

# The AU-EU FNSSA International Research Consortium

Framing the IRC for spearheading the  
Africa-Europe Research and Innovation  
partnership on FNSSA

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# Outline



**CEA-FIRST**

Consortium Europe-Africa on **Research** and **Innovation** for **Food Systems Transformation**



Introduction

Antecedents of the IRC



The AU-EU IRC on FNSSA

What the International Research Consortium (IRC) is about

How the IRC will function



Perspectives on how the IRC will drive the FNSSA Partnership



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This Project is funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe Research & Innovation Programme - Agreement 101136771



# Antecedents of the FNSSA (Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture) International Research Consortium (IRC)



Consortium Europe-Africa on Research and Innovation for Food Systems Transformation

- **Before 2018-** RINEA, ProIntensAfrica, PAEPARD etc
- **2018- CSA LEAP4FNSSA**
- to provide a **structured mechanism** for aligning research **priorities** and fostering closer collaboration between African and European institutions
- focused on **facilitating policy coherence** and stakeholder **coordination**.
- FNSSA Database has been put in place currently holding 625 U-EU FNSSA projects
- Launched the AU-EU International Research Consortium (IRC) (Sept. 2022)



THE AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP  
LE PARTENARIAT AFRIQUE-UE



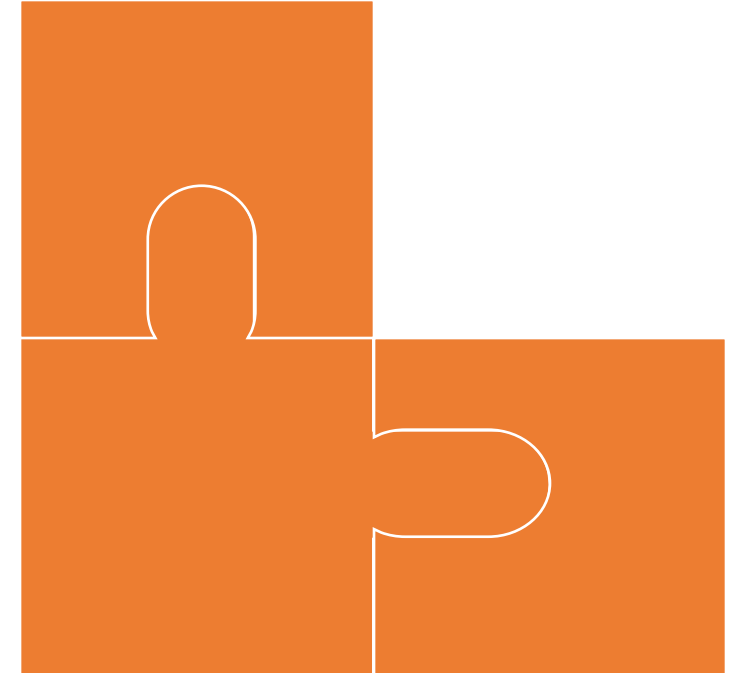
EU-AU Research and Innovation Partnership on  
**Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA Partnership)**



To reduce **fragmentation**, Duplication, strengthen synergies and coherence of actions and creating the enabling environment for **scaling impactful solutions** leading to improved efficiency, returns on investment and Impact by;

- Fostering **collaborative research** between African and European institutions
- Supporting **interactions between R & I projects** and food systems and actors that leads to scaling of innovations
- Strengthening **research capacities** and **knowledge exchange**
- **Aligning policies** for sustainable innovation uptake

- **Some key challenges in the AU-EU R & I landscape**
- Intervention, Funding and Policy fragmentation
- Regulatory barriers
- **Key IRC offering for reducing fragmentation**
- IRC KM platform as the main instrument for sharing FNSSA information
- Facilitate learning environment and connecting lessons from the real world between projects, financing and policy making
- Showcasing successful solutions





# IRC offering for enabling the Environment for Scaling Innovations



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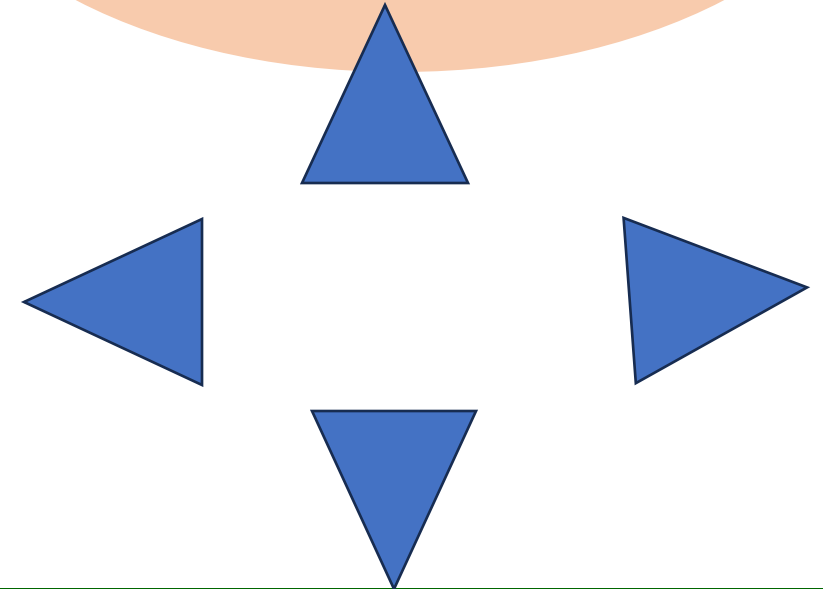
- **Challenges in Scaling Agricultural Innovations**

- Limited funding for African research institutions
- Infrastructure and logistical constraints
- Inequities in AU-EU R & I partnerships

- **Key strategies**

- Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration Partnerships between researchers, policymakers, private sector, and farmers
- Capacity Building Training programs and knowledge transfer
- Knowledge Exchange Digital platforms and innovation hubs
- Policy and Investment Alignment Supportive policies and financial mechanisms

**Moving from research and pilot projects to large-scale adoption require stakeholder engagement in the process of scaling !!**



# Recognising current Shifts in Research and Innovation Partnerships



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- Dynamic interplay among startups, established companies, universities, and research centers, all collaborating to drive innovation.
- This collaborative landscape being enriched by the emergence of university spin-offs—bridging the gap between theoretical research and practical applications
- Global food companies leading venture funds and incubator programs to attract startups
- R&I can lead and need to **respond to industry demand for smarter, more efficient, and sustainable methods for food production**



# AU EU Partnership programming: FNSSA Priority

## The Role of the IRC

### AU EU Policy making

HLPD, FNSSA WG, EC DGs, AUC Depts  
Agenda 2063, CAADP Malabo, AfCFTA, Farm  
2 Fork, Global Gateway, FNSSA Roadmap  
CCSE, IA



