



Who are we ?

The Alliance for Agroecology in West Africa (3AO) is a coordination and information platform composed of farmers' organizations, research institutes / universities, international NGOs and social movements. It aims to promote and support an agroecological transition in West Africa to ensure resilient, sustainable livelihoods adapted to local agricultural challenges. Through a series of concrete and concerted actions, 3AO aims to create synergies between different scales and organizations to strengthen research and advocacy efforts in favour of agroecology, while providing greater visibility to the agroecological movement in West Africa.

NB : 3AO is not a funding mechanism, but a means to facilitate intersectoral cooperation.

CREATION OF 3AO

3AO was created in April 2018, during a West African multi-stakeholder meeting co-organized by ROPPA (Network of Peasant Organizations and Agricultural Producers of West Africa) and IPES-Food (International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems). Hosted in Dakar (Senegal), the meeting brought together 41 participants from 31 national, regional and international organizations to develop a joint strategy and outline a concrete action plan to support the development of agroecology and sustainable food systems in the region.

« If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. »

African Proverb

WHAT IS AGROECOLOGY?

« Agroecology is not a niche for small-scale artisanal farmers in given sectors, nor is it a label to be attained on the basis of specific practices. It is a universal logic for redesigning agricultural systems in ways that maximize biodiversity and stimulate interactions between different plants and species, as part of holistic strategies to build long-term fertility, healthy agro-ecosystems and secure livelihoods.¹»

Key findings

The agricultural sector accounts for 35% of West African Gross Domestic Product and employs 65% of the regional population². Yet, small family farmers – the mainstay of agricultural production systems – are the first victims of hunger, which affects 36 million people in the region³. Indeed, one of the major challenges facing West African agriculture remains its ability to ensure sustainable food and nutrition security, and resilient livelihoods for a population of 371 million – one that is estimated to double by 2050⁴.

Agriculture in West Africa faces a number of structural (e.g. loss of soil fertility, conflicts around land use and access to the means of production, pressure on natural resources) and cyclical (e.g. climate change) challenges. Yet, international, African and West African development programs continue to promote an "industrial" agricultural model. This model, however, fails to address national and regional dependencies on food imports, adaptation to climate change, sustainable use of natural resources, and access to safe, nutritious and balanced diets.

