

## **Upscaling performed cashew plant material production in Ghana**

One of the main objectives of the African Cashew initiative is to increase cashew production and increase the income of producers. However, it is well known that cashew farmers lack access to high yielding planting materials in the production zones. To accelerate the propagation and dissemination of grafted seedlings using scions from elite mother trees (high yielding, better quality e.g. nut size, disease resistant, etc), ACi, in collaboration with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in Ghana (MOFA) and the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) has embarked on a grafting program. This operation seeks to upscale the model nursery through the training of grafters in 17 cashew districts in the country.

In 2011, the proposed plant material production program is expected to yield 100,000 good quality grafted seedlings by the 23 ACi – assisted nurseries in the 17 project districts. The seedlings will be planted to establish 150 hectares farmer-based clonal gardens to be used later mainly for rehabilitation and upgrading of the low producing cashew farms. Farmers will also have the opportunity of buying grafted seedlings from these nurseries to plant 700ha of cashew plantation.

The trainee grafters were drawn from Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) in the 17 districts with each FBO providing 10 grafters. Three trainees from each nursery are undