

The AGRODEP Quarterly Update is designed to regularly provide the Scientific Advisory Board, the Steering Committee, and the Network Advisory Committee with up-to-date information about the activities of the Modeling Consortium.

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### TRAINING PROGRAM FOR 2012

AGRODEP will offer eight training courses for its members in 2012. The [2012 training program](#) was designed based on AGRODEP members' preferences as determined from a survey conducted in September 2011. The courses include training on data (social accounting matrices data, household survey data), computable general equilibrium modeling, poverty measurement and analysis, impact evaluation, and panel data econometrics.

The first three-day training course on "[Building and Updating Social Accounting Matrices \(SAM\)](#)" was held on March 13-15, 2012 in Dakar, Senegal. The course was taught by Dr. Ismael Fofana, Post-Doctoral Fellow at IFPRI and Network Coordinator for AGRODEP. The twelve AGRODEP members who attended the training were selected based on their motivation as well as data access/availability for their specific country, as indicated in their course application.

The next training course will be on "[Poverty Measurement and Analysis](#)" and is scheduled for April 24-27, 2012 in Dakar, Senegal. The course will be conducted by Philippe Van Kerm and Anne-Claire Thomas from the Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium. The application period has ended and the selection of course participants based on their motivation and background is on-going.

### MEMBERSHIP EXTENSION

In February 2012, AGRODEP launched its third round for membership applications with the aim of extending the number of [AGRODEP members](#) in 2012. The call for membership applications, which was sent to a large number of universities and research institutions in Africa, drew a total of 245 applications.

The selection of 30 new members was just completed using the same selection criteria that were used in previous membership rounds. First, applicants must: i) be based in Africa and ii) have obtained a Ph.D. within the last 15 years, or currently pursuing a Ph.D. degree, or have a Master's degree combined with technical skills and experience. The second set of criteria relates to research experience as evidenced from publications and any further training and workshops attended. Finally, as needed, regional, gender, and scientific diversity is ensured in the composition of members.

### AGRODEP BULLETIN

In March 2012, AGRODEP released the first issue of the [AGRODEP Bulletin](#), a publication that provides insights into major economic development issues in Africa and announcements about AGRODEP's activities. The Bulletin is expected to help increase the visibility of AGRODEP's research and capacity building activities among a larger international audience. The first issue featured an article by Devesh Roy on the relationship of trade protection and tariff evasion in Kenya, Mauritius and Nigeria. It was disseminated via email to the members of the AGRODEP community and to more than 1000 individual researchers and research centers/universities in Africa, as well as to several agencies and institutions such as AERC, AfDB, ASARECA, CAADP focal points, CEPII, CORAF/WECARD, FANRPAN, FARA, GTAP, RESAKSS, and the World Bank.

### COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The co-chairs of the [AGRODEP Steering Committee](#) (SC), Dr. Ousmane Badiane of IFPRI and Dr. Lindiwe Sibanda of FANRPAN, proposed a virtual meeting of the twenty-member group on February 27, 2012. The Steering Committee provides advice to the AGRODEP Management team on the general operations and strategic directions of the Consortium and reviews and approves key program documents drafted by AGRODEP Management. The purpose of the proposed meeting was to review AGRODEP's activities in 2011 and to discuss and approve the draft workplan for 2012. Unfortunately, the meeting had to be cancelled since only about 50 percent of the [SC members](#) indicated that they can participate. While awaiting the scheduling of the next meeting, the AGRODEP management team proposes to make all meeting materials, including video presentations, available in a designated webpage so that the SC can conduct discussions via email about AGRODEP's 2011 activities and the 2012 workplan in April, 2012.

Similarly, the virtual meeting of the [Network Advisory Committee](#) (NAC) on March 20, 2012 did not go through because of connection problems with the GoToMeeting technology. An alternative procedure and date for the virtual meeting are being explored by the Network Component Coordinator, Ismael Fofana, and the NAC co-chairs, Dr. Mbène Dièye Faye of CORAF/WECARD and Dr. Michael Waithaka of ASARECA. The agenda of the meeting, the first to bring together all [thirteen members of the NAC](#), will be to review the activities of the Network Component and discuss and approve the terms of reference of the NAC.

### COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH PLAN

AGRODEP developed a Communications and Outreach Plan which focuses on identifying cost-effective activities that will link the AGRODEP research network to the policy decision-making processes in Africa. The following are the plan's objectives: 1) Raise awareness about the AGRODEP Modeling Consortium, 2) Increase the visibility of AGRODEP members both within and outside Africa, 3) Promote/communicate research conducted by AGRODEP members, and 4) Strengthen partnerships with existing networks in Africa. The plan defines several outreach tools implemented by AGRODEP, its partners, and members.

### AGRODEP IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Since its launch in October 2011, AGRODEP's web portal ([www.agrodep.org](http://www.agrodep.org)) has been continually populated with new resources, news, and information for AGRODEP members and stakeholders. In the last two months, the portal has drawn an increasing number of visitors as a result of the launch of new activities such as trainings, the new membership round, and the AGRODEP Bulletin, among others. AGRODEP's presence in social media attracts an increasing number of followers who are interested in learning more about AGRODEP and keeping up-to-date with its activities. AGRODEP is now available in popular social media such as [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#). AGRODEP presentations and videos are shared in the AGRODEP [Slideshare](#) and on the AGRODEP [YouTube](#) channel.