

RESCAR - AOC

Network of Agricultural and Rural Extension
Services in West and Central Africa

Capitalization Report

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Capitalizing on the Experiences of National Agricultural Advisory Forums in West and Central Africa

Benin | Burkina Faso | Cameroon | Côte d'Ivoire

| Ghana | Nigeria | Senegal | D.R. Congo

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► Acronyms and Abbreviations

AFAAS	African Forum for Agricultural Extension Services
CA	Agricultural Council
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
CIRAD	Center for International Cooperation in Agricultural Research for Development
CORAF	West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development
GFRAS	Global Forum on Rural Advisory Services
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OP	Farmers' organization
RESCAR-AOC	Network of Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services in West and Central Africa
SARFAAS	Southern Africa Regional Forum for Agricultural Extension Services
SCA	Agricultural Advisory Services
SSANAAS	Sub-Saharan African Network for Agricultural Advisory Services
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies

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- Mr. **Gabriel OWUSU** of Ghana;
- Professor **Tunji AROKOYO** of Nigeria;
- Dr. **Patrice DJAMEN NANA** of Senegal;
- Ms. **Victorine MBOMBO** of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Chairs of national agricultural advisory forums:

- Professor **Ismail M. MOUMOUNI** of Benin;
- Mr. **Seydou OUEDRAOGO** of Burkina Faso;
- Ms. **Nathalie NTUMY BOGUI** of Côte d'Ivoire;
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► Abstract

Agriculture is a major pillar of economic development in West and Central Africa. It employs nearly 60% of the working population and contributes significantly to GDP (nearly 35%). Despite its importance, the sector faces numerous challenges, including low productivity due to inadequate practices, vulnerability to climate change, low mechanization, and increasing land degradation. In this context, agricultural extension plays a key role in facilitating producers' access to innovations, information, and appropriate practices. However, the provision of agricultural extension services remains insufficient in both quality and quantity. To address this shortfall, several countries have established agricultural extension forums—multi-stakeholder platforms aimed at improving the coordination, quality, and effectiveness of agricultural extension services.

The objective of this study was to build on the experiences of national agricultural advisory forums in West and Central Africa by analyzing their operations and the challenges they face, and to identify performance drivers. To this end, a mixed-methods approach was adopted. It was based on a combination of desk research and data collection from agricultural advisory (AA) experts and chairs of national agricultural and rural advisory forums in eight (08) countries in West and Central Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Cameroon, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The study thus shed light on the characteristics and importance of national agricultural advisory forums, the current status and functioning of these multi-stakeholder platforms, their relevance, and the recommendations to be considered for their establishment. The study also highlights that national agricultural advisory forums are indispensable tools for better structuring and modernizing agricultural advisory systems in West and Central Africa. The structural and organizational strengthening of these structures is essential to promote the sustainability, inclusivity, and productivity of West and Central African agriculture and to address the challenges of food security and rural development in Africa.

► General Introduction

Agriculture is at the heart of economic growth and development in Africa. It provides approximately 80% of the food needs for nearly 300 million people in the West African region (ECA, 2012). In this region of Africa, the agricultural sector is the primary occupation for about 60% of the working population and accounts for nearly 35% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (ECA, 2012). Although it plays a significant role, the sector's development is hampered by low mechanization, inadequate agricultural practices, a lack of storage and transport infrastructure, and low productivity linked to climate variability and soil degradation.

The agricultural sector in Africa is closely linked to agricultural extension, which plays a central role in promoting sustainable development by providing farmers with information, techniques, and solutions tailored to their needs, thereby enabling the transformation of scientific and technical knowledge into concrete practices in the field. Over the past thirty years, the supply of agricultural extension services has diversified significantly in the region but remains far from meeting the needs of all farmers in terms of both quantity and quality (Inter-réseaux, 2019a). This shortfall has an undeniable impact on agricultural productivity, the environment, and public health.

In response to this shortfall, several countries—including Morocco, Madagascar, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Niger—have adopted new, sometimes ambitious policies and are seeking to revitalize agricultural extension by leveraging the diversity of approaches and mechanisms that currently exist in a scattered manner on the ground, with the aim of ensuring their coordination (Inter-réseaux, 2019a).

These existing consultation frameworks, such as national forums, remain largely unknown and insufficiently utilized by the relevant stakeholders. They face significant challenges related to funding, governance, and the qualifications of advisors (Inter-réseau, 2019a). According to RESCAR-AOC (2024a), many stakeholders also express a growing need for knowledge regarding how these platforms are established and operated.