### AU EU programming /Financing

instruments  
H2020, HE, AURG, PRIMA, LEAP-Agri



### AU EU Projects & CSAs

625 multi-country Projects, under  
H2020, HE, LEAP Agri, PRIMA, PANAP

Influence Food Systems transformation by SCALING  
Innovations >>>

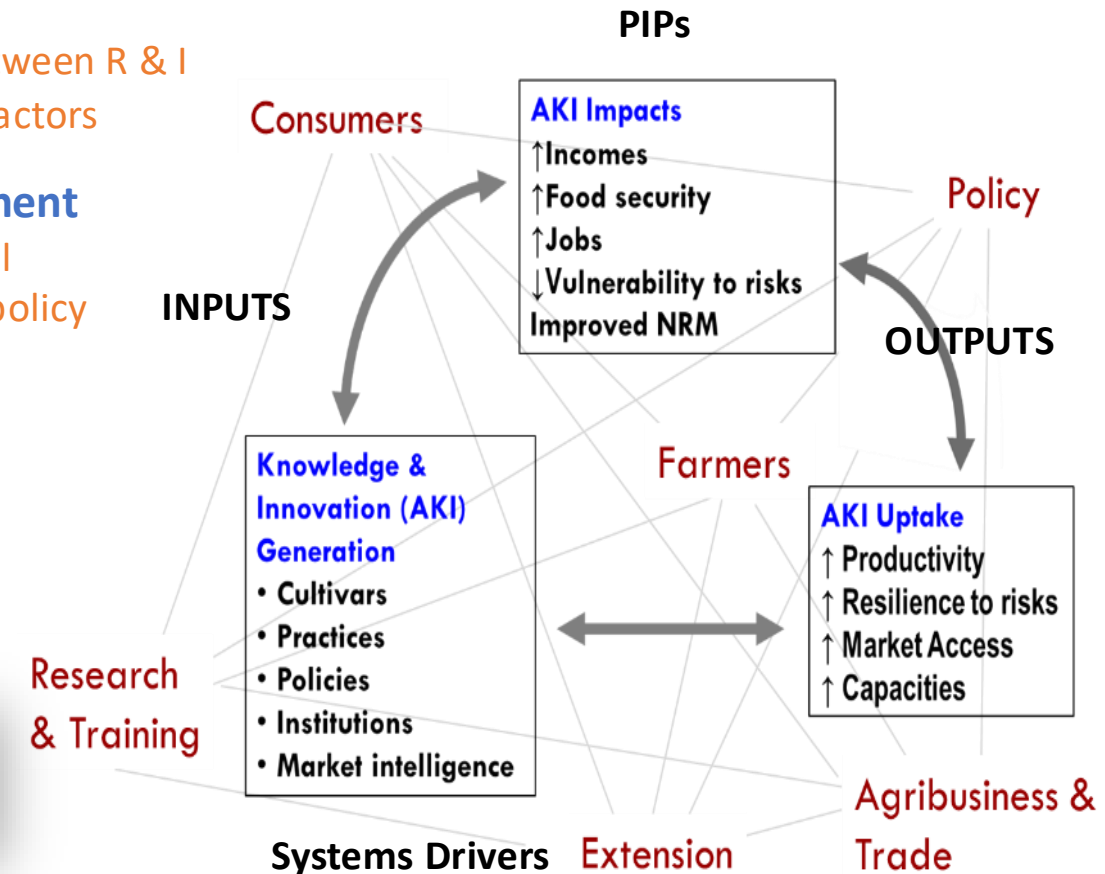
### AU-EU IRC on FNSSA, Coordinates

- Knowledge Management and innovation brokerage, Priority Analysis
- Communication
- Monitoring and Evaluation,
- Policy-Practice interface, clustering
- Multi-actor Working Groups
- Institutional Strengthening

**Supports interactions** between R & I projects and food systems and actors

**Facilitate learning environment**  
& connect lessons from the real world (projects, financing and policy making)

### Food Systems







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## IRC Stakeholders *Differentiated Value Add*

Academia

Development  
Institutions

Governments &  
Policy Makers



Farmers, Farmer organisations & CSOs

R&D Public / Funding  
Agencies

Research  
Institutions

SMEs, Private Sector Actors &  
Agribusinesses

How IRC will  
Function



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## IRC Stakeholders

*Differentiated Value Add*



**Academia**

**> Data & Knowledge on projects, programmes, policies and resultant innovations from the AU-EU R & I**

**> Capacity development for different actors within the FNSSA domain**

A coordinated platform for Dialogue and partnership among AU-EU FNSSA actors at various geographic scales

**> Funding Mechanisms and access to funding opportunities for R & I in the FNSSA domain**



How IRC will Function

## IRC Stakeholders

*Differentiated Value Add*



**Governments  
& Policy  
Makers**

**> Data & Knowledge on projects, programmes, policies and resultant innovations from the AU-EU R & I**

**> A coordinated platform for Dialogue and partnership among AU-EU FNSSA actors at various geographic scales**

**> Capacity development for different actors within the FNSSA domain**

**> Funding Mechanisms and access to funding opportunities for R & I in the FNSSA domain**



How IRC will  
Function



## IRC Stakeholders

*Differentiated Value Add*



**Funders**

> Data & Knowledge on projects, programmes, policies and resultant innovations from the AU-EU R & I

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> Funding Mechanisms and access to funding opportunities for R & I in the FNSSA domain



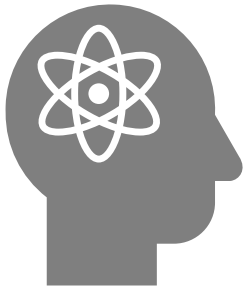
How IRC will Function





## IRC Stakeholders

*Differentiated Value Add*



**Development  
Institutions**

**> Data & Knowledge on projects, programmes, policies and resultant innovations from the AU-EU R & I**

**> A coordinated platform for Dialogue and partnership among AU-EU FNSSA actors at various geographic scales**

**> Capacity development for different actors within the FNSSA domain**

**> Funding Mechanisms and access to funding opportunities for R & I in the FNSSA domain**



How IRC will  
Function





## IRC Stakeholders

*Differentiated Value Add*



**Research  
Institutions**

**> Data & Knowledge on projects, programmes, policies and resultant innovations from the AU-EU R & I**

**> A coordinated platform for Dialogue and partnership among AU-EU FNSSA actors at various geographic scales**

**> Capacity development for different actors within the FNSSA domain**

**> Funding Mechanisms and access to funding opportunities for R & I in the FNSSA domain**



How IRC will  
Function







## IRC Stakeholders

### *Differentiated Value Add*



**Farmers, Farmer  
organisations &  
CSOs**

**> Data & Knowledge on  
projects, programmes,  
policies and resultant  
innovations from the AU-  
EU R & I**

**> A coordinated platform for  
Dialogue and partnership  
among AU-EU FNSSA  
actors at various  
geographic scales**

**> Capacity development  
for different actors  
within the FNSSA  
domain**

**> Funding Mechanisms  
and access to funding  
opportunities for R & I  
in the FNSSA domain**



How IRC will  
Function



## IRC Stakeholders

*Differentiated Value Add*



**SMEs, Private Sector  
Actors &  
Agribusinesses**

**> Data & Knowledge on projects, programmes, policies and resultant innovations from the AU-EU R & I**

**> A coordinated platform for Dialogue and partnership among AU-EU FNSSA actors at various geographic scales**

**> Capacity development for different actors within the FNSSA domain**

**> Funding Mechanisms and access to funding opportunities for R & I in the FNSSA domain**



How IRC will  
Function



## IRC Stakeholders

*Differentiated Value Add*



**Government &  
Policy Makers**

> Data & Knowledge on projects, programmes, policies and resultant innovations from the AU-EU R & I

