs) have adopted the principles of good governance, notably transparency, inclusion and accountability.
- » 109,629 tonnes of agricultural produce were mobilized and marketed, representing a total of 27.34 billion euros in sales over five (5) years.
- » In 2022, the program facilitated the implementation of a digital warrantage monitoring tool. This tool facilitates the systematic recording of deposit data.
- » The Collines inter-communal consultation framework (CCIC - Collines) signed a commercial partnership agreement that led to a contract for 100 tonnes of gari with private players (traders' association) in Malanville and gari processors in the Collines.

The Approche Communale pour le Marché Agricole (ACMA) program, in its phase 2, has invested more in capacity-building in terms of observance of good agricultural practices, with respect for Mother Earth. Moïse HOUNDOU, President of the Union Communale des Coopératives Maraîchères de Dassa-Zoumé (Itagui), in the Kèrè district of Benin, testifies to having taken advantage of this to improve his pepper production yield.

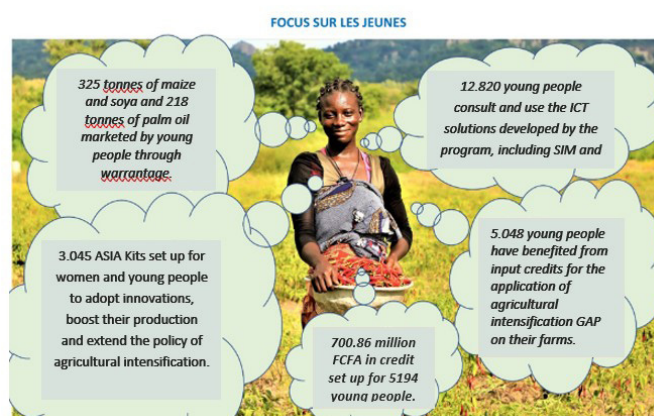


FIGURE 2. ACMA 2 results in 2022, Focus on young people

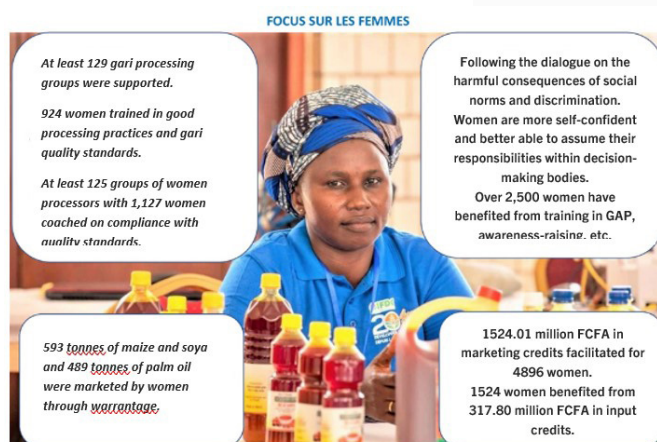


FIGURE 3. ACMA2 in 2022, Focus on women

"I'm married with seven children, and I've been involved in market gardening since I was very young. Four years ago, I was elected head of the **Union Communale des Coopératives Maraîchères de Dassa-Zoumé**. In the commune, most farmers grow chillies according to ancient cultivation practices, with numerous difficulties linked in particular to pest management from the nursery, the organization of players and access to production factors. The cultivation system often encountered is rain-fed, and the players do not have a good command of water.

In 2018, the ACMA program identified us as targets for its interventions. At the time, we had expressed our various problems mentioned above. In this way, ACMA2 has taken into account the real needs of the producers we are. A market-garden production infrastructure with an irrigation system was then built for us, followed by SAEs including RAD-ONG, were made available to us for capacity-building on innovative pepper-growing systems and input mobilization and marketing channels.

RAD-ONG technicians were at our disposal on a daily basis during the last two production campaigns.

Their support focused on adopting and scaling up the GAPs tested and promoted by ACMA2, and facilitating access to production factors and markets, all with a view to making us self-sufficient. We achieved exceptional results on the Itagui perimeter with the intensification option promoted by ACMA2. This option combined several types of inputs in precise proportions. The seeds used were certified. I remembered it like it was yesterday. Indeed, we had already discovered through the Demonstration Fields that yields were different.

What's more, over the years, production yields have been even better, as our mastery of GAP has improved.

