

## **One-Health Platform for climate-driven pests and diseases in West-Africa under the CGIAR's Two Degree Initiative (2DI) for Food and Agriculture**

### **Kick-off Webinar Report**

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**Date: 30 June 2020**

**Venue: Virtual**

#### **Meeting participants (Partners and potential partners)**

1. Abberton Michael, Deputy Director for West Africa (IITA)
2. Abdel-Rahman Elfatih, BIMAF Working Group Leader (ICIPE)
3. Abdoul Barry, Director & Representative, Coastal West Africa Hub (IFAD)
4. Adjanohoun Adolphe, Director General (INRAB)
5. Afari-Sefa Victor, Regional Director Coastal West Africa (WorldVeg)
6. Agboton Cyriaque, Consultant (BIMAF)
7. Akinbamijo Yemi, Executive Director (FARA)
8. Alhassane Agali, BIMAF Working Group Leader (AGRHYMET)
9. Asiedu Robert, Director for West Africa (IITA)
10. Assogba-Komlan Françoise, Secretary General of the Ministry (Benin Ministry of Agriculture)
11. Ba Malick, Niger Country Representative (ICRISAT)
12. Borgemeister Christian, Chair of the IITA Board of Trustees (IITA)
13. Campbell Bruce, Director of CCAFS (CCAFS)
14. Carter Rebecca, Deputy Director, Climate Resilience Practice (WRI)
15. Chikoye David, Director for Plant Health (IITA)
16. Cofie Olufunke, Country Representative Ghana and West Africa (IWMI)
17. Dickens Chris, Head of Office Southern Africa (IWMI)
18. Djinadou Igue Alice, BIMAF Working Group Leader (INRAB)
19. Djouaka Rousseau, BIMAF Working Group Leader (IITA)
20. Fakunle Yinka, Head, ICT (IITA)
21. Gnonlonfin Benoit, Senior Adviser, Sanitary & Phytosanitary Office, Focal Point of Fall Armyworm Program, ECOWAS Commission (ECOWAS)
22. Knaepen Hanne, Policy Officer, Sustainable Food Systems & Economic and Agricultural Transformation (ECDPM)
23. Koffi Yao Bernard, Senior Program Officer, ECOWAS Commission's One-Health Program (ECOWAS)
24. Lokossou Virgil, Senior Program Officer, Lead of Human Health's Pillar of ECOWAS Commission's One-Health Program (ECOWAS)
25. Lopez Katherine, Head of Communication (IITA)
26. Maiga Idrissa, Senior Advisor, AGRHYMET (CILSS/AGRHYMET)
27. McDonnell Rachael, Strategic Program Director, Water Climate Change & Resilience (IWMI)
28. Naab Jesse, BIMAF Working Group Leader (WASCAL)

29. Odhong Jonathan, Webinar Facilitator (IITA)
30. Ouedraogo Souleymane, Director General, AGHRYMET (CILSS/AGHRYMET)
31. Owen Christina, Senior Program Officer (BMGF)
32. Rampa Francesco, Head of Programme, Sustainable Food Systems & Economic and Agricultural Transformation (ECDPM)
33. Rumbaitis del Rio Cristina, Action Track Co-Manager, Global Commission On Adaptation (WRI)
34. Sæthre May-Guri, Deputy Director General/Research for Development (IITA)
35. Stålnacke Per, Director of Research (NIBIO)
36. Tamò Manuele, Benin Country Representative (IITA)
37. Tenkouano Abdou, Executive Director (CORAF/WECARD)
38. Tèpa-Yotto Ghislain, BIMAF Coordinator (IITA)
39. Thunes Karl, BIMAF Working Group Leader (NIBIO)
40. Tollervey Alan, Head of Agricultural Research (DFID UK)
41. van Gilst Daniel Frans, Senior Advisor, Department of Climate, Energy and Environment (NORAD)
42. Wittine Dagmar, Senior Advisor (GIZ)
43. Zougmore Robert, West Africa Representative (CCAFS)

## Introduction

On Tuesday, 30 June 2020, IITA held an online kick-off webinar to inform key partners in the region about the new initiative of a “One-Health platform for climate-driven pests and diseases in West Africa” under the CGIAR’s “Two Degree Initiative (2DI) for Food and Agriculture”.

