

ATASP-1 news

January–March 2017



...enhancing food security, rural income, and employment through agribusiness development

Nigeria's Agriculture Minister Commissions ATASP-1 Youth Training Center for Agribusiness

This center is expected to serve young people around north central Nigeria; the center in Kano serves the north east, and the center in Onne in Rivers State will serve the south east and south south. Under the ATASP-1 Program about 200,000 young adults are expected to be trained along the cassava, rice, and sorghum value chains.



The Hon Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Chief Audu Ogbeh cutting the tape.

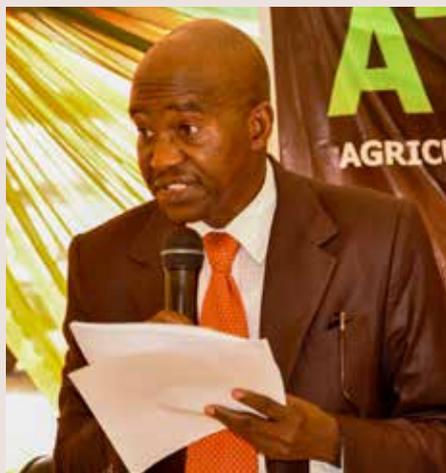
The Youth Training Center for Agribusiness situated within the IITA-Abuja station has been commissioned. The commissioning coincided with the training of young men and women on seed production and processing technology by the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Rural

Development, Chief Audu Ogbeh. The building has a training hall, a conference hall, a boardroom, and 16 units of office accommodation distributed to project staff both in the Project Coordination Office and the commodity value chains - cassava, rice, and sorghum.

In his opening remarks, the National Program Coordinator, Mr Haruna Akwashiki highlighted the strategy for implementing the various components of the ATASP-1 Program. These included infrastructural development such as the building of three Youth Training Centers the construction of an irrigation canal 1,300 km long and 1,330 km of feeder roads. He also mentioned commodity value chain development which focuses on the three main crops - rice, sorghum, and cassava and involves three CGIAR Centers - IITA, AfricaRice, and ICRISAT with IITA as the Program Executing Agency (PEA) in charge of the program management component.

On his part, the representative of IITA-DG at the event and ATASP-1 Outreach Program Coordinator Dr G. Tarawali explained the role of IITA in providing agricultural technologies for enhancing food and nutrition security. Speaking further, he mentioned the importance of improved seeds in agricultural production and enumerated some achievements recorded by the Outreach Program on the ATASP-1 project. He thanked the Federal Government for continued investment in Agriculture and the youth.





Left: Outreach Program Coordinator, Dr Gbassey Tarawali, and Right: National Program Coordinator, ATASP-1, Mr Haruna Akwashiki.

Highlight of the event was the rendition of testimonies by the Youth Agripreneurs on how the IITA Youth in Agribusiness Program has had an impact on their lives. In their description, Oluwatosin Olaniyi, Nathaniel Malgwi, Gift John

Bawa, and Zacchaeus Isuwa stunned the audience with their avowed passion for agriculture. In her vote of thanks, Oluseyi Akpanika, on behalf of the youth, entreated the Government to provide young people in other States

with similar facilities and an opportunity to explore their potentials in the agribusiness space.

After listening to the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) in Abuja Station who had benefited from several trainings conducted by the ATASP-1 Program, the elated Minister said, "I am very impressed by the passion our youth have displayed here today and the excellent work these young people are doing in agriculture.

I will bring you (IYA) on TV to talk to other young Nigerians about agribusiness." During the Minister's tour of the mini-exhibition of food and tools, he also promised to set up a mini-processing center for IYA, where they will scale up their value addition confectionary.

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A youth agripreneur presenting a gift to the Hon Minister of Agriculture, Chief Audu Ogbah.

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ATASP-1 Trains the Youth on Seed Production and Processing Technology



The Minister with young trainees.

Young people from different parts of the country have been trained on improved seed production and processing technologies at the ATASP-1 Youth Training Center for Agribusiness in Abuja. The training was simultaneously carried out in IITA-Abuja for cassava, NCRI-Badeggi for rice, and ICRISAT-Kano for sorghum; it was designed to introduce young entrepreneurs to modern technologies for producing and processing high yielding seeds.

While flagging off the training, the Hon Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Chief Audu Ogbah stressed the importance of improved seeds in crop production. He encouraged

“This training is very strategic, as the availability of quality seeds at the right time is crucial to enhanced productivity,” the Minister stated.

the young seed entrepreneurs to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the training and make good use of it.

Earlier, the ATASP-1 National Program Coordinator, Mr Haruna Akwashiki emphasized the importance of the training and explained why the project is intervening in the area. “One of the major challenges facing farmers in ATASP-1 intervention area is the

shortage of quality seeds. At the end of the training the young people will produce seeds for farmers in their various locations,” Mr Akwashiki stated.

On his part, the ATASP-1 Outreach Program Coordinator, Dr G Tarawali explained the role of high yielding seeds as a primary determinant of yield. He attributed over 50% gain in productivity to the use of quality seeds and urged the participants to take the training very seriously.

The training was held in two batches between 26 and 31 March for batch ‘A’ and from 2 to 6 April for batch ‘B’ with about 60 entrepreneurs trained on cassava stem production, 85 on rice seed production, and 75 on sorghum seed production.

ATASP-1 Outreach Program Holds Work Planning Meetings in all Zones



Participants in session in Minna during the meeting.

To address the issues of synergy and a harmonious working relationship between the ATASP-1 Outreach Program and the zonal OFFICES, the Outreach Program held a work planning meeting with the zonal team in the four Staple Crops Processing Zones (SCPZs) where ATASP-1 is implemented.

For the Adani-Omor SCPZ, the meeting was held in Awka, Anambra State, on 5-7 March. The meeting for the Bida-Badeggi SCPZ was held in Minna, Niger State, on 8-10 March. In the same way, the meeting for the Kano-Jigawa SCPZ

was held in Jigawa on 13-14 March and the Kebbi-Sokoto leg of the exercise was held in Kebbi on 16-17 March. These meetings were duly attended by Officers from the National Program Coordinating Office, Outreach Program

Coordination Office and Commodity value chains, the Zonal Program team and State Government Officials.

The program of the meetings set aside Day 1 for a review of 2015/2016 field activities in the zones by the commodity. This was followed by a detailed discussion by participants. Day 2 was devoted to work planning for 2017. The meetings resolved several issues and developed a communiqués for each zone.

