



Partnership: A cost effective research and development tool

Reséau Ouest et Centre Africain du riz, ROCARIZ—a French acronym that translates to ‘West and Central Africa Rice Research and Development Network’—was launched in 2000 after in-depth consultations among WARDA, WECARD/CORAF, NARES and USAID. ROCARIZ, a successor network of the WARDA/NARS Rice Task Force (TF) collaborative mechanism for rice research and development, is financially supported by USAID. In November 2001, however, the network diversified its funding source by securing a three-year grant from the European Union (EU).

In order to effectively link rice researchers, development agents and end-users of rice research findings in West and Central Africa, ROCARIZ’s Coordination is located at WARDA Headquarters, M’bé, Côte d’Ivoire. For the efficient delivery of rice-based technologies targeting complex and often fragile ecosystems, ROCARIZ maintains the TF mechanism with Rice Breeding TF, Mangrove Swamp Rice TF, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) TF, Crop and Natural Resource Management (NRM) TF, Sahel Natural Resource Management (SNRM) TF, Economics TF and Technology Transfer TF (TT TF).

ROCARIZ aims to link rice stakeholders in West and Central Africa in order to generate and sustain improved, relevant rice technologies, and to facilitate their transfer and diffusion for rapid adoption by end-users. This is achieved by enhancing NARES’ capacity and capability for participatory rice research planning, technology generation, evaluation, and transfer to end-users.

Network Coordinator

Dr Sidi Sanyang is a Gambian who obtained his PhD in Entomology with emphasis on insect pathology from the University of Reading, UK. At the time of his appointment as ROCARIZ Coordinator, he was the Pest Management Program Leader at the National Agricultural Research

Institute (NARI), The Gambia, and during his last two years at NARI, he was *de-facto* Assistant to the Director General. Dr Sanyang has a good publication record in refereed journal and has presented many conference papers. He is married with three children.

Management of ROCARIZ Research

ROCARIZ research is managed by a Steering Committee elected from the seven TFs and comprising representatives of NARES scientists, development agents, rice private sector and WARDA. The Steering Committee members are:

- Dr Selome Dogbe ITRA, Togo Chairman
- Mrs Vivian Ojehomon NCRI, Nigeria Vice Chairwoman
- Dr Imolehin E.D. NCRI, Nigeria Member
- Dr Adeyemi Joshua Premier Seeds, Nigeria Member
- Dr Dakouo Dona INERA, Burkina Faso Member
- Dr Mamadou K. Ndiaye IER, Mali Member
- Dr Khouma Mamadou ISRA, Senegal Member
- Dr Lo M. Mamadou ISRA, Senegal Member
- Dr Monty P. Jones WARDA Member
- Dr Séré Yacouba WARDA Member

Biennial Regional Rice Research Review (4Rs): The Voice of Rice Stakeholders in West and Central Africa

ROCARIZ has established a forum for reporting and publishing rice research and development activities within West and Central Africa, the **Biennial Regional Rice Research Review** (commonly known as **4Rs**) with the main objective of providing NARES scientists who received ROCARIZ grants the opportunity to present their research findings to a wider audience, including

those from outside West and Central Africa. The 4Rs provides an excellent forum for interaction not only between regional scientists and development agents, but also for scientists from centers of excellence and those from the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) and Southern African Center for Cooperation in Agricultural and Natural Resources Research and Training (SACCAR) of the African continent.

ROCARIZ: A Resource Center for Rice R&D

ROCARIZ has provided the NARES of all its member states, as well as donors and some international centers, publications of the merger process of the WARDA/NARS Rice Task Forces, dubbed mini-rice network (*Merger of WARDA Task Forces and CORAF Rice Network*), as well as a summary of the research findings (*Summary of WARDA/NARS Task Forces Activities 1991–1997*) of the WARDA NARS TFs.

ROCARIZ: Providing the Lifeline for Rice R&D in West and Central Africa

About 59 NARS scientists in 14 West and Central African countries were able to complete two-year projects across six of the seven ROCARIZ TFs (Economics TF, Mangrove Swamp Rice TF, IPM TF, Breeding TF, NRM TF, and SNRM TF). No activity was conducted in the Technology Transfer TF, because, until recently, the Technology Transfer scientist was not in place at WARDA. Rokupr Research Station (RRS) in Sierra Leone was also fully paid to develop and test mangrove swamp rice technologies because of its comparative advantage in mangrove rice research. The total number of funded projects in 2000 was 78, but only 67 projects were operating in 2001 indicating a 14.1% decline, with the Breeding TF registering the largest decrease of 36.8%. The number of scientists that started collaboration with ROCARIZ also dropped from 68 in 2000 to 59 in 2001 (a 13.2% decrease). The main reason for the decline in project-funded activities was NARS scientists' movement, plus the fact that some of the 14.7% NARS scientists that received funding for two or more projects could implement only one activity.

Monitoring Tour 2001: What Have We Found?

Although monitoring of 2001 WARDA outreach programs (ROCARIZ/INGER-Africa/PRIGA-PVS/ NARES) collaborative research activities is not about passing judgement as to the success or failure of our trials, rather it offers NARES scientists, development agents and Directors General an opportunity to be informed of opportunities and challenges of rice R&D in the sub-region, and offers them the opportunity to take corrective decisions as the activities evolve. In order to achieve our objectives, a multidisciplinary team (WARDA and NARES scientists and development agents) visited the upland rice ecology of Ghana, Togo and Benin, and the Sahel irrigated rice of Senegal and Mauritania with the active participation of our partners and farmers. Some of the key findings include:

- Access to improved rice seeds by farmers remains a constraint to rice research and development within the sub-region.
- Opportunities for inter-country marketing of improved rice seeds exists between Senegal and Mauritania, and possibly The Gambia, and Togo and Benin, possibly including Ghana.
- The analytical tool used to determine phosphorus in long-term soil fertility studies in irrigated systems was designed for upland soils and is not suitable for irrigated systems.
- There is generally weak in-country coordination of WARDA outreach programs, because of lack of funding.
- Increasing role of rice as a food-security commodity in the sub-region.
- Relevant rice-based technologies are being tested/promoted with farmers.
- There is less involvement of farmers in on-station trials compared with on-farm activities.
- Bacterial leaf blight disease in the Senegal River delta where irrigated rice is produced and rice yellow mottle virus (RYMV) infection in the Togo irrigation scheme. This is the first observation of RYMV in irrigated rice in Togo.