In 2021, my long pepper yield was estimated at around 6 tonnes/ha, compared with 1 tonne/ha when I was using the old practices. The best grower this year had an estimated yield of over 8 tons/ha. We analyze the markets with the help of the facilitator at the marketing to always avoid losses. In certain circumstances, we even sold fresh chillies instead of dried ones. In 2021, my colleague Paul harvested around 253 kg of fresh chilli peppers for a profit of 85650 FCFA from the same 400 m² plot, with a margin of over 40,000 FCFA.8

At the start of the support program, ACMA2 and Africa Green Corporation helped us obtain a loan for our production activities. The nineteen cooperatives working on the site in 2020 obtained a loan of seven million two hundred and eighty thousand CFA francs (7,280,000 FCFA). This was used to finance production costs, in particular the purchase of inputs. But this year, yields were not satisfactory. In fact, we were unable to mobilize inputs on time, and the technical production itinerary was not strictly adhered to. As postharvest preservation techniques were not as well mastered at the outset, many losses were recorded.

The irrigation system also broke down, and water shortages recurred. If we couldn't achieve our objectives with the much desired loans, I think that money alone was not enough to succeed in our production activities. The money we borrowed could not be repaid. Admittedly, it hasn't all been easy. In 2021, RAD-ONG helped us to establish better organizational discipline. This was complemented by on-site technical monitoring, training for pools of relay producers in Good Agricultural Practices and digital finance, and facilitating the supply of inputs and access to markets. The irrigation system has also been repaired, with water reservoirs recently built. And the results have been immediate! At present, thanks to our production, we have repaid all our loans with margins to finance our family needs, and the current campaign will be even better."



FIGURE 4. Round pepper plant at the Hydro agricole site in Itagui

EnGRAIS

Activities

The implementation of the ENGRAIS and “Partnership for Agricultural Research, Education and Development (PAIRED)” projects has led to the development of innovations designed to encourage producers to derive greater benefit from the use of agricultural input packages (AIPs) and the FeSeRWAM interactive platform, which illustrates the Fertilizer and Seed Recommendation Map for West Africa.

Its operation consists of combining, for a given crop, choices of improved seed varieties and appropriate fertilizer recommendations, supported by Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) specific to agroecological zones. In 2022, EnGRAIS published the revised version of the fertilizer and seed recommendation map for West Africa and agricultural input packages (FeSeRWAM/PIA version 2.0) www.feserwam.com.

A workshop was held from November 15 to 18, 2022 in Parakou, Benin, on the theme of “Training trainers and producers to disseminate FeSeRWAM platform PIAs”. Objective: to familiarize participants, represented by Communal Cell Managers and private service providers from emerging priority sectors in Agricultural Development Poles (PDA) 1, 2, 3 and 4, with the FeSeRWAM platform and how to use it. Specifically, the workshop aimed to :

- » Provide participants with tools for andragogy, i.e. the practice of teaching adult learners ;
- » Provide participants with basic information to better understand

The workshop was attended by some forty participants, including six (6) women from state institutions and the private sector involved in research and agricultural consultancy in PDAs 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The participants represent the Agences Territoriales de Développement Agricole (ATDA) 1, 2, 3 and 4, the Prestataires privés du Conseil Agricole- inter- venant dans les PDA 1,2 3 et 4, and the Fédération Nationale des Producteurs de Semences (FNPS).

With the aim of facilitating rapid adoption of the FeSeRWAM platform and improving knowledge and mastery of Agricultural Input Packages (AIP), IFDC and CORAF organized a training workshop for national trainers on the use of the FeSeRWAM platform and Agricultural Input Packages in Benin. The workshop was attended by forty two (42) participants, including

fourteen (14) women from INRAB, ATDA 5, ATDA 6, ATDA 7, OPAs, public and private agricultural advisory services, and DCAIFE (see Appendix).

This report describes the progress of the training course held from November 23 to 25, 2022 in the conference room of the Hôtel les Oliviers in Porto-Novo. At the end of the proceedings, a roadmap (table 1) was drawn up by the participants for the restitution of the work to grassroots users of the various structures represented at the workshop. It was also recommended that IFDC organize a workshop on the definition of an operational mode for the dissemination of innovations, involving structures such as DCAIFE, INRAB and ATDA.