By linking One-Health to Climate change, the One-health Platform is meant to provide support to agricultural producers’ management of biorisks, cross-government approaches to address climate-driven food-health risks, institutionalized capabilities for early detection of emerging threats and rapid response, and new technologies for biocontrol. The West Africa region will serve as a model for what can be achieved, prior to scaling to other regions in Africa and beyond.

The webinar brought together key stakeholders from the region, donor representatives, CG Centers, WRI, international research organizations (see participant list) to discuss the nexus of crop, livestock, human and ecosystem health, pest and disease epidemiology and control, food production, safety and nutrition, and climate change as a complex public health issue.

## Opening and setting the scene presentations

The meeting commenced with introductions by the facilitator **Jonathan Odhong** followed by opening remarks by **Christian Borgemeister** on linking one health to climate change and engaging key stakeholders for an active partnership and synergies to address one health in a holistic way. He said that through the webinar the organizers are seeking opinions of the added

value and buy-in from key regional and international stakeholders. He continued by adding that every participant brings value from their wealth of experience by contributing to the discussions on the Regional Grand Challenge (RGC) on One-Health under the four strategic priorities (see below).

**May-Guri Sæthre**, while giving her opening remarks, explained that One Health is one of the eight Grand Challenges identified under the new CGIAR Two-Degree Initiative for Food and Agriculture. She added that the aim of the webinar is to move forward using collaborative efforts and particularly to outline plans for a physical meeting planned to take place in Cotonou in mid-September, (post-COVID-19). She concluded that collaboration is open to national, regional, continental and international institutions, donors, and investors as this is needed to create a viable initiative.

**Françoise Assogba-Komlan** welcomed all participants and partners of what she called an ‘exciting One-Health initiative’, a fully holistic and more inclusive concept integrating Plant Health.

She seized the opportunity to acknowledge the contributions and reflections of all partners since the declaration of the President of the Republic of Benin, HE Patrice Talon, at Marrakech COP 22, to support the ambitions of the Benin Government to host an International Research Center for Climate Change-resilient Agriculture (CIRACC).

The current Biorisk Management Facility (BIMAF) strategy is fully aligned with the Government vision and Action Plan. It is proposed to address national and regional agricultural priorities and meant to mitigate the risks induced by climate change to enhance food and nutritional security of smallholder farmers which represent the largest agricultural community.

Benin, the champion of the CIRACC initiative, will be proud to host the proposed face-to-face meeting mid-September (COVID-19 permitting) to specifically address implementation issues of this important One-Health Grand Challenge.

**Bruce Campbell** gave a short presentation on the overall objective of the Two-Degree Initiative. He said that one of the key objectives is to transform the food system by looking at the trends in undernutrition, while exploring new development approaches against the background of climate change towards achieving the SDGs by 2030.

He continued by stating that the CGIAR has put climate change at the center of its future strategy with a focus on sustainable research for development which is demand driven research that will involve the participation of multiple stakeholders and will bear the flexibility to fit in with policy processes.

The Initiative is going to focus on various challenges and the One-Health platform in West Africa, which is one among seven others, with thematic as well as regional focus, he concluded.

**Cristina Rumbaitis del Rio**, introducing the Global Commission on Adaptation, said that the Commission which targets mobilizing momentum, political visibility, and funding, will ultimately give way to action on climate change adaptation. This is in two phases, with the first phase focusing on engagement, building coalitions, and analysis which resulted in a flagship report called ‘Adapt Now’, that calls for a revolution in planning, financing, and understanding to take necessary action to build resilience to the impacts of climate change. She said that this part of the revolution and understanding is the theme where we find ourselves today. The second phase is the launch of eight action tracks meant to catalyze and galvanize more funding, attention, and action on climate change, she added.

Many of these tracks are cross-cutting with a goal of improving the resilience of 300 million smallholder farmers by 2030 and various initiatives, including work on digital advisory services, improving market linkages for climate resilient value chains. All of these, she stated, is about mobilizing the right agenda, asking the right questions, and building the right partnerships as part of creating transformational impact.

