



## TAAT and AALI: A Strategic Framework to Catalyse African Agricultural Transformation



A report of the inaugural meeting between Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) and the African Agricultural Leadership Institute (AALI)

March 2023

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### Authors

**David Bugeme**

**Rachel Zozo**

**Atayi Opaluwah**

**Ernest Asiedu**

**Noel Mulinganya**

**Dolapo Ogunsola**

**Welissa Mulei**

**Blandine Sanginga**

**Solomon Gizaw**

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### Acronyms and Abbreviations

AALI: African Agricultural Leadership Institute

AATF: African Agricultural Technology Foundation

ABC: Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT

AfDB: African Development Bank

AfricaRice: Africa Rice Centre

BMGF : Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

CAPUIDC: Cellule d'Appui au Programme d'Urgence Intégré de Développement Communautaire

CERAGRU: Centre de Recherche en Agrumiculture

CH: Clearinghouse

COMESA: Common Markets for Eastern and Southern Africa

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

EAC: Eastern Africa Community

HIB: High Iron Beans

IITA: International Institute of Tropical Agriculture

INERA: Institut National pour l'Etude et la Recherche Agronomiques

MINAGRI: Ministry of Agriculture

PADCA-6P: Projet d'Appui au Développement des Chaînes de Valeurs Agricoles dans 6 Provinces

PROADER: Projet d'appui au Développement Intégré de L'Economie Rurale

PURPA: Projet d'Urgence de Production Alimentaire

RECs : Regional Economic Communities

SADC : Southern African Development Community

SAH: Semi-Autotrophic Hydroponics

SENASA: Service Nationale des Semences

SG: Secretary General

SNV: Service National de Vulgarisation

TAAT: Technologies for African Agriculture Transformation

## Overview of the TAAT-AALI Collaboration in DR Congo

In the period from March 27 to 31, 2023, a significant collaborative effort took place in the Democratic Republic of The Congo (DRC) between the Technologies for African Agriculture Transformation (TAAT) and the African Agricultural Leadership Institute (AALI). This mission marked the inaugural step in the partnership between AALI and TAAT through the funding window of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) to the Clearinghouse (CH), aimed at advancing and disseminating proven agricultural technologies to bolster production in Africa, with a special focus on the DRC.

The primary goal of this mission was to collaborate closely with AALI, gain a deeper understanding of the recently signed sub-agreement, and set the stage for supporting TAAT-CH's mission. This support involved engaging with high-ranking officials from the DRC government to incorporate TAAT technologies into projects and programs funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB). Notable among these initiatives were the «Projet d'Urgence de Production Alimentaire» (PURPA), the «Projet d'Appui au Développement des chaînes de Valeurs Agricoles dans 6 Provinces» (PADCA-6P), and the «Projet d'appui au Développement Intégré de L'Economie Rurale» (PROADER).

During the mission, the team also seized the opportunity to engage in technical discussions with public and private sector partners and the DRC AfDB office. The purpose of these engagements was

twofold: firstly, to raise awareness regarding TAAT's significant contributions to agricultural development across the continent, and secondly, to enhance the visibility of the TAAT brand within the DRC through technical discussions with public and private sector partners and the DRC AfDB office.

The mission was comprised of a diverse group of individuals, including the leadership and staff of the TAAT Clearinghouse, coordinators from various TAAT Compacts, including Cassava and Enable-TAAT managed by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the Maize Compact overseen by the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), and the Rice Compact led by AfricaRice. The representation of the IITA-Kinshasa Office, with participation from the Country Representative and Central Africa Hub Director, the Executive Assistant, the Site Manager at Mongata Agriculture Base, and the Administrative Assistant to ATA-RDC Value Addition Lead. AALI's representation included the Technical Director and the Administrative Assistant.

This collaborative mission served as a pivotal moment in the journey to enhance agricultural technology adoption and development in the DRC, showcasing the commitment and partnership between TAAT and AALI.



## Day 1: TAAT-CH Partnership with AALI

### 1.1. TAAT-CH and AALI Partnership Framework

The collaboration between TAAT-CH and AALI unfolds a strategic framework to catalyse agricultural transformation across the African continent:

- AALI's Pan-African Network Activation: AALI, leveraging its extensive network across Africa, will orchestrate pivotal engagements with high-level policymakers and political leaders. These discussions aim to facilitate the integration of TAAT-vetted technologies into national and regional agricultural investment programs, primarily funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB).
- High-Level Engagement Missions: AALI commits to accompanying four high-level engagement missions annually in selected countries. These missions will run in tandem with CH country engagement officers,

actively promoting TAAT-endorsed technologies within national and regional agricultural initiatives.

