



# **STRATEGIC PLAN 2013–2022**

The West Africa Livestock Innovation Centre

*Through innovation and  
partnership, we are developing  
the West African livestock sector  
to transform people's lives.*

A village chief milking one of his  
goats in Ségou District, Mali.  
Photo: ILRI/Valentin Bognan Koné



# Foreword

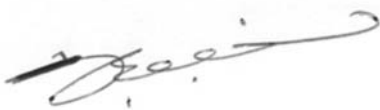
The International Trypanotolerance Centre (ITC) has spent the past 30 years developing regional public goods that have had positive impacts on livestock producers in West Africa. This work involved basic, applied and adaptive research on improving livelihoods based on the N'Dama cattle and the Djallonke sheep and goats. In response to recent challenges, ITC has undertaken a review of its *modus operandi*. With the support and active participation of its many stakeholders and partners, the exercise turned out to be a huge success and led to the development of a new 10-year strategic plan, which is summarized in this brochure.

Within the broader context of the regional Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Compact of the Economic Community of West African States, the diverse national CAADP Compacts, the CAADP Business and Investment plans and the West Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme, ITC and its partners are now ready to address the current opportunities, trends and challenges facing the livestock sector in West Africa. We have changed many things about ITC, including its name, governance, geographical reach, programmes and partners.

In crafting the plan, ITC and its partners were guided by a central vision: ***a vibrant West African livestock sector that boosts food security and creates wealth while safeguarding the environment.***

We are also guided by one expectation: to make a significant improvement in the performance of endemic ruminant livestock species in West Africa and hence in the lives and livelihoods of the large population of livestock producers who rely on them for their livelihoods.

We invite all our stakeholders and partners to contribute actively to the implementation of the plan, so that together we can enrich the livelihoods of livestock-dependent communities in West Africa, and pursue the core values of CAADP.



Dr Yemi Akinbami  
Chair, ITC Council



An N'Dama cow and calf. Photo: PROGEBE/ITC



# Introduction

ITC was established in The Gambia in 1982. Its original purpose was to study and increase the use of cattle, sheep and goat breeds that naturally tolerate the tsetse fly-transmitted disease, trypanosomiasis. The disease, which is very common in West Africa, can cause emaciation, heart failure and death in ruminants.

ITC was a research and development centre; we developed technologies and strategies to help poor livestock keepers across West Africa and beyond improve the productivity of their farms. Focusing on cattle, sheep and goats, we made real strides in the development of disease risk assessment and control strategies, and nutrition management. We managed a major breeding programme to improve the performance of trypanotolerant N'Dama cattle and Djallonke sheep and goats, and distributed improved animals across the sub-region. We investigated the socio-economic and policy aspects of livestock production. We also supported training on a range of livestock research topics for African and international scientists. We are very proud of our accomplishments, which include the production of public goods that impacted positively on the lives of livestock producers.

Nevertheless, on the eve of ITC's 30th anniversary, it became clear that we needed to revisit what we do and how we operate. Our activities needed to better reflect the trends that, over the past several decades, have transformed agriculture in many parts of the world. Globalization and the spread of industrial agriculture have led to remarkable gains in the productivity of modern food systems. The transaction costs associated with such systems have plummeted, thanks to better transportation and communications technologies.

At the same time, rising incomes, urbanization and the growth of the middle class in many developing countries have changed the patterns of demand for food. Wealthier people consume more meat and dairy products, which has accelerated the demand for livestock, in theory creating an opportunity for poor producers. Yet, the so-called 'livestock revolution' has so far largely bypassed West Africa's small-scale livestock keepers. While globalization offers them potential access to new markets, it also exposes them to the full force of global competition, which they are ill equipped to face.

Another factor raising concern is the prospect of climate change and its impact on the regional livestock sector. Livestock contribute to climate change through the emission of greenhouse gases. They are also, potentially, its victims. When raised traditionally, animals essentially depend on the natural resource base, and any deterioration in water, land and grazing conditions caused by climate change or variability will affect their health and welfare, their productivity and even their survival. In addition to bringing more floods, warmer and wetter weather will increase the occurrence of animal diseases, since the insects that act as disease vectors, such as ticks, will be more likely to survive year-round. Prolonged dry spells or droughts, in contrast, may lead to the complete collapse of the livestock sector, as feed and water shortages take their toll. This is what happened in the great Sahel drought of 1983–84, an episode that has since been repeated, albeit on a smaller scale, in several parts of the region. Droughts are likely to become more frequent and more severe as warming intensifies over the coming decades. Finally, climate change not only puts livestock at risk; it also threatens the billions of people around the world who depend on animals for their livelihoods.