Results

- » “EnGRAIS has developed 43 Benin-specific AIPs to help Benin’s agriculturists increase their productivity and improve their livelihoods.
- » Stakeholders in Benin have acquired the skills needed to train and advise farmers on best management practices for fertilizer use.
- » The Bulk Fertilizer Blending Guide for West Africa tackles the challenges posed by poor fertilizer blending practices and harmonizes blending activities to align them with international standards that help Benin blenders improve the quality of their fertilizers.
- » The cost simulator benefits all players in the fertilizer supply chain, including those in Benin, as it is a free cost management tool for the supply, import, blending and trading of fertilizers in West Africa.
- » Over 500 copies (in French and English) of WAFBIG were printed and distributed across West Africa to provide advice, data and information to a range of stakeholders, including those in Benin, on fertilizer prices and the market crisis, and to update stakeholders on fertilizer trade and consumption.
- » Following the launch of FeSeRWAM version 2.0, EnGRAIS carried out FeSeRWAM dissemination activities in several countries, including Benin, and conducted training programs at national level.

ACMA3

The year 2022 saw the finalization of the ACMA3 project proposal. The same year saw the approval of the project proposal. To ensure continuity of the results achieved in previous phases, most of the staff were redeployed to work on the new phase. Now extended to the north of Benin (Borgou, Donga, Collines), the program’s management team used the year 2022 to look for a site to house the Parakou premises. The next step was to organize the move of all the professional equipment needed for the installation. This was followed by the fitting-out of the premises and the technical installations essential for the start-up of activities on the site and in the new areas. During the same year, IFDC facilitated the relocation of staff and recruited new staff. démarrage des activités sur le site et dans les nouvelles zones. Au cours de cette même année, IFDC a facilité le déplacement du staff puis procédé aux recrutements des nouveaux staffs.



FIGURE 5. A group photo of the FeSeRWAM workshop

4. IFDC'S KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN BENIN IN 2022

FAO/ PROCAR TRAINING WORKSHOP

Over the past few years, IFDC has developed expertise in developing market systems to link small-scale producers to the market. The institution played a very active role in the PADAAM training workshop on linking producers to markets, held in Bohicon from August 16 to 20, 2022, at the request of the FAO. The training was co-led by executives from FAO, IFDC and PADAAM. Six objectives were set for this sharing event:

1. Analyze the theory and principles of the relationship between farmers and markets.
2. Strengthen participants' skills in facilitating small producers' access to markets
3. Strengthen participants' skills in ICT solutions to facilitate market access for small-scale producers.
4. Put theory into practice through case studies and field visits
5. Share success stories with participants on how small-scale producers can access markets.
6. Share with participants approaches to improving the business environment for farmers

The workshop was moderated by three IFDC staff: Olga KOKODE; Mathias AHOUNOU; Adodo ABALO.

The welcome address by IFDC-Benin Resident Representative Françoise LEMA SAYI, followed by that of PADAAM Project Manager Serges Olivier AKPOVO, and that of FAO Resident Representative Christian GOMEZ set the scene.

Over a dozen papers presented by various experts, including several from IFDC, filled the three days of training. Some of the topics covered included :

- » Competition strategy, coordination mechanism in agricultural value chains: the 2SCALE logic with the CASE approach
- » Strategy for building productive partnerships (4P, simple contract, and joint venture)
- » SOCIA Benin case study
- » The IFDC business cluster construction method
- » The strategy for managing a customer's needs within the framework of a public-private partnership.
- » Sharing experiences of access to institutional and ordinary markets
- » BoP's market conquest strategy
- » New information and communication technologies for agriculture and market information systems (MIS)

The importance of ICTs for agriculture and their use is the quintessence of this communication. The experience of the ACMA2 project, through the implementation of an IT ecosystem, has enabled the development of applications directly linked to the needs of actors in agricultural value chains. This IT ecosystem is made up of :

- ✓ Agri-wallet
- ✓ EMI management
- ✓ Player management
- ✓ SIM (market information system)

- ✓ SIFT
- ✓ IGNITIA
- ✓ Post-credit monitoring platform
- ✓ E-commerce

Open Door

From October 31 to November 03, 2022, International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) celebrated 20 years of presence and activity in Benin with an Open House. IFDC's theme was "20 years in Benin: Developing agriculture from the ground up". The aim of the IFDC Open Days in BENIN is to raise awareness of IFDC through various platforms. The organization of the Open Days aims to improve IFDC's visibility, its positioning in the transformation of agricultural systems in priority regions and countries, and its relations with partners and donors. Its specific objectives are as follows.

- » Create more visibility for IFDC in Benin,
- » Strengthen relationships and partnerships for better collaboration and synergy of action.
- » Present IFDC's innovative technologies and results in Benin and worldwide,
- » Identify and attract new donors and partners.