**May-Guri Sæthre** gave a background introductory presentation about the One-Health platform for climate-driven pests and diseases in West Africa, looking at how the One-Health initiative aims to address these challenges and opportunities, by linking climate change with four strategic priorities (SPs):

**SP1- Horizon scanning and building Early Warning & Rapid Response Systems**

The overall objective is to provide seasonal and long-term forecast and management options for biorisks affecting plants, animals, people and the environment in West and Central Africa. Specific objectives are:

- a) Data infrastructure on climate and environmental variables and biorisk characteristics
- b) Prevention, surveillance, diagnostic, and ICT tools at local, national, and regional level.

**SP2- Managing climate-driven biorisks**

The overall objective is to prioritize and manage the most serious existing and emerging biorisks in agriculture.

Specific objectives are:

- a) Common tool set for assessing and managing biorisks
- b) Biopesticides, biofertilizers, and biological control agents developed and deployed against current and high-risk future biotic stresses including agricultural land degradation.

**SP3- Harnessing high throughput technologies for food safety and health for mega-cities in West Africa**

The overall objective is to improve food safety and health for mega-cities in West Africa under a climate change context.

Specific objectives are:

- a) Climate-smart and biorisk resilient cropping systems and crop varieties
- b) Enhanced human health in relation to water, soil, plant and animal health for sustainable quality food production.

#### **SP4- Mainstreaming biorisk management into national and regional development programs**

The overall objective is to establish a platform for sharing information on climate change-related biorisks and to influence policy dialog and advocacy.

Specific objectives are:

- a) Updated regulatory framework on biorisk management
- b) Strengthened capacity of national and regional bodies on the framework and on the use of biorisk management techniques.

Sæthre said all of these are looking forward to work with stakeholders to achieve the objectives. She further stated that there is anticipation that the West Africa region will serve as a model for what can be achieved in the Grand Challenge prior to scaling to other regions in Africa and beyond. She concluded by reiterating that the Challenge is open to increasing partnership to national, regional, and continental institutions, international institutions, CG centers, donors and investors.

**Yemi Akinbamijo** said that his presentation is looking at the strategic priorities one to four and see how these align with the work FARA is doing; he added that as part of the GFAR, FARA is a continental institution but is connected to four subregional organizations. Working with 55 National Agricultural Research Institutes and regional institutions has helped FARA develop the kind of synergies that it needs, most of which overlap with what the One-Health platform is proposing. Hence, there is need to merge these synergies and we will be able to link all of these into the strategic priorities in a way that confers mutual benefits, he stated.

He also added that some of the models FARA has developed to address issues, like the Agricultural Innovation System for managing biorisks, can be put at the disposal of the One-Health platform. He concluded his presentation by showing concrete examples of how FARA initiatives feed directly into the four One-Health priorities.

**Yao Bernard Koffi** started his presentation by introducing the ECOWAS' own One-Health platform, which is entirely focusing on the human/animal ecosystem interface in the evolution and emergence of pathogens. He also presented details of activities and achievements of the West African Health Organization (WAHO) regional framework in agriculture, environment, and water resources, with concrete examples of policies and regulations which have been implemented by ECOWAS.

He continued by stating that the 4 SPs of RGC One-Health platform are quite relevant and will offer some possibility of cooperation within the implementation of ECOWAS regional One-Health framework. He mentioned for instance that we could link with the Regional Rapid Response Mechanism, coordinate capacity development efforts, and collaborate to expand and strengthen the regional reference laboratory network.

#### **Summary of comments and discussion**

The stakeholders generally welcomed and endorsed the One-Health platform for climate driven pests and diseases in West Africa, as well as the four strategic priorities (SPs) presented. Hence, the discussion focused more on what will be needed to make more visible or clear in the respective SPs to provide a truly holistic and inclusive One-Health platform. Details of all comments and discussions can be found on the [audio file](#) and also the [chat file](#) of the webinar.