Other issues driving the livestock sector in West Africa include the rapid rise of supermarkets nearly everywhere in the developing world, which has increased

demand for processing and packaging livestock products in ways that meet health and safety standards; the need to balance the livelihood benefits of increasing livestock production with the environmental risks associated with doing so; changes in the policy and institutional landscape, including moves towards a common West African market; more limited development assistance and the growing prominence of non-traditional funders, such as philanthropic organizations and the private sector; and technological advances, especially in the fields of biotechnology and information and communication technologies.

Responding to these trends and challenges requires an approach to livestock development that is people-centred, environmentally sound and that builds national and local capacity for self-reliance.

With this in mind, ITC embarked on a journey to develop a new strategy. The process of rethinking how we do business was systematic and participatory. We reflected on our strengths and weaknesses as a research centre and brought in an independent consultant to look at institutional issues. We analyzed existing international, regional and national livestock-related strategies and plans to identify gaps that needed filling, to ensure that our efforts would complement those of others and would align with national and regional development goals. This includes alignment with relevant sections





A land-use discussion with livestock producers. Photo: PROGEBE/ITC

of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and, within this, the Framework for African Agricultural Productivity (FAAP), the tool for implementing the CAADP vision. The new strategic plan also targets similar results areas to those outlined in the current West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (WECARD) strategic plan.

Three workshops and an e-consultation brought together over 100 stakeholders – including farmers' groups and civil society – who contributed their knowledge and ideas to the development of the strategy. The draft strategy was circulated widely for comments before its submission to the ITC Board for approval in January 2013.

# A change of name, a broadening of mandate

The outcomes of our strategy process were a change of name – to the West Africa Livestock Innovation Centre (WALIC) – and, more importantly, of mandate, to include a wider set of responsibilities over a larger geographical area. WALIC succeeds ITC as a research centre and adds the important dimensions of innovation, knowledge management, advocacy and communications in the context of strengthening rural livelihoods. WALIC will reach more broadly into the West African region than its predecessor and will expand its focus to cover all indigenous ruminants, not just the breeds that tolerate trypanosomosis. WALIC aspires to be a technical arm of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, the regional body responsible for coordinating and promoting economic development among its member states.



## What is an innovation centre?

An innovation centre is a place where people share ideas and build a future together. It is a space characterized by creativity, connectivity and community. Innovation centres foster a culture in which imagination is celebrated and collaboration is the order of the day.





A wholesale sheep market in Tamale, Ghana. Photo: ILRI/Jo Cadilhon

## What will we do?

West Africa is one of the least developed regions in the world, due in no small part to years of civil war. Now that nearly all the wars have ended, the region has a great opportunity to accelerate economic development. Today, over 55 per cent of West Africans live on less than US\$1 a day. Livestock development is a route to changing that reality, representing a path out of poverty for many of the region's most vulnerable people in both rural and urban areas.

WALIC's strategy embraces the notion that improving the productivity and resilience of native breeds of cattle, sheep and goats will help grow the economy of the region and improve the welfare of its people. The strategy is guided by the principles of innovation, partnership, empowerment and sustainability. WALIC is concerned with the whole web of activities needed to bring livestock products to market, from production through processing to delivery. Analyzing these value chains is critical to understanding how markets work, the roles played by different actors,

and the factors limiting productivity and the competitiveness of smallholder farmers and pastoralists. We pay particular attention to the needs of women and youth, who are the poorest and most vulnerable people in the region.

*WALIC's **vision** is a vibrant West African livestock sector that boosts food security and creates wealth while safeguarding the environment.*

*WALIC's **mission** is to unlock the potential of West Africa's ruminant livestock through new partnerships and approaches that empower stakeholders along value chains.*

## Four thematic areas define WALIC's strategy

### **Genetic improvement, conservation and enhanced use of West African livestock**

West Africa is extremely vulnerable to climate change given its degraded physical environment, poverty and rapidly growing population. The region is already experiencing rising temperatures, changes in rainfall patterns and an increasing incidence of extreme weather events due to climate change. Without the ability to adapt, the poorest people will suffer most.

West African livestock breeds, such as N'Dama cattle, West African dwarf goats and Djallonke sheep, are legendary for resisting disease. These and other local breeds also have a remarkable ability to adapt to dry and hot conditions. Yet little has been done to improve their productivity and to protect them from extinction.