> A coordinated platform for Dialogue and partnership among AU-EU FNSSA actors at various geographic scales

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> Funding Mechanisms and access to funding opportunities for R & I in the FNSSA domain



How IRC will  
Function





## Adopting a simple but effective structure: I RC Governance and Coordination

### How the IRC will function

Rotating coordination/ Political leadership / Presidency

#### 1. STRATEGIC FUNCTION

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

COUNCIL

#### 4. SUPPORT FUNCTION

SECRETARIAT

#### 2. ADVISORY FUNCTION

EXTERNAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

#### 3. OPERATIONAL FUNCTION

Working groups

Working groups

Working groups

Working groups

Working groups

Working groups

#### The IRC

Constitutes the structural, practical and participatory interaction between R & I partners on FNSSA

Promotes joint funding opportunities on priority FNSSA topics and

Improves the contribution of projects to European and African development goals as well as to global targets e.g. SDGs

## Some Guidelines for the working groups

**Approach** : Polycentric

**Clustering strategy**: FNSSA Roadmap priorities

- Thematic
- Interests
- Geographic regions
- Strategic initiatives



**Admission**: Requests responding to IRC Labelling guidelines

## IRC Functions

01

Increase synergies and coherence between actors

Develop a learning environment and knowledge base including MEL framework

02

03

Develop a sustainable and inclusive governance structure for the IRC

Liaison with the High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) Bureau and its organs

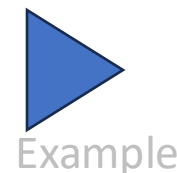
04

05

Capacity Development

## Related Services

1. Identification of priorities for R&I
2. Alignment of the many R&I programmes, initiatives and actors
3. Showcase solutions that work
4. Regular update programmes, and national, regional & continental policies
5. Facilitate finding appropriate funding opportunities in line with relevant policy development
6. Successively growing of an AU-EU knowledge Management and Communication Framework
7. A sustainable and inclusive structure of finance and funding
8. Organisation and institutionalisation of regular dialogues with the AU-EU HLPD institutions
9. To feed the AU-EU TCIP capacity audits and situation analysis





# How the IRC will function e.g. Soil Health priority theme



Data on current AU-EU soil health projects and initiatives (xx number of projects in FNSSA)



[https://library.wur.nl/WebQuery/leap4fnssa-projects?wq\\_fld=ti&wq\\_val=soil](https://library.wur.nl/WebQuery/leap4fnssa-projects?wq_fld=ti&wq_val=soil)



Funding – instruments, Calls



Partnerships



Learning and best practice



Policy implications



Process to be used in the IRC- Soil Health WG



Specific outputs; - Conferences, Policy briefs

FNSSA project database

LEAP4FNSSA Long-term EU-AU Research and Innovation Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems

Search only in title: soil

Records 1 - 12 / 12

Check title to add to [marked list](#)

Sorted by: Project start date (recently started first)

- ☐ Reschedule : RESilient to Climate Change Extremes Mediterranean Agricultural Systems: Leveraging the Power of Soil Health and Associated Microbiota
- ☐ ISFERALDA : Improving Soil FERTILITY in Arid and semi-arid regions using Local DAta palm residues
- ☐ BICEPS : Biochar Integration in Small-Holder Cropping Systems –Economy, Food Product Value Chains, Climate Change Resilience and Soil Fertility
- ☐ LSC-ES : Land, Soil and Crop Information Services to support Climate Smart Agriculture
- ☐ Soils4Africa : Soil Information System for Africa
- ☐ 4CE-MED : Camelina: a Cash Cover Crop Enhancing water and soil conservation in Mediterranean dry-farming systems
- ☐ ProSmallAgriMed : Promoting soil fertility, yield and income in smallholder agriculture of semiarid and arid Mediterranean regions by management of beneficial soil microbiota, conservation agriculture and intercropping
- ☐ Enhancing nutritional quality of plantain food products through improved access to endophyte primed and high pro vitamin A plantain cultivars under integrated soil fertility management practices in Nigeria, Cameroon and Gabon
- ☐ Crop and Soil Health Improvement for Sustainable Agricultural Intensification Towards Economic Transformation in West Africa
- ☐ CIRCSA : Coordination of International Research Cooperation on soil Carbon Sequestration in Agriculture
- ☐ INCAA : Innovative Conservation Agriculture Approaches: Food Security and Climate Action Through Soil and Water Conservation
- ☐ ComeSSA : Connecting knowledge, scales and actors. An integrated framework for adaptive organic resource management targeting soil degradation and agroecosystems resilience in SSA

Check title to add to [marked list](#)

Location

Africa

- Central Africa (1)
  - show countries
- Eastern Africa (1)
  - show countries
- Northern Africa (4)
  - show countries
- Southern Africa (1)
  - show countries
- Western Africa (4)
  - show countries

Europe

- Southern Europe (2)
  - show countries
- Western Europe (1)
  - show countries

Type of Funder

- European Commission (9)
- Public governmental funding (3)
- African Union (2)
- Grant making foundations (1)
- Non-governmental Organizations (1)

Type of organisation

- Research organization (12)
- University/Higher education institution (12)
- Government agency (9)
- Private company (6)
- Non-governmental organization (NGO) (5)
- Expert network (1)

LEAP4FNSSA has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 817663.

