

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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AU-SAFGRAD Training on Climate-Smart Irrigation & Greenhouse Design for Agrifood Systems Transformation



The African Union's Semi-Arid Food Grains Research and Development (AU-SAFGRAD), one of the specialized technical Offices (STOs) in the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE), organized a training on Design, Operations and Maintenance (DOM) of Climate smart agricultural technologies for agrifood systems transformation in

Africa.

The 10-day intensive training from 31st March- 9th April 2026, was organized in collaboration with the League of Arab States' Arab Fund for Technical Assistance to African countries (AFTAAC) and *l'Agence Tunisienne de Coopération Technique* (ATCT). The Training course adopted a mixed mode of seminar lectures, practical training, and field visits delivered and facilitated by technical and field experts from agricultural research institutes and commercial farms.

The focus of the training was to bridge the capacity gap in AU member States and build the capacity of public agricultural support staff in the design, operation, and maintenance of modern irrigation and greenhouses as climate-smart agricultural (CSA) technologies to mitigate declining agricultural productivity due to climate variability. The training targets young and early-career agriculture engineers and experts from public MDAs. Participants from eleven (11) francophone AU Member States (Algeria, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Mauritania, Morocco, Senegal, Togo, and Tunisia) were the direct beneficiaries of the training. The annual training, which serves as training for trainers (TfT) to build systemic capacities of AU Member States. Beneficiaries are charged and encouraged to organize step-down training sessions in their countries in the DOM of CSA technologies to build a national pool of experts that can support agrifood systems transformation.

The 2026 training exposed participants to the DOM of greenhouses, hydroponics (aeroponics, aquaponics, deep water culture, and nutrient film techniques), micro-irrigation, rainwater harvesting and use, fertigation, water quality and soil salinity management, conservation agriculture, and precision farming. The training also covered topics in conflict management in shared natural resource (water) use, water laws, as well as policy and institutional support that encourage scaling of CSA technologies. The Institute for Research in Arid Regions (IRA) of Tunisia served as the host institution for the 10-day training.

The closing and certification ceremony took place on Thursday, 9th April 2026, at the IRA Auditorium. The ceremony was graced with the presence of high-level delegations from the training collaborating organizations. These include the Director General of the IRA, the Director General of ATCT, the Director of Operations of AFTAAC, the Governor of Medenine, Tunisia, and the Coordinator of AU-SAFGRAD, Dr Ahmed Elmekass.

The Governor of Medenine Governorate, Mr. Walid Tabboub, on behalf of the government of Tunisia, thanked AUC through AU- SAFGRAD for its role in building the technical capacity of young experts in climate-smart agricultural technologies use as adaptation to achieve resilient livelihoods across Africa.

In his closing remarks, Dr Elmekass stressed the need to build the capacity of support staff in public agencies through strengthening strategic partnerships, promoting South-South cooperation, and focusing attention on climate-smart agricultural technologies so as to achieve the CAADP objectives and the goals of the AU's Agenda 2063.

For further information, please contact:

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