SRAI 2

Strengthening Regional Agricultural Integration in West Africa: Phase 2

http://aec.msu.edu/fs2/srai/

Annual Report:
January – December, 2013

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This report was prepared by John Staatz

Contacts:
In Mali: BPE 2906, Bamako, ACI 2000, Mali:
Boubacar Diallo (diallob@msu.edu; tel. +223-2022-3419)

In the USA:
Dept. of Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics, Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan, 48824-1309
John Staatz (staatz@anr.msu.edu; tel. +1-517-355-1519)
Steve Haggblade (blade@msu.edu; tel. +1-916-933-1176)
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Strengthening Regional Agricultural Integration in West Africa, Phase 2 (SRAI 2)

1. Project Description

The SRAI 2 project was authorized by the Foundation in January 2013, with a three-year time horizon and a budget of US $1,653,204. The project is framed within the context of: (a) efforts to strengthen regional economic integration in West Africa via national policy reforms and regional efforts, such as the ECOWAS Regional Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) and (b) growing demand within West Africa for higher-valued and more processed agricultural products, which offer new opportunities for West African farmers and agribusinesses. The project builds upon work carried out by Michigan State University and its West African partners on regional agricultural integration during the first phase of the SRAI program, supported by the Foundation from 2009 through 2012.

SRAI 2 involves both research and outreach components, with the outreach aimed at policy makers, scientists, the private sector and development partners in West Africa. Consistent with MSU’s role as an educational institution, the project implements the research and outreach in a way that builds West African scientific and policy analytic capacity—e.g., through the involvement of African graduate students from MSU and research partners in West African organizations such as AfricaRice.

SRAI 2 has 3 analytic and outreach themes:

1. Evolution of food demand in West Africa and its implications for development of agroprocessing

2. Evolution of the Asian rice market and its policy implications for rice development efforts in West Africa

3. Alternative models of value-chain organization that link smallholders more effectively to markets.

The SRAI 2 program is implemented by MSU faculty, graduate research assistants, staff and African partners, both from the campus in East Lansing and from the MSU office in Bamako. The work is synergistic with other research and outreach on food security in West Africa carried out by the MSU team and financed by USAID, IFAD, the Gates Foundation, the European Union, FAO and ECOWAS.

The SRAI 2 work plan is presented in Table 1. It called for major emphasis in 2013 on themes 1 and 2, with the bulk of the work on theme 3 beginning in 2014. All three themes are addressed in a manner that simultaneously analyzes the research issues, builds West African
analytic capacity and translates the research findings into “digestible” outreach messages for the different audiences discussed above.

2. **2013: A Year of Transition**

The year 2013 was marked by striking transitions in Mali, which affected the pace of implementation of the SRAI 2 program, particularly those components programmed to be implemented from the Bamako office. In January, the French military intervention against jihadist forces liberated much of northern Mali, but was accompanied by a period of period of uncertainty as the operations unfolded and travel in the country was restricted. The military actions in early 2013 constrained the ability of campus-based staff to travel to Mali to work with the Bamako-based team and limited travel within Mali by Bamako-based staff. In addition, the Bamako-based team also had to devote time to deal with the shut-down and reconfiguration of some of MSU’s USAID-Mali financed activities due to the suspension of US development assistance to Mali.

By August, the political and security situation had settled to the point where Mali could hold the first round of Presidential elections, which were followed by a second-round run-off election in September. The election of Ibrahim Boubacar Keita as president of Mali brought a second major change to the project. Long-time MSU program coordinator in Mali, Nango Dembélé, was named as Vice Minister of Rural Development and hence moved on to his new position. Boubacar Diallo, who had led much of the SRAI 1 analytic work, assumed overall coordination of MSU food security programs in Mali, and MSU assigned additional campus-based staff, including Steve Haggblade and Veronique Theriault, to help support the SRAI analytic work.

These changes slowed implementation of some of the SRAI 2 program, particularly on the outreach activities in West Africa. Consequently, expenditures on the project, as detailed in the financial report (part 5 of this report), were only about 54% of the projected levels for 2013. Nonetheless, as noted below, the project had several notable achievements.

3. **Key Achievements in 2013**

Table 1 summarizes, by theme, the major project achievements in 2013, compared to the workplan (as modified in September 2013). In this table, green colored items under the Timeline/Milestones columns represent items that have been completed. Those in red are overdue, while those in black are not due yet.