# Conclusions (1): IRC actions and anticipated influence



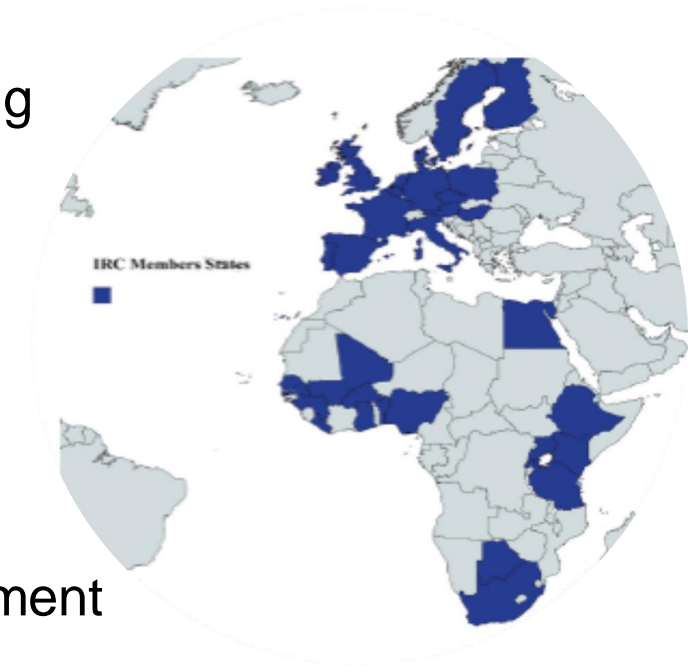
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The IRC support more conducive environments for the scaling and effective policy-design, implementation, reflection and learning through:

- Creation of **a transdisciplinary stakeholder dialogue** structure
- **Secretariat support** to the AU-EU High Level Policy Dialogue and its Working Group on FNSSA and associated AU-EU FNSSA partnership governance structures
- Facilitation of **communication**, gender & **youth and a funders' Working Groups**, including an innovative funding mechanism
- **Proactive identification and facilitation** of opportunities for the **scaling of innovations and sharing of knowledge** between projects, programmes, and food system actors
- **Brokerage and clustering** between multi-actor groups, including agri-businesses, policymakers, extension and advisory services, academia and researchers

- ‘Internationalisation’ of the AU-EU IRC on FNSSA
  - Enhancing North-South and South-South research collaboration with inclusive approaches that empower women and youth in agriculture – **connections with the CGIAR, FAO, UNFS** program etc
  - Increased AU-EU funding for joint research projects, whilst ensuring equitable funding and technology transfer – **Member States**
  - Stronger institutional partnerships and **policy coherence**
- Strategies for the **Sustainability of the IRC**
  - IRC members mirroring AKIS stakeholders
  - Network of networks approach
  - Ownership by members – signaling a positive and serious commitment that should be leveraged
  - Continued alignments of IRC services with needs of Funders & Development partners





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**65**

**Signatories**

**38**

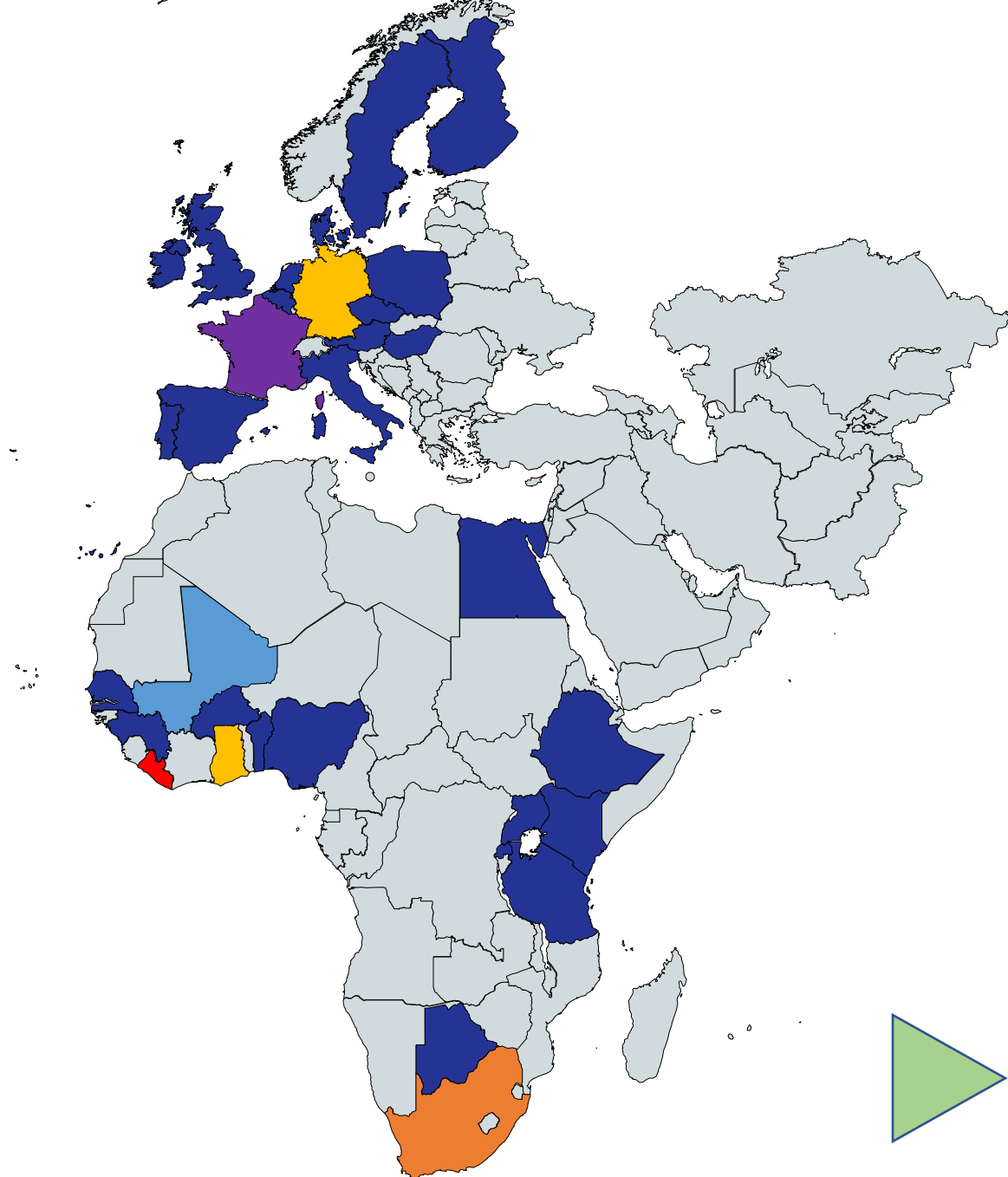
**African**

**27**

**European**



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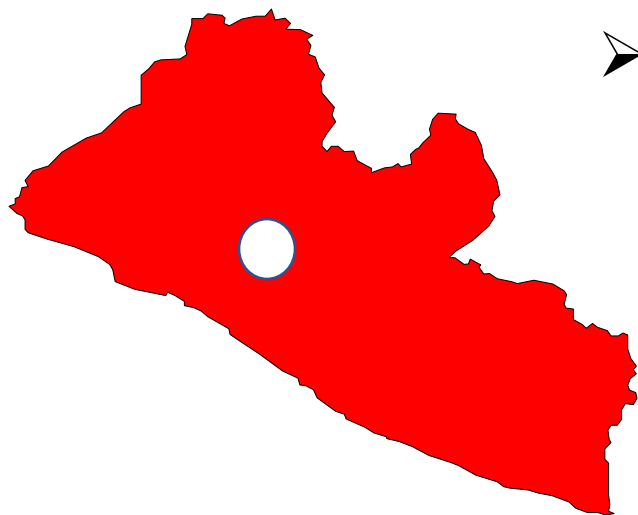