WALIC will build on ITC's work to improve the productivity and resilience of livestock systems in response to heat, drought and disease, ensuring that important genetic diversity is not lost in

the process. A key role will be to help countries define their breeding goals and strategies for livestock improvement.

### **How?**

- We will develop a West African strategy and implementation framework describing options, tools and approaches for conserving and using indigenous ruminant livestock.
- We will develop and test approaches to enhancing the use of indigenous livestock genetic resources in a range of production systems.
- We will evaluate breeds and crossbreeds from around the world that have the potential to improve the performance of indigenous breeds.
- We will develop and share a multilingual database, with information on West Africa's livestock resources, including genetic and phenotypic data, and on the characteristics of the region's different production systems.

A teenage girl and one of her family's sheep at an urban farm in Bamako, Mali.  
Photo: ILRI/Stevie Mann





## Building productive capacity

Today, 70 per cent of West Africans are under 30 years old. These are the people who hold the future of the region's agriculture in their hands. But, most of them are remarkably uninterested in that role, seeing agriculture as a career characterized by low pay and heavy lifting. This may be due partly to the fact that, even in rural areas, school curricula no longer give much attention to agriculture as a career. In the meantime, more and more young people are moving to the cities in search of better lives.

Poor livestock keepers, especially in rural areas, often lack access to the advisory services, institutional frameworks, technical and financial assistance and business skills they need to fully participate in markets, both within and beyond the region. They often depend on middlemen to market their products, losing out on much of the profit as a result. There are opportunities for market actors, from commercial producers to processors and traders, to help small-scale producers respond to market needs. New partnerships and business models can benefit everyone involved in the

value chain; these include for-profit social enterprises and contract farming relationships.

We intend to address capacity building in several ways. WALIC's approach favours institutional and socio-economic transformation over traditional training courses. Our primary goal is to create a new generation of leaders and managers to energize the institutions and value chains that can drive livestock development. We want to motivate more young people to take up careers in agriculture. We also want to involve local governments, community organizations and the private sector in addressing the factors that currently exclude smallholder livestock keepers from external markets. These include policy environments that favour large-scale enterprises; excessive regulation based on exaggerated perceptions of the health and safety risks associated with small-scale production; poorly targeted and under-resourced veterinary services; lack of institutional support for small-scale dairying; lack of infrastructure – especially roads – in rural areas; and a continuing failure to make credit and inputs available to small-scale farmers and pastoralists.

## How?

- We will contribute to strengthening the capacity of livestock keepers, processors and traders to be more competitive in their business operations and to access higher value markets. We will help smallholders gain access to the inputs, advisory services and financing they need to compete in markets.
- We will support educational programmes that expose young people to exciting opportunities in animal agriculture.
- We will strengthen the capacity of national institutes to address regional livestock challenges.

## Managing the knowledge needed to increase production

Knowledge management is the practice of recording and sharing insights and experience. Access to knowledge is essential for learning, innovation and effective decision-making. Information is needed to underpin policy and investment decisions, to understand the impact of development interventions and to improve the management and use of livestock by different actors in the value chain. Yet, despite massive strides in the field of information and communications

technology, lack of access to knowledge remains a major bottleneck to progress in West Africa's livestock sector. A great deal of livestock data and information exists but it often remains in raw form or has been processed for researchers and is hence not accessible to the people who need it most: livestock keepers and others who need to improve the efficiency of their enterprises.

Making information available on best practices (e.g. in managing feed resources, protecting animal health and processing livestock products for market) and providing early warnings (e.g. of droughts, floods and disease outbreaks) in the right format, languages and channels will enable producers and others to make the right management decisions. Likewise, providing information about markets – local, national, regional and global – will improve access for small-scale producers.

WALIC will develop mechanisms for collecting, analyzing and sharing livestock knowledge in order to strengthen the learning that will underpin innovation and the adoption of effective policies for the livestock sector. In addition, we will use the tools and processes of knowledge management to make WALIC a learning organization, a knowledge broker on livestock and the place to go for high-quality information on livestock issues in West Africa.





Village land-use mapping in Guinea. Photo: PROGEBE/ITC

## How?

- We will explore the use of innovative communications technologies – including mobile phones and radio – for helping value chain actors get the information they need, when and where they need it.
- We will develop and share knowledge products, including databases on animal health, feeding and breeding; information on livestock and climate change; success stories on the use of new technologies and approaches; and livestock market information systems.
- We will compile, analyze and share weather data to help livestock keepers manage their risks better.
- We will analyze, distil and share information to support economic arguments for investing in livestock development.
- We will analyze, distil and share information on the impacts of various policies on livestock development.