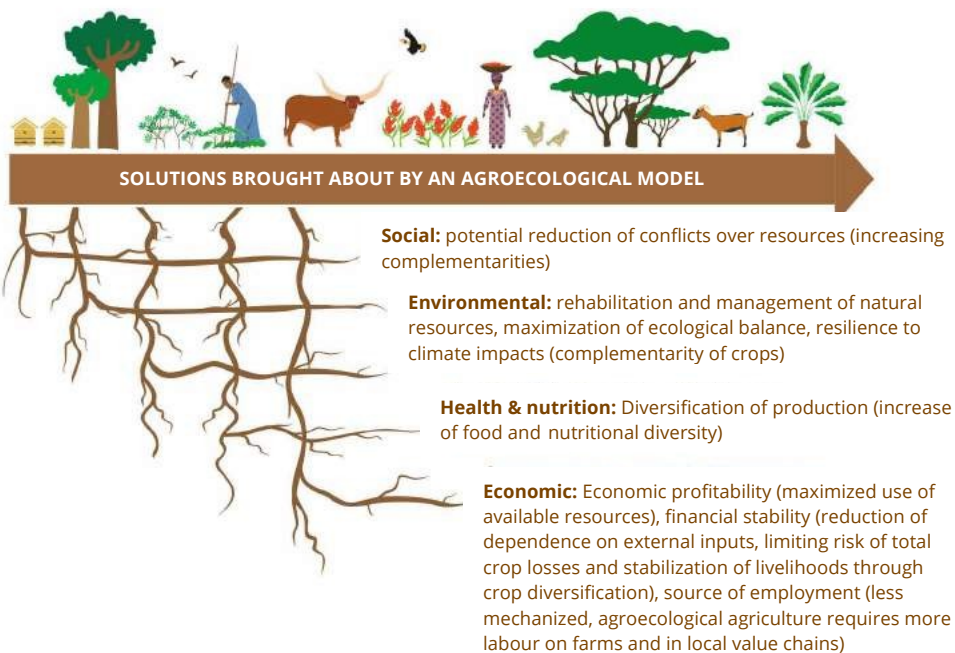
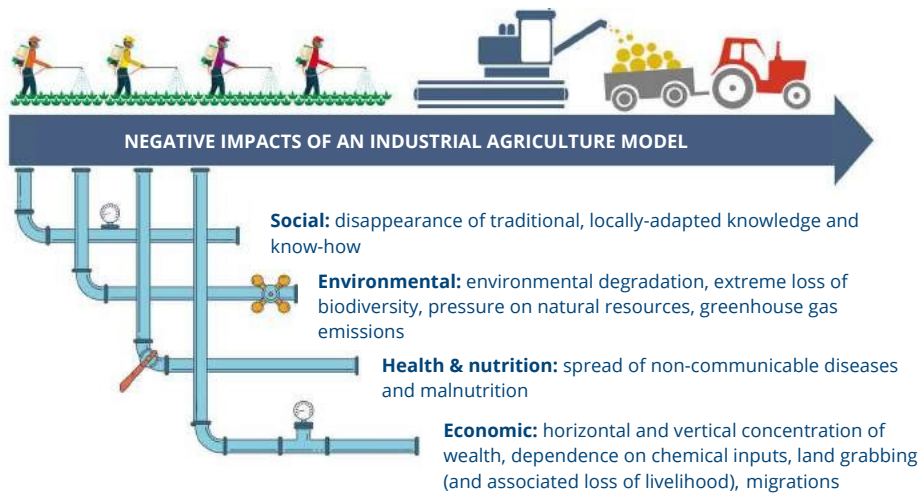
Though industrial agriculture remains the dominant model for food and farming systems around the world, it is increasingly being questioned, notably in West Africa, by calling for an agroecological transition. Agroecology presents a holistic response to the majority of agricultural challenges in West Africa, and contributes to the realization of the Right to Food by providing a new basis to develop healthy and sustainable food systems.

1. IPES-Food (2016). From Uniformity to Diversity: A paradigm shift from industrial to diversified agroecological systems.

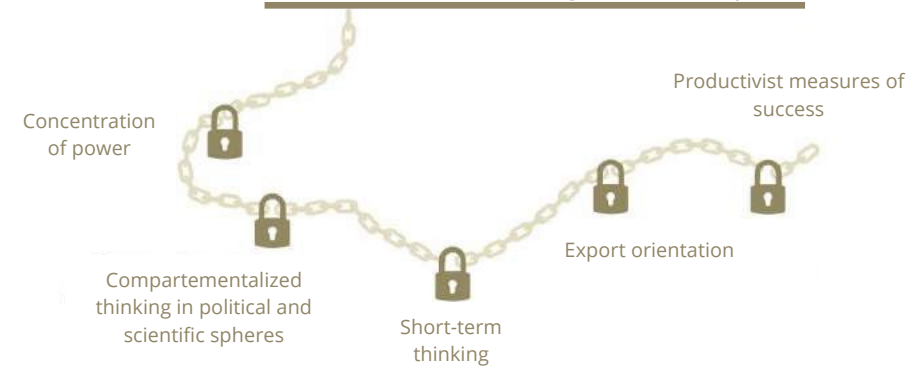
2. World Bank (2016). West Africa Agricultural Productivity Program.

3. OECD. (2016). Stats of the Week: Food Security in West Africa.

4. UN. (2017). World Population Prospect.



Yet despite their potential, agroecological initiatives in West Africa are developing slowly, and remain isolated, poorly documented and marginalized (in terms of visibility and capacity to scale up). These challenges are the result of a number of observable and material barriers (e.g. lack of funding and capitalization on experience and/or evidence; poor access to markets and means of production), as well as systemic and normative lock-ins, operating at different scales to maintain **industrial agriculture** in place.



