



ENHANCING CAPACITIES ON INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURE TRADE AGREEMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL AGRICULTURE AND FOOD MARKETS

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1ST YEAR OF ECIATA PROJECT COMPLETED



The 1st year of the 3-phase ECIATA project has been successfully completed by the project partners. This culminated in the generation of a Comprehensive Needs Assessment Report of Partner countries and a summarized regional report. The report is the result of extensive outreach, collaboration and consultation between the Academic Partners and key target groups, stakeholders and beneficiaries to assess existing policy, legislation

and institutional framework in relation to the implementation of the ECOWAS Agriculture Policy (ECOWAP) and the CAADP (Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme) in targeted countries in the West Africa sub-region. The country needs assessment reports produced by the Partners, assessed the negotiating capacities of government agriculture and trade officials to help identify Curriculum and Training Courses for capacity-building needs in the region. This is aimed at collaborations between the Academic Community and regional governments, private sector, farmers groups and Civil Society in enhancing trade policy and negotiation capacity skills in partner countries. The reports also looks at the levels of implementation of ECOWAP in the partner countries and across the region and the role of trade agreements in its effective implementation. The ECIATA project study contributed to the academic community's input to enhanced research skills on trade policy which impacts

on the agriculture sector. It has provided the opportunity amongst the Partners to share best practices on agriculture and trade policy aimed at supporting government and regional institutions in the implementation of agriculture policy. This also has the potentials to benefit the overall agriculture sector, regional integration and the development of the regional food markets for food security, sustainable development and poverty reduction.

Some key element of the project report are the relevance of the Academic Community in building national and regional capacities on trade negotiations and its contribution to agriculture and food security policies of the countries in the West Africa sub-region, as well as national agriculture policies of the partner countries and how they interrelate with existing bilateral and multilateral trade policies. The key agro-exports produced by each partner country and the institutional and policy framework supporting the production and exports of these crops are also presented. Also examined was how existing trade policies will help promote the development of Livestock and fisheries industries in the region and their contribution to food security @.

Culled from project final report



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MODERN YAM RECIPES BOOK LAUNCHED

A book on modern Yam recipes has been launched to encourage the usage and consumption of African foods internationally

Author: Dorothy -Dee Ann Woode



Locally this would help attract more tourists and also help strengthen the hospitality industry and generate income for the

country. The 60 page recipe book was first launched in Milton Keynes in the United Kingdom and later in Accra, Ghana. While launching the book, the Deputy Minister for Tourism and Creative Arts Hon. Dzifa Gomashie Abla said that, the "Modern Yam Recipe" book has been launched at the right time since it will go a long way to help the cookery industries and other institutions to realize the relevant and the nutritional of a yam. It will also boost the agricultural industry by encouraging farmers to increase yam production for both international and local market. She has therefore called on researchers and relevant stakeholders to endeavor to come out with a research on yam preservation and its processing in order to avoid its wastage in the country.

According to the author of the book, Dorothy -Dee Ann Woode, Chef Director, African International Culinary Education -AICE, yam is a good source of Vitamin B6 which has been shown to reduce risk of heart diseases. It is also high in potassium which helps to control blood pressure. The author is also passionate about the export of African foods and cuisine on the international market. She states that when African foods are accepted and consumed internationally it will assist farmers and



promote income generation and economic

development for the agricultural sector in Africa @. Elsie Okulaja: Communication Officer, ECIATA Project, info@eciata-winneba.com

JOINT BORDER POST BETWEEN TOGO & GHANA WOULD BOOST ECOWAS AGRICULTURE TRADE

The recently inaugurated European Union funded Joint Border post between Ghana and Togo has the potentials to benefit the regional agriculture sector amongst ECOWAS States in their role as exporters as well as importers of agro-products allowing better access to inputs for production and greater participation in the international trading system.

Trade facilitation has been ranked as one of the highest priorities for export growth and Government identified needs relating to border administration in order to improve the operational capacity of service. These include training and capacity building for customs officers and other relevant trade facilitation agencies, particularly on valuation, control and release of goods, and risk management. The major barriers to increased export volumes and diversification in West Africa are not foremost constrained by factors related to trade procedures. The underlying obstacles are lack of proper infrastructure, low levels of technology, lack of skilled labour and high bureaucracy. Furthermore, the agriculture export sector in most West African countries is constrained by the high regulations on the world market.