- Subregional Conferences: AALI will organize subregional conferences in years 1, 2, and 3 in partnership with the Sub-Regional Organizations (SROs) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs). These conferences will emphasize the significance of leveraging TAAT-vetted technologies and nurturing investments for national and regional agricultural programs.





## 1.2. AALI 2023 Work Plan

During the meeting, AALI's work plan for 2023 was presented, and collaborative inputs were provided to fine-tune and expedite its execution. A pivotal priority identified was the need to address the seed law, enabling the deployment of high-yield varieties of maize, rice, and other critical crops. Consequently, AALI was tasked with organizing a high-level dialogue involving government officials to support the regulation of seed policies in the country. This dialogue will be meticulously planned and executed in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MINGARI), specifically its specialized agencies SENSEM (Service Nationale des Semences) and SNV (Service National de Vulgarisation), and the Ministry of Scientific Research and Technology Innovation through INERA (Institut National pour l'Etude et la Recherche Agronomiques). Annexure 1 outlines the refined AALI work plan, delineating clear deliverables and timelines.



## Day 2: AfDB Funded Projects

The second day of the mission brought TAAT face-to-face with the AfDB-funded Project Coordinators, Mr. Christopher Mampuya (PADCA-6P and PURPA) and Mr. Omar Mangenda, the Value Chain Specialist of the Projects. The TAAT Compact Coordinators for Cassava, Maize, and Rice initiated presentations, laying the foundation for an in-depth discussion with the Project Coordinators to identify avenues for TAAT's technical assistance and areas of synergy and collaboration.

### 2.1. Highlights of the Discussion

- Sustainable Seed Systems: The discussion underscored the paramount importance of establishing a sustainable seed system within the country to enable seed production across various sub-sectors. Two approaches were identified: seed production in partnership with the private sector and sustainable seed production utilizing SAH technology, which already exists for the Cassava Compact.
- Knowledge Transfer: A critical aspect highlighted was knowledge transfer through capacity building of INERA technicians. This collaboration would facilitate the production of pre-basic seeds in partnership with IITA, AfricaRice, and AATF.
- Seed Certification and Dissemination: Collaborative efforts with SENSEM for seed certification and SNV for disseminating improved seed varieties to farmers in their respective communities were emphasized.
- Finalization of Draft Conventions: Urgent attention was drawn to the finalization of draft agreements between PADCA-6P and relevant organizations such as AfricaRice (Rice), AATF (Maize), and ABC (HIB).

### 2.2. Action Points

- Finalization of Draft Agreements: The TAAT Rice and Maize Compacts were tasked with engaging in discussions with their respective institutions to expedite the finalization of draft agreements, including obtaining pending signatures and nominating contact persons proficient in French.
- High-Level Dialogue on Seed Policy: Recognizing the urgency of addressing the seed policy, discussions on both national and regional levels were initiated. AALI, in conjunction with all MINAGRI specialized services, will lead the preparation of the high-level dialogue. The involvement of the TAAT Policy Enabler Compact in these conversations was deemed essential.
- Scheduling High-Level Dialogues: The high-level dialogue on seed regulation in DRC is tentatively scheduled to occur within a month. David Bugeme will spearhead discussions with national partners to prepare for the event and establish a committee to oversee its execution.
- Confirmation of TAAT Contribution: Further clarification regarding TAAT's contribution of USD1 million to the PADCA-6P project was discussed. Awaiting pertinent documentation, such as the aid memoire or PADCA-6P PAR, containing this information, was noted.

### 2.3. Meeting with SENASEM and SNV

During the meeting with SENASEM and SNV, several critical matters were discussed, and recommendations made to enhance agricultural development:

- **Leveraging Innovation Platforms:** It was proposed to capitalize on the creation of Innovation Platforms established by FARA. These platforms would be used to build the capacity of value chain actors and farmers. The goal is to ensure that seeds move efficiently from the breeding stage into the hands of end-users.
- **High-Level Dialogue in April:** It was recommended that the upcoming high-level dialogue, scheduled for April, should address issues related to seed regulation and the introduction of hybrid seeds for maize and rice. This strategic move aims to maximize farmers' returns on investment, guaranteeing uninterrupted seed supply across seasons. But also to ensure that the country benefits from the ongoing seed policy harmonisation and regulation efforts across different Regional Economic Communities (RECs) for which DRC is a member state, such as Common Markets for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Eastern Africa Community (EAC).
- **Technical Support by IITA:** IITA is committed to providing technical support to SENASEM and SNV. This support is geared towards creating a new generation of agrimultipliers within the seed system. The goal is to ensure the sustainability of seed production and dissemination in rural communities.



