



SIBWA

Seeing Is Believing Very High Resolution for Smallholders



WYSIWYB : what you see is what you believe Bamako – June 5, 2009

Imagine you are a West African smallholder farmer. You're no newcomer to agriculture. In fact you inherited unique environmental variability – and a solid risk management expertise to go with it. Immemorial cycles of natural and farmer selection have consolidated your vast expanses of patchy farmland into a world center of agro-biodiversity. Colonization and contemporary history could not disrupt strong social networks, trusted safety nets, and cultural allegiances. As a result, **your collective legacy is more than cultural. It is AGRI-CULTURAL. And you trust it.**

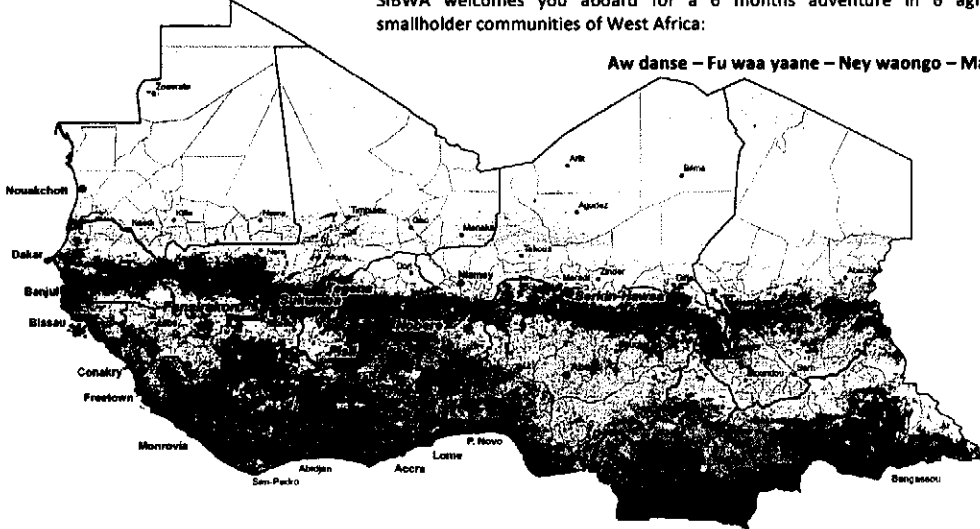
Every once in a while, land dries up for extended periods of time. You remember your parents' recollection of the 70/80s great droughts, and they told you about yet older memories of the great famine during the First World War. Over time you witnessed increased interest from non-farmers in your livelihoods, in your vulnerability to climate, and welcomed their suggestions. Some came with new things: drought-resistant varieties, which you tried, or rain gauges, which you kept. Some even asked if you'd like to know when rains start!! You also heard that some now build tractors, and some even send planes to bring rain – but to be honest, **you doubt that those things will work out for you.**

More importantly you've noticed some changes lately. Like, there is not much good land left to clear anymore. In some places there is not even any land available at all! That field over there, which used to yield bountiful harvests, now has patches of stress. More of your friends have gone to the city in search of seasonal jobs – or have permanently relocated. It's as if land had shrunk and aged. Sometimes, fights erupt with migrant pastoralists. Then of course, most extension agents from the parastatal are gone – well, not much to gain from cotton anyway. The whole cotton thing is just screwed up. You think you'd better reinvest in cereal cropping, at least that works, and that feeds. But for how long? The number of bags per field is not really increasing!! Maybe you need to talk to your peers and request group meetings with the elders, the mayor, the farmers' representative... You'll need some kind of change to feed more mouths yet! **Some kind of community-level change?**

Because change is happening!! There are new opportunities – like Jatropha, a real pain to harvest, but visibly good on degraded areas. And yes, there's also this contour ridging thing that people talk about – infiltrating more rainwater and not that expensive to set up after all. Maybe you need to team up with your neighbor farmers, have a village assembly and call that NGO – as they will not come for only a handful of customers. Maybe you need to call upon the village chief to devise some equitable plan for all... **maybe you need some kind of tool that shows where to do things differently**, yes, maybe like that guy on the other side of the valley with his new motorbike, solar panel and B&W TV: what is his secret? What's hidden on his farm that would explain those harvests? His compost pits? The way he spreads compost? Or the way he adapted fertilizer applications against the cotton company's recommendations? By the way, you need to prepare seeds for that new field of yours, the remote one on the highlands. Would be good to know the acreage. Maybe you'd need a paper that shows it's yours so you can invest in it more. Or maybe not. Like, you could keep that paper safe with your birth certificate, just like people keep land titles in the big city. Just in case. **MAYBE YOU NEED A MAP** – like the big one those guys showed one time, with your compound and trees and all your stuff. Even your donkey cart was there !!

