



## Situation Of The Regional Food Security Reserve

**A**FTER EIGHT YEARS OF IMPLEMENTATION, the Regional Food Security Reserve (RRSA) has a capital of 74,162 metric tons of cereals such as millet, sorghum, corn and rice. What is the situation in detail: level of stocks in storage facilities, quantities of current procurement, assessment of interventions in response to food crisis, status of replenishments, availability of storage facilities are among the points on which this note provides insights? It only addresses cereal stocks (it does not deal with RRSA interventions in response to nutritional and pastoral crises). The note also aims to present the current challenges of the RRSA.

### Regional context

In 2011, ECOWAS adopted a regional storage strategy based on the complementarity of three levels of storage commonly called «lines of defense»: (i) local stocks, generally held by producers' organizations; (ii) national security stocks managed by

the States, and (iii) the Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR) managed by ECOWAS and created by an Additional Act to the ECOWAS Treaty signed by the ECOWAS Heads of State in 2013.

The Regional Food Security Reserve (RFSR) was set up to provide ECOWAS member states, Chad and Mauritania with a sovereign instrument for managing food, nutrition and pastoral crises.

The Reserve is also a flagship instrument for supporting national capacity to prevent and manage food crises and reduce the vulnerability of rural and urban populations. It comprises a physical reserve and a Financial Reserve. The physical reserve, which according to the conceptual plan of ECOWAS should eventually represent 1/3 of the RFSR's total intervention capacity, has been operational since 2016. The Financial Reserve is housed in the Regional Agriculture and Food Fund (RAFF), which is managed by the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID). This Financial Reserve is currently being implemented, with the first operations scheduled for 2025.

The activities of the Regional Food Security Reserve were ef-

fectively launched in 2016 with the support of the West Africa Food Security Storage Support Project (ECOWAS Stock project) financed by the European Union for an amount of 56 million euros. This support has allowed ECOWAS to start implementing the Regional Food Security Storage Strategy and to make significant progress at all three storage levels. At the regional level, the Regional Reserve has set up transparent governance bodies and instruments and built up a physical capital of cereal of more than 36,000 metric tons.

When the ECOWAS Stock Project was completed in May 2021, the Regional Storage Strategy has continued to benefit from several forms of support to ensure that the gains made are consolidated and that the intervention capacities of the regional component are increased:

- ECOWAS has set up a special fund dedicated to reinforcing the intervention capacities of the Regional Food Security Reserve using its own funds, which has enabled the acquisition of 4,862 metric tons of cereals in 2022. In 2023, ECOWAS enabled the RFSR to purchase 5,590 metric tons of cereals and finally 5,423 metric tons in 2024;
- The interim phase of the Support Project for Food Security Storage in West Africa, worth a total of €18 million co-funded by ECOWAS and AFD, has enabled the purchase of more than 16,000 metric tons of cereals;
- WAEMU’s contribution to strengthening the intervention capacities of the Regional Food Security Reserve with the acquisition of more than 5,027 metric tons of cereals;
- The support of the World Bank through the West African Food System Resilience Program (PRSA/FSRP), which finances some of the RFSR’s activities, and also, through the GSFF (Global Shield Financing Facility) initiative, the implementation of a risk financing instrument which would serve as a backstop or safety net for the RFSR in the event of natural disaster induced food. The latter should increase the RFSR’s intervention capacity.

## RFSR state as of December 31, 2024

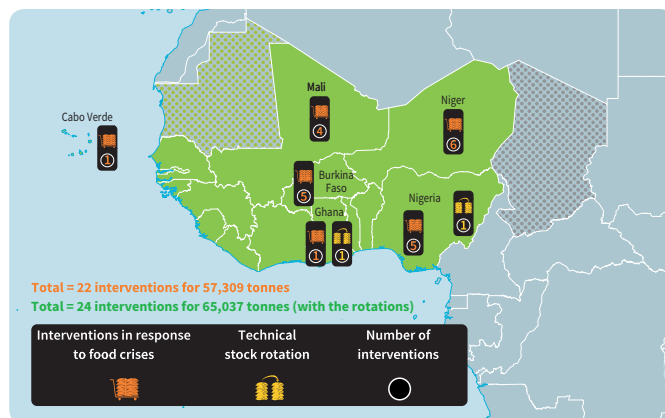
The purpose of this note is to provide an overview of the situation of the Regional Reserve as of December 31, 2024. It provides the various stakeholders with information on the current state of the storage facilities, the physical stock available in warehouses, the stocks in the procurement phase and the state of replenishments of stocks made available as part of the Regional Reserve’s operations. This document also aims to present the current challenges facing the RFSR.