By theme, the key achievements were as follows:

**Theme 1: Evolution of food demand in West Africa and the implications for development of agroprocessing**

- Detailed analysis was carried out on the evolution of trends in apparent per capita food consumption, by type of product, for each of the 15 ECOWAS countries over the...
30-year period 1980-2009, using annual data from FAOSTAT food balance sheets. The following written reports summarize this work:


- A summary of key results appeared in the selected paper and PowerPoint presentation made by Nathalie Me-Nsop at the African Rice Congress in Yaoundé in October (Nathalie M. Me-Nsop and John M. Staatz. “The Role of Rice in Changing Food Consumption Patterns in West Africa”). After the conference, the organizers selected this paper to be submitted to a special issue of the international journal *Global Food Security*.

- Parts of this analysis were also incorporated in a forthcoming major FAO/African Development Bank/ECOWAS study, *Agricultural Growth in West Africa (AGWA): Market and Policy Drivers*, of which John Staatz is a co-author. Revisions to this study were completed in December, 2013 and the draft is currently with editor. The book will be published in 2014.

- Econometric analysis of demand trends in Mali, Benin and Senegal (at the country-level) and in Mali (at the household level) examined consumers’ willingness to substitute among starchy staples based on relative prices. This analysis confirms that consumers in these countries are substituting rice for millet based on relative prices; similarly, maize and cassava are substitutes in Benin.

- The econometric results and the food-balance sheet analysis formed the basis for the Ph.D. dissertation in Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics (from MSU) of Nathalie Me-Nsop, *Trends and Determinants of Food Consumption Patterns in West Africa*. Nathalie, a citizen of Cameroon, defended her dissertation in 2013: She has been subsequently hired by the Global Center for Food System Innovation at MSU to help lead future work on food systems innovation in Africa.

- In addition to the outreach on Theme 1 carried out at the Africa Rice Congress in Cameroon in October, SRAI 2 sponsored the participation of some African

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1 Appendix 1 present also presents a consolidated list of all written outputs to date for SRAI 2.
participants at an invited panel of the 4th International Meeting of the African Association of Agricultural Economics, held in Hammamet, Tunisia in September, on the Agricultural Growth in West Africa study. This panel provided an outreach venue for the FAO/AfDB/ECOWAS study to which SRAI 2 analysis contributed.

Key messages that emerge from the theme 1 analysis include the following:

- Changes in patterns of starchy staple consumption in West Africa are more complex than just a shift from millet and sorghum to wheat and rice; as is often alleged. There is strong growth in per capita yam and cassava consumption in the region and in maize consumption in certain countries, particularly Mali, Senegal and Burkina, with consumers shifting consumption based on both relative prices and convenience of preparation, as populations become more urbanized. There are thus market opportunities for producers of several different staples, including but not restricted to rice, in West Africa. In addition, given the increasing demand for convenience, growth in demand for marketing and processing services in the future will likely create increasing opportunities for job creation and expansion of agroprocessing firms.

- There has been and likely will continue to be very robust growth in demand for animal products, fruits and vegetables, offering strong potential markets for West African farmers if quality control, aggregation, and marketing challenges can be addressed. There are, however, wide variations across countries due to differences in political stability and in the growth and distribution of income. Because the production and marketing of these perishable products is labor intensive, further developing the value chains for these products offers the possibility to create many jobs for the region’s swelling labor force.

**Theme 2: Evolution of the Asian rice market and its policy implications for West Africa**

Research began on the forces driving the relative competitiveness of Asian and West African rice systems, drawing in part on results from collaboration begun under SRAI 1 with AfricaRice. Written outputs include:


Economy and its Implications for the Development of the Rice Subsector in West Africa”). Based on the paper and presentation, Ms. Adjao received the Congress’s “Most Promising Young Scientist Award.” After the conference, the organizers selected this paper to be submitted to a special issue of the international journal Global Food Security. A more detailed analysis of issues related to Theme 2 will appear in Ramzi’s Ph.D. dissertation, which is scheduled for completion in June 2014.

Theme 3: Alternative models of value chain organization that link smallholders to markets

Work during 2013 under this theme focused primarily to literature reviews, setting the stage for more in-depth field investigations in 2014. These reviews included:

- A literature review on alternative contracting models used to link smallholders to agroprocessors in various countries around the world, with lessons learned for Mali. This review served as the basis for a master’s paper in Agricultural and Resource Economics at MSU by Jacob Coulibaly, completed in 2013 (“Strengths and Weaknesses of Alternative Models of Linking Smallholders to Downstream Value Added Activities in Mali: A Literature Review”). Mr. Coulibaly is a faculty member at Mali’s school of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IPR/IFRA), to which he returned following the completion of his degree at MSU. He is now using the concepts from SRAI 2 in his teaching of agribusiness and microeconomics courses in IPR/IFRA’s new agricultural economics undergraduate program, thus training a new generation of Malian actors in these concepts.

