ICRISAT in Niger

Country Overview

The Niger has recorded its highest number of food-insecure people in the last eight years. With unprecedented food shortages and 80% of the country’s population living in rural areas, affected households urgently need agricultural support to restore their food production and incomes.

“The Niger Humanitarian Response Plan 2022, FAO

In 1981, ICRISAT and the Government of Niger signed an Agreement to set up the ICRISAT Sahelian Center (ISC) on a 500-hectare site in Sadoré. The Center, inaugurated in 1989, has leading research facilities - laboratories for soil and plant analysis, crop physiology/ biotechnology, aflatoxin analysis, millet genetics and entomology.

The regional genebank in Niger conserves over 47103 accessions of 36 species. The Agro-innovation Business Center at Sado, a joint initiative between ICRISAT and the Government of Niger, hosts startups and provides SME acceleration and incubation services.

Partnerships

INRAN (Institut de Recherche Agronomique du Niger) is the apex body for the coordination of all agricultural research activities in Niger. ICRISAT in partnership with INRAN and partners, including Faculty of Agronomy, Abdou Moumouni University and the Institut Pratique du Rural Development (IPDR), have invested in the genetic resources conservation, the development of new varieties and natural resources management.

Producer organizations such as Réseau national des Chambres d’Agriculture du Niger (RECA), Le Collectif des Associations Pastorales du Niger (CAPAN), and the Federations of Niger’s farmers’ unions (Moriben and Fumagaskia) have been key partners in project implementation.

Regional organizations such as The Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), The African Union, in particular its Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture and New Partnership For Africa’s Development (NEPAD), The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), The West African Monetary and Economic Union and West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD) are some other key collaborators.
ICRISAT has developed and led numerous initiatives: the African Market Garden, the Sahelian Ecofarm, bio-reclamation of degraded land, collection and conservation of plant genetic resources, crop improvement and diversification, natural resources management, soil fertility improvement, and capacity building of stakeholders. More importantly, women are empowered through income generation activities, nutrition and market development activities.

2007 - 2019: The twelve year Tropical Legumes project was aimed at providing improved varieties and developing a sustainable seed system to improve the source of income for smallholder farmers. ICRISAT coordinated groundnut production training for over 1,100 farmers in Niger (85% women) including training 44 extension agents in Integrated Crop Management (ICM) and aflatoxin management. As a result, the average annual production of improved groundnut increased from an average of 19 tons/year (2007–2009) to 393 tons/year (2012–2014).

2018 - 2020: The project ‘Enabling Value Chains to Create Sustainable Income for Vulnerable People in Crop-Livestock Systems of Burkina Faso and Niger’ funded by Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Livestock Systems (USAID) transformed the unsustainable and unproductive systems into profitable and market orientated crop-livestock systems. The project resulted in improved access to feeds for livestock farmers at 30% lower price than the market price.

2019 - 2021: Delivered low glycaemic index (GI) pearl millet grains to address type-2 diabetes in African regions. The project was funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), Government of UK, and The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) through Innovate UK, Aberystwyth University.

2018 - 2022: The project Support Climate Smart Agriculture in Niger - Projet d’Appui à l’Agriculture Sensible aux risques Climatiques (PASEC) implemented by the Government of Niger with support from The World Bank is aimed at increasing the use of agroforestry and conservation agriculture techniques to minimize climate and food insecurity risks; promoting the recovery of degraded agro-sylvo pastoral land; Watershed management and protection of water sources used for irrigation.

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