The Joint Border post between Ghana and Togo would facilitate trade within the ECOWAS Region

The recently Conference of Ministers of Trade at the AU held in December 2014, reaffirmed the importance of Trade Facilitation to the economies of African including enhanced infrastructure and boosting productive and trade capacities, in addition to reducing transaction costs, barriers, incentivizing the undertaking of reforms and improvements to the customs regulatory systems as well as boosting intra-African trade.

The Joint Border post between Ghana and Togo would facilitate trade between the Eastern and Western countries within the ECOWAS Region. More so it would help to increase the revenue for governments, reduce waiting times at borders, lead to lower incidence of



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HIV/AIDS and make it easier for traders with perishable agriculture commodities to engage in formal trade. This would help to reduce the volume of informal cross-border transaction within the region and in particular for women engaged in cross-border agro-trade would facilitate formalities to allow them to enter the formal economy more easily @. Elsie Okulaja: Communication Officer, ECIATA Project, info@eciata-winneba.com

Are GMOs a Threat or an Opportunity for the Agriculture Sector in Africa?

Consumers who are opposed to the application of genetic engineering in food production argue that using this technology in crop production has significant negative consequences. They fear that inserted genes could be allergenic or harmful to human health. Examples of such fear included a possibility of new genes inadvertently causing plants to produce toxins at higher levels than are present naturally, which could create long-term negative health consequences. Further, genes from genetically modified plants may escape into the environment through cross-fertilization, posing risks to the natural ecosystem.



Moral issues surrounding the technology have manifested in the form of a belief system that it is immoral to alter God's creations using genetic engineering techniques. Others have pointed to the inequitable distribution of the

economic benefits of such technologies. For example, many believe that multinational biotech corporations are the main beneficiaries of agro-biotechnology while consumers especially farmers in developing countries assume most of the risks involved. Further, increasing control of multinational corporations over small-scale family farming and gradual disappearance of small farms (e.g. dairy industry) could affect food security and agriculture production in Africa. Other risks of genetically modified crops include potential hazards to natural ecosystem and human health.

On the other hand, supporters of technologies of genetic manipulation argue that the application of such to crop production will bring substantial benefits to societies while revolutionizing the way crops are produced to help enhance food security and agriculture productivity. Some of the specific benefits of the technology include improved environmental quality by reducing the use of pesticides and herbicides in crop production and improved nutritional value of foods (e.g., rice with improved quantities of Vitamin A; soybean with fatty acid and reduced phytate contents). More importantly, supporters of genetic modification believe that that technology will mitigate food shortages in developing nations by increasing yields with crops resistant to various pests, insects or drought.

***The Benefits of GMO
Include Its Ability to Potentially Reduce
World Food Shortages by Increasing Yields***

Mainly therefore, the benefits include its ability to potentially reduce world food shortages by increasing yields, followed by its ability to improve environmental quality by reducing the use of chemicals in agricultural production. To a large extent, farming in West Africa is by default organic. This could be so, due to the high and unaffordable costs of agricultural inputs including agro-chemicals. Most of the agriculture land in West Africa has been untouched by pesticides and other chemicals for hundreds of years. The now organic farmers may suffer from a seeming bio-warfare for a place in global food production, especially in situations of loose regulations. A possibility of gene transfer to non-target species has huge implication to organic farming, in that crop plants engineered for herbicide tolerance and weeds may crossbreed, resulting in the transfer of the herbicide



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resistance genes from the crops into the weeds and these super weeds can subsequently impact on crops under organic farming or others such as cocoa for exports which could lead to import restrictions in certain export markets. @Edwin J. J. Momoh, Momodu Kanu, Sheik Dyphan Massaquoi, Njala University ECIATA Team. emomoh@njala.edu.sl

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS (GI): HOW CAN WEST AFRICAN AGRICULTURE BENEFIT MORE?

Simply stated, GI is any geographical name or sign (symbols, icons etc.) affixed to a good which conveys geographical information that is useful in identifying the origin, reputation and/or qualities of the product. The international recognition for the use of GIs to differentiate goods dates as far back as 19th Century. Since then, their importance has progressively grown. In the last decade and a half, in particular, there has been heightened interest following the inclusion of GIs as protectable subject matter under the TRIPS Agreement. The increasing interest and use of GIs, however, also signals their increasing commercial importance, at least for some players, which parallels the increased interest and use of other types of intellectual property (IP) rights. In the main, while manufactured or industrial products can also benefit from GI protection, the vast majority of GI protection relates to agricultural products in the foods and beverages category.

