The OACPS Research and Innovation Programme:
Advancing the R&I landscape in West Africa

The **OACPS R&I Programme** works in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries through the **ACP Innovation Fund (IF)** - for R&I capacity building, research uptake and policy advocacy, and the **Policy Support Facility (PSF)** - to enhance R&I policies and ecosystems

40,000+ actors from different economic domains benefitted with new business and job opportunities

2,000+ policy makers, innovators and **researchers** equipped to drive R&I initiatives

8 incubators, 1 Fab lab and **1 tech transfer office** established, **29 patent applications** submitted

4 policy recommendation **reports 2 handbooks** ondeveloping R&I policies and innovation funds

200+ national institutions engaged

1,000+ R&I actors and **innovators** trained in research valorisation

9 R&I ecosystem **mappings**

Innovations in **digital agriculture** and **Artificial Intelligence** set benchmarks for other countries in Africa

1 national R&I **policy, 2** national R&I **strategies, 1** national R&I **fund bill**

◉ WEST AFRICA

OACPS R&I Programme implements IF and PSF at country, regional and multi-country level to enhance technological capabilities, R&I policies, R&I ecosystems, innovation potential and sustainable development.

In West Africa, **IF** finances two Projects:
Accelerating Inclusive Green Growth through agri-based Digital Innovation in West Africa - AGriDI,
and **Valorising Research, Results and Innovation in West Africa - VaRRIWA**

AGriDI

2021 - 2025

▶ **Implemented by:** International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology **(icipe)**, Université d'Abomey-Calavi **(UAC)**, Gearbox Pan African Network **(GB)** and Agropolis Fondation **(AF)**.

▶ **Objective:** Enhance agricultural productivity through digital innovation, focusing on youth, women and green growth, in line with **ECOWAS**, national **STI** and **ICT** policies and the African Union's STI Strategy 2024.

▶ **Selection of Outputs:**
- Baseline study of the project in target countries
- A Survey on Digital Agriculture in Five West African Countries
- Digital Agriculture Policies and Strategies for Innovations in the Agri-Food Systems
- Explore Machine Learning Models for Soil Nutrients Properties Prediction: Systematic Review
- Digital Agriculture Ecosystem in Benin. An Analysis of the Institutional Environment (French)
- Digital solutions in the agricultural sector in Benin

▶ **AgriDi-financed projects**

Country	Projects	Achievements
Co-development and adaptation of digital innovative solutions to enhance agricultural productivity		
Benin	**DigiCLA**	Sustainable **digital practices** for effective and efficient agro-ecological management of the *Fall Armyworm* in **maize** production developed and promoted
Burkina Faso	**PPeDMaS**	A **digital pest** and **disease management system** developed
Nigeria	**SMARTSOIL**	An **AI-driven soil information system** to improve **crop yields** and **soil management** developed
Digital innovative solutions to establish market linkages for farmers' produce		
Benin	**BoMeF**	A **mobile platform** for rice and maize supply chains, reaching **7,000 value chain actors,** developed
Ghana	**SAPA**	An **agri-tech platform** connecting smallholder farmers to markets, connecting over **23,000 users,** established
Ghana	**DigiMakt**	**Digital services** bundled for smallholder farmers, used by over **13,000 farmers,** developed
Nigeria	**MarketMap**	A **digital platform** focused on **women agripreneurs** promoting economic empowerment developed
Development of policies to support digital innovation		
Benin	**REPINAB**	Policy **tools for use of** and scaling **digital innovations** developed
Ghana	**EFUDTRIPI**	Research conducted on **digital tech adoption** to increase farm productivity and farmers' income

VaRRIWA

2020 - 2025

▶ **Implemented by:** Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie **(AUF)** and national research agencies **AbeVRIT** (Benin), **ANVAR** (Burkina Faso), **ANRSA** (Senegal) and **DRST** (Togo).

▶ **Objectives:** Enable a conducive environment for technology transfer and sustainable innovation through:

· **Training R&I Stakeholders** on policies and R&I adoption.
· **Supporting Structures** to accelerate transfer, incubate and improve employability.
· **Networking R&I Stakeholders** to enhance cooperation in technology transfer.