AfDB President awarded Honorary Doctorate from FUTA

Dr Akinwumi Adesina, the President of the African Development Bank was honored with a doctorate Honoris Causa from the Federal University of Technology Akure recently.



Adesina was Nigeria's immediate past Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and is currently the President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), the first Nigerian to occupy that position in the 50 years of the AfDB.

Interestingly, the AfDB supports ATASP-1, and wishes to replicate the model in other African nations. In solidarity with Adesina, the National Program Coordinator of ATASP-1, Mr Haruna Akwashiki led a delegation to the event.



Top: AfDB President flanked by ATASP-1 Coordinator, Bottom: AfDB President with co-awardees.

ATASP-1 Re-positions the M&E System for Effective and Efficient Performance



Participants during the Monitoring and Evaluation workshop.

A retreat to re-position the M&E of ATASP-1 has ended in Abuja. The aim of the meeting as described by the national M&E Specialist for ATASP-1, Dr Emmanuel Akogun, was to enlighten the staff of ATASP-1 and the Outreach Program on the methodology for gathering data for activities, i.e., what type of data to collect, how to collect them, and the individuals responsible for collecting the data.

It was also to establish the familiarity of work schedule and position the system for effective and efficient performance of the program of activities, using the Performance Indicators. The National Project Co-ordination (NPC) also encouraged the staff to collect socio-economic data/detailed information on all ATASP-1 infrastructure including the feeder roads, schools, and boreholes, since the projects are being constructed for a purpose, and they should be uniformly

done in all the zones by the end of March, 2017.

Laying emphasis on the Outreach Program, the NPC stressed that for every activity that is being carried out, a format for simple reporting should be provided for the beneficiaries to fill, alongside pictorial evidence at the end of the training, for record keeping and monitoring. This is all to ensure that beneficiaries and stakeholders understand clearly the aim of the project.



Group photograph of participants at the workshop.

Referring to the four zones concerning ATASP-1 job creation, the NPC stated "there has to be uniformity in the creation of jobs", consisting of the Adani-Omor, Kebbi-Sokoto, Kano-Jigawa, and Bidda-Badeggi Zonal Crop Processing Zones. He added that "for every five jobs created, one job is created downstream."

The 2-day meeting was held on Tuesday, 28 February and Wednesday, 1 March 2017 at Madugu Hotels in Jabi, Abuja, and was chaired by Dr O. O. Oyebanji, who contributed immensely. It was attended by the ATASP-1 national and zonal staff and the Outreach Program staff. Mal. Mouktar A. Adamu, Communication Consultant, gave a lecture on How to Use Visuals to Prepare Reports.

The workshop was power-packed as essential materials such as Farm Management Record Sheets, 2017 Cropped Area, Productivity and Revenue Data Capturing template, Farm-level Monitoring template, Consolidated Performance Indicators Data Table and Results Framework were distributed to all participants for a collective perusal and review and for vivid and achievable outcomes.

Also, Dr Yahaya Sabo, the Consultant, presented a preliminary report on ATASP-1 Baseline Study which entails Performance Indicator Definitions, Targets and Baseline. During the workshop, a committee was set up in to further review the indicators and targets of the Outreach Component of the Program as well as the target and also to harmonize the indicators of the two components.



Dr O.O. Oyebanji making a presentation.



Cassava value chain

Dr Okechukwu Richardson conducting the Honorable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Chief Audu Ogbah round the cassava exhibition stand.

Cassava Value Chain meets, sets Priorities for 2017 Cropping Season

Dr Richardson Okechukwu, the Cassava Commodity Specialist of ATASP-1, met the Zonal Program Coordinators and Zonal Outreach Specialists of three zones where cassava outreach is being implemented. The zones include Adani-Omor (Enugu and Anambra States), Bida-Badeggi (Niger State), and Kano-Jigawa (Kano and Jigawa States). The meeting which was the first of its kind had in attendance the National Program Coordinator (NPC), Mr Haruna Akwashiki, the Outreach Program Coordinator, Dr Gbasse Tarawali, and the Rice Commodity Specialist, Dr Philip Idinoba among other Program staff. During the meeting, which was held at IITA Abuja, a review of cassava program activities in 2016 was carried out, and priorities for 2017 were set to fill the gaps in the previous year.

In 2016 so many demonstration plots were set up, and trainings on good agricultural practices were conducted. Top of the agenda in this year's activities is the training of the youth in stem production, application of agro-chemicals, reactivation of processing plants, use of simple farm machines, linkage of farmers to off-takers, training of women and the youth in value addition, the making of cassava bread, biscuits, chin-chin, and cake, among other uses, to increase income, create jobs, and reduce post-harvest loss.



Left: Cross-section of participants during the meeting. Right: Dr Okechukwu training young adults on seed production and seed entrepreneurship in Abuja.

Cassava field activities



Cassava seed entrepreneurs' training of trainers (TOTs).



Training cassava seed entrepreneurs: Youth from Adani-Omor and Kano-Jigawa SCPZs.



NASC officer speaks on seed quality and certification.



Training of cassava seed entrepreneurs: Youth from Bida-Baddegi SCPZ.





Left: Hands-on practical on field operations in cassava farm; right: Hands-on practical on chemical weed control on cassava farm.



Training chief executives of some selected seed companies.



Jigawa cassava demonstration and seed farm, Kila DEMO, Gwaram LGA.



Godfrey Okoye University Cassava seed farm, Enugu.

Ishiagu cassava field, Enugu.

Ufuma cassava field, Anambra.



Rice value chain

The Youth Benefit from Rice Seed Production Training; rice seeds, and off-takers

Young men and women have been trained on seed production in two Staple Crop Processing Zones (Kano-Jigawa and Sokoto-Kebbi SCPZs). The training was facilitated by the AfricaRice Seed System Specialist, Abuja. These events were conducted in Kano and Birnin Kebbi and were complementary to similar youth seed groups trainings executed for the other zones of Adani-Omor and Bida-Badeggi in 2016.

The core topics treated during the training were an overview of Seed Production Technology; Seed Production Practices; Rice Seed Production Technology (Principles and Practices) Seed Quality and Genetic Purity Maintenance; Identifiable Varietal Characters of Popular, Improved Rice Varieties in Nigeria; Seed Processing, Packaging, and Storage; Rice Seed Production Entrepreneurship/ Seed production as a Business; Rice and Rice Seed Biology.