The Open House in Benin was attended by the Dutch Embassy in Benin, the Ministries of Agriculture, Digitization, Trade and Foreign Affairs, government departments, prefectures, town halls, non-governmental organizations, regional and international organizations, the World Bank, UEMOA, the Peace Corps and other key partners in the implementation of IFDC's various projects and programs in Benin, as well as students and agricultural economic actors.

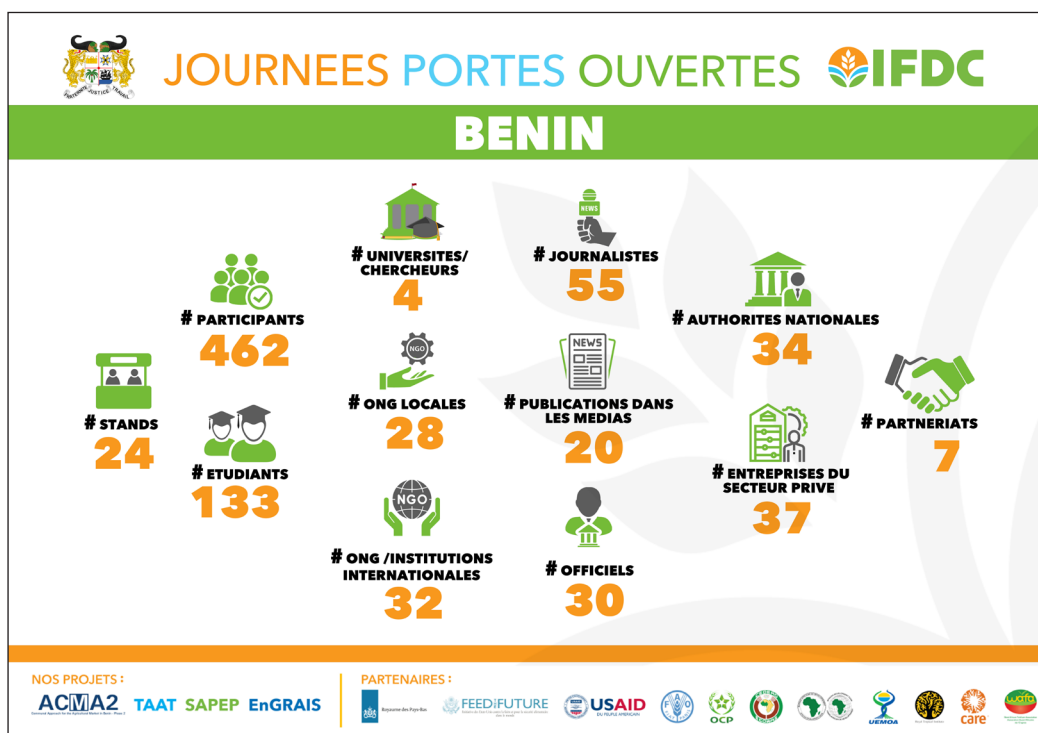
Another feature of the JPO was its focus on BtoB meetings, exhibitions and stand visits. This was an opportunity for exhibitors to present and promote their products. A step that was greatly appreciated by participants.

The launch of the ACMA3 Program in Parakou was the final stage of this major event. It was devoted to the official launch of the ACMA3 Program, the visit of exhibition stands and the closing of the JPO.

The event was attended by the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Benin, and representatives of the Ministries of Commerce, Digitization and Foreign Affairs. Also present were prefects, mayors and other authorities from the program's intervention zones. In summary, the impact of this event can be measured as follows:

Teamwork between IFDC staff in Benin, the Business Development team and the Global Communications team contributed to the success of the Open Days and the Official Launch of the ACMA3 Program. The inclusion of current and former agricultural actors and partners in the organization of the mini-fair broadened the horizon of events.

The inclusion of a fertilizer exhibition in the fair is a very practical way of sharing IFDC's core competencies and activities. The organization of the event in Cotonou and Parakou shows that IFDC covers the country. The presence of the Minister of Agriculture at all stages of the event shows how much IFDC's interventions in Benin are appreciated by the Beninese government, and the openness of the Minister of Agriculture to supporting IFDC in Benin.



5. PARTNERSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS & LOCAL NGOS

With a view to ensuring synergy of action for the benefit of stakeholders, IFDC is developing partnerships with projects, NGOs and other support structures operating in the same area, in order to exchange experiences and develop synergies and complementarities in the implementation of agricultural development activities. The following table shows the synergies developed.