### RFSR actions to date

Since inception, the RFSR has carried out 24 interventions, including two technical rotations for a total of approximately 65,036 metric tons of cereals. The two technical rotations were carried out for Ghana and Nigeria, for a total of 7,726.75 metric tons of cereals.

Three other interventions were also approved by the Executive Board of the RFSR Management Committee, including 8,313 metric tons for Ghana, 500 metric tons for Mali and 500 metric tons for Sierra Leone, for a total of 9,313 metric tons. These in-

### Regional Reserve operations since 2018



interventions are currently being implemented.  
The following table 1 gives details of the work carried out by the

RFSR as of December 31, 2024.

**Table 1: Operations carried out by the RFSR, by year and by country (metric tons)**

| Years                | Burkina Faso  | Cabo Verde   | Ghana        | Mali          | Niger         | Nigeria       | Total/year    |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 2017                 |               |              |              |               |               | 1,130         | 1,130         |
| 2018                 | 4,303         |              | 2,750        |               | 6,528         |               | 13,581        |
| 2019                 |               |              |              | 2,856         |               | 5 000         | 7,856         |
| 2020                 | 954           |              |              | 793           | 678           | 3,999         | 6,424         |
| 2021                 |               |              |              | 7,372         | 7,598         |               | 14,970        |
| 2022                 | 6,580         |              |              |               | 4,023         |               | 10,603        |
| 2023                 |               | 1126         |              |               |               |               | 1,126         |
| 2024                 | 870           |              | 500          |               | 1,000         | 6,977         | 9,347         |
| <b>Total/country</b> | <b>12,707</b> | <b>1,126</b> | <b>3,250</b> | <b>11,021</b> | <b>19,827</b> | <b>17,106</b> | <b>65,037</b> |

### *Stocks available in storage facilities*

As of December 31, 2024, the Regional Food Security Reserve had 12,602 metric tons of cereals stored in warehouses, divided between the various storage sub-spaces as shown in the table 2 below.

It should be noted that some of the stocks under procurement have been delivered by suppliers, but the formal acceptance process has not yet been completed. The quality control is yet to be completed.

### *Stocks in procurement, stocks under replenishment and available storage facilities*

The Regional Food Security Reserve has initiated various cereal procurement processes for a total of 28,482 metric tons of cereals, of which 18,033.83 metric tons are at an advanced stage

### **RFSR's physical capital as of December 31, 2024**

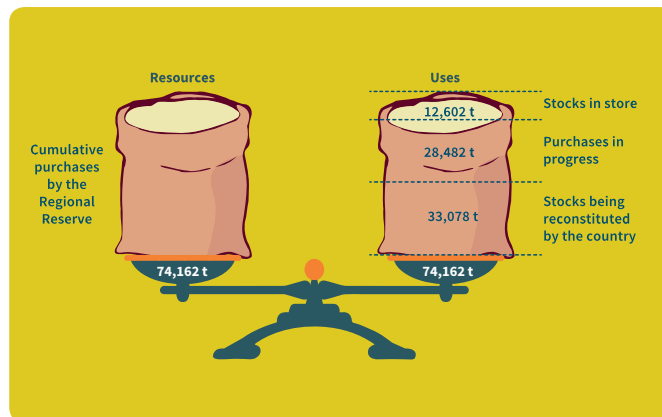


Table 2: Current stocks of the RFSR reserves by subspace and country

| Subspace      | Country of stockage        | Stocks available in storage facilities (metric tons) |
|---------------|----------------------------|--|
| East          | Niger                      | 987  |
|               | Nigeria                    | 1,980  |
|               | <i>Total East</i>          | 2,967  |
| Center        | Burkina Faso               | 8,313  |
|               | Ghana                      | 0  |
|               | Mali                       | 1,322  |
|               | <i>Total Center</i>        | 9,635  |
| West Atlantic | Senegal                    | 0  |
|               | <i>Total West Atlantic</i> | 0  |
| Atlantic Gulf | Sierra Leone               | 0  |
|               | <i>Total Atlantic Gulf</i> | 0  |
| <b>Total</b>  |                            | <b>12,602</b>  |