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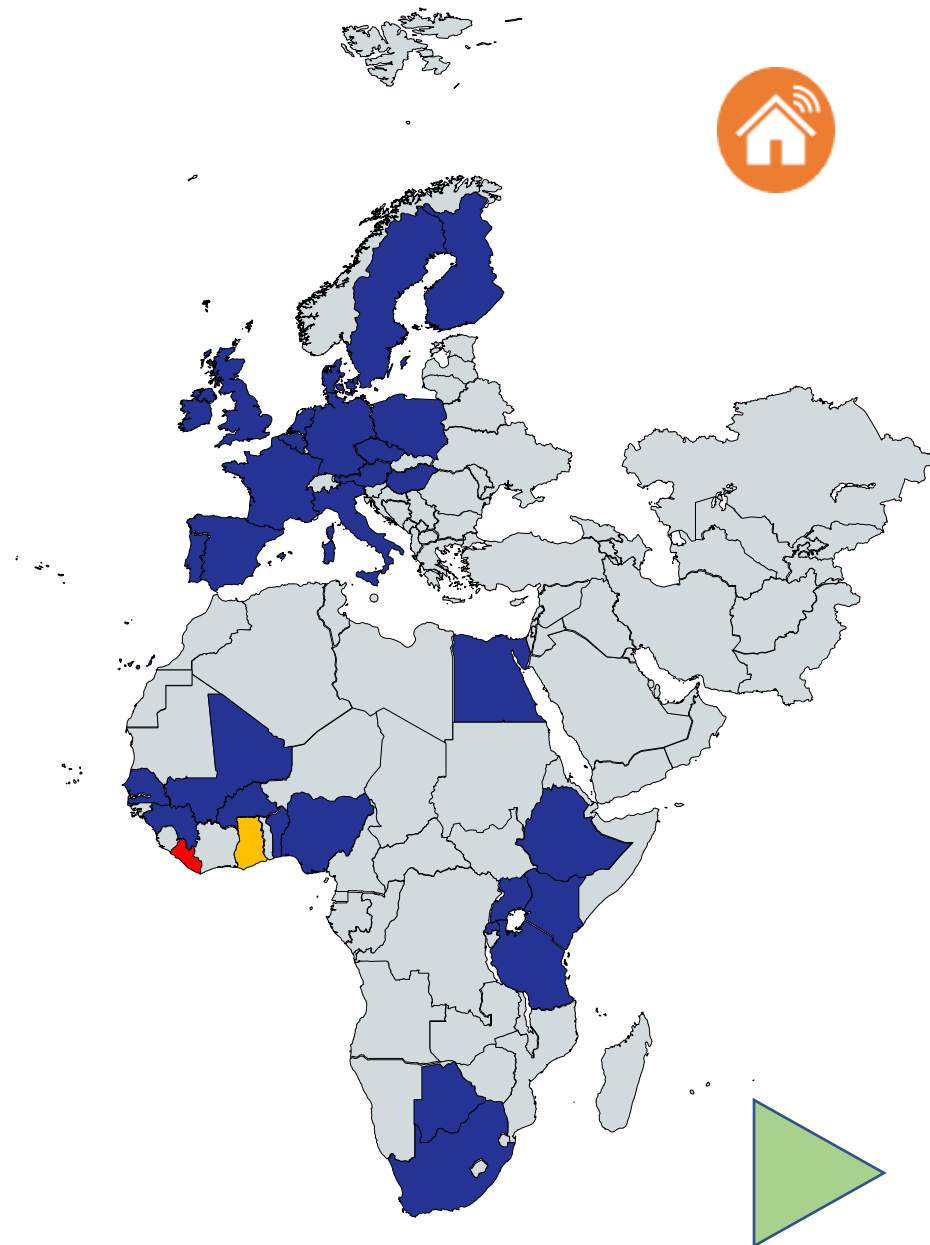
Country: **Liberia**

## 1 IRC Signatory

- Government of Liberia  
Ministry of Agriculture



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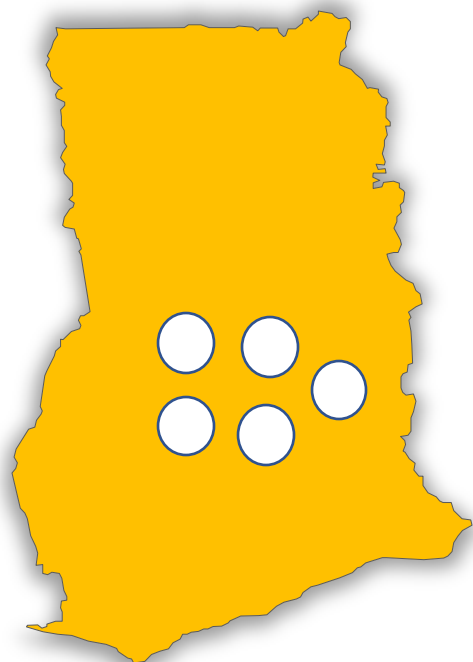






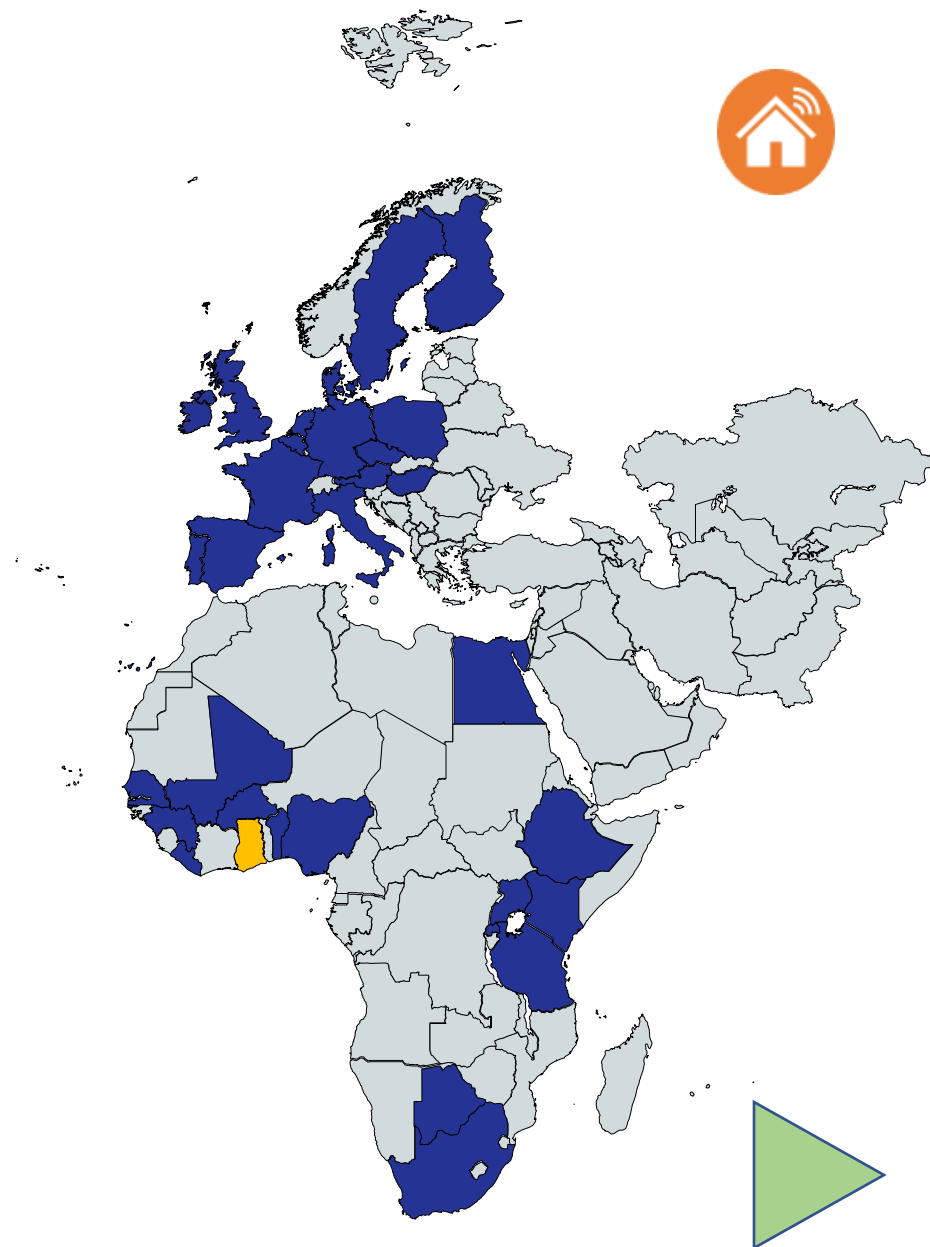
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Country: **Ghana**