Tableau 1. Synergie et complémentarité avec quelques partenaires

Projects/Programs	Service area	Action areas	Opportunities for ACMA2 to develop synergy and complementarity
» The project to support agricultural development in the Collines department (PADAC)	Collines Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Access to agricultural investment in communes » Land tenure security and support for communal land management » Institutional support, including the collection and analysis of agricultural statistics in the department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ACMA2 exchanges information with PADAC staff to avoid duplicating investments in the Collines department. » Collaboration focuses on the collection and analysis of agricultural statistics in the department through the DDAEP, which PADAC supports in this activity.

Projects/Programs	Service area	Action areas	Opportunities for ACMA2 to develop synergy and complementarity
» Projet d'appui aux infrastructures agricoles dans la vallée de l'Ouémé (PAIA-VO).	Ouémé Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Hydro-agricultural development and intensification of production (maize, rice and market gardening) » Construction of trading and storage infrastructures » Training and setting up young businesses » Provision of materials, equipment and critical inputs (basic kits) for young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Since phase 1, the ACMA program has developed synergies with PAIA-VO. For example, PAIA-VO invested in the rehabilitation of the track leading to the Malomè chilli market, which was rehabilitated by ACMA2 in Dangbo. » Since phase 1, ACMA has connected women's groups supported by PAIA-VO in the Mis-séré-té commune to the market and to financing.
» Agricultural development and market access support project (PADAAM)	Northern Benin (Ouémé, Atlantique, Mono Plateau, Zou, Couffo et Collines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Strengthening partnerships and creating added value: marketing agricultural products and building the capacity of stakeholders » Improved productivity and agricultural production (corn, rice and cassava): access to inputs and agricultural advisory services, construction of warehouses and development of lowlands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Discussions are underway with ProCaR national coordination to develop synergies between ACMA2 and PADAAM. » A PADAAM staff member takes part in the SC members' meeting
» Projet de Vulgarisation de l'Aquaculture Continentale au Bénin - phase II (PROVAC II) (Benin Aquaculture Extension Project - Phase II)	Northern Benin (Ouémé, Atlantique, Mono Plateau, Zou, Couffo et Collines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Farmer-to-farmer" extension approach in the 7 PROVAC target departments¹ » Improving fish farming productivity and diversifying fish farming techniques in PROVAC's 7 departments¹ » Improving the financing environment for fish farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Collaboration with PROVAC2 is already operational, as joint training courses have been organized since the first phase of ACMA. » This collaboration has continued with ACMA2, with PROVAC2 providing technical training for fish farmers and ACMA2 focusing on market research and commercial negotiations.
» World Food Programme (WFP) - Benin	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » School canteen program » Local Purchasing Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Institutional market available » Discussions to consolidate market opportunities for PEA actors
» Energy4 Impact	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Promotion and support for users of solar equipment, i.e. small-scale farmers/processors » Training of trainers for solar companies and agricultural projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Diagnose technical problems and provide technical support/ options in EMIs where ACMA2 has installed solar equipment

Projects/Programs	Service area	Action areas	Opportunities for ACMA2 to develop synergy and complementarity
» GIZ/ProCIVA	Collines, Borgou et Alibori	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Support for small farms » Support for small and medium-sized businesses » Institutional support » Farm machinery » ICT applied to agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Sharing of areas of intervention between ACMA2 and ProCIVA's soybean SAEs to avoid duplication of activities and funding. » Sharing of experience on the Ignitia solution for farm-scale climate forecasting as part of climate change mitigation in agriculture.
» Integrated Project for the Digital Transformation of Rural Regions (PITN2R) - MND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Alibori, Borgou, Donga, Atacora et les Collines and covers 2128 villages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Extending connectivity to rural areas » Digital financial inclusion and digital solutions for rural development » Project implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Discussions underway to strengthen the national e-agriculture promotion system.
» German Technical Cooperation (GIZ) Agricultural Policy Advisory Support Project (ProACPA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National implementation of coherent policies in the poultry and soybean sectors, based on rigorous evidence and analysis; • Improving access to market information for actors in the soybean and poultry sectors; • Creation of relationships and business networks between actors in the soybean and poultry sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Development and implementation of coherent policies in the poultry and soybean sectors, based on rigorous evidence and analysis; » Improving access to market information for actors in the soybean and poultry sectors; » Creation of relationships and business networks between actors in the soybean and poultry sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Discussions were held with ProACPA's national coordination to develop synergies with ACMA2. » We took part in their national workshop on the organization of the soybean sector. This workshop was organized by ATDA 4, with whom we already collaborate.
» Rural Development Sector Support Program, phase 3 (PASDeR3) - La Coopération Suisse	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The territorialization of agriculture » Promoting sectors through the development of agricultural value chains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ACMA2 has participated in the development of an integrated strategy for the delivery of agricultural advice, the establishment of agricultural clusters and the implementation of a market information system. » Discussions have been held with project coordinators to explore mechanisms for making SIM and SIFT available to PASDeR3 beneficiaries.
» The DEFIA - ENABEL program	Northern Benin ; Pôle 7 (5 et 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Development of entrepreneurial coaching and agricultural advisory services, » Financing productive investment, » Connecting/facilitating business links between actors (producers, processors, traders, financial and non-financial service providers). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Discussions are well advanced to make SIM and SIFT available to the beneficiaries of the DEFIA program.