The key issues emerging from the discussions are summarized below:

### **1. Better integration of available expertise**

Many stakeholders, including CORAF, FARA and CILSS/AGRHYMET, expressed the wish to see this platform proactively building innovative partnerships for a better integration of all the expertise presently in West Africa. We need to coalesce efforts and expertise and provide an enabling environment for working together and therefore abandoning the current ‘silo’ mentality.

### **2. Agroecology and ecosystems health**

SP2 - Managing climate-driven biorisks - should more explicitly include the notion of agroecological principles to embrace ecosystems as a means of control for pests. Also, there should be more clarity on what is included under ecosystem health and especially the aspects of climate driven environmental health risks should be more clearly spelled out.

### **3. Better integration of water-related One-Health issues**

It was suggested that the water dimension should be better integrated into the plant, environment, animal, and human health interface. The plant, animal, and human health dimensions are closely linked to water (e.g., contaminated water can act as a carrier of diseases for both humans and animals), and lack or excess of water are key climate-driven factors affecting plant and environmental health.

### **4. Economic impact of biorisks**

Some funders, including banks and investors, see pests and diseases as a very complex area and from their perspective not yielding clear-cut and easy solutions. Also, it can be difficult to convince them of the value of controlling pest and disease challenges without knowing the true burden, with rather scanty recent data on economic impact of biorisks in West Africa. Hence, it was suggested that the platform should catalyze selected impact studies, and then facilitate an evidence-based discussion on where investment and policies need to improve. Along these lines, we should identify quick wins which can be used to showcase the integrative and transformative approach of the One-Health platform.

### **Way forward and closing**

In his closing remarks, **Abdou Tenkouano** mentioned that the challenge is very daunting and said that if we can reverse the losses caused by climate-driven biorisks, some 48 million people

in West Africa could be saying ‘thank you’. This target, he said, is achievable particularly if we apply transformative research that leads to societal impact in a very integrated way between the disciplines, but also the different agencies that are operating in the field.

With regard to the question whether West Africa should be a guinea pig for testing the One-Health approach, he was confident that our efforts are going in the right direction and entirely in line with similar efforts by the World Bank and CORAF such as their joint endeavor called the West Africa Food Security and Resilience program.

Finally, he reiterated the need to implement this comprehensive One-Health platform also to manage entire ecosystems and landscapes using an agroecological approach as mentioned during the discussions.

**May-Guri Sæthre** closed the webinar by thanking the presenters and all participants for the frank discussions and comments. She mentioned that there will be a comprehensive report on the meeting while inviting everyone as partners to collaborate on the initiative.

### **Update on next steps**

Due to COVID19, it was decided that the planned F2F meeting in Cotonou will be replaced by a virtual meeting. The next steps will be to convene a 2-half day webinar on 14 and 15 October (1300 Hours, WAT) with plenary sessions and breakout groups, facilitated by a professional webinar management company. This time, we expect a larger community of key stakeholders to be decision makers at the country level, with a minimum of two representatives per country involving at least two of the core competencies of the One-Health approach. Plenary sessions will remain succinct and will set the scene, while there will be ample time for parallel breakout groups to further elaborate on how we together can build an inclusive and holistic One-Health Platform that can serve the needs of the region (Day 1). On Day 1 we would like to identify regional and national priorities among and within the four SPs, as well as the research priorities to enable the One-Health Platform to bring the four SPs together in a logical and complementary way compared to what is already on the ground at regional and national levels. We would also like to identify organizations that can contribute to the different SPs. On Day 2 we will use the outcome of previous discussions to inform technical details related to the 4 SPs and advance their operationalization into fundable projects. We would also like to identify quick wins within each SP for proof of concept of and to promote-long term investment in the One-health Platform. i.e., selected impact studies, economic burden of not controlling pests and diseases, etc. Finally, we would like to identify longer term activities and goals to achieve the vision of desired transformative change, i.e., a significant reduction in (1) production and trade losses worth several million US\$, and (2) deforestation linked to expansion of agricultural land, with the associated loss of biodiversity, while continuing to feed a growing population.



This can only happen by joining forces for sustainable management of pests and diseases through a holistic One-health platform.