- A broadening of the literature review was begun by a new Master’s student (Ryan Vroegindewey), who began work in September under SRAI 2 as a Graduate Research Assistant. He will couple this review with field work to be carried out in Mali in 2014.

- John Staatz carried out an extensive literature review as part of FAO/AfDB/ECOWAS study mentioned earlier. Key findings focused on the economics of quality assurance and the need to improve wholesaling functions in West African agrifood systems.

- In December 2013 and January 2014, Ramzi Adjao carried out a field visit and initial assessment of progress in implementing the “Future Farm” rice development program in Yamoussoukro, Côte d’Ivoire. This effort, in which SFSA is a partner, is an innovative PPP aimed at drawing lessons on how to link smallholders more effectively into the rapidly growing rice value chain in West Africa. Her report, “The ‘Future Farm’: a Novel PPP in the Yamoussoukro District” was completed in February 2014.

Other 2013 outreach activities – Drawing on SRAI 1 results

In addition to the work on SRAI 2’s three themes, the project also carried out the following outreach activities based on work supported under SRAI 1, which focused heavily on policy actions to promote regional agricultural trade in West Africa:
• In January, 2013, Nango Dembele participated in and made a presentation to a joint USAID/ECOWAS “Food Across Borders” conference on regional trade, presenting SRAI results on regional agricultural integration and its contribution to food security in West Africa.

• At the request of the University of Pretoria, SRAI team members helped prepare a paper on West Africa’s experience in developing its regional and national CAADP plans as an input into Southern Africa’s CAADP process. The paper, “Regional Dimensions of South Africa’s CAADP Process: Lessons from West Africa”, by Steve Haggblade et al., was to be published in a special issue of a University of Pretoria journal. Because the other contributors to the special issue did not deliver on time, the special issue was cancelled, but with the encouragement of the South African editor, the paper will be submitted to the *African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics* in early 2014.

4. **Awards and Honors in 2013**
Awards and honors received by SRAI 2 researchers during 2013 included the following:

• In September, 2013, long-time Bamako-based SRAI coordinator and MSU faculty member Nango Dembele was named Vice Minister of Rural Development of Mali, where he will be in a position to help translate SRAI analytic results into policy.

• In October, 2013, SRAI 2-supported MSU PhD candidate and Graduate Research Assistant Ramziath Adjao received the Most Promising Young Scientist award at the Africa Rice Congress in Yaoundé, based on her Congress paper and presentation described above.

• In November, 2013, John Staatz was named “Officier de l’Ordre National du Mali” by Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta for his contributions to food security and agricultural development in Mali, work that has been supported in part by the SRAI projects/

5. **Financial Report**

Table 2 shows expenditures vs. budgeted amounts, both for 2013 and the 3-year life of the project. Expenditures in 2013 totaled US $321,261, compared with a year 1 budget of $595,329—an expenditure rate of 54%. This lower-than-programmed rate of expenditure reflected (a) constraints on implementing some of the outreach activities due to the disruption in Mali mentioned earlier and the cancellation/postponing of some of the events outside of Mali targeted for outreach presentations (e.g., the UNECA Africa-wide MIS forum, originally planned for November 2013, has been postponed) and (b) the need to reallocate MSU staff time, both in Mali and in the US, to deal with the reprogramming of the MSU programs in West Africa due to the security situation in Mali and the departure of Nango Dembele to take a cabinet position in the Malian government. As discussed in the following section, MSU plans to devote increased staff time in 2104 to catch up on the production of outreach
publications and other outreach activities as well as pushing forward the scheduled 2014 research and outreach program.

6. Plans for 2014

Current plans for 2014 are described below, but as discussed in a following subsection of this report, MSU proposes that these be discussed with the Foundation (perhaps in March) in order to make any needed mid-course corrections.

Key planned activities

- Completion of current analytic work on the relative competitiveness of Asian and West African rice systems (theme 2), and preparation of further outreach materials and activities, as outlined in Table 1. MSU would like to explore with the foundation whether further work, to be carried out potentially with Foundation staff members, on the evolution of the rice system in Asia (e.g., focused on the development of new technologies), and its implications for West Africa, is warranted.