To date, there are over a hundred forums worldwide, including more than thirty in Africa, which differ in several respects (RESCAR-AOC, 2024b). Some forums function more or less effectively, while others exist in name only; operational difficulties are largely linked to the process of establishing these forums.

The objective of this document is therefore to document and analyze the experiences, best practices, and challenges of national agricultural advisory forums in order to strengthen their effectiveness, sustainability, and contribution to the development of agricultural advisory services in West and Central Africa, on the one hand, and in Africa as a whole, on the other.

1. Methodology and Limitations of the Analysis

1.1. Study Methodology

To draft this capitalization document, a mixed-methods approach was adopted. It combined literature review and data collection from agricultural extension (AE) resource persons and chairs of national agricultural and rural extension forums in West and Central Africa.

The literature review included the analysis of existing reports on national forums, scientific publications, activity reports, and documents produced by organizations involved in agricultural extension.

Following this literature review, two questionnaires were developed using the intuitive KoboToolbox software and then sent to key informants (CA experts) and forum chairs, respectively. A total of thirteen (13) individuals were surveyed for this study, including seven (7) experts and seven (6) chairs of national forums (Table 1).

The questionnaires addressed various aspects of how the forums operate and helped gather important information on institutional structure, governance, funding mechanisms, success factors, and the main challenges encountered (see **Appendices 1 and 2**).

Table1 : Experts and Chairs of National Agricultural Advisory Forums Contacted for the Study

Country	Number of Experts Consulted	Number of Forum Chairs consulted
West Africa		
Burkina Faso	1	1
Benin	1	1
Ivory Coast	0	1
Ghana	1	1
Nigeria	1	1
Senegal	1	0
Central Africa		
Cameroon	1	0
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1	1
Total	7	6

1.2. Limitations of the study

During the course of the study, several practical difficulties were encountered, notably:

- ▶ limited availability of information during the literature review. Indeed, several reports and documents were incomplete or difficult to access;
- ▶ incomplete or late responses to the questionnaires;

- ▶ the complexity of the topics addressed, particularly aspects related to governance, financing, fundamental principles, and lessons learned regarding the functioning of the forums.

2. Characteristics and Importance of a National Agricultural Advisory Forum

2.1. Definition of the National Agricultural Advisory Forum

The national agricultural advisory forum is a national consultation platform bringing together stakeholders from all sectors involved in agricultural advisory services, designed to promote the sharing of experiences, the creation of synergies among stakeholders, and the pooling of resources in order to better support producers in the field according to the diversity of their needs (Inter-réseaux, 2019b).

2.2. Fundamental Principles of a National Agricultural Advisory Forum

National agricultural advisory forums are based on a set of guiding principles that ensure the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the agricultural system. These principles can be summarized as follows:

- ▶ **Harmonization and national ownership.** The forum must facilitate the alignment of national agricultural advisory policies and strategies while ensuring ownership by all local stakeholders to guarantee the coherence and sustainability of interventions.
- ▶ **inclusivity and multi-stakeholder participation.** The forum must be a platform open to all agricultural extension stakeholders (public and private sectors, producer organizations, NGOs, research and training institutions, etc.) and promote active participation and multi-stakeholder dialogue.
- ▶ **A farmer-centered approach.** The forum must ensure that advisory services are tailored to producers' actual needs, accessible, locally based, and responsive to local contexts.
- ▶ **Accountability and performance management.** The forum's activities and decisions must be guided by accountability, transparency, and ethics, with clear mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating performance.
- ▶ **The data-driven and innovation-based approach.** Decisions and recommendations must be based on evidence and encourage innovation in agricultural advisory practices and methods.

- ▶ **Equity and gender.** The forum must promote equity in access to advisory services by explicitly integrating gender issues and fostering the inclusion of women and youth.
- ▶ **Communication and transparency.** Open and transparent communication is essential for building trust among stakeholders and ensuring the effective sharing of information and best practices.
- ▶ **Adaptability and forward-thinking.** The forum must be able to adapt to changes in the agricultural and rural landscape while maintaining a long-term strategic vision for the sector's development.
- ▶ **Professional ethics and conduct.** The forum is based on ethical and professional principles that ensure the credibility and legitimacy of the advisory services provided.
- ▶ **A participatory approach and capacity building.** The forum's activities must promote a participatory approach, including capacity building for agricultural advisors and institutions involved in agricultural advisory services (AAS).