## 5 IRC Signatories

- Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)
- Center for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)
- West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use (WASCAL)
- University of Cape Coast
- University of Energy and Natural Resources



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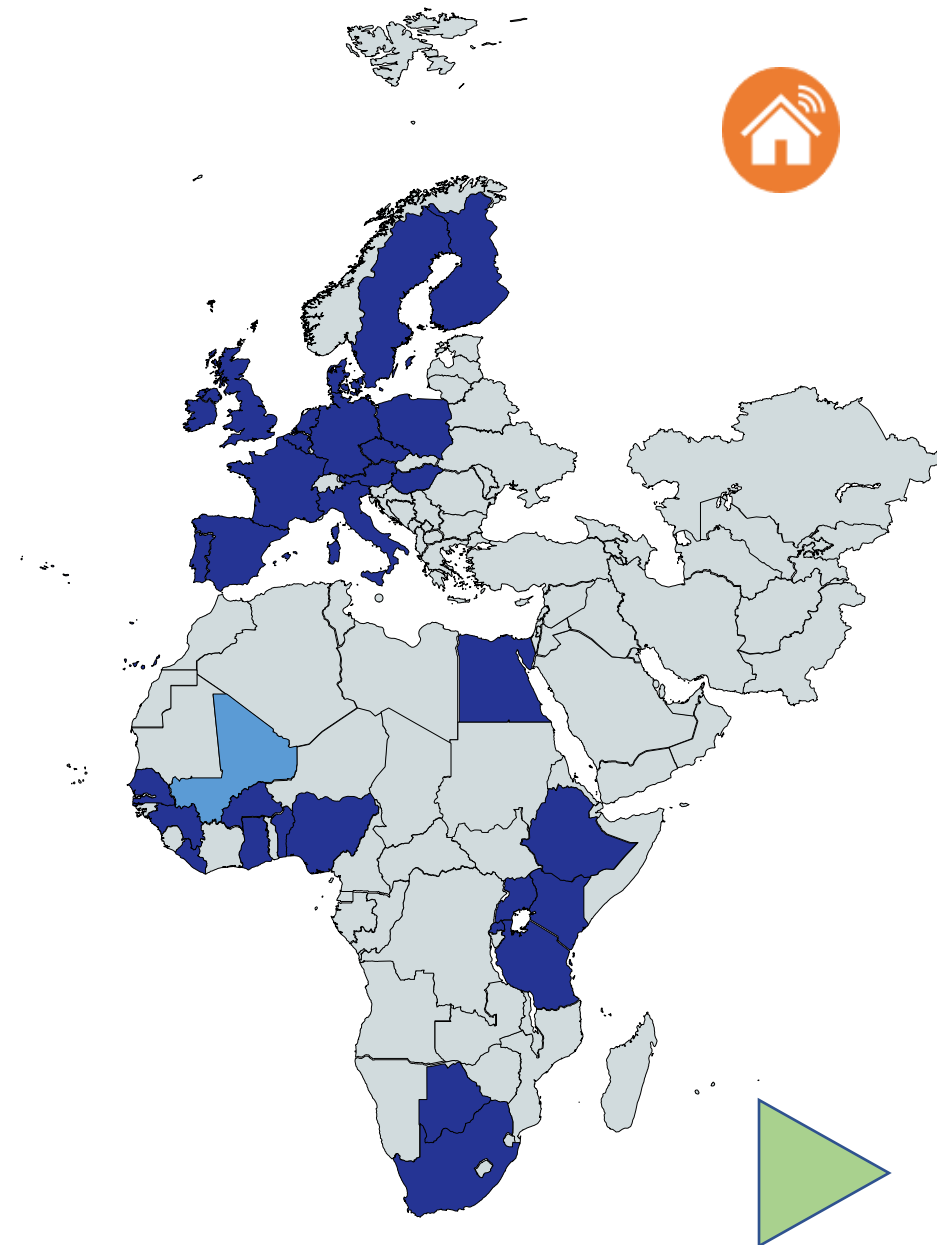


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Country: **Mali**

## 1 IRC Signatory

- l'Institut d'Economie Rurale (IER)