In Kano-Jigawa, ten young adults representing Zango-Buhari Youth Seed Producers Group were trained. Two field workers in the zone and two of the farmers executing the dry season demonstration activities with the project were among those trained. So far, negotiation has



Youth groups trained in Kebbi-Sokoto zone.

commenced with potential off-takers who could buy the seeds. The Director of TecniSeeds Ltd has agreed to buy back the seeds produced by the trainees and she was present at the training. The youth were given 200 kg of breeder seeds for further multiplication to the next class of seeds (foundation seed production). She also promised to establish a longer term relationship with them and support as they were trained by AfricaRice. As at March, 2017, 1.9 ha has been transplanted out of the 5.1 ha seed farm earmarked by the young adults. All transplanting has been concluded



Youth groups trained in Kano–Jigawa zone.

In Sokoto-Kebbi, a total of 24 young people were trained from eight youth groups across the State. Each group owns one hectare of land and 25 kg of seeds were given to each of the groups. Alhaji Aliero, the MD of the seed company in Birnin Kebbi, also pledged to give youth groups the soft loan needed to fuel the water pump; he intends to deduct this loan while buying the seeds from the youth groups.

Research Institute (NCRI), Badeggi, for this training. A total of 83 participants (69 Male, 14 Female) attended the training in rice seed production and entrepreneurship. This time a good number of potential female seed entrepreneurs were trained (16.87%) as compared to males (83.13%)

who participated. The Rice Component will make available to the trainees 25 kg of foundation seeds per hectare to produce seeds during the 2017 raining season and the project is also working hard in linking them to potential seed companies as off-takers.

In addition to the two zonal trainings described above, another set of young farmers was selected across the four SCPZs. Among them the IITA Youth Agripreneurs (IYA) from Abuja and Onne were trained on seed production technology and entrepreneurship skills in two batches. The trainees converged at National Cereals



Guests at the Opening Ceremony of the Seed Production training included the Emir of Agaie and the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Agriculture, Niger State.



Seed training participants during the practical session at NCRI research and demonstration farm, Badeggi.

Scaling-out Good Agronomic Practices through Step-down Trainings

A total of 1,549 farmers have been trained on Good Agricultural Practices. Sokoto–Kebbi zone had the highest number of such farmers trained to adopt GAP practices during the 2016 dry-season cropping activities.



GAP step-down training at Kpatsuwa on dry-season rice farming.



Farmers in Gwadangwaji learning to use a 20 cm X 20 cm spacing transplanting rope (Kebbi–Sokoto).



Members of champions group transplanting in line (Adani–Omor).



Transplanting in line practical at Tagadawai (Kano–Jigawa).

Farmers get Support to Boost Dry Season Paddy Production

During the last quarter of 2016, the Rice Component ventured into exploring the potential of dry-season rice cultivation particularly in the two SCPZs, (Bida–Badeggi and Adani–Omor) which are traditionally in the non-dry season agricultural belt.

The desire was to explore the possibility of sufficient ground- or surface water from permanent streams which could be pumped to support the rice crop to maturity. This was discussed with some groups of farmers who were willing to experiment, in collaboration with the zonal staff. The Rice Component hired seven local but experienced tube well diggers from Kebbi State and transported three to Bida-Badeggi and four to Adani-Omor zone. They worked for two weeks with only partial success. Although the

digger often found sufficient groundwater in Niger starting from 10 to 15 m depth, the clay content of the subsoil was too low, so the sites were generally unsuitable for water pumping at a depth below 20 m. The sandy particles suspended in the soil would readily destroy the water pumps. Greater success of viable tube wells was recorded in the Adani-Omor zone, particularly in Ogbaru area of Anambra State due to its proximity to the River Niger. In both zones many of the locations will require deeper boreholes of



An EA giving out rice seed to one of the groups on behalf of AfricaRice (Adani–Omor).

maybe beyond 30–40 m to have functional underground water for dry-season irrigation and our local technicians from Kebbi State were not used to digging tube wells manually beyond 16 to 18 m depth and indeed they did not envisage such depth so were not well-equipped with the iron tubes. In Bida-Badeggi zone, only one tube well was found to be sufficiently viable among the more than 10 that were dug and in Adani Omor about four are functional at the depth of 12 to 16 m.



Fertilizer distribution to farmers who have transplanted at Waek, Jabo, Kafin Hausa (Kano–Jigawa).



Presentation of input to a group of farmers at Kpatsuwa (Bida–Badeggi).



Presentation of input to a group of farmers (Kebbi–Sokoto).

During this period, more attention has been given to the monitoring of the demo rice farms, to ensure that the farmer-implementers apply several good practices that have been transferred to them. To support those implementing dry-season demonstration farms, farmers got free rice seeds and 50% of the required inputs per hectare (i.e., 25 kg seeds, two bags of NPK, two bags of Urea, and two liters of herbicides). A total area of 3ha/ group/

community was envisaged in two locations per LGA where dry-season rice activities could be carried out. The distribution of farm inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and herbicides has been done in almost all the locations during these periods. However, demo farmers implementing demo farms received these inputs based on the land area under cultivation. In Kano–Jigawa, post-emergence herbicide and Urea have not yet been given to many

of the demo farmers owing to late transplanting. It is expected that these inputs will soon be supplied to the farmers and hopefully transplanting will soon be concluded. A total of 56 ha of demo plots had been established at the end of March, 2017, and about 2.2 t of seeds, 75 bags (3.75 t) of NPK, 54 bags (2.7 t) of Urea and 61 liters of herbicides had been given to the demo farmers across the four zones so far.

Report of quick assessment of Production Constraints/Actors mapping ready

A quick assessment of the rice production systems, production constraints, current level of technology intensification, and major actors mapping across the four SCPZs was initiated during the second quarter of 2016 and the report has been long expected.

This quick assessment was like a snapshot diagnosis and baseline information to guide implementation. A draft report is now ready and will be shared with all stakeholders very soon.

A total of 125 rice farmers were interviewed across the four SCPZs of ATASP-1. Zonally

32% of the total respondents were from Adani-Omor, 30% from Kano–Jigawa, 13% from Kebbi–Sokoto, and 25% were from Bida–Badeggi.

The respondents gave information on farm-specific characteristics of their operations and other key stakeholders

in their locality. Information on the current farming practices and cost of production was obtained from the respondents. Individual and key informant interviews as well as focus group discussions (FGDs) were held to obtain the required information.



