



## Editorial

### Unlocking the potential of research and innovation for inclusive and sustainable development in West Africa

**By Alioune Faye,  
manager of the  
project VaRRIWA  
(Valorising Research  
Results and  
Innovation in West  
Africa)**



West Africa is positioning itself as a major player in the field of research and innovation (R&I). The region, rich in cultural diversity and natural resources, offers an environment conducive to the creation of new and adapted solutions to the challenges we face.

In this context, the VaRRIWA (Valorising Research Results and Innovation in West Africa) project, financed by the ACP Innovation Fund and implemented by the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, has made significant progress: the successful launch of fourteen third-party projects; the dissemination of reference frameworks identifying research and innovation needs and offers in Benin, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Togo; and the deployment of a regional digital platform aimed at strengthening synergies between R&I players.

Eight schemes to support the commercialisation of R&I results have been launched in the four countries, giving

innovators in these countries access to training in business development, intellectual property management, individual coaching and even seed funding to launch their innovative projects.

Another crucial aspect of the project is to encourage cooperation between researchers and innovators, at both national and regional level. To this end, the first edition of the 'Salon de la Valorisation des Résultats de la Recherche et de l'Innovation en Afrique de l'Ouest' (SaVaRRI-AO) will be held in Lomé from 18 to 20 September 2023, with the aim of encouraging exchanges between R&I players from the private and public sectors, in order to create constructive and lasting partnerships.

West Africa is at a turning point in its development, and R&I are key to unlocking its full potential, as demonstrated by the progress made in the VaRRIWA project. By strengthening the links between researchers, innovators and socio-economic players, and by encouraging the exploitation of research results and technology transfer, West Africa is preparing itself to treat the many economic, environmental, climate and health challenges it is facing and seize the opportunities on the road to sustainable development.



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