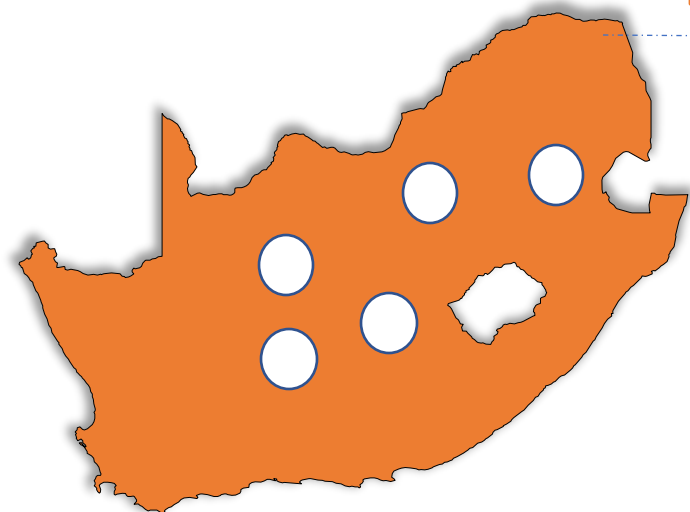
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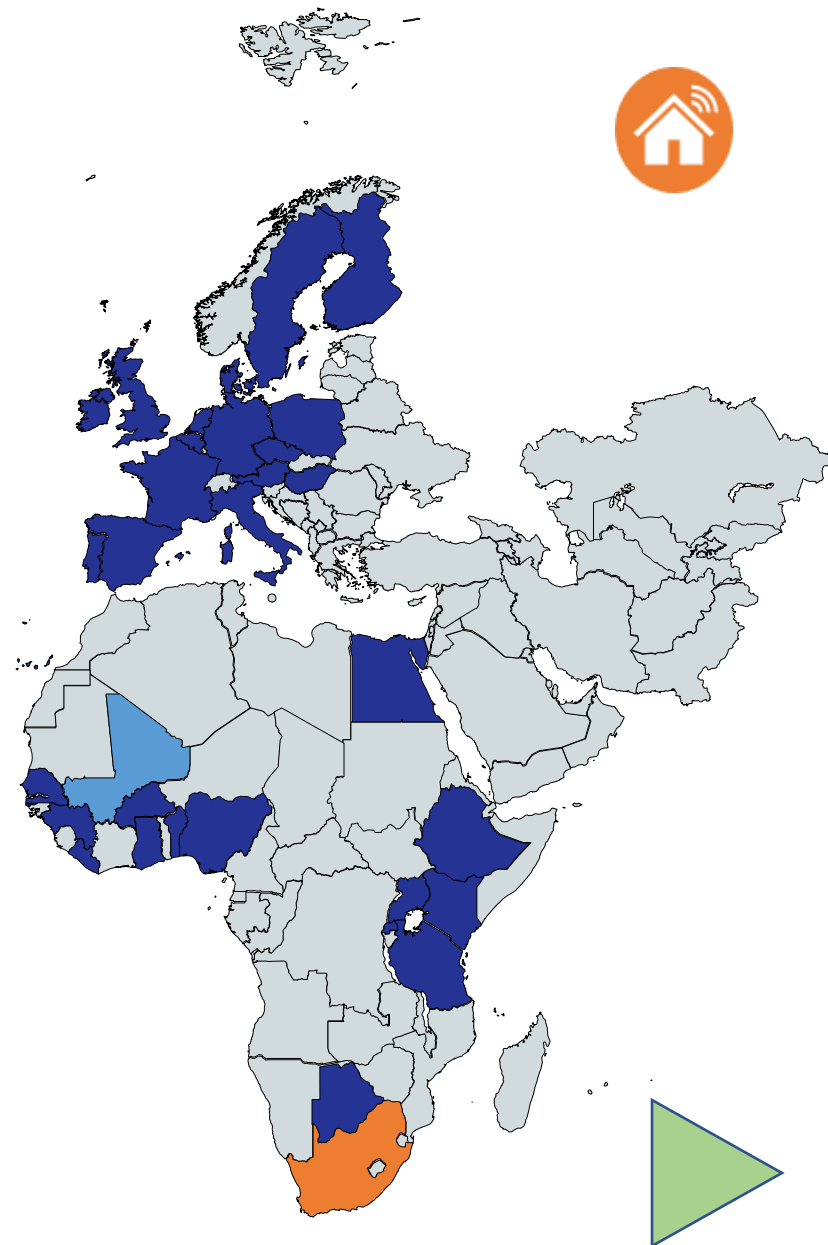
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Country: **South-Africa**

## 4 IRC Signatories



- National Research Foundation (NRF)
- Agricultural Research Council (ARC)
- Department of Science and Innovation
- Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)



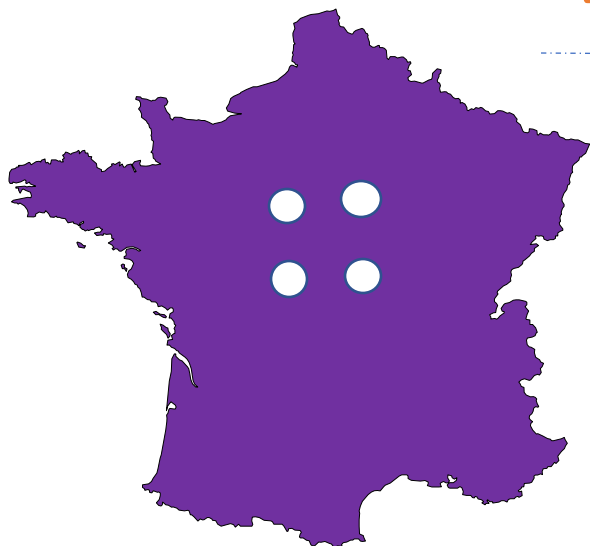
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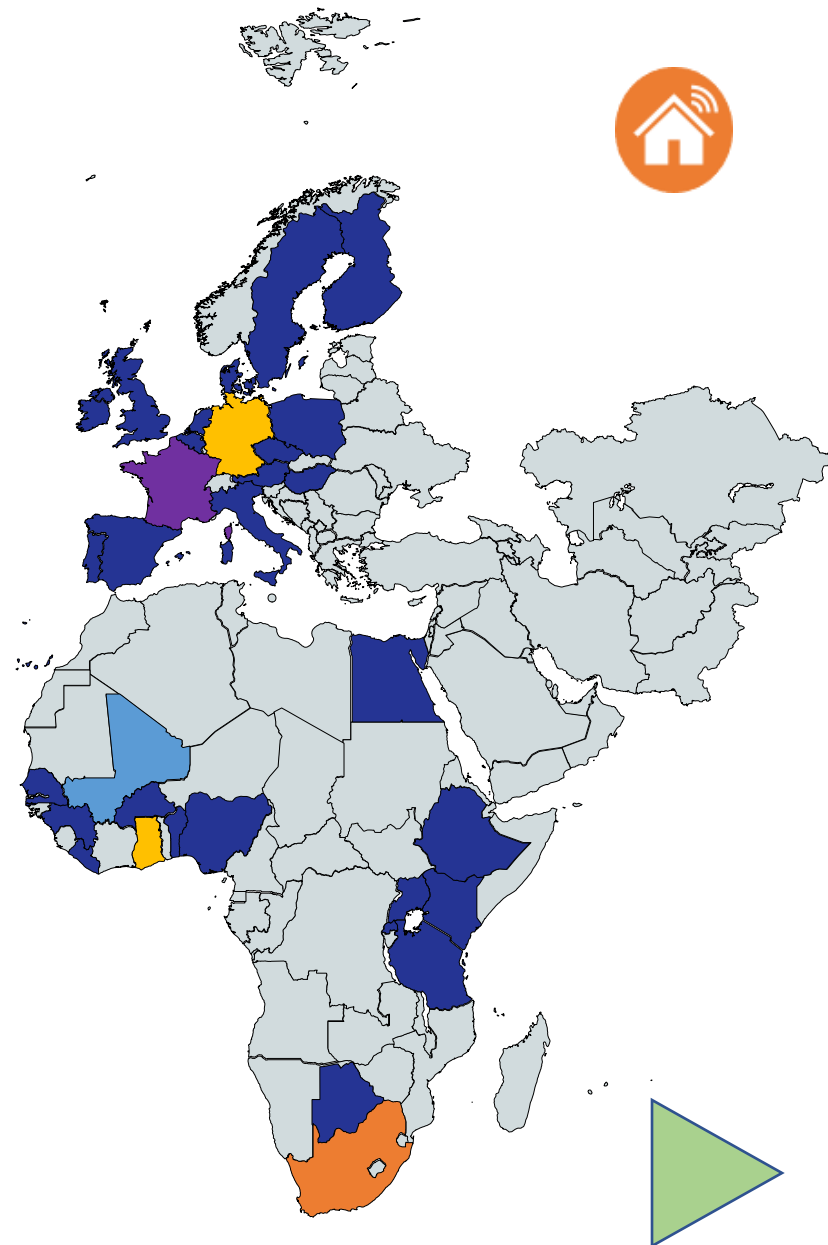
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Country: **France**