of the procurement process (contracts signed and deliveries underway) and 10,448.17 metric tons of cereals for which the procurement process has recently begun, and deliveries scheduled for 2025.

33,077 metric tons of cereals are awaiting replenishment following interventions in ECOWAS countries, with a commitment to reimburse “grain-for-grain” by countries or by third parties.

The following table 3 gives details of the various stocks held by the RFSR, as well as the storage facilities situation following replenishments and purchases in progress.

The reserve has a storage capacity of 58,550 metric tons contracted with the national storage companies, but its actual current requirement is 74,161 metric tons, equivalent to the total capital of the RFSR under current purchases and replenishments. The reserve has an additional need for 15,611 metric tons of storage facility divided between the various sub-spaces.

This situation is a major challenge that comes on top of the

### Breakdown of physical stocks in the Regional Food Security Reserve

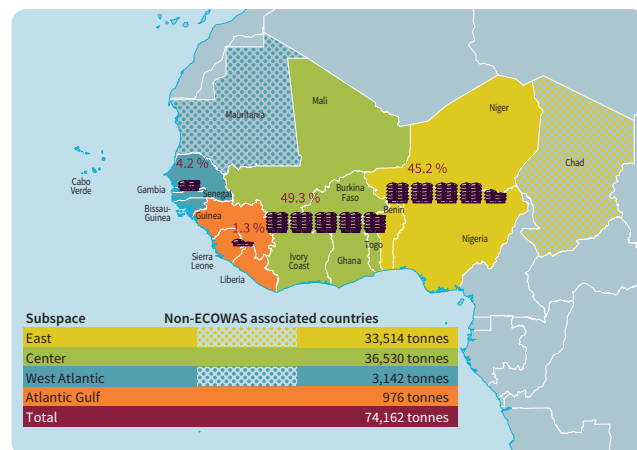


Table 3: RFSR's storage capacity under procurement and replenishments (metric tons)

| Storage subspaces | Country of storage         | Contracted storage facilities (a) | Stocks present/ available in warehouses (b) | Stocks being replenished by countries and paying agents (c) | Inventories in the course of purchase (d) | Storage facilities available (e = a - (b + c + d)) |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| East              | Niger                      | 18,500                            | 987   | 15,108  | 2,514                                     | -109   |
|                   | Nigeria                    | 10,000                            | 1,980                                       | 6,977   | 5,948                                     | -4,905   |
|                   | <i>Total East</i>          | <i>28,500</i>                     | <i>2,967</i>                                | <i>22,085</i>   | <i>8,462</i>                              | <i>-5,014</i>                                      |
| Center            | Burkina Faso               | 10,050                            | 8,313                                       | 1,048   | 7,440                                     | -6,751   |
|                   | Ghana                      | 4,000                             | 0   | 2,573   | 3,120                                     | -1,693   |
|                   | Mali                       | 11,000                            | 1,322                                       | 7,372   | 5,342                                     | -3,036   |
|                   | <i>Total Center</i>        | <i>25,050</i>                     | <i>9,635</i>                                | <i>10,993</i>   | <i>15,902</i>                             | <i>-11,480</i>                                     |
| West Atlantic     | Senegal                    | 4,000                             | 0   | 0   | 3,142                                     | 858  |
|                   | <i>Total West Atlantic</i> | <i>4,000</i>                      | <i>0</i>                                    | <i>0</i>  | <i>3,142</i>                              | <i>858</i>   |
| Atlantic Gulf     | Sierra Leone               | 1,000                             | 0   | 0   | 976                                       | 24   |
|                   | <i>Total Atlantic Gulf</i> | <i>1,000</i>                      | <i>0</i>                                    | <i>0</i>  | <i>976</i>                                | <i>24</i>  |
| Total             |                            | 58,550                            | 12,602                                      | 33,078  | 28,482                                    | -15,611  |

other challenges encountered in building up the RFSR's response capabilities.