2.3. Main objectives a forum should pursue

The agricultural advisory forum's vision is to improve the effectiveness, quality, and impact of AAS and to strengthen the coherence of the system within a pluralistic context. The forum pursues the following objectives:

- ▶ **Ensure access to AS at the “last mile.”** It helps bring advisory services closer to producers by facilitating local, accessible support tailored to local realities (including the most isolated farms).
- ▶ **Support the government in the strategic direction and regulation of the services provided.** The forum assists public authorities in defining agricultural advisory policies and strategic directions while contributing to the regulation and oversight of the quality of services provided by the various stakeholders.
- ▶ **Strengthen coordination and alignment among stakeholders.** The forum promotes better coordination among AAS providers and ensures their alignment with national policies to guarantee the coherence and complementarity of interventions.
- ▶ **Improve the quality and professionalization of services.** It contributes to the establishment of professional standards, the strengthening of advisors' skills, and the continuous improvement of the quality of services offered to farmers.

- ▶ **Strengthen links among stakeholders in the agricultural system.** The forum facilitates interactions between research, extension, farmers, and markets to promote better knowledge transfer and faster adoption of innovations.
- ▶ **Improve access to agricultural information.** It aims to ensure that producers have regular access to reliable, relevant, and up-to-date information essential for decision-making.
- ▶ **Promote sustainable and climate-smart agriculture.** It supports the dissemination of practices that promote the sustainability of agricultural systems, particularly through the promotion of climate-smart agriculture.
- ▶ **Establish monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems.** The forum should encourage the development of monitoring and learning mechanisms to evaluate the performance of advisory services and continuously improve interventions.
- ▶ **Encourage innovation and digitalization.** It promotes the integration of digital solutions and innovative approaches that modernize agricultural advisory services and improve their effectiveness.
- ▶ **Contribute to the modernization and structuring of agricultural advisory services.** The forum contributes to the modernization of agricultural advisory services, the capacity building of stakeholders, and the economic structuring of value chains to improve producers' competitiveness and incomes.

2.4. The Specific Role of a Forum in the Provision of Agricultural Advisory Services

Forums play a specific role in the provision of agricultural advisory services. This includes:

- ▶ **supporting producers in transitioning to modern, sustainable, and profitable agricultural systems.** The forum thus helps guide agricultural advisory services (SCA) toward innovative practices adapted to local realities and promotes improvements in the economic, social, and environmental performance of farms.
- ▶ **developing and guiding agricultural advisory services** by defining strategic directions for targeted, relevant, and effective advice; establishing mechanisms for regulating and professionalizing the sector; supporting the training of agricultural advisors; and promoting monitoring, evaluation, and/or sanction mechanisms to ensure service quality.

- ▶ **Coordination of stakeholders.** It ensures coordination among the various agricultural advisory stakeholders to strengthen synergies and harmonize interventions.
- ▶ **Evidence-based advocacy.** Drawing on factual data, the forum seeks to influence public policy with a view to improving agricultural advisory systems and supporting the interests of producers and service providers.

2.5. Added value of a forum in a pluralistic agricultural advisory context where coordination and oversight of service delivery should be a sovereign role of the State

In a context of multiple agricultural advisory stakeholders, the state's capacity to ensure coordination and oversight of services on its own becomes limited. The national forum thus emerges as an essential complementary mechanism that provides significant added value to the functioning and effectiveness of agricultural advisory services. It contributes to:

- ▶ **accelerate innovation and improve decision-making.** Thanks to its proximity to actors on the ground and its ability to bring together expertise, the forum facilitates the identification of appropriate technical and economic solutions and improves decision-making for the benefit of producers.
- ▶ **prioritizing and resolving urgent issues.** The forum makes it possible to identify and prioritize the real concerns of stakeholders on the ground.
- ▶ **serve as a strategic ally of the government.** It acts as a strategic governance tool and helps strengthen, structure, coordinate, and unify interventions.

