

IFDC Project Facilitates Fertilizer Forum



With an average annual application rate of 12 kilograms per hectare, West African fertilizer consumption is one of the lowest in the world. Among other factors or conditions that contribute to low fertilizer consumption is the fertilizer value chain in the region, which is characterized by a wide array of constraints that keep farmers unable to access good quality and affordable fertilizers. Nevertheless, the region is poised to increase fertilizer use and, therefore, agricultural productivity. Improvements in policies and coherent regulations, as well as increasing investment in the agriculture sector, signal that the time is right to tap into West Africa's agriculture potential.

In this context IFDC launched the USAID-funded West Africa Fertilizer Program (WAFP) in 2012 to support the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in aligning regional fertilizer policies to achieve the African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) goal of doubling agricultural productivity levels. Active in all 15 ECOWAS countries – with special focus on the Feed the Future countries of Ghana, Liberia, Mali, and Senegal – WAFP's objective is to sustainably improve agricultural productivity through increasing the regional availability and use of appropriate and affordable fertilizer.



The Honorable Federal Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Nigeria, Chief Audu Ogbeh, gives the opening statement and keynote address at the second WAFSF.

Productive dialogue between the public and private sectors is a necessary step in the process of harmonizing regional fertilizer policies. Therefore, WAFP facilitated two West Africa Fertilizer Stakeholder Forums (WAFSF), and three mini-forums during the Ebola crisis, hosted by ECOWAS. The project organized the WAFSF to provide a platform for public-private dialogue on key topics such as ECOWAS regulations and harmonization, the professionalization of the fertilizer value chain, logistics and infrastructure constraining the commercial supply of fertilizer, and improvement of subsidy policies and programs in the region. In addition, the WAFSF seeks to establish valuable business linkages and public-private partnership opportunities throughout the supply chain in the region for commercial, investment, and developmental purposes.

The first forum, hosted in Accra, Ghana, in September, 2013, was attended by more than 236 participants who shared business models and offered ways to improve logistics, policies, financing, subsidies, regulations and regional harmonization. A second full forum was held in Abuja, Nigeria, May 18-20, 2016, with the theme of "Scaling Up Quality and Adapted Fertilizer Supply in West

Africa.” The second forum gathered 349 delegates including public officials, policymakers and implementers, international and local manufacturers and traders, importers, blenders, distributors, bankers, and farmer-based organizations. Participants discussed practical approaches for achieving increased supply, distribution, and use of quality fertilizers in West Africa. Specific topics discussed included fertilizer regulation and quality control, trade and logistics, finance mechanisms and challenges, subsidy design and administration, and the importance of adopting balanced fertilizer recommendations.

WAFP will continue work through May 2017, responding to constraints in the region’s fertilizer distribution network in order to sustainably improve productivity and to increase regional availability and use of appropriate and affordable fertilizer. To learn more about the project, subscribe to the quarterly newsletter at <http://bit.ly/WAFPlist> or visit the project webpage at <https://ifdc.org/usaidth-wafp/>.