Sorghum value chain

Dr Hakeem Ajeigbe (ATASP-1 Sorghum Specialist) and the Hon Minister of Agriculture (Chief Audu Ogbeh) take a tour of the ICRISAT stand during the flagging-off ceremony.

ATASP- Radio Talk Shows thrill listeners

A live radio phone-in program was conducted at Arewa Radio 93.1 FM to discuss the sorghum value chain and ATASP-1 activities.

This was organized to create all the necessary awareness on the implementation of its activities, to mobilize and enlighten all farmers and the public in the three SCPZs, particularly the Kano-Jigawa SCPZ.

The radio program discussion featured ICRISAT partners such as the ATASP-1 Zonal Office Kano and Fadama Farmers Association from Kiru Kano. The discussants of the program which was conducted in Hausa for one hour were

Abubakar H. Inuwa, Sorghum Business Development Officer, ICRISAT; Mr Sanusi Muhammad Agribusiness Specialist and Abdu Sule Adamu, Outreach Specialist Kano-Jigawa SCPZ; and Musa Muhammed of the Kiru Fadama Association, Kano State.

During the program 21 calls were received from listeners with various questions and comments such as these: Where are the farmers going to get improved varieties of sorghum? How can the farmers be assured of a good market at all times? How can smallholder farmers fit into the program? Responses of this kind are a clear indication that the listeners/farmers are following the information being disseminated. Radio still remains a veritable means of information dissemination and enlightenment.



Live radio phone-in program was conducted at Arewa Radio 93.1 FM to discuss the sorghum value chain and ATASP-1 activities.

Another hour-long live radio talk-show program in the Hausa language was organized and conducted at Rahama Radio 97.3 FM to discuss the sorghum value chain and ATASP-1 activities.

It featured another set of ICRISAT partners such as the USAID MARKETS II and Kano FADAMA III AF. These are also important partners in the implementation of the sorghum value chain activities and critical members of the Sorghum Innovation Platform (IP).

The two organizations were represented by their staff, Suleiman Sambo of USAID MARKETS II and Adamu Sani, the agronomist, of Kano FADAMA III



Live radio talk show held at Rahama Radio 97.3 FM to discuss the sorghum value chain and ATASP-1 activities.

AF; ICRISAT Sorghum Outreach was represented by Shuaibu A. Ummah M&E Officer and Abubakar H. Inuwa Sorghum Business Development Officer.

The essence of the radio program was to create all the necessary awareness on the activities of the Sorghum Outreach Program, value chain development,

the Sorghum IP collaboration, social reorientation of farmers' thinking and capacity to increase their productivity as well as to take agriculture as business and not for subsistence. ICRISAT is leading the Sorghum Outreach Program in playing a vital role in the actualization of the FGN Green Alternative and Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP).

The Youth and Women trained on the Business Potential of Sorghum Seed Production

Young men and women have been trained on the potential of sorghum seed production. The event which was held at the Conference Hall of ICRISAT-Kano was declared open by the Hon. Commissioner of Agriculture, Kano State, Dr Nasiru Hassan Gawuna, ably represented by the Director Administration and General Services, Alh. Ahmadu Adamu Makoda.



Participants at the training session.

He congratulated the participants for their selection to participate in the training program and wished them success and hoped the outcome would be an increase in the supply of quality

seeds of improved sorghum varieties to farmers in the rural areas. He also drew the attention of the participants to the importance of seeds in agriculture as a contributor to improving farmers'

livelihoods. Seeds combine a number of advantages to farmers through an increase in farm yields and income. At the end of the training program which consisted of two days of class work and one day of field practical training at the ICRISAT farm IAR/ABU Zaria the closing ceremony was performed by the Hon. Commissioner Agriculture and Natural Resources, Jigawa State, Alh. Kabiru Ali. He informed the participants about the numerous achievements of Jigawa State in terms of the expansion program of thousands of hectares of irrigable land for rice and wheat production coupled with several support programs to smallholder farmers to boost their productivity. Participants were presented with a certificate of participation by the Hon. Commissioner of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Jigawa State. A total of 67 participants were in attendance from Kano–Jigawa SCPZ, with 54 males and 13 females. During the training, the participants' knowledge on the subject matter was assessed through a questionnaire form administered before and after the training program of 6 modules which consisted of six presentations on Improved Sorghum Agronomic Practices; Seed and Seed



Top: Group photo of participants; bottom: field visit.

Best-bet sorghum Production Technologies Validated and Disseminated

In 2016 demonstrations, a total of 110 t of sorghum seeds was distributed to 34,032 benefiting farmers across the participating States, LGAs, and Communities in three SCPZs targeting an estimated sorghum production of 70,267 t. Assorted fertilizers and chemicals were also distributed to farmers to the tune of 390 bags of NPK, 195 bags of Urea, and 276 sachets of chemicals for seed dressing, and 23 liters of herbicides. The following demonstrations were established in the five States, 23 LGAs, and their respective 100 communities of a plot size of 2 ha. All the Demonstration Logbooks were collected from the Extension Agents and analyzed.



Distribution of inputs to farmers.

The results of the demonstrations conducted in the three SCPZs on fertilizer application strategies, tillage practice, seed dressing, and improved sorghum varieties were analyzed.

The results indicated that there were significant increases in sorghum yield and a favorable impact in the technologies demonstrated in Kano-Jigawa SCPZ. In terms of the seed dressing technology the yield gain was 27.3%; the yield gain in tillage was in 20% and 42% from the use of seeds of improved varieties of sorghum.

Similarly, the results of the analysis of the demonstrations conducted in Kebbi-Sokoto SCPZs indicates significant increases and favorable impacts in the technologies demonstrated in the SCPZ

on seed dressing technology (30% yield gain) so also in tillage (55.8% yield gain) and 64.2% from the use of seeds of improved varieties.

The results of analysis of the demonstrations conducted in Bida-Badeggi SCPZs indicates significant increases and favorable impacts in the

technologies demonstrated in the SCPZ on seed dressing technology (38% yield gain) and from the use of seeds of improved varieties 30% yield gain).