The main interest in the enforcement of GI protection is to ensure that the characteristics of a product and its reputation are adequately priced in the market as well as to avoid fraud, consumer confusion and the misuse of GIs. A premium price that takes the reputation and qualities of a product into account, may lead to a better distribution of revenues throughout the income chain. Furthermore, as production is tied to the geographical area, delocalization can be prevented and hence there will be a creation of value added within the region. Thus, the producers will no longer export generic goods, but will rather seek to produce and export high-quality agriculture and handicraft products. Furthermore, GI protection may also allow promotion and protection of traditional knowledge and production methods.

Two key GI related issues are currently discussed and negotiated in the WTO, namely the establishment of a

multilateral register for wines and spirits and the extension of the higher level of protection to products other than wines and spirits. From these negotiations a draft set of modalities was proposed by, amongst others, the European Communities, China, Brazil, India, Switzerland, the ACP Group and the African Group. This proposal seeks to address in parallel a multilateral GI register, the extension of high-level GI protection to all products and the requirement to disclose the origin of genetic resources or traditional knowledge used in patent applications.



For a GI to be eligible for registration in a third country under the TRIPS Agreement, it first has to be registered in the country of origin. In Ghana, the Geographical Indication Act

was enacted in 2003, but awaits its passage through Parliament. Meanwhile the Trademarks Act 2004 provides for the registration of certification trademarks. In Nigeria there is no current legislation on Geographical Indications. Two regulations promulgated in 2005 deals with the accuracy of labelling for wines and spirits respectively. The only possibility for the protection of GIs in Nigeria is as a certification mark under the Trades Mark Act 1990.

However, there are also challenges arising from the protection of products as GIs. For example, it is unclear how the benefits will be distributed within the value chains, the increase in prices may harm access of poor locals to essential food and cultural products and other genetic resources as well as producers of goods not protected as GIs may be marginalized. Considering the long-term benefits of GIs West African countries may do well to Adopt National GI systems: Countries where no sui generis GI system is in place like most countries in the region, should register products temporarily as trademarks. However governments should



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simultaneously work on the implementation of a GI system. In this regard, countries which already have Bills in place should facilitate the passage of these Bills through their Parliaments. On the other hand countries that already have a sui generis GI system (Burundi, Rwanda and Zanzibar) should register their products directly as GIs.

Secondly, Government Ministries of Agriculture should collaborate with the Ministries of Trade & Industries to provide support to industries and producers with potential capacity of registering their products as GIs. Thirdly, ECOWAS Member States should take advantage of their Common Market Agreement to provide the mandate to develop a common sui generis GI system. Within such a system, the ECOWAS countries can automatically provide protection to all GIs registered in another ECOWAS country. Moreover, with such an ECOWAS sui generis GI system in place, the countries can act jointly to obtain registration of ECOWAS GIs in third countries. Furthermore governments in the region should leverage their resources and membership of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) in support of its expertise in the areas of developing a common sui generis GI system in countries within West Africa and also to promote the extension of the scope of GI protection to other country products under the TRIPS Agreement.

ECOWAS Member States should take advantage of their Common Market Agreement to provide the mandate to develop a common sui generis GI system.

Last but not the least ECOWAS countries should request technical and financial assistance from the WTO TRIPS Council for the implementation of a GI regulatory framework or for the domestic registration and protection of GIs. Moreover, countries can also request specific support measures for the improvement of GI protection within the Aid for Trade programme of individual countries@. *Chris Addy-Nayo, Project Team Leader, chanade@chanade.nl*



THE ECIATA PROJECT TEAM



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For Further Information, Contact the ECIATA Project Communication Officer, info@eciata-winneba.com

Coming Events
Project Steering Committee Meeting
 Accra, Thurs, 29th January, 2015
Project Dissemination Workshop
 March, 2015

Partner Institutions

Federal University Of Agriculture Abeokuta, Nigeria

William R. Tolbert Jr. College of Agriculture and Forestry, (WRTJ CAF), Liberia University of Liberia.

Njala University, Freetown, Sierra Leone.







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