2.6. Success Factors for a National Agricultural Advisory Forum

The success of a forum depends on several essential conditions that ensure its effectiveness, sustainability, and impact on agricultural advisory systems. The key elements of this success are as follows:

- ▶ the critical role of leadership (the presence of “champions” capable of mobilizing stakeholders and resources);
- ▶ ownership of the forum by members and stakeholders;
- ▶ a sustainable funding mechanism;
- ▶ capacity building for members;
- ▶ internal and external communication, including with other countries;
- ▶ credibility and neutrality of the forum;

- ▶ a transparent, democratic, and inclusive governance system;
- ▶ capacity to take concrete action with a strategic presence and influence.

3. Overview of National Agricultural Advisory Forums in West and Central Africa

In Africa, national AC forums are linked to subregional agricultural advisory networks such as the Network of Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services in West and Central Africa (RESCAR-AOC) for the West and Central Africa region and the Southern African Regional Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (SARFAAS) for the Southern Africa region. These networks are supported by the umbrella organizations for agricultural extension, namely the African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAAS) and the Global Forum for Rural Advisory and Extension Services (GFRAS).

Figure 1 presents the global structure of forums and networks of agricultural extension stakeholders.

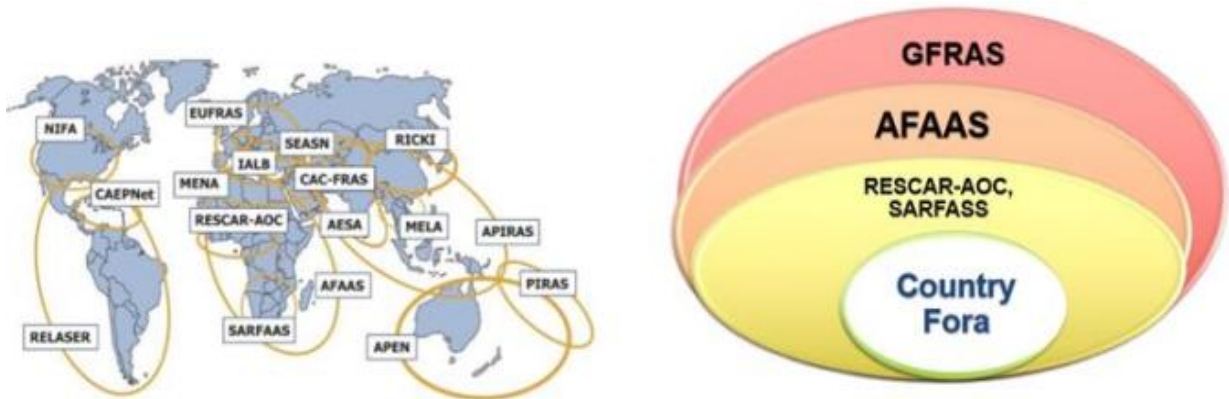


Figure1 : Global map of forums and networks of agricultural extension stakeholders
(Source: Inter-réseaux, 2019b)

4. How National Forums Operate

4.1. Structure of national forums

The structure of national agricultural advisory forums is based on an institutional framework that not only coordinates stakeholders but also facilitates the governance of the entity. The operational model of the forums must be sufficiently flexible to adapt to new and emerging needs. The model consists of four (04) or five (05) core units. These are:

- ▶ **the General Assembly.** It is the supreme decision-making body and is responsible for defining the forum's strategic directions. It brings together all forum members grouped by stakeholder categories (public institutions, producer organizations, the private sector, research and training institutes, NGOs, and technical and financial partners).
- ▶ **the Board of Directors.** This is the governing body responsible for implementing the decisions made by the General Assembly. It sets the forum's strategic direction, monitors the implementation of activities, mobilizes resources, and oversees the Executive Secretariat.
- ▶ **The Executive Secretariat (or Office).** It serves as the Forum's operational body and is responsible for coordinating activities and projects, organizing meetings and workshops, managing communication and information dissemination, and handling administrative and financial management.
- ▶ **The Oversight Committee (or Monitoring Committee).** This is a key governance body whose primary role is to ensure the proper execution of the forum's missions and to oversee its management. It performs a dual role of oversight and advisory support. It ensures the effectiveness of monitoring mechanisms, the implementation of strategic guidelines, as well as compliance with institutional and regulatory frameworks and the principles of good governance.
- ▶ **Working groups.** Some forums have working groups that allow for the mobilization of members' technical expertise and the development of recommendations to improve agricultural advisory services.