Farmers benefit from Training and provision of Market Information on postharvest technologies including mobile threshers, hammer mills, and harvesters

ICRISAT has delivered on all the required trainings to be conducted on the use, demonstration, handling, and maintenances of small-scale geoprocessing machines such as the Hand pushed seed planter, Animal drawn precession seeder, Multipurpose thresher, Heavy duty multipurpose thresher,

Multipurpose hammer mill, Hammer mill with cyclone, Multi-crop stalk chopper, and Multi-crop stalk grinder to 2691 farmers (1727 males and 964 females) across the three SCPZs in 2016. These farmers were also provided with the relevant market information and 36 farmers were linked with four fabricators in Kano, Kaduna,

and Zaria. All these efforts were meant to put the farmers on a sustainable track for their future development goals and objectives. From January to March, about 10 farmers have indicated their interest in procuring some of the various small-scale machines for their use and for commercial purposes.

Sorghum Outreach Innovation platform (IP) holds collaboration meeting with Honeywell Flour Mills Plc and Northern Nigeria Flour Mills Plc

The ATASP-1 Sorghum IP held meetings with sorghum off-takers. The aim of the interaction was to review and address the challenges facing the aggregation of sorghum grain particularly for Honeywell Flour Mills Plc.

price information from HWFM. During the meeting, it was gathered that only Ahalson Nigeria Ltd among all the aggregators was able to supply the sorghum grain to HWFM warehouse at Sharada Estate II on 20/12/2016.



Participants at the meeting.

In the case of Northern Nigeria Flour Mills Plc grain aggregation was being carried out successfully owing to their market price liberalization and off-taking of all available varieties of yellow sorghum. The meeting was attended by representatives of ATASP-1, ICRISAT, Techni seed, USAID MARKETS II, Maina Seeds, KNARDP Kano, Livemax Livewell Enterprise, Ningi LGA, Chimande Seeds, Joy Seeds, Lifted Agro, Eliel Consult, AHALSON Enterprises Ltd, and SG

2000. The purpose of the emergency meeting was highlighted to members by the Sorghum Commodity Specialist, Dr Hakeem Ajeigbe. It was as a result of the series of calls he receives from stakeholders complaining about the slow release of grains by farmers and the issue of uncertainty in aggregation from the field, the unusually high cost of sorghum grains in the market artificially caused by the activities of middlemen and other competitors, and the lack of

In furtherance of the decisions taken at the emergency meeting, another meeting of partners and some representatives of aggregators in the ATASP-1 Sorghum IP was held on 16 January 2017 to plan and agree on some pertinent issues that will facilitate the smooth and successful aggregation of the sorghum grains for Honeywell Flour Mills Plc in all locations.

The HWFM representative informed members on the level of preparedness of the Company to off-take all available grains at a fixed price of N13,000 as the cost of 100 kg bag of good quality sorghum grain. In response the aggregators expressed their field experiences on the high cost of sorghum grain in the market based on farmers' high expectations coupled with their overhead costs. They therefore recommended an upward review of the price given by HWFM.

Partners on their part presented their field progress reports and their readiness to facilitate the aggregation of the grains as most of the sorghum has been harvested, processed, and bagged. Some of the partners have well-organized farmers' clusters and well-established structures for aggregation. Others do not have these but were encouraged to establish them for easy and successful aggregation. However, the reports reaching the stakeholders from the field on the availability of the grains to be mopped up were highly impressive and encouraging with the hope of meeting the HWFM grain requirement.

Some partners informed the meeting that some of their networked farmers were impatient and went ahead to sell their products to some other aggregators outside the IP who come from Ibadan, Enugu, and Lagos, etc.

The meeting was made to understand an unusual incident in Ningi LGA where the rural market price (N15,000) was higher than that of the urban market



Participants at the meeting.

price (N14,000); this was attributed to the influx of aggregators/off-takers in the business of sorghum mopping up. On the issue of seed recovery, a lot of progress has been made.

The ICRISAT Country Representative/ Sorghum Commodity Specialist drew the attention of the members to the fact that the platform will be faced with a lot of challenges and difficulties, as this is the first year of implementation. Everyone should work hard to overcome them.

The decisions reached during this meeting were far reaching and it was a turning point in the business of

this collaboration. As in any business relationship a compromise and some level of sacrifices should be made for the relationship to flourish.

The Sorghum Commodity Specialist (SCS) was at the HWFM factory Lagos 1–3 March 2017 to further brainstorm on the challenges facing grain aggregation and to find a lasting solution to the problems militating against smooth aggregation. The SCS was to discuss with the management of HWFM for the partnership to succeed as it was the first of its kind in Nigeria where such a huge industrial market was created for the farmers with a good and structured buy-back.

Sorghum Seed Recovery drive with IP Partners at Bida-Badeggi SCPZ

The visit to Niger State partners took place 15–17 February 2017 to meet ATASP-1 Sorghum Outreach Program partners: the Niger State FADAMA-III AF, Minna Catholic Diocese, and ATASP-1 Bida-Badeggi SCPZ, Niger

State, with the purpose of discussing specific activities with respect to the program. The issues discussed included grain recovery from the 2016 cropping season, coordination for transporting the seeds to Kano, collection of on-farm

Demonstration Logbooks with ATASP-1 for analysis, plans for collaboration with Niger State FADAMA-III AF, and plans for 2017 activities with ATASP-1 (large plot demonstration in Bida-Badeggi, plans and agreement on possible dates in March for briefing LGAs, grain aggregation and buy-back issues).



Meeting with one of the ICRISAT partners— Niger State FADAMA III AF.

The meeting at Niger State FADAMA-III AF on 15 February 2017 was attended by the Program Manager, Engr. Aliyu Usman Kutigi, the Program Agronomist, Alh. Mohammed Sule Vatsa, the Information Officer, Alh. Baba Shaba, and the Public-Private Partnership Officer, Haj Aishetu S. Mohammed. Niger State Fadama-III has indicated its interest in working with ICRISAT at all levels of implementation of the Sorghum Outreach Program.

Seed Recovery efforts from 2016 cropping season

The Seed Recovery Plan was an arrangement agreed upon by the networked farmers and partners that seeds of two improved varieties of sorghum preferred by HWFM (CSR-01 and SK 5912) would be given to them on loan but payable in cash or kind at the end of the harvest period.

About 86,000 t of the two preferred varieties worth about N20million were procured by the Company (HWFM) and given to the farmers with an assured market for their products.

The progress of the seed recovery efforts by NSFDO was in top gear; the Program Coordinator said that they were still in the process of recovery but the process had been affected by slow rate of buy-back from the aggregators. The recovered grains will be transported by ICRISAT to Kano. They assured the ICRISAT team that up to five trailer loads of grains for off-taking are available, equivalent to 15 t.