## Day 3: Field Visit to the Centre de Recherche en Agrumiculture (CERAGRU)

The purpose of the field visit to CERAGRU was to gain insights into the successful deployment of SAH (Semi-Autotrophic Hydroponics) technology by the Cassava Compact during TAAT 1. CERAGRU, in collaboration with IITA, has been instrumental in scaling up this technology through the Agriculture Transformation Agenda (ATA) project initiated by the President of the DRC. The first production cycle of cassava is situated at the Mongata field site, managed by IITA in partnership with the private sector (BAB) and AALI.



## Day 4: Meeting with AfDB Officials and the CAPUIDC Office

The objective of this meeting was to introduce the TAAT program to AfDB officials and officials from the «Cellule d'Appui au Programme d'Urgence Intégré de Développement Communautaire» (CAPUIDC). CAPUIDC is a specialised unit attached to the Office of the President responsible for agriculture.

- AfDB Meeting: Recommendations stemming from this meeting included the need for the TAAT team to analyse existing projects to identify intervention opportunities. Furthermore, it was suggested that TAAT continue to collaborate with the AfDB's DRC country office to formulate new country projects.
- CAPUIDC Meeting: The Deputy Coordinator of CAPUIDC recommended that TAAT shares technical notes related to the country's priority crops (cassava, maize, and rice), as well as insights

into youth engagement in agribusiness and capacity development. This sharing of information would precede a significant restructuring of agriculture donor-funded programs, involving bilateral and multilateral entities. Additionally, PROADER expressed interest in collaborating with TAAT Compacts to introduce small machinery to project communities and their farming beneficiaries.

## Day 5: TAAT-CH and General Secretary

The meeting at the Ministry of Agriculture, presided over by the Secretary General (SG), yielded fruitful outcomes. The SG encouraged TAAT and AALI to continue providing technical support and emphasized the importance of working closely with SENAEM and SNV in preparation for the high-level dialogue.

### Key recommendations from this meeting included:

- IITA's Training of Seed Inspectors: It was agreed that IITA would implement the training of seed inspectors, as previously discussed in Kalambo. SENAEM and SNV have already identified the seed inspectors to be trained.
- Enhanced Collaboration with SVN and SENAEM: The meeting emphasized the importance of continued collaboration with SVN and SENAEM to deploy high-yielding varieties of priority crops and introduce hybrid (maize and rice) and biofortified (cassava) varieties to enhance production and nutrition. Collaboration with the HIB Compact was also encouraged.
- Development of a Roadmap: TAAT was encouraged to work with SNV and SENAEM to develop a partnership roadmap to enhance institutional capacity and strengthen the seed system. The Ministry of Agriculture, particularly SNV, expressed interest in a partnership focused on agribusiness, offering training opportunities for SNV staff within the youth age bracket.

### General Recommendations

- The TAAT team should develop a concrete plan for implementing the mission's recommendations.
- The TAAT team should develop a case study on the successful deployment of SAH technology in DRC.
- The TAAT team should continue to engage with the DRC government and AfDB to identify new opportunities for collaboration.
- The TAAT team should develop a roadmap for strengthening its partnerships with SENAEM and SNV.







## Lessons Learned

- 1.** Increasing TAAT's visibility through the distribution of communication materials such as catalogues, pitches, technical notes on country priority crops (cassava, maize and rice), flyers, pamphlets, posters, etc., is vital.
- 2.** Enhancing the visibility of the TAAT brand through the availability of visibility materials such as caps, t-shirts, business cards, billboards, etc., is essential.
- 3.** Maintaining an intensive online presence through social media platforms, in collaboration with the Bank Communication Department and local journalists, can significantly enhance awareness of TAAT programs.
- 4.** Country engagement activities, like the one conducted in DRC, provide a great avenue for ensuring that institutions and government officials are aware of TAAT's contributions to the country. Regular country engagement visits and dialogues can be more cost-effective and impactful than large inauguration meetings or workshops.

## Conclusion

The collaborative mission between TAAT and AALI in the Democratic Republic of Congo represents a significant stride towards enhancing the country's agricultural technology adoption and development. This mission not only solidified the partnership between the two organisations but also set the stage for integrating TAAT technologies into crucial projects funded by the African Development Bank. The engagement with high-level officials, field visits, and technical discussions underscore the commitment to advancing agricultural transformation in the DRC. Key recommendations and lessons learned will guide future initiatives, ensuring sustainable progress in the agricultural sector. This mission serves as a beacon of collaboration and progress, heralding the promise of a brighter agricultural future in the DRC and across the African continent.



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For more information, please contact :  
 TAAT Programme Management Unit, IITA  
 HQ, Ibadan - Nigeria TAAT Clearinghouse,  
 IITA Benin, Cotonou - Benin

Dr Chrys Akem – TAAT Program Coordinator; +234 8169020531  
 Dr Solomon Gizaw – Head, TAAT Clearinghouse; +251900461992  
 Email: [taat-africa@cgiar.org](mailto:taat-africa@cgiar.org)

taat-africa.org