## 4 IRC Signatories



- CIRAD
- **Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)**
- Committee Linking Entrepreneurship Agriculture Development (COLEAD)
- National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE)



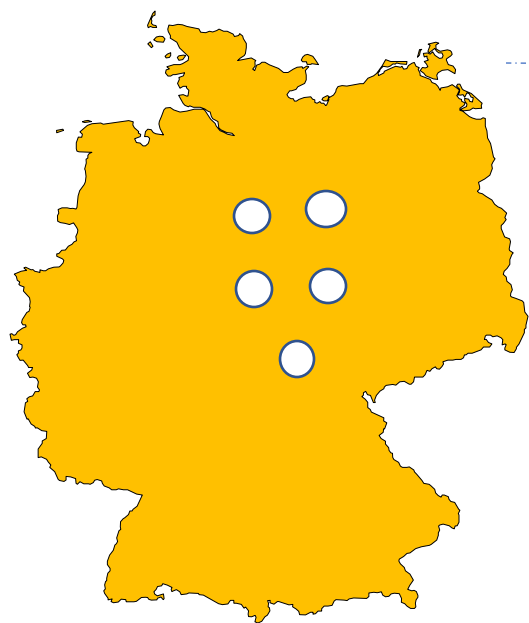
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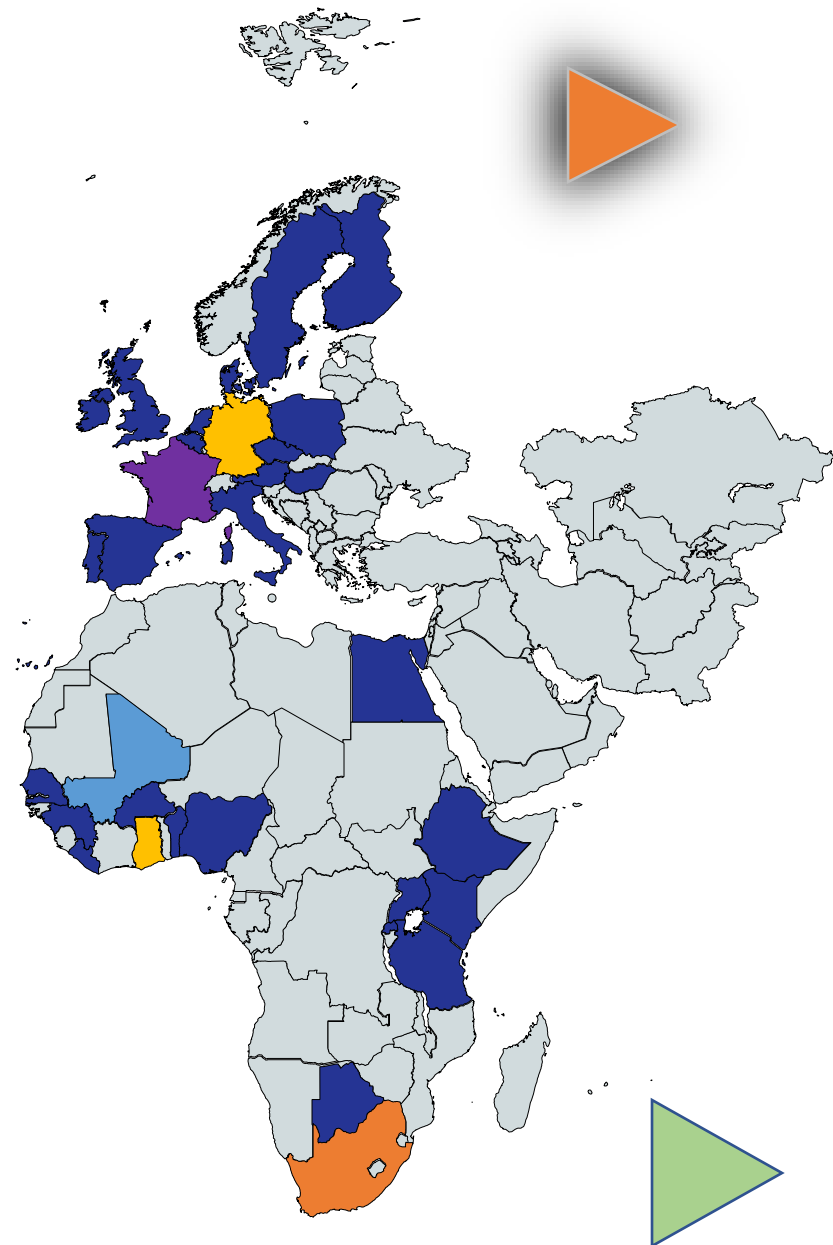
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Country: **Germany**

## 5 IRC Signatories



- Universitaet Hohenheim (UHOH)
- Go Africa
- DEUTSCHES ZENTRUM FUER LUFT - UND RAUMFAHRT EV (DLR)
- YPARD
- Justus Liebig University of Giessen



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- **AU-EU FNSSA IRC Rallying Call to action!**

- Role of Governments (MS) and development partners
- Role of research institutions and academia,
- Role of private sector involvement as key to advancing food security and sustainable agriculture







# Thank You !

- Visit the International Research Center (IRC) website: <https://irc-ceafirst.org/>
- Sign up for our newsletter: <https://forms.gle/KoVaTPhHVg7PuK2q6>
- Join IRC community and live discussions: <https://faraafrica.community/leap4fnssa/irc/cea-first/join>
- Find out how to become an IRC member : <https://irc-ceafirst.org/irc-membership/>
- Apply for the IRC membership: <https://irc-ceafirst.org/irc-fnssa-experts/>
- Follow us on Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/irc-ceafirst/>
- Watch our IRC explanatory video : <https://irc-ceafirst.org/>



Scan to apply for IRC Mem-  
bership



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