A meeting was held on 15 February 2017 with Minna Diocese as one of the partners in the IP and attended by the Project Coordinator, Rev. Fr. Chiedozie Ezeribe and two of his assistants, Mr Nwachukwu Clement and Emmanuel Okereke.

A total of 11,410 kg of sorghum seeds was so far recovered in the zone and the recovery process was still on-going and expected to be completed in April. On-farm Demonstration Logbooks were collected from the EAs in the zone for analysis. The implementation of 2017 planned activities was highlighted as these affect the zone for discussion during the working visit. Also included were on-farm (large plot) demonstrations, LGA briefing plans, and trainings.

ICRISAT Innovation Platform meetings with Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi, and Bauchi States

The visits started on 20 February 2017 with Katsina State FADAMA III AF where the meeting was chaired by the MD of KTARDA, Alh. Ibrahim Shehu Musawa and supported by Dr Herbert, Mission Team Leader of the National FADAMA III Coordinating Office. FADAMA III AF has two value chain crops targeted in Katsina State: sorghum and tomato.

During the meeting, it was agreed that ICRISAT with sorghum as its mandate crop should deploy different improved varieties to Katsina State taking into consideration the different agro-ecologies of the State. This should include the two improved varieties that are already preferred by the Flour Milling Companies (CSR 01 and SK5912) with industrial market opportunities. The meeting also recommended ICRISAT to source an organized market for the other varieties to be deployed to the State, because FADAMA III AF in Katsina State has many sorghum farmers who are ever ready to engage in large production of the grains for industrial uses. Dr Herbert commended ICRISAT for a good farmers' network and resource management. He therefore urged ICRISAT to train more farmers around community seed production so as to meet the future seed demand. Alhaji Bashir BalaZango, State Program Coordinator, FADAMA III AF, Katsina State, in his remarks also appreciated the efforts of ICRISAT for providing them and their farmers with improved seeds and packages of improved agronomic practices of sorghum production in 2016, acknowledging that the seeds were provided within a very short time of the request being made. They promised to contact their facilitators on the extent of seed recovery and will get back to ICRISAT.



Participants at the innovation platform meeting.

Visit to IFAD-CASP, Katsina State

ICRISAT team met with the IFAD CASP partners. Mallam Musa Hassan, the State Program Officer (SPO), IFAD CASP, Katsina State in his briefings stated that the program in Katsina has three major crops to promote, (sorghum, maize, and cowpea) and three minor crops (millet, groundnut, and rice). In the past, they had been in collaboration with IAR on sorghum but the collaboration was not fruitful to them due to some failures experienced along the line. However, they are now very much interested in collaborating with ICRISAT considering its vast experience, expertise in dryland crops, and competent/ professional personnel of international repute as well as the Institute's commitment to serving humanity in Africa and Asia over time. The SPO CASP, Katsina State, highlighted the potentials of sorghum in the State in terms of area coverage (34,000 ha) with 40% (13,600 ha) of it to be devoted to sorghum production.

Visit to Sokoto State Fadama III AF

ICRISAT team was in Sokoto and met with FADAMA III AF. They informed ICRISAT that none of the sorghum seeds collected from ICRISAT during the 2016 rainy season had been planted because they were afraid the plants would not be able to reach maturity before the end of the season. The CDO, Alhaji Umar Abu Dagawa added that the program is currently planning on engaging 1 farmer group each from Gada and Rabah LGAs to test dry-season sorghum production in 2017, and they are planning to commence full activities in early March, because they realized that some of their farmers in Gigane community (latitude 13.521607, longitude 5.235663, altitude 183.4), Gwadabawa LGA, has a variety of sorghum which they grow and harvest three to four times a year. The community and some of the fields were visited where in the course of discussions with the farmers in the community they were informed that the variety was sourced from Niger Republic by one of the farmers in the community and the variety had been with them for four years now. The variety was found to be early maturing (90 days), dwarf, resistant to both biotic and abiotic stresses, having several productive tillers, and producing a high yield through ratooning rather than direct seeding. Samples of the variety were collected as panicles from the fresh harvest and some grains from the 2016 wet season harvest.

Visit to IFAD-CASP, Kebbi State

ICRISAT team was in Birnin-Kebbi, Kebbi State, and met with IFAD CASP State Program Coordinator (SPC), Mr Joel Aiki, who expressed his appreciation for the visit and willingness to collaborate with the ICRISAT Outreach Program in ensuring that the objective is achieved. The SPC commended ICRISAT for their efforts in the capacity building of Extension Agents and farmers which will add value to the implementation program of CASP. He added that the Program is considering the possible ways in which farmers' yield will shift from the average 1.1 tha⁻¹ to 3 tha⁻¹; he believes they can achieve that only by collaborating with ICRISAT. He also assured ICRISAT of the Program's esteemed interest of collaboration particularly in the area of job creation through value addition and product development. IFAD CASP Kebbi State Program Coordination Office are willing to collaborate with ICRISAT in building the capacities of the youth in the area of agricultural mechanization, particularly the repair and maintenance aspect. The State Government is interested in distributing agricultural machines to youth groups across the State to serve as service providers to the farming communities, but they are afraid of the machines being dumped by the young people because of repair and maintenance issues. In response ICRISAT through the Sorghum Commodity of ATASP-1 promised to increase the number of youth trainings on the maintenance of the machines and linkages to fabricators.



Participants at the innovation platform meeting.

Meeting with large-scale Farmer and Agro-dealer, Alhaji Bala Muhammed

ICRISAT Team while in Kebbi State met with Alhaji Bala Muhammed who had collected 100 packets of seeds, each weighing 8 kg, and distributed these to his farmers for grain production in 2016. Alhaji Muhammed has dispatched all the seeds to the farmers and helped them with a fertilizer loan. They have all planted and harvested. All the farmers have refunded the cost of fertilizer and 10 kg of the seeds given to them instead of 8 kg. The seeds were recovered and conveyed to ICRISAT Kano office.

Meeting with ATASP-1 Kebbi-Sokoto zone

The Team was at ATASP-1 office and meet with the Zonal Outreach Specialist, Agribusiness Specialist and Gender Specialist, as the ZPC travelled to Abuja for an official assignment. The issue of seed recovery remains the focus of discussion where they informed the team that they have requested all Extension Agents to put all the necessary machinery at their disposal to recover the seeds given to the farmers. On the implementation of 2017 plan activities they suggested that ICRISAT should use the profiled sorghum farmers documented in the zone (2,500) as having 1 ha or less.