- Expanded analytic work on the scope for substitution among various starchy staples (with particular emphasis on rice, cassava products and yams), to be carried out with focus groups of retailers and consumers, particularly in the coastal states of West Africa (e.g. Benin, Ghana). This work would complement the previous econometric analysis carried out in year 1 of the project.

- Expanded field research on agroprocessor-smallholder linkages, with particular attention to analysis of various models being implemented in Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, and Senegal. The SRAI team discussed this issue with Oumar Niangado of the Foundation in November, 2013, in Bamako, and he indicated the need for further work on this topic.

- An expanded program of policy outreach on results already obtained on findings from all three themes. This will include:
  - Redesign of the SRAI website, creating a separate site for SRAI 2 to give these findings more visibility.
  - Updating of the list-serve of policy analysts and policy makers developed under SRAI 1 for distribution of the SRAI 2 reports and policy briefs.
  - Completion of planned policy briefs on these results, in French and English.
  - Presentation of results at a range of policy venues in West Africa, at the continental level, and in the North. The African Union’s decision to designate 2014 as the Year of African Agriculture and Food Security will create several potential new opportunities for presentation of results and interaction with policymakers. Josué Dioné—an MSU graduate and former faculty member—is a special advisor to the African Union Commission on the Year of African Agriculture and Food Security, and MSU staff will contact him, as well as work
with Minister Nango Dembele, to identify possible venues. The completion of the major FAO/AfDB/ECOWAS study on Agricultural Growth in West Africa will create further opportunities for joint outreach in 2014. A preliminary list of possible venues, developed in January at the request of Paul Castle of the Foundation, appears in Appendix 2.

- MSU/SRAI 2 graduate research assistant Ryan Vroegindewey (who formerly worked in the Accelerated Economic Growth team of USAID/Mali and is a skilled photographer) has been awarded a fellowship by the Howard G. Buffet Foundation to spend 2 months in Mali in June and July 2014 to create "photographic profiles" of household food security among varying groups of households in four different Sahelian livelihood zones, coupled with information gathered in semi-structured interviews. He will also incorporate analysis of marketing and contracting options open to different classes of households and how they might link more effectively to agroprocessors. The Buffet-supported work will thus add a visual component that can be used in SRAI 2 outreach efforts in 2014 on opportunities and barriers to incorporating smallholders more effectively into agroprocessing endeavors. (Vroegindewey will also be involved in analysis of the different models of linking farmers to agroprocessors described above).

**Proposed Program Review**

The year 2013 brought several changes, both to the economic situation in West Africa (particularly in Mali) and to the staffing patterns and portfolio of activities of MSU in the subregion. Nango Dembélé’s nomination as Vice Minister of Rural Development was simultaneously a loss and a gain to the team. MSU lost a talented analyst, but his new position opens new opportunities for SRAI 2’s policy outreach, not only in Mali but throughout the subregion. The growing involvement of MSU faculty members Steve Haggblade and Veronique Theriault in SRAI 2 brings new talents and experiences to the team, including considerable experience in Asia. The portfolio of other programs implemented by MSU in West Africa that are complementary to SRAI 2 is also changing, with anticipated future work funded by others donors on value-chain performance and input policies. It therefore would be very timely to review with the Foundation the planned year 2 and year 3 activities and make any adjustments necessary to take advantage of the new opportunities offered by these changes.
### Table 1: Expected Research and Outreach Outputs, Timelines, and Milestones (2013-2015) [Green = complete; Red = overdue]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component 1: Evolution of food demand in West Africa and the implications for development of agroprocessing</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Products/value chains</th>
<th>Timeline/Milestones</th>
<th>Possible outreach venues (Component 4 of project)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Review of major trends in consumption patterns via analysis of Food Balance Sheets and more in-depth consumption studies to analyze demand prospects and scope for substitution. | 1. Summary report on evolving nature of food demand in West Africa and likely future trends, with implications for agro processing (in English and French) 2. Paper on substitutability among cereals (cross-elasticities), especially between imported and local staples, in Mali | Summary report covers all 15 ECOWAS countries. | All major food items | • Detailed working paper on Food Balance sheet Analysis (March 2013 – complete)  
• Paper for Africa Rice Congress (Sept. 2013 – complete)  
• Summary report (English): October 2013; policy brief, November 2013; French versions – December 2013  
• Journal article, Jan. 2014 | • Possible joint outreach on consumption trends with FAO at AAIE meetings in Tunisin in September, 2013  
• African Rice Congress, Yaoundé, Cameroon, October 2013 |
| Synthesis of existing information on trends in agroprocessing (products, value added, target markets) in the region and identification of major constraints. | Report focusing, on a few key countries, analyzing: (a) Evolution of value added in GDP; (b) Estimation of investments, employment, volume and value of output; (c) Evolution of structure, procurement system, market share and market targets; (d) likely future trends in consumption over the next 10 years; (e) Inventory of processing technologies; (f) Constraints and | Tentative List: Nigeria, Ghana, Cote d’Ivoire, Senegal, Mali | To be identified from review of consumption trends. Likely cases include: Packaged foods (Nigeria); sorghum-sales to breweries | • Report: April 2014; policy briefs (2) – June, 2014  
• Journal article, Dec. 2014 | • Meetings/seminars with Partnership to Cut Hunger & Poverty in Africa (mid 2014)  
• ECOWAS/CILSS Annual Market Outlook Conference (April 2014) |