Projects/Programs	Service area	Action areas	Opportunities for ACMA2 to develop synergy and complementarity
» Benibiz (Technoserve)	» National (except Littoral)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Support for youth entrepreneurship and SMEs » Access to financing for young people and SMEs 	» Entrepreneurial capacity building for young PEAs supported by ACMA2 in the departments of Oumé, Plateau, Zou and Collines
» Youth Employment Project to Improve Food Security in North Benin (EJASA, SNV)	» Alibori and Atacora Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Focus on market gardening, poultry, small ruminants and soybeans » Access to finance, innovation and markets for young people (men and women) » Capacity-building for employability and inclusiveness in decision-making bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » ACMA2 will share its experiences with the EJASA project on soybean, access to finance, innovation and markets » ACMA2 is already discussing the possibility of integrating young people into the TIC4Ag scheme to strengthen youth entrepreneurship.
» Stakeholder capacity-building project to develop a mutually supportive value chain for pepper and tomato pickling (ICRA and Africa Green Corporation)	processing unit in Dassa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Connection with pepper and tomato growers for production contracts » Tomato and pepper processing at the Dassa Zoumè plant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Providing market opportunities for pepper growers in the Itagui irrigated perimeter (Dassa) supported by ACMA2 » Joint activities are already underway at the Itagui market garden site (Dassa).
» SafeVeg project (World Vegetables Center)	Benin, Burkina et Mali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Testing innovative interventions for vegetables that are accessible, affordable and acceptable to consumers » Promoting greater use of sustainable agricultural practices Improving productivity with networks of market gardeners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Meetings are scheduled with project management in Benin to collaborate on using SafeVeg project innovations for ACMA2-supported actors in the chilli pepper value chain. » An opportunity to get future ideas for the continuation of ACMA2

In addition to these projects/programs, IFDC has developed partnerships with Structures d'Appui Entrepreneurial (SAE), made up of NGOs and farmers' organizations. Over the course of the year 2022, partnerships were developed with SAEs for the installation of educational demonstration fields around innovative technologies for increasing agricultural productivity and support for agricultural business clusters to improve their competitiveness. The SAEs concerned are ANaF, Africa Green, OPADEB, CBDIBA, UNPS, ABS, ADDB. In addition to NGOs and farmers' organizations, consulting firms are also called in to provide ad hoc support for the structuring of cooperatives and farmers' organizations. To this end, COTEF was consulted on the structuring of producers' organizations. As part of the promotion of agricultural digitization, partnership contracts have been signed with FUPRO, a large-scale producers' federation.

6. Conclusion and outlook

During 2022, IFDC invested in agricultural development, focusing on the issues of innovation and fertilizer procurement. Indeed, the impact of the war in Ukraine led to a rise in the price of inputs, making some of them inaccessible, which had an impact on the launch of agricultural campaigns.

By drawing on its expertise and experience, IFDC has been able to strengthen the resilience of small-scale farmers and continue to promote good farming practices, integrated soil fertility management and climate-smart agriculture.

2023 represents an important scaling-up year for IFDC in Benin, despite the current economic challenges and the shortage of inputs at local level. Through its projects and programs, IFDC will focus on supporting its stakeholders in the adoption of good agricultural practices such as the

development of organic fertilizers, compost, the use of seeds requiring less fertilizer and conservation agriculture. It will also develop new opportunities to support the government in implementing its policy and achieving its agricultural objectives.

To this end, IFDC will be scrutinizing the various calls for proposals aimed at improving Benin's agricultural system, supporting producers in their efforts to cope with climatic hazards, improving their production and income, adapting agriculture to the climate, and demonstrating good methods for restoring and preserving soil fertility.

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