The stakes are high: the lock-ins to transition are numerous, multi-sectoral, and systemic, but solutions exist, and have been identified. As a holistic approach, an agroecological transition requires simultaneous action within different spheres of influence (policy, research, peasantry, civil society) and at different scales (local, national, regional, international) to challenge the status quo. **Every actor, no matter their starting point, is essential to this transition.** Coordinating our respective initiatives, sharing our experiences and strengthening our technical capacities provide us with the keys to unlock the agroecological transition and achieve our goals.

It is from this understanding that 3AO was created.

Strategy

3AO uses a cross-sectoral approach to define how to best strengthen existing agroecological initiatives, remove barriers to transition, and advance the debate on agroecology in West Africa (i.e. by determining **who** does **what**, **when**, **where**, and **how**). This strategy is based on intersectoral dialogue, active stakeholder participation, collective ownership of issues, and shared responsibility and accountability.

FONCTIONING

Lead organizations and support groups:

Each initiative listed in the 3AO Action Plan is carried out by a “lead organization”, which benefits from the expertise and experience of a “support group” made up of additional member organizations. Knowledge and experience sharing is intended to promote an exchange of best practices, increase the visibility of individual initiatives, and avoid the duplication of efforts working towards common goals.

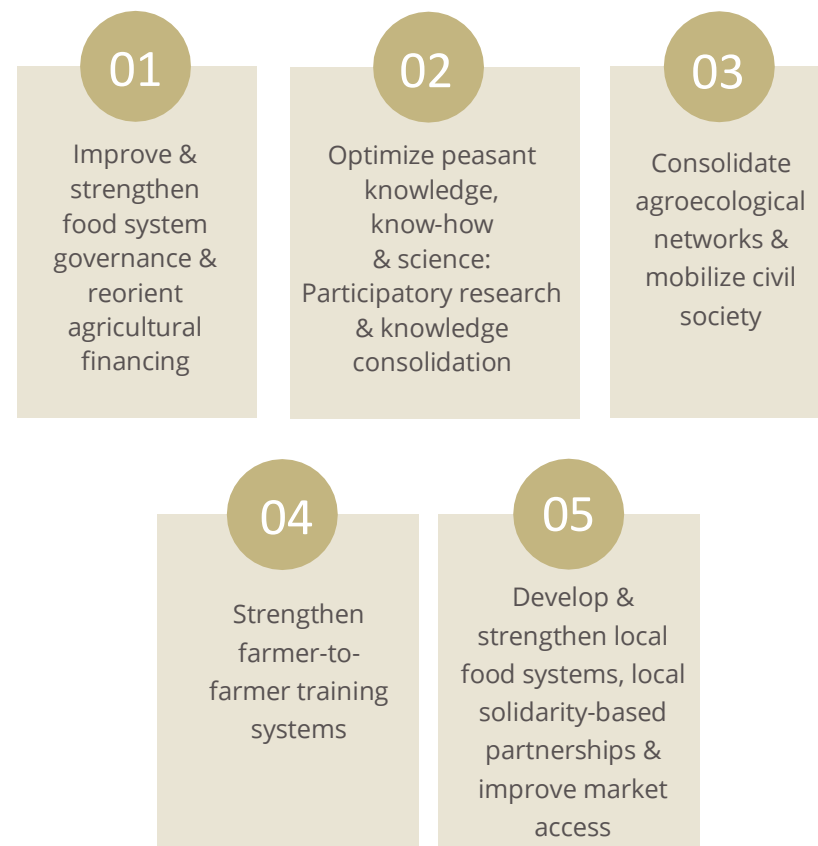
The outcomes and outputs of each initiative will be shared with the whole alliance, and may be taken up by additional organizations.

Steering Committee:

The 3AO steering committee coordinates and monitors the action plan. Members include representatives of ROPPA, IPES-Food, AFSA, Enda Pronat, CIRAD, and Action Against Hunger.

ACTION PLAN

The 3AO action plan comprises over fifty initiatives, divided into five priority areas:



This action plan, available on request, serves as a reference framework to coordinate the Alliance's activities.



Contact us

For additional information or to join the Alliance, please contact the 3AO Secretariat:

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