

# UK invests in West Africa's agriculture sector

In Ghana, COVID-19 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have exacerbated the challenges of climate change, including energy, financial, and food security. The UK, Ghana, ECOWAS, and many other partners are working together to ensure that Ghana is playing its role in the West Africa region to produce more rice, facilitate trade, and reduce costs to the consumer.

Through the Africa Food Trade and Resilience programme, the UK government alongside strategic partners is investing £450,000 to establish the ECOWAS Rice Observatory and its national chapter, known as the 'Ghana Competitive Africa Rice Platform'. This new public-private sector platform will identify and spur reforms to increase investment into the ECOWAS rice value chain.

This support for Ghana and other ECOWAS countries will:

- reduce the £2.6 billion annual cost of importing rice to West Africa
- potentially create more than 385,000 new jobs in the rice value chain across West Africa

British High Commissioner to Ghana, Harriet Thompson said:

The numbers speak for themselves: there is so much potential for growing the rice sector here in Ghana and across West Africa. The ECOWAS Rice Observatory will support the growth of the rice industry and increase trade and investment opportunities in the market.

At a time when many countries around the world are facing food insecurity as a result of Russia's illegal war in Ukraine, I am confident this project will strengthen the food system here in Ghana and across the region, now and in the future.

The CARP launched in Accra (1st November 2022), at a ceremony led by its new Chairperson, Mr Yaw Poku, alongside the Chief Director of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Patrick Robert Ankobiah, and the British High Commissioner, as well as representatives of ECOWAS, the German development agency, GIZ, and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa.

The ERO provides a platform for rice stakeholders to understand patterns of demand and production, seize trade, investment, and reform opportunities, understand the impacts of climate change, and work towards resilient food security in the future.

As well as supporting the ERO, the UK is working with international partners to secure finance to respond to the global food crisis driven by climate change, and COVID-19. Now, Russia's unlawful invasion of Ukraine is

exacerbating existing economic fragility and food insecurity.

In October, British High Commissioner Harriet Thompson visited AgDevCo's Babator Irrigated Farming Hub in Ghana's Savannah Region. Engaging 764,000 small-scale farmers and creating or sustaining 15,600 jobs across the continent, AgDevCo is a key investor in African agriculture, backed by UK Government investment. Earlier this year, AgDevCo sold Ghana's biggest active irrigated farmland to regional multi-national company Oba Pack, having spent many years developing the site.