Documentation on CCASA platform method

C-CASA Mali

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Introductory Note

This fact sheet has been produced as part of a study to map innovative methods and tools in agricultural advisory services in West and Central Africa. This study was commissioned by CORAF/WECARD (the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development) and carried out by RESCAR-AOC (the West and Central Network for Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services) across 13 West and Central African countries.

The overall objective of the study was to compile a descriptive directory of innovative agricultural advisory methods and tools for scaling up agricultural technologies and innovations in West and Central Africa.

Several individuals within CORAF, RESCAR-AOC, and beyond, across the 13 countries covered by the study, contributed to the success of this initiative. We extend our gratitude to everyone involved for their contribution.

1. Overview of the CCASA Platform Method

The CCASA platform (National Science-Policy Dialogue Platform for Agricultural Adaptation and Food Security in the Face of Climate Change) is an exchange framework that connects all stakeholders in the agricultural sector. The main implementing stakeholders of the method include: (i) The Ministry of Agriculture, responsible for coordination, monitoring and evaluation, capacity building, fundraising, and promotion of innovations; (ii) Research institutions for developing innovations and strengthening farmers' resilience; (iii) Farmers' Organisations (FOs) for identifying farmers' needs and sharing experiences; (iv) Local authorities for facilitating interactions and supporting stakeholders; (v) The media for widespread dissemination of findings. This initiative fosters synergies between key national stakeholders involved in guiding and making political decisions essential for national plans and strategies to address climate change.

2. Brief Description of the Beneficiaries Supported by the CCASA Platform Method

The beneficiaries of the CCASA platform method are rural communities, with the farmers as the final beneficiaries. However, the platform serves as a departmental-level framework that supports decision-makers and leaders in developing resilience options and strategies for their communities. It also promotes the dissemination of climate-

resilient agricultural practices. The supported farms have an average size of 4 to 5 hectares and include men, women, and young people. The production systems are diverse, incorporating mixed and integrated farming. The most commonly raised livestock includes poultry and small ruminants, though cattle farming and small-scale fish farming also exist. The primary crops include cereals, legumes, roots and tubers, as well as fruits and vegetables.

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3. Necessity and Objective of the CCASA Platform Method

The CCASA platform method was officially introduced in Senegal in 2015 in a context of climate variability and change, characterised by recurrent extreme weather events, land degradation, disruptions in crop varieties, and the proliferation of pests. The global geopolitical context at the time, including the Paris Climate Agreement, also strongly influenced the establishment of this method. The CCASA platform was necessary for planning agricultural campaigns based on agro-meteorological forecasts. It was created to address challenges in agricultural activity planning by incorporating climate information and scaling up resilient technologies and innovations to cope with climate change. Its objective is to reduce the vulnerability of farmers and agricultural systems to the adverse effects of climate change. The specific objectives of the CCASA platform are:

- Sharing knowledge on climate change;
- Strengthening existing consultation frameworks and spaces;
- Ensuring the flow of information and activities between research institutions and key national actors, including rural development technical services, academic institutions, farmers' organisations, private rural sector stakeholders, media, NGOs, and policymakers;
- Enhancing stakeholders' capacity on climate change issues;
- Strengthening interactions between local and national levels to foster a political dialogue that integrates climate change into public policies related to agriculture and food security;
- Developing and implementing innovative projects promoting climate-smart agriculture.

4. Impacts of the CCASA Platform Method

The use of the CCASA platform has reached a significant number of farmers and contributed to increased agricultural yields. According to farmers, the platform is highly effective as it provides essential climate-related information (rain, wind, etc.), enabling them to better plan their agricultural activities through access to weather forecasts in local languages directly on their phones. Participation in platform discussions and the adoption of technologies have led to improved agricultural yields. Specifically, farmers reported a 25% increase in yields using the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) and a 30% increase with the Zaï technique. Additionally, farmers observed an increase in their incomes. Access to weather information has helped them better plan their farming seasons, leading to improved yields and, consequently, higher revenues from product sales (an average 20% income increase).

5. Technologies and Innovations Promoted through the CCASA Platform Method

Several technologies and innovations have been promoted through the CCASA platform, including Zaï technique, Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR), System of Rice Intensification (SRI), Line sowing of rice, etc.

6. Average Implementation Costs of the CCASA Platform Method

The implementation costs of the CCASA platform are high and cover expenses related to national and local meetings, establishing Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) demonstration plots, broadcasting "Kaddu Baykat" radio programs, scaling up local frameworks, supporting research institutes, coordinating and monitoring field activities. The estimated cost of platform services is approximately 750,000 CFA francs per month per department. 90% of these costs are covered by partners and 10% by the Senegalese government.

7. Strengths and weaknesses of the CCASA Platform Method

The main strengths and weaknesses of the CCASA platform as identified during the national discussion and evaluation workshops, and during the documentation interviews on methods and tools, are as follows:

Strengths of the CCASA Platform:

- It facilitates the dissemination of information to farmers;
- It supports decision-making by bringing together multiple stakeholders;

- It promotes consensus on technical, organisational, and communication aspects among all stakeholders;
- It enjoys strong institutional support;
- It encourages significant involvement of local authorities and farmers in its implementation.

Limitations of the CCASA Platform:

Establishing the CCASA platform requires time to bring stakeholders together; it demands significant financial resources for implementation.

8. Prerequisites for Success and Roles of various stakeholders in the CCASA Platform's Success

For the CCASA platform to operate effectively, strong awareness-raising efforts among administrative authorities and local elected officials are necessary. Additionally, capacity-building initiatives for farmers on the platform's methodology and climate change issues are essential, along with establishing a multidisciplinary team for platform management and facilitation.

Key lessons and messages from the CCASA platform's operation include:

- Political involvement facilitated the platform's deployment;
- The engagement of various stakeholders (local authorities and farmers) contributed to achieving the platform's objectives;
- Fulfilment of commitments helped maintain platform user motivation;
- The availability of financial resources (Government’s contributions and financial partners) ensured the timely implementation of all platform activities.