

# Promoting Rice Self-Sufficiency & Economic Growth in West Africa through ERO & its National Chapters



Recognizing the need for greater coordination, stronger policy alignment and reduced reliance on imports, the ECOWAS Commission and its partners have launched the ECOWAS Rice Observatory (ERO) and a network of National Chapters.

This multi-stakeholder initiative is setting the stage for a more resilient and profitable rice sector in West Africa, one that prioritizes import substitution and long-term sustainability.

## Building the Foundation for Change

West Africa's rice sector holds the potential for self-sufficiency, yet challenges such as fragmented associations, inconsistent regulations and heavy import dependence have slowed progress. The ECOWAS Rice Offensive Strategy (2020–2025) calls for coordinated regional action, leading to the creation of the ERO in 2021 with support from a wide range of development partners.

The ERO serves as a bridge between member states and the ECOWAS Commission, ensuring alignment in implementing the regional strategy. At the national level, chapters are being established to bring together stakeholders across the rice value chain, foster innovation and strengthen advocacy and dialogue.

## MOVE's Role in Shaping the Platform

To ensure that each National Chapter reflects national realities while staying aligned with the regional framework, MOVE has supported stakeholder mapping, inclusive governance structures and transparent leadership elections.

Technical committees, modelled on those at the ERO level, provide focused expertise on sector challenges.



Figure 1 - Technical Committee

The process emphasizes diversity, balanced representation and collective ownership which are critical ingredients for long-term success.

Despite early challenges such as managing differing stakeholder interests, this inclusive approach is already fostering collaboration, trust and a shared vision. By placing all value chain actors at the table, the initiative is creating conditions for stronger policy implementation, improved market access and greater resilience to global shocks.

## Momentum Across the Region

Since 2022, five National Chapters have been formally established:

### Ghana

Competitive African Rice Platform (CARP Ghana)

### Nigeria

Competitive African Rice Forum for Sustainable Development (CARF-FSD)

### Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone Rice Observatory (SLeRO)

### Burkina Faso

Observatoire National du Riz Burkina Faso (ONARiz-BF)

### Côte d'Ivoire

Observatoire National du Riz Côte d'Ivoire (ONRiz-CI)

Several more countries, including Mali, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau, are in the process of developing theirs. As these structures take root, they are expected to become hubs for coordination, innovation and investment attraction.

## Looking Ahead

The ECOWAS Rice Observatory and its National Chapters are still in their early stages, but the groundwork is in place for transformative impact.

By strengthening coordination, promoting inclusive decision-making and aligning regional and national priorities, this initiative is well-positioned to accelerate progress toward rice self-sufficiency and economic growth across West Africa.

The future looks promising. As more chapters are established and begin implementing their agendas, the region is poised to reduce imports, boost local production and create lasting opportunities for farmers, processors and entrepreneurs alike.