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2 All of the 3 components shown in this table will feed into a major outreach effort with ECOWAS, national governments, and international organizations regarding the implications of the findings for CAADP-supported investments, private-sector opportunities, and regional trade policies. As described earlier in the proposal, this will involve presentation of results in various conferences, diffusion of results through websites and listservs, and presentations through radio, TV, and the popular press. This column lists possible conference and meeting venues where some of this outreach effort will take place.
| Opportunities of off-farm segments | Constraints in infrastructure and energy need in the processing system; (h) Constraints in the institutional environment | (Nigeria); rice processing (Mali, Nigeria); animal feed (Senegal, Mali) |   |   |   |
### Component 2: Analysis of the evolution of Asian rice market and its policy implications for West Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Products/value chains</th>
<th>Timeline/Milestones</th>
<th>Possible outreach venues (Component 4 of project)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Recent evolution of world rice market, with emphasis on comparative costs of production in Asia and West Africa | Bibliographic review and review of secondary (FAOSTAT; FAO/OECD joint outlook reports) data on rice production in Asia, structure of production and marketing systems, and future trends in consumption and production costs. Synthesize comparable information for West Africa from SRAI I work with AfricaRice and additional forecast/outlook analyses. | Thailand, Vietnam, China, India, Pakistan, Myanmar, Philippines (?), along with comparative information from West Africa | Rice | • Preliminary findings in paper to African Rice Congress  
• Report based on literature and secondary data, highlighting key changes in Asian systems with respect to production, processing, quality differentiation, and environmental sustainability. – October 2013; Policy synthesis; Nov. 2013  
• Journal article, Jan. 2014- submitted | • Africa Rice Congress, Yaounde, October 2013  
• Circulation of all materials through RESIMAO (network of West African MIS network);  
• Presentation to UNECA-organized meetings on African MIS forum in Addis (Nov. 2013) and/or UNECA meetings in late 2013 on regional value chains. |
| Implications of changing world rice market for West African investments in rice production | Analysis of implications in world rice market (particularly in Asia) for current and planned rice policies and investments in West Africa in the context of CAADP. Topics to address: Implications for policy changes regarding:  
• Rules regarding trade restrictions  
• What platforms for private-public partnership?  
• What scale of farming, processing and technology and ways of linking them in the value chain?  
• Rules governing land and water tenure  
Regional approach to regional approach to rice development | ECOWAS 15 | Rice | • Report, Feb. 2014  
• 3 policy syntheses – April. 2014 (major input into outreach effort)  
• Journal article, Sept. 2014 | • ECOWAS/CILSS Annual Market Outlook Conference (April 2014)  
• Meetings of ECOWAS/CAADP group, mid 2014  
• Annual meeting of advisors to CILSS Council of Ministers (mid 2014)  
• Presentation in Washington with Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa (mid 2014)  
• Crans-Montana II if that is held (Sept. 2014) |
Component 3: Analysis of alternative models of value chain organization that link smallholders to markets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Products/value chains</th>
<th>Timeline/Milestones</th>
<th>Possible outreach venues (Component 4 of project)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of alternative models of linking smallholders to dynamic value chains</td>
<td>Literature review of alternative experiences in West Africa and elsewhere around the world, focusing on contract farming, investor-driven and producer-driven models</td>
<td>Main emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa, but examples from other areas as well</td>
<td>Various crops (e.g., horticultural products, cassava, rice)</td>
<td>Report; June 2014, Policy synthesis, August, 2014</td>
<td>• Presentation in Washington with Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa (3rd quarter, 2014)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of specific experiences in West Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliverables</th>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Products/value chains</th>
<th>Timeline/Milestones</th>
<th>Possible outreach venues (Component 4 of project)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Case studies, to be identified through literature review. Cases will likely include some of producer-driven models (e.g., a contract-farming model in Guinea linking a farmers’ organization to a mining company; other models supported by AGRA; Senegalese experience with interprofessions) and investor-driven models (e.g., in Ghana and Mali) | Likely value chain/country combinations:  
  • Cassava: Benin  
  • Maize/Poultry: Mali, Cote d’Ivoire or Ghana, Senegal  
  • Horticulture: onions (Mali), potatoes (Mali, Guinea), and tomatoes (Burkina Faso)  
  • Rice (Mali, Guinea). | Full report, March 2015  
  Policy syntheses, June 2015  
  Journal article, Sept. 2015 | • Meetings of ECOWAS/ CAADP working groups (3rd quarter, 2015) |
Table 2. SRAI2 Budget and Expenditures as of December 31, 2013 (All figures in US $)