SIBWA welcomes you aboard for a 6 months adventure in 6 agricultural smallholder communities of West Africa:

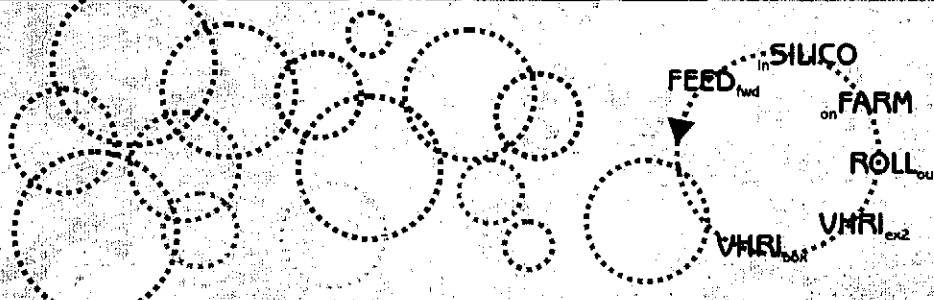
Aw danse – Fu waa yaane – Ney waongo – Mara'ba !!



The SIBWA Team (more joining soon!!)



Aicha Amadou Baina Bougouna Fatuma Gilbert Haby Jesse Jules Kalifa Lydie Madina Ouley Seydou Sibiry Solo



Seeing is Believing West Africa Very High Resolution for Smallholders

VHMRI: build site-specific VHR information containers and proto-maps. **VHMRI**: build a human interface for VHR information extraction and exchange. **ROLL**: roll out VHMRI to farmer fields. **FARM**: populate VHMRI through in-situ interactions (incubate on-farm). **SILICO**: explore VHMRI support functions (incubate in-silico). **FEED**: Collate information from incubators, forward updated maps to sites and collect feedback



AGCommons was launched by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as part of their Geospatial Technology Program. It is led by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) in partnership with Spatial Development International for high-win initiatives.

AGCommons currently are in short supply locally. AGCommons promotes the use of geospatial information technologies for agricultural development, and identifies and seeks funding to the agriculture development sector. AGCommons is establishing working relationships with existing service providers and work within the community to build capacities that possible good for the largest number of people and include data, development and acquisition, visualization and cartography, and sophisticated spatial modeling. AGCommons (Agricultural Geospatial Commons) is an Africa-based service bureau that provides geospatial information technology services to extend the reach and impact of existing agricultural initiatives, and improve the productivity and incomes of smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa. AGCommons extends geospatial information to these smallholders, and helps them communicate their rich knowledge on various aspects of farming, along with location specific data, back to the groups and organizations working on their behalf.

The services are provided through a 'commons' approach, to create the greatest possible good for the largest number of people and include data, development and acquisition, visualization and cartography, and sophisticated spatial modeling. AGCommons is establishing working relationships with existing service providers and work within the community to build capacities that possible good for the largest number of people and include data, development and acquisition, visualization and cartography, and sophisticated spatial modeling. AGCommons (Agricultural Geospatial Commons) is an Africa-based service bureau that provides geospatial information technology services to extend the reach and impact of existing agricultural initiatives, and improve the productivity and incomes of smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa. AGCommons extends geospatial information to these smallholders, and helps them communicate their rich knowledge on various aspects of farming, along with location specific data, back to the groups and organizations working on their behalf.

Mission: Improve the incomes and lives of small farmers in sub-Saharan Africa through location-specific information.

AGCommons

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Sotubagis

A geospatial joint-venture initiated by ICRISAT and ICR Sotubagis is based in Bamako, the fastest growing metro area of Africa. Hosted by national partner ICR on the campus of the Sotuba Regional Agronomic Research Center, it flips upside down traditional partnerships to incubate collaborative modes of tomorrow: multi-stakeholder, decentralized, grass-root, trans-disciplinary and focused on regional integration.

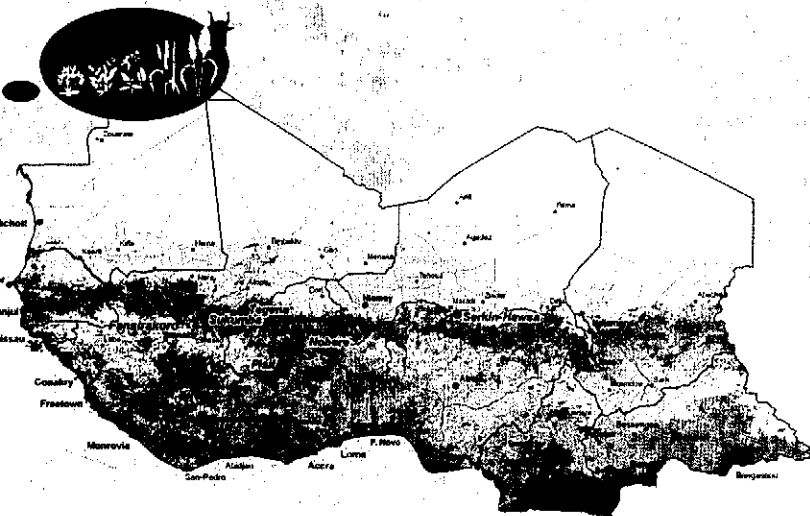
The International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) is a non-profit, non-political organization that does innovative agricultural research and capacity building for sustainable development with a wide array of partners across the globe. ICRISAT's mission is to help empower 644 million poor people to overcome hunger, poverty and a degraded environment in the dry tropics through better agriculture. ICRISAT belongs to the Alliance of Centers of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

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ICRISAT
Science with a human face
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