## Five challenges

### Challenges ➔ Mitigation measures

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*The insufficiency of storage facilities* with currently more than 15,000 metric tons of space deficit distributed across storage countries. This situation is quite critical given the ambitions of the RFSR to increase its capacity, which aims to be a quick response instrument in the face of growing food insecurity in the sub-region.

- ➔ The Regional Reserve has carried out prospections for new storage facilities in some countries such as Benin, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Togo with the objective of increasing its storage capacity.
- ➔ A formal request has been sent to the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the provision of 10,000 metric tons of silo storage capacity.
- ➔ Consider building storage silos for the RRSA to increase the Reserve's storage capacity.

*The absence of significant, sustainable and predictable funding* with an Economic Community that despite its other challenges is striving to allocate funds for the rise of the RFSR. It should be noted that despite the efforts of donors such as the European Union, AFD, the World Bank, and WAEMU who have contributed to strengthening the Reserve, the uncertainty of fund inflows remains a major challenge.

- ➔ ECOWAS's commitment through the injecting of its own funds to the RFSR special fund and the annual subscription of the Regional Fund for Agriculture and Food, which includes the Financial Reserve, demonstrates the region's desire to promote the RFSR.
- ➔ ECOWAS maintains significant lobbying with donors to mobilize additional resources. A new funding of 20 million euros has been signed with the European Union, the implementation of which will begin in 2025.
- ➔ WAEMU's commitment to strengthening the intervention capacities of the RFSR marks an important step forward in the direction of the sustainability of the regional instrument for responding to food crises.
- ➔ Continue work on the risk transfer mechanism (feasibility, validation, implementation, implementation manual, sustainability, capacity building), This would give the RRSA rapid access to the appropriate financial resources when it needs them most to respond to the risks of identified shocks.

*Financing and setting up the Financial Reserve* also remain a significant challenge, not only from the financing standpoint, which, like the physical reserve, faces uncertainties, but also from its operationalization angle.

- ➔ Finalise the study and adopt the operating procedures for the Financial Reserve.
- ➔ It should be noted that there has been a significant progress in the process of setting up the Financial Reserve with the approval of the documents governing the RFAF (Regional Fund for Agriculture and Food which is managed by EBID and to which the Financial Reserve belongs) and the ongoing recruitment of the consultant for the procedures specific to this Financial Reserve. As a reminder, the Financial Reserve must ultimately account for 2/3 of the total capacity of the RFSR, of which the physical cereal reserve will account for the remaining 1/3.

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## Challenges ➔ Mitigation measures

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*The slow pace of replenishment of stocks* that have been made available to beneficiary countries under the “grain-for-grain” replenishment modality remains an obstacle to the stability and the sustainability of the RFSR.

➔ Countries are working to replenish stocks, but the growing food insecurity in recent years is hampering their commitments. ECOWAS is also monitoring and lobbying for the replenishment of stocks.

*The exit of three Sahelian countries from ECOWAS* creates uncertainties for the RFSR since most of the Reserve’s stocks are stored in these 3 countries (84%) but also these 3 countries are those that have benefited the most from RFSR interventions (67% of interventions). It should also be noted that these countries have ongoing replenishment commitments of around 23,528 metric tons (71% of the total expected replenishments).

➔ As part of the ongoing review of the ECOWAS Regional Food Security Storage Strategy, measures to adapt the RFSR’s operations will be proposed mainly for:

- Mobilization of storage capacity in countries not yet covered by RFSR;
- Strategic repositioning of RFSR stocks;
- Experimentation of the storage of new products (cassava by-products and cowpea, “ready to eat” products, etc.);
- Operationalization and increased use of the Financial Reserve;
- Etc.

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### Financial partners:



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