STRENGTHENING REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA Phase 2 (SRAI 2)

GRANT PERIOD: 01/01/2013 -12/31/2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Budgeted Amount – Life of Project</th>
<th>Budgeted amount for 2013</th>
<th>Total Est. Expenditures as of 31 Dec. 2013</th>
<th>Balance – Life of Project</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SALARIES</td>
<td>$743,080</td>
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<td>TRAVEL/TRANSPORTATION/ALLOWANCES</td>
<td>169,308</td>
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<td>OTHER DIRECT COSTS</td>
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<td>RESEARCH EQUIPMENT</td>
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<td>SUBORDINATE AGREEMENT</td>
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<td>INDIRECT COST (OVERHEAD)</td>
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<td>54,121</td>
<td>29,205</td>
<td>121,087</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</td>
<td>1,653,204</td>
<td>595,329</td>
<td>321,261</td>
<td>1,331,943</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1. List of SRAI 2 Supported Reports, Presentations and Theses

Reports


Conference Presentations/Draft Journal Articles


Dissertations and Theses

Appendix 2: Possible Outreach Venues in 2013 (List communicated to the Foundation in January 2014)

- USAID/West Africa is planning of organizing a second edition of its Food Across Borders conference, focusing on regional agricultural trade in West Africa. This is likely to be held at end of March in Accra, but a precise date has yet to be set.
- The Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa is planning a major 2-day PPP conference in Washington, D.C. possibly in April/May 2014, following the two that SFSA and AGRA co-hosted with the Partnership last October. The Partnership is also planning a regional PPP conference, in Ghana or Nigeria with the John A Kufuor Foundation.
- There are a number of major African Union events coming up to commemorate the African Year of Agriculture, including a Finance Ministerial in Abuja in March; AU Summit in Addis in July; the AOGA Forum in Washington, D.C. in July; and the AGRA Forum in September. 2014 will be a very active year on agriculture/CAADP and the Partnership is seeking partners to help organize convenings linked to these events.
- ECOWAS/CILSS. These organizations often set dates for their meetings at the last minute. They undoubtedly will have several meetings during the year on the regional CAADP/ECOWAP (ECOWAS Agricultural Policy) during the year. For the time being, the only ones that have been scheduled are between Feb 12-17 in Ouagadougou. These focus on regional food reserves and several regional programs, including the Programme d'Appui à la Sécurité Alimentaire et Nutritionnelle en Afrique de l'Ouest (PASANAO).
- The West Africa Regional Agricultural Outlook Conference, which is typically held in March or April, but for which a precise date has not been set yet.
- The World Food Prize (which Marco normally attends) in Iowa during the week of the World Food Day in October.

Other possibilities but for which no dates have been set yet:

- Outreach meeting of FAO/AfDB on the Agricultural Growth in West Africa study. A high-level outreach meeting with African policy makers will likely take place in Tunis in March or April.
- As part of its regional CAADP/ECOWAP program, ECOWAS has created a new Regional Agency for Food and Agriculture, based in Lomé. In collaboration with the ECOWAS Department of Agriculture, Environment and Water Resources, one could potentially organize a productive outreach program with the Agency.
- MSU is in the process of negotiating with USAID’s Office of Science and Technology a “Foresighting” Conference, likely to be held in November, 2014, on major changes underway in African food systems. The venue will be either in East Lansing or Africa.