Visit to Kebbi State Fadama III AF

The ICRISAT team was with FADAMA III AF in Kebbi State. The State Program Officer, Alhaji. Farouk Umar informed the team that they collected 1000 packets of seeds each weighing 8 kg from ICRISAT for grain production in 2016 and distributed all to their farmers. Seed recovery is underway.

Visit to Bauchi State Fadama III AF

ICRISAT was at the Bauchi State FADAMA III AF office where they held meetings with Mallam Ahmad Wakili, who represented their SPC. Mr Wakili informed the team that efforts were put in place to recover the seeds and ensured them that the process will be completed shortly, as their SPC has promised to recover everything before the distribution of the dry-season inputs.

Visit to Ningi LGA

The team met with the ICRISAT Field Assistant in the area, Muhammed Sadisu Abdul Salam of Ningi LGA, Bauchi State. He informed the team that they have recovered much of the grain but it is with the farmers in their respective communities because of the transportation and storage issues. But he assured them that recovery will be completed shortly and requested the support of ICRISAT to hire a store in Ningi to enable him convey the seeds to a location for easy conveyance.



Field visit.

Pre-season Briefing carried out in Bida–Badeggi zone

The Bida–Badeggi zone had its pre-season community and cluster briefing. This is to keep the beneficiaries in tune with the program’s activities for the year and the peculiarity/comparative advantage of each community to the commodity of interest.

The Zonal Outreach team (Zonal Agribusiness Specialist, Zonal Outreach Specialist, and Zonal Gender and Social Development Specialist) together with the research associates for the commodities in the zone noticed the enthusiasm of the farmers during the event and their willingness to work with the Program. There was a great turnout in all communities visited as more

farmers’ organizations indicated their interest in working with ATASP-1. All clusters in the zone now have a unified structure as all the 24 clusters have their leaders and have started meeting.

The briefing event became an avenue to collectively take stock of the last season and plan the year. Some of the activities for the season were unveiled at the various centers.

Immediately after the well-packaged pre-season briefing, more farmers’ organizations have registered their groups and have been holding meetings.

These farmers are more aware of the program, knowing that the entry point is through cooperatives and farmers’ organizations.



Pre-season community sensitization.



Stella Amaluiche.

Success stories

Faces of Agricultural Transformation

Malnutrition is over in my family and community

“Nutrition I have learnt is paramount in the development of a child as that affects his or her development especially within the one thousand days.”

“I thank ATASP-1 for exposing me to the importance of nutrition for infants” said Mrs. Stella Amaluiche, a community woman from Asaba community in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State. She is one of the 40 women whose capacity was built by ATASP-1 Adani-Omor on Nutrition and Health for infants at Awka in March 2017. ”

I came back home and decided to put into use the knowledge they shared with us and at our monthly meeting in the community I shared what I learnt with other women so that they can learn from it too. I have a child whose health has improved tremendously due to the training that I received. The training has changed my perception about infant nutrition and its importance.

One interesting thing is that most of the items required to prepare infant formula are found in our environment. I was ignorant of its combination and method of preparation for supplements for our young ones. I have started sharing the knowledge that I received to other nursing mothers in our community who could not attend the training, as they watch the health of the children improve. Malnutrition will be a thing of the past in our community,” she said.



Charles Ifedegwu.

ATASP-1 has taken me out from poverty

“I thank ATASP-1 for their intervention. Last year I got 2,8 t of paddy from just one plot of half a hectare, I harvested much more than some farmers who cultivated 1.5 hectares because I followed the good agricultural practices as taught by ATASP-1,” said Charles Ifedegwu, a rice farmer from Asaba in Uzo-Uwani LGA of Enugu State who benefited from ATASP training on GAP.

“It is not how far but how well and it is not how many hectares but how many tonnes of paddy. With this experience that I gained from the training, I would rather plant one hectare properly and maintain it than plant many without GAP. I am a testimony to what imbibing GAP can do to one’s income. I surpassed many of my colleagues that planted 1.5 hectares in terms of my output. I could not believe it myself but it is true,” he said. According to Ikwunne Veronica, a member of Oganiru group, “we had never done dry-season rice farming before but through the intervention of ATASP-1 our group did dry-season farming this year and as you can see the result is amazing. The rice is doing exceptionally well and it is already obvious we are going to have a bountiful harvest by the time it matures.”



Bello A. Umar.

“When farmers come to me, I know that their crop has problems, but I do not know what causes the problem and the exact solution. I completely do not have any idea about pests and diseases.”

ATASP-1 transforms Bello's 33 years knowledge of pests and disease

One of the major challenges for Extension Agents in Nigeria is their lack of opportunity to upgrade their knowledge. This challenge is such that many of the EAs know only what they knew over two decades ago—no new knowledge has been added, even when there are new agricultural practices available.

Bello A. Umar Sokoto is part of this category of EAs. He has been in the agricultural system “since 1983,” yet he has no new knowledge to transfer to rural farmers with whom he has worked for several years. “When farmers come to me, I know that their crop has problems, but I do not know what causes the problem and the exact solution. I completely do not have any idea about pests and diseases.”

When Bello heard about the Agricultural Transformation Agenda Support Program (ATASP-1), and the upcoming training for EAs, he had to travel all the way from Kware in Sokoto State to Birnin-Kebbi in Kebbi State to participate.

During the training, Bello learned about new farm practices in sorghum production, as well as how to manage the pests and diseases which are the major cause of low yield among the farmers under his domain. “Most of the sessions opened my eyes to what I never knew or had limited knowledge about. I have benefited so much from these trainings under this ATASP program, particularly in handling pests and diseases,” he said after the training. Explaining further, he added, “With the knowledge I have now, the farmers that I work with will no longer have any challenge with managing the pests and diseases which affect their yield.”

Bello has since returned to Kware where he hopes to provide support in setting up an ATASP-1 demonstration field, through which the farmers and other stakeholders will benefit from his new improved knowledge. “I am already a better EA after these trainings and the farmers that I work with will be happier henceforth. I wish that some of the farmers that I work with will benefit from the training also.”

Bello was one of the 60 participants of the training. The participants included EAs, men and women who were drawn from Sokoto and Kebbi States. During the training, Dr Angarawi and his team from ICRISAT took turns in exposing the EAs to the nitty-gritty of sorghum production.