## Advocacy and partnership to support livestock development

West Africa's livestock sector has huge potential to improve the livelihoods of smallholders and pastoralists throughout the region. Meeting that potential requires supportive policies and greater investments in animal production, both in the mixed crop–livestock systems of the humid and sub-humid zones, and in the agropastoral and pastoral systems of the drier areas. Policy-makers and donors alike will need to be convinced of the benefits that will result from supporting the sector.

It is hardly a secret that working in partnership yields better results than going it alone. The new thinking is that development partnerships should extend beyond the usual public and private R&D organizations (government research and extension services and national and international charities and foundations) to include all relevant stakeholders in the public and private sectors and in civil society. In the livestock sector, this would include all the organizations and actors in the livestock value chain: farmers and farmer organizations, input suppliers and service providers, small-scale manufacturers, livestock traders, dairy and meat processors, retailers, extension service providers, development workers, policy-makers, regulatory bodies,



international and regional livestock research institutes, relevant regional and international forums, banks and other financial service providers and consumer organizations.



Improved small ruminant housing in rural Gambia. Photo: PROGEBE/ITC

Smallholder livestock keepers are often unable to compete in high-value markets. Reasons include their lack of access to reliable market information, weak business management skills and the inability to have their voices heard. WALIC will identify opportunities for partnerships that can help make smallholders more competitive and facilitate their entry into high-value local, national, regional and even global markets.

### How?

- We will work with businesses and civil society to advance the cause of livestock and to raise its profile on the development agenda.
- We will bring together R&D organizations, businesses and civil society to share resources and expertise and to coordinate their contributions to the development of the livestock sector.
- We will help livestock producers to organize themselves and strengthen their capacity to participate in high-value markets.

# Making it happen

WALIC's new 10-year strategic plan has identified a number of key actions that can empower livestock keepers in West Africa with the knowledge and capacity they need to transform animal production into a pathway out of poverty. The strategy will help us to set our priorities, focus our resources, launch new activities and adjust existing ones as needed.

To implement the strategy, WALIC will rely on a number of tools and approaches.

**A representative Governance Structure** to ensure that stakeholders and partners including high level policy makers from member countries fully participate in decision making at the highest level, in order to foster a sense of joint ownership of WALIC.

**Priority setting** enables us to respond to emerging needs and opportunities, while allowing us to focus our efforts where we can make the greatest impact. We will

continually revisit our portfolio, adapting our priorities and adding new dimensions to our work, based on what we learn and the new opportunities and challenges that emerge along the way.

Strong **communications** are critical to WALIC's success. Our communications strategy has the goals of listening to stakeholders and interacting with them, broadcasting our impact and the value of our work; sharing research results with the people who can use them; and promoting the potential of the livestock sector to transform West African lives. We aim to become the foremost source of information on livestock production in the region. And we mean to make communications a two-way process, in which we gather information from our partners and use it to enrich and fine-tune our activities.

WALIC has chosen to remain a focused centre and to rely heavily on **strategic partnerships** to deliver on its agenda. We will develop and







A community-level consultation in Mali. Photo: PROGEBE/ITC

manage mutually beneficial partnerships and alliances that maximize the sharing of expertise and other resources.

We will regularly collect and analyze information on our projects to see how

we are doing and to provide the basis for reviewing the overall value and impact of our work. **Monitoring and evaluation** are important tools for tracking progress, learning and adapting in response to experience.

# Your part in our development

If you want to learn more about WALIC's plans for the future, please get in touch with us. We'll put you on our mailing list so that we can keep you informed about our progress. We'll also invite you to contribute to the development of our programme in areas where you have relevant expertise and skills. Most of all, we need your support: WALIC is an ambitious idea and we will need both financial and practical contributions to turn our vision into a reality.

For further information, contact  
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Clockwise from top left: Livestock watering facilities in rural Gambia; Some milk products including local butter from Guinea; A Djallonke ram; Cattle Market in Sare-Yoba Senegal; Animal traction; A well-endowed West African Dwarf doe.  
Photos: PROGEBE/ITC



**Credits**

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**The West Africa Livestock Innovation Centre (WALIC)** is a non-profit institution that aims to improve the productivity and sustainability of the livestock sector in West Africa. It takes over from its predecessor, the International Trypanotolerance Centre (ITC), and has a new vision and strategy.



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*Transforming lives through livestock*

