

Wageningen University & Research

Sahel Update 2022



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Introduction by the Chair of the Wageningen Sahel Platform

Activities

An overview of a number of activities of member of the Wageningen Sahel Platform. The overview indicated the diversity of projects and is by no means a full overview.

The activities consists of some assignments;

- West Africa Food Systems Resilience
- Quick assessment of Covid 19

And of Ongoing research projects of which a number started before 2021

- SFAVEG West Africa
- Pro-ARIDES
- ISSD Sahel
- 3F: feeding the soil and feeding the cow to feed the people
- CGIAR Climate security Initiative

A number of projects are specifically targeted at soils

- Global Soil Partnership
- Soils 4 Africa
- Soil & SLM data for impact

Introduction

2021 has been a peculiar year for several reasons, but that has not refrained us from making progress with expanding WUR's engagements in the Sahel region.

The Sahel Core Group of WUR continued to meet on a monthly basis, exchanging information, discussing new potential activities and most importantly how to improve the impact of the activities. The group is composed of all institutional parts of WUR which allows us to coordinate well our activities. Even more importantly, this allows us to act as a one-window for partners in the region, policy makers seeking our advice or international donors. This has resulted in constructive talks and new partnerships and proposals for funding.



The Sahel Core team members have been working on a position paper reflecting on the root causes of current instability and poverty in the region. And what WUR could contribute to improving the situation. The problems in the region are severe, not at all improved by the COVID pandemic, and complex. To mitigate the conflicts and improve people's livelihoods transitions of the current food systems are required. Making these transitions work for tangible outcomes needs a multi-disciplinary and multi-actor approach. We aspire to support regional actors in their leadership and participation in national dialogues guiding food system transformations.

In 2021 we continued and initiated various projects that contribute in one way or another to the above mentioned food system transitions. See below a selection of these projects.

The Sahel Group is open to all researchers working or with an interest to work in the Sahel region. Join us

Bart de Steenhuijsen Piters
Chair Sahel Group





West Africa Food System resilience

The West African region supplies most of the food for its growing population, which now exceeds 400 million. West African countries meet most of the region's needs for coarse grains, tuber and root crops, vegetables, fruits, and meat. Over the past century, West Africa's food systems have shown various degrees of resilience in responding to external and internal shocks. These food systems have also shown resilience to the drivers of and long-term changes to the social and ecological systems in which they are embedded. But there are limits to the region's capacity for absorption, adaptation, and response, which is challenging food system balance and efforts to ensure an affordable, sufficient, and accessible supply of healthy food for West Africa.

Countries: West Africa.

Funding: BuZa

Partners: KIT, ECDPM, WorldBank

Duration: 2020-2021

More info: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Research-Results/Research-Institutes/Economic-Research/show-wecr/Food-systems-in-West-Africa-are-resilient-but-also-vulnerable.htm>

Contact: Bart de Steenhuijsen Piters



Quick assessments of COVID-19

Agricultural sectors are facing critical challenges. Without fast and informed action, the COVID-19 crisis risks becoming a food crisis. WUR and partners are collaborating to identify priority steps for enhancing food systems' resilience in low and middle income countries. We've developed dashboards on a country and sector level. These dashboards show you the latest insights in priority steps for action. Our research is based on [methodology](#) and steps for rapid assessments.

Countries: Global, including Mali.

Funding: BuZa/SNV

Duration: 2021

More info: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Research-Results/Research-Institutes/centre-for-development-innovation/Our-Value-Propositions/Guiding-Sector-Transformation/The-effects-of-COVID-19-on-food-systems-rapid-assessments.htm>

Contact: Walter de Boef



SAFEVEG West Africa

SAFEVEG aims to pilot and scale innovative approaches to improve the functioning of vegetable value chains through strengthening the relationships among value chain actors, and increase the production and consumption of safe vegetables, leading to better nutrition and more jobs, especially for women and youth in West Africa.

Countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali with potential scaling to other ECOWAS countries.

Funding: EU contribution: € 8 M ;
Netherlands contribution: € 3.97 M;
Total: € 11.97 M

Duration: November 1, 2020 - October 31, 2025

More info: <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/desira/wiki/safeveg-west-africa>

Contact: Bart de Steenhuijsen Piters



Pro-Arides

The Pro-ARIDES project is designed to contribute to increased resilience, food security and household incomes for farmers and (agro) pastoralists in the Sudano-Sahelian zone. Through effective decentralized institutions and organizations for improved service delivery, natural resource and land management and local economic development. Local institutions and organizations are strategic levers for achieving systemic change, and Pro-ARIDES places them at the heart of its work.

Countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger

Funding: Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Duration: 2021-2030

Partners: SNV, CARE-Nederland, KIT Royal Tropical Institute

More info: <https://www.wur.nl/en/project/pro-arides-project-aims-at-increased-resilience-and-economic-development-of-sahel-region-1.htm>

Contact: Simone van Vugt



Integrated Seed Sector Development in the Sahel

Thirty-two per cent of the Nigerien population and 21 per cent of the Malian population still struggle with food and nutrition insecurity. Sustainable intensification of food crop production can address this and, at the same time, provide economic opportunities. To this end, high-quality seeds are essential. This project will ensure the availability and use of quality seeds through the establishment of a commercially viable and self-sustaining seed sector.

Countries: Mali, Niger

Funding: Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Duration: 2020-2024

Partners: [ICRISAT](#), [IFDC](#), [ISSD Africa](#), [SAA](#), KIT

More info: https://www.kit.nl/project/integrated-seed-sector-development-in-the-sahel/?alt_nav=5274

Contact Walter de Boef



3F: Feeding the soil and feeding the cow to feed the people

Increasing and optimizing the ecosystem services provided by biodiversity is one way to achieve agro-ecological intensification of agro-sylvo-pastoral systems and to reduce the impact of pests and diseases thereby improving crop yields. Co-designing innovative agro-ecological technologies can help to identify locally suited solutions for optimizing complementarity and facilitation effects between plant (crop and trees) and livestock components to feed the people

- Countries:** Burkina Faso
- Funding:** McKnight Foundation
- Duration:** 2018-2022
- Partners:** CIRAD, [ICRISAT](https://www.icrisat.org/), INERA, AMSP
- More info:** <https://www.ccrp.org/grants/3f/>
- Contact:** Katrien Descheemaeker



FAIR-Sahel: Agro-ecological intensification for resilience in the Sahel

In the Sahel, a large part of the population experiences food insecurity, due to the low productivity of the agricultural system. This project is to experiment and promote new combinations of agricultural practices that allow farm households to adapt to the new climate conditions and attain more revenue with a minimum of negative environmental impact. The project develops, co-designs and assess methodologies to engage farmers as well as other actors in the research and information process, so as to create conducive conditions for the transformation of agriculture towards Agroecological Intensification (AEI).

Countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal

Funding: European Commission, [AFD](#)

Duration: 2020-2023

Partners: [CIRAD](#), [IRD](#), [ZALF](#), [CSIC](#), [ISRA](#), [IER](#), [INERA](#)

More info: <https://www.fair-sahel.org/>

Contact: Katrien Descheemaeker



CGIAR Climate Security Initiative

Because of a changing climate, the way governments and communities manage land, water, and food systems is now more than ever a pivotal factor in whether societies can endure peace. The programme partners have launched a PHD Programme (flagship 9), which represents first generation all-women candidates from the global South and North, focusing on climate security in the Sahel, and the Asian deltas (Mekong and Ganges)

Countries: global incl. Sahel

Funding: CGIAR

Duration: 2021 -

Partners: CGIAR, SIPRI

More info: <https://climatesecurity.cgiar.org/>

Contact: Han van Dijk



Global Soil Partnership

The Global Soil Partnership (GSP) is a globally recognized mechanism established in 2012 with the mission is to position soils in the Global Agenda through collective action. Key objective is to promote Sustainable Soil Management (SSM) and improve soil governance to guarantee healthy and productive soils and support the provision of essential ecosystem services towards food security and improved nutrition, climate change adaptation and mitigation and sustainable development. Pillar four of the GSP essentially addresses the development of an enduring and authoritative global system to monitor and forecast the condition of the soils globally.

Countries: Global, with focus on West Africa

Funding: LNV/BMGF

Partners: FAO

More info: <https://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership>

Contact: Rik van den Bosch



Soils 4 Africa

The aim of Soils4Africa is to provide an open-access soil information system with a set of key indicators and underpinning data, accompanied with a methodology for repeated soil monitoring across the African continent. The soil information system will become part of the knowledge and information system of FNSSA and will be hosted by an African institute.

Countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger

Funding: European Commission (H2020)

Duration: 2021-2030

Partners: [ISRIC](#), [FARA](#), [SZIU](#), [IITA](#), [ARC-LNR](#), [IBEC](#), [Stellenbosch University](#), [ICRAF](#), [RCMRD](#), [CDPIFA](#), [BUNASOLS IRA](#), [KALRO](#), [SGS](#), [JRC](#), [META](#)

More info: <https://www.soils4africa-h2020.eu/>

Contact: Mary Steverink-Mosugu



Soil and SLM data for impact (Land Use Planning & improved Soil Fertility)

First two year focus on soil and SLM data systems including improving LandPKS, applicable for incorporation of data for different contexts and scales, duration: beyond project cycle. 2023 build use cases to support Land Use Planning in West Africa

Countries: West Africa (Mali & Senegal)

Funding: USAID Feed the Future

Duration: 2021

More info: <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/agriculture-and-food-security/increasing-food-security-through-feed-future>

Contact: Andries Bosma

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For more information on the activities of the Wageningen Sahel Platform;
have a look at www.wur.eu/Sahel

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