The dignitaries who were at the training were the Program Manager of Kebbi State Agricultural Development Authority (KARDA), Alhaji Mohammed Adamu Sanusi, the FADAMA III Liaison Officer for sorghum, Awotunde Busayo, the ATASP-1 Zonal Program Coordinator for Sokoto-Kebbi SCPZ, Dr Dogondaji and his team.

Farmers jubilate over bumper harvest

The Kebbi/Sokoto zone is in the time of harvesting the dry-season irrigated rice. Dry-season farming was introduced to some ATASP-1 rice farming communities in the zone for the first time. These communities have the potentials for irrigated farming but lack knowledge and could not explore the opportunity before the intervention of ATASP -1. Now, farmers from these communities have been singing praises and smiling, bagging their rice in large numbers. Before the introduction of irrigated farming and intervention of the Program, the farmers recorded an average of 1.8 t/ha but have recorded 3.4 t/ha on average. This, the farmers said, was achieved as a result of their quick adoption of GAP and the technique training provided by ATASP-1. Harvest is still on.



Annual Work Plan and Budget (AWPB) meeting at Grand Cubana Hotels, Utako Abuja.



Outreach farmers' capacity building training at different LGAs in Kano and Jigawa states, also attended by LGA Chairmen, District Heads, DPOs, HODs, and different value chain actors.



Dr Maji delivering FARO 44 seeds to Hajia Uwandi Adamu of Zango Buhari community, Bunkure LGA of Kano State, for dry-season rice production.



The Kebbi-Sokoto Zonal Outreach Officer (left) and extension agents delivering 25 kg of FARO 44 seeds to Alhaji Muhammad Bello on behalf of AfricaRice in Makera, Kebbi State.



A plate-loading method is being used to determine the bearing capacity of the soil at the Technology Demonstration Center, Awka.



On-farm training for rice farmers in Zauro, Kebbi State.



Presentation of rice seeds (FARO 44) to farmers for dry-season farming in Bida-Badeggi zone of Niger State.



Kano Zonal meeting with consultants and contractors, chaired by the ATASP-1 Zonal Program Coordinator, Alhaji Ado Shehu.



Site hand-over at Aguorba Primary School in Udenu LGA of Enugu State. In attendance is the Igwe of the community and his cabinet with the ATASP-1 team and contractors.



Geophysical investigations to identify potential locations for the drilling of boreholes in Uzo Uwani LGA of Enugu State.



Step down training on nutrition and health for rural women farmers in Adani-Omor zone.



Bida Zonal Office of ATASP-1 commissioned by the National Program Coordinator, Mr Haruna Akwashiki.



ATASP-1 Youth Training Center in Abuja.



Flagging-off ceremony of seed production training at Badeggi, Niger State with Emir of Agaie speaking.



ZPC Ibrahim Manta inspecting the construction of a clinic in Mongorota in Gbako LGA of Niger State.



Dr Hakeem Ajeigbe training the youth on seed production and seed entrepreneurship in Kano.



ATASP-1 project signpost at Kware LGA, Sokoto State.



Inspection of Isa Kaina Water Works in Dandi LGA of Kebbi State.





ATASP-1 engineers on site supervision of a technology demonstration center in Birnin Kebbi, Kebbi State.



Kano Zonal meeting with consultants and contractors, chaired by the ATASP-1 Zonal Program Coordinator, Alhaji Ado Shehu.



Inspection of Sabuwar Tunga Clinic in Suru LGA under construction.



During the commissioning of Kware Irrigation Scheme in Sokoto State.



Zango Buhari Youth Rice Seed Producers Group flaunting their certificates and rice seeds after being trained on rice seed production technology.

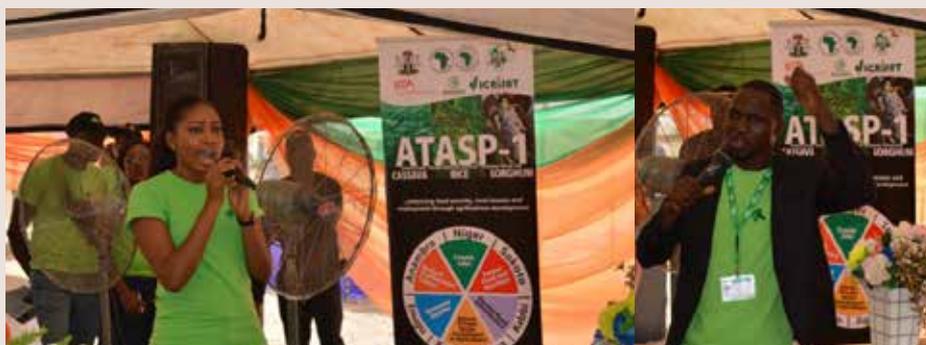


Rice field.

In his speech, the Special Guest of Honour and Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Chief Audu Ogbah commended IITA for the Youth in Agribusiness scheme and its effort towards raising entrepreneurial leaders who will have an impact on the society and the Nigerian economy at large. In his words, Chief Ogbah remarked, "I can't be any prouder as a father or grandfather can be, by seeing and hearing what the youth just said right now. May God bless you richly. One of the young ladies said you don't have

to read agriculture to be a farmer. You know I didn't read agriculture in school, I read French literature." The Hon. Minister then proceeded to flag off the National Seed Production and Processing Technology Training being held simultaneously in IITA-Abuja, NCRI-Badeggi, and ICRISAT-Kano.

After the speech, the Hon. Minister then commissioned the building, made a tour, and proceeded to see the exhibition put together by the various ATASP-1 commodity value chains, the IITA Youth



Agripreneurs testifying to their profitable investment in agribusiness.



Tweets from the Hon Minister of Agriculture about ATASP-1.

About ATASP-1

The Agricultural Transformation Agenda Support Program, Phase One (ATASP-1) is an agricultural program developed by the African Development Bank (AfDB) in collaboration with Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) to contribute to food and nutrition security, employment generation, and wealth creation along the rice, cassava, and sorghum value chains. The Program is implemented in four Staple Crops Processing Zones (SCPZs) of Adani-Omor, Bida-Badeggi, Kano-Jigawa, and Kebbi-Sokoto and covers 33 LGAs in the seven states of Anambra, Enugu, Kano, Kebbi, Jigawa, Niger, and Sokoto.

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