▶ **Selection of Outputs:**

· Mapping of Actors, Results and Needs in R&I in Benin, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Togo *(French)*
· Diagnostic study on the determinants of non-use by scientific research actors of the economic valorisation of their research results *(French)*
· VaRRIWA Networking Platform: register and connect to the VaRRIWA Platform

▶ VaRRIWA-financed projects

Country	Projects	Achievements
Information and Training		
Benin	**VABRINOV**	**Modules** in 3 higher education institutions, **342 R&I actors** trained in intellectual property rights and the socio-economic valorisation of research results
Burkina Faso	**CEFEVRRI**	A training and expertise centre established, **319 R&I actors** trained on the valorisation of results
Senegal	**PFVRIEES**	A **online training platform** in research valorisation developed, **128 R&I actors** trained on the valorisation of results
Togo	**FOR-VARRITO**	**423 researchers, 120 inventors and entrepreneurs** trained on research methodologies on the valorisation of results, particularly their economic exploit
Sustainable Support Mechanisms		
Benin	**RVRI-UAC**	Valorisation system of **incubator** strengthened, **25 R&I actors** trained in result valorisation and invention protection, **12 start-ups** coached, **14 patent** applications submitted
Benin	**PAVRIB**	An **incubator** established, **26 R&I actors** trained on research valorisation, **12 patent applications** filed with OAPI
Burkina Faso	**BTTI**	A **tech transfer office** established, **25 innovators** trained on R&I results, **12 innovations** supported with 2 patents and 10 brand protections submitted
Burkina Faso	**CITI-CNRST**	An **incubation centre** established, **25 innovators** trained on the valorisation of R&I results in IP management and business creation
Senegal	**APEX**	An **incubation centre** established, **30 researchers** trained in business creation, industrial valorisation, and IP management, 10 innovations supported with 1 patent submitted to OAPI
Senegal	**VALMEDTRA**	A **digital platform** for developing traditional medicines established, **a spin-off** for promoting phytomedicines created, **8 products** developed
Togo	**UVI2A**	An **incubator** on agricultural research established, **30 innovators** trained on the valorisation of agricultural and agri-food R&I results
Togo	**CAVRIS**	A **Fab Lab** for support to start-ups established, **10 innovators** supported, **7 businesses** created
Networking		
West Africa	**PPP-VRI**	A **regional forum** to strengthen partnerships and valorise R&I results organised
	FORUM MICD-AO	A **regional forum** with exhibitions and seminars organised, an informative website and a digital networking platform developed to stimulate partnerships in **sustainable construction materials**

In West Africa, the [PSF](#) has delivered six [Services](#) at national and multi-country level

PSF at national level

Gambia (August 2021 – January 2022)

		Outputs

Assisted the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology ([MOHERST](#)) in developing a **National Innovation Fund (NIF)**

Achievements: Gambia has approved the National R&I Fund Bill, allocated 100k Euro to NIF, secured the partnership between MoHERST and the World Bank

▶ **60 policymakers** from **20 institutions** trained on the establishment of the NIF and partnership strategies

- [Country Background Report](#)
- [Policy Recommendations Report](#)

Guinea (December 2022 – August 2023)

Assisted the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Innovation ([MESRSI](#)) in developing a **National R&I Policy (PNRI)**

Achievements: Guinea developed and validated PNRI with a 5-year Strategy, R&I law in progress

▶ **50 policymakers** from **28 institutions** trained in R&I policies and strategies

- [Country Background Report](#)
- [Policy Recommendations Report](#)

Mauritania (July – December 2021)

Assisted the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research ([MESRS](#)) in developing a first **National R&I Strategy**

Achievements: Mauritania approved R&I Strategy, increased budget allocation, launched competitions and scholarship programme

▶ **20 policymakers** from **10 institutions** trained in R&I policies and strategies

- [Country Background Report](#)
- [Policy Recommendations Report](#)

Togo (September 2023 – April 2024)

Assisted the Ministry of Higher Education and Research ([MESR](#)) in developing a **R&I Support Fund**

▶ **20 policymakers** from **6 institutions** trained in R&I policies and strategies

PSF at multi-country level

Mutual Learning Exercise on National R&I Funds (February – October 2024)

Outputs

[Facilitated R&I fund knowledge exchange in West Africa](#)

Strengthening R&I financing mechanisms

▶ **30 policymakers** from **17 countries** trained, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mauritania, Senegal, The Gambia, Togo

Handbook on R&I Fund development
(In preparation)

Mutual Learning Exercise on R&I Policies and Strategies (February – September 2023)

Outputs

[Collaborative initiative on effective R&I policy development and execution](#)

Aligning R&I policies with global agendas

▶ **45 policymakers** from **15 countries** trained in R&I policies and strategies, including Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania

[OACPS Handbook on R&I Policy](#)