4.2. Current Governance of National Forums

The majority of national agricultural advisory forums have the structural units mentioned above (at least 4 out of 5 or all 5). The institutional, political, and organizational realities of these organizations have a significant impact on their operations. Indeed, some forums, such as those in Benin and Nigeria, benefit from a strong institutional foundation where collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and other stakeholders reinforces their legitimacy and capacity for action. Conversely, other forums face difficulties in establishing sustainable collaboration with public institutions (particularly ministries in charge of agriculture), which limits the scope of their actions and the recognition of their strategic role in agricultural advisory services.

However, other forums, such as those in Benin and Nigeria, benefit from formal institutional anchoring but face the same operational difficulties as those without such institutional anchoring. These findings suggest that the quality of leadership, a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of each structural unit, the ability to mobilize key advisory stakeholders, and the establishment of operational and inclusive management mechanisms are equally critical to the governance of national agricultural advisory forums.

4.3. Inclusivity and Participation of All Agricultural Advisory Stakeholders in the Activities of National Forums

In West and Central Africa, national agricultural advisory forums are composed of a wide range of stakeholders. These categories vary from one country to another but essentially consist of the following stakeholders:

- public and private advisory bodies;
- public and private research institutions;
- agricultural professional organizations;
- ministries responsible for rural development;
- agricultural development agencies;
- farmers;
- interprofessional organizations.

Inclusivity within these forums is effective due to the diversity of stakeholders, but their participation in initiatives remains inconsistent at times. Indeed, the limited capacity of some forums to establish a sustainable economic model and an operational management mechanism results in low stakeholder engagement in the various activities organized. At the same time, some of these forums regularly benefit from opportunities for exchange and sharing of experiences through regional and international events organized by AFAAS and GFRAS. These meetings help foster engagement, strengthen interactions, clarify concrete actions, and promote mutual learning among agricultural extension stakeholders.

4.4. Actual Contribution of National Forums to the Provision of Agricultural Advisory Services

The establishment of forums is one of the best approaches to addressing the challenge of coordinating and ensuring consistency in the actions of agricultural advisory stakeholders at various levels (national, regional, global) (Inter-réseaux, 2019b). At the national level, the

agricultural advisory forum plays a role in defining ethical guidelines for the provision of agricultural advisory services (Inter-réseaux, 2019b). Among other things, they help strengthen extension and agricultural advisory systems through various contributions.

In Benin, for example, the forum participates in the evaluation and development of national agricultural advisory strategies and shares its expertise with stakeholders. It has also introduced new advisory methods and tools, notably market access advisory services, integrated agricultural advisory services, the Tem Sesiabun Gorado model (TSG model), etc. The Burkina Faso forum has participated in studies on agricultural and rural advisory services, notably in the development of the national guide to agricultural advisory and extension methods and tools. It has also contributed to the capitalization of innovative agribusiness methods and approaches such as the RuralInvest approach, the Agricultural Business Clusters approach, 2SCALE, and VBA. In addition, the forum maintains a database of extension workers and agricultural advisors in Burkina Faso. The forum in Nigeria, for its part, participates in and organizes international meetings on agricultural advisory services (organizing the 6th edition of the African Agricultural Extension Week in 2023 and participating in the 2025 edition in Malawi), drafts policy documents including Nigeria's first agricultural extension policy, and facilitates policy dialogue on the integration of climate-smart agriculture. In addition, it builds the capacity of extension actors in the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and promotes market-oriented AAS services leveraging ICT. In Côte d'Ivoire, the forum establishes innovation platforms with significant socio-economic impacts for the relevant value chains. These contributions bring about tangible changes to national agricultural extension systems.

4.5. Main Challenges Faced in the Governance and Operation of National Forums

National forums face numerous challenges in both governance and operations. These challenges can be grouped into five (05) broad categories that provide a better understanding of the constraints affecting them:

- ▶ **institutional and governance challenges**
 - the difficulty of mobilizing and coordinating stakeholders in the agricultural sector;
 - the low level of engagement among certain stakeholders;
 - the absence or limited involvement of public agricultural extension services;

