

Benin is committed to boost its cashew production and processing

Benin exports 130,000 MT, out of which more than 100,000 MT are own production. Five processing firms with more than 4,500 MT are installed, four of them starting processing end of 2011. These processors employ more than 1,000 people from the surrounding communities, mainly women. The African Cashew Initiative supports these processors, as well as 40,000 farmers, increasing their income from cashew by 100 USD per season, relating to an additional income of 4 millions USD .

Nevertheless the productivity levels of cashew all over Africa are still very low, with 4 kg/ tree, compared to 12-15 kg/ tree in India or Brazil, countries with well developed cashew production and processing. Together with the national research institute (INRAB), ACi has started in Benin – as also in Ghana – the production of improved planting material targeting a production increase of 500% per tree.

These challenging tasks need good, experienced partners. Hence, the Benin government decided to approach the Brazilian government to add their knowledge to the efforts of the African Cashew Initiative in the area of improved planting material, as well as in small scale processing of cashew apples.

The African Cashew initiative, facilitated by the ACi country coordinator André Tandjiékpon, discussed its strategic plan for the next year, with the steering committee, made of actors of the national platform of cashew stakeholders, presided by Georgette Tarraf, and the national secretary Boris Houénou. The main activities will focus on supporting the government activities to promote improved planting material, support farmers groups, and continue the technical advice to medium-to-larger scale processing firms to set up and expand their operations.

An overview on cashew industry and the areas of support by the African Cashew Initiative were given to Mme. M. Sephou, Minister of trade and industry, and Mr.

O. Vigan, General Secretary of the ministry of agriculture, M. E. Ouin-Ouro, the General Secretary of the Presidency, as well as Monsieur S. Manigui from the Belgium Cooperation (CTB) . Several issues for government attention were addressed, e.g. local market regulation inciting local processing and facilitate access to raw cashew; facilitation of the ministry for competitiveness of cashew production using expertise of Brazilian cooperation.

Beside these meetings with public officials, fruitful exchanges were made with the management team of SWCM, the biggest Beninese owned trading company which is now investing into processing of cashew nuts. They were partnering with ACi in some quality related farmers training.

With all partners met, the possibility for Benin to host 2012 annual conference of ACA has been shared with regard to their contributions and the potential opportunities to boost cashew industry for such event.



Picture: Working meeting to prepare for the ACA conference: (from left) Mary Adzanyo, Director Private Sector Development ACi, Soule Manigui, Cooperation Technique Belge, André Tandjiékpon, Coordinator ACi Benin, Rita Weidinger, Executive Director ACi, Edouard Ouin-Ouro, General Secretary of the Presidency of Benin.

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