- weak political commitment and shortcomings in policies and regulatory frameworks;
- extension approaches that remain top-down and limit stakeholder participation;
- the weak organizational structure of producer organizations;
- ▶ **financial and economic challenges**
 - lack of funding and the absence of a sustainable business model;
 - the absence or insufficiency of financial resources to carry out the forum's activities;
 - heavy reliance on project funding;
 - the high costs associated with mobilizing stakeholders;
 - difficulties in accessing credit for producers;
 - the lack of funding to develop value-added services for members.
- ▶ **challenges related to mobilizing and engaging stakeholders**
 - the limited capacity to mobilize and bring stakeholders together;
 - low member engagement and the difficulty in incentivizing or strengthening their involvement;
 - the difficulty in quickly demonstrating the concrete benefits of the forum (return on investment not readily visible in the short term, particularly over a 5-year period);
 - individualism in the agricultural sector limiting collective dynamics.
- ▶ **Challenges related to communication, visibility, and awareness**
 - the limited ability to communicate the relevance and added value of the forum's actions;
 - Insufficient communication and awareness-raising channels;
 - the difficulty of disseminating information in certain areas (poor cellular coverage, deteriorating security situation, etc.).
- ▶ **Structural and technical challenges in the agricultural sector**
 - Low levels of mechanization and agricultural productivity;
 - insufficient extension services in certain areas due to security concerns;

- structural challenges affecting the entire agricultural extension and advisory system.

4.6. Lessons Learned on the Establishment and Operation of National Forums

The establishment and operation of national forums have yielded several lessons, including:

- ▶ the need to demonstrate and highlight the forum's added value to members and partners;
- ▶ the importance of highlighting the forum's contribution to the overall objectives of the agricultural sector;
- ▶ the need to define specific indicators to measure and evaluate the extent to which objectives are met and the forum's impact;
- ▶ the need for sustainable financial resources;
- ▶ the need to build members' capacity and professionalize the sector;
- ▶ the importance of the forum's institutional anchoring.

5. Current relevance of national forums and recommendations for their establishment or revitalization

5.1. Current relevance of national forums

National agricultural advisory forums are important and even more relevant today. Indeed, they serve as neutral and inclusive platforms for consultation to coordinate multi-stakeholder rural development actions and enable the harmonization of interventions to address productivity and food security challenges. They also facilitate advocacy efforts to ensure that agricultural advisory services are better integrated into national policies and promote the sharing of best practices while taking into account the real needs of producers.

5.2. Recommendations to Address the Main Challenges Faced in the Current Operation of National Forums

The challenges identified in the operation of national forums can be addressed through a combination of strategic actions. The actions undertaken should strengthen their governance, performance, and sustainability. It is therefore recommended to:

- ▶ develop networking and stakeholder engagement to strengthen exchanges, collaboration, and synergies among stakeholders;
- ▶ build the capacity of stakeholders;
- ▶ intensify advocacy efforts to promote the role of the forum among public decision-makers and raise stakeholders' awareness of the importance of collaboration and synergy in the agricultural sector;
- ▶ strengthen institutional partnerships between the forums, ministries of agriculture, and research and training institutions;
- ▶ decentralize activities through regional forums;
- ▶ establish sustainable funding mechanisms (diversification of funding sources, membership dues, etc.)
- ▶ strengthen the autonomy and sustainability of the forums (develop financial autonomy strategies, forge strong partnerships to support activities).

5.3. Recommendations for Revitalizing Stagnant National Forums

The revitalization of national CA forums must be tailored to the forum's level of maturity and take into account the operational challenges of each forum. It requires a structured approach combining organization, stakeholder mobilization, and strategic strengthening. Actions to revitalize the forums may include:

- ▶ identifying and engaging key stakeholders at the national and regional levels (government, producer organizations, NGOs, private sector, etc.);
- ▶ establishing effective mechanisms for mobilizing and engaging members;
- ▶ organizing regular forums for discussion on topics relevant and prioritized for the agricultural sector;
- ▶ foster operational synergies among stakeholders to improve interventions;
- ▶ strengthening stakeholders' capacities and equipping the forums with guidelines for sustainable operation that include strategies for collaboration with technical and financial partners;
- ▶ consolidate the legal structure of the forums (legal formalization, creation of a functional office with permanent staff, etc.)

- ▶ establish a clear strategy (strategic development plan for agricultural and rural advisory services) and use this plan to guide the forum's actions over the medium term (at least 5 years);
- ▶ adapt the forums' strategies to local realities to ensure their effectiveness;
- ▶ strengthen advocacy and communication;
- ▶ ensure the mobilization of financial resources;
- ▶ encourage regional and continental organizations to take into account the specific characteristics of each country in their interventions.

5.4. Recommendations for the Establishment of New National Agricultural Advisory Forums

The process for establishing new national agricultural advisory forums was developed in 2024 by RESCAR-AOC in its strategic document on the establishment and/or revitalization of national forums or national agricultural advisory platforms in West and Central Africa. This framework can draw on the following recommendations to improve and/or consolidate the establishment process:

- ▶ conduct an assessment of the sector, particularly by performing an in-depth analysis of the existing agricultural advisory system, and use this assessment to define the forum's positioning and added value;
- ▶ prioritize the forum's key and visible actions;
- ▶ promote broad and inclusive participation;
- ▶ decentralize the forum's activities.

Conclusion

National agricultural advisory forums play a strategic and indispensable role in strengthening agricultural advisory systems in West and Central Africa. Their relevance lies in their ability to structure an agricultural advisory system that has become pluralistic, facilitate coordination among stakeholders, support the transfer of knowledge and agricultural innovations, and influence agricultural policies to promote sustainable, high-performing, and environmentally friendly agriculture.

Despite this proven importance, national agricultural advisory forums face several major organizational, institutional, technical, and financial challenges. These obstacles often limit the continuity and scope of activities, thereby reducing the forums' potential impact on the ground.

To improve the functioning of these platforms, several courses of action should be considered, including strengthening leadership and inclusion, organizing regular training and workshops for sharing experiences, developing strategic and operational plans, and establishing a sustainable economic model. Implementing such measures will enable national forums to strengthen their credibility, visibility, and impact while helping to make agricultural advisory systems more coherent, innovative, and inclusive.



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Appendix 1 : Questionnaire for discussion with agricultural advisory experts on the dysfunction of national forums

1. What is your understanding of what a national agricultural advisory forum is?
2. What are the fundamental principles of a national agricultural advisory forum?
3. What are the main objectives a forum should pursue?
4. What is your assessment of the actual objectives of the forums you are familiar with (achievements and shortcomings)?
5. What specific role should a forum play in the provision of agricultural advisory services?
6. Do the forums that have been established succeed in playing this role? Strengths and weaknesses
7. What is the added value of a forum in a pluralistic agricultural advisory context where the coordination and oversight of service delivery should be a sovereign role of the state?
8. What are your assessments of the current structure and governance of the national forums you are familiar with (strengths and weaknesses regarding their inclusivity, governance, etc.)
9. What currently limits the participation of all agricultural advisory stakeholders in the forums of different countries, and what are your suggestions for addressing these challenges?
10. What currently limits the effective functioning of national forums, and what are your suggestions for improvement?
11. What are your suggestions for revitalizing national forums?
12. What are your recommendations for action regarding the establishment of new agricultural advisory forums?
13. Do you think these forums are still relevant today? Why?
14. Please share with us any reports or other documents regarding national forums.

Appendix2 : Questionnaire for discussion with the chairs of national agricultural advisory forums

1. What motivated the creation of your forum?
2. Who funded the activities to establish your forum?
3. Which organizations have officially joined your forum? Please provide a list and the email address of each member organization of the forum
4. Does the forum have current legal recognition?
5. What are the decision-making bodies within the forum?
6. What types of stakeholders are involved in the forum?
7. What are the forum's main sources of funding?
8. Does the forum have a sustainable business model?
9. What are the forum's main initiatives, recognized at the national level?
10. What concrete changes has the forum brought to the agricultural advisory system?
11. Does the forum participate in the development of agricultural policies? If so, in which activities has the forum been involved?
12. Is there regular exchange of experiences between your forum and other forums?
13. What are the operational challenges facing your forum?
14. What are your suggestions for making your forum more dynamic?
15. If you had to create an agricultural advisory forum from scratch, what key actions would you consider to make it more effective?



ABOUT RESCAR-AOC



Created in 2010, RESCAR-AOC is a multi-stakeholder platform dedicated to agricultural and rural advisory services in West and Central Africa. As a member of AFAAS and GFRAS, the network aligns with their objectives and actively advocates for synergies and partnerships with these organizations and all stakeholders in agricultural and rural development, in a spirit of subsidiarity.

Its vision: agricultural and rural advisory services that effectively facilitate the development of inclusive and sustainable agricultural and food systems in the subregion.

To achieve this, RESCAR-AOC focuses on learning, innovation, capacity building, and inclusive dialogue among actors and stakeholders, because the sustainable transformation of agricultural and rural advisory services is built together.

P.O. Box 6630 Ouagadougou 01 Burkina Faso

28.227 Dassasgo Street

contact@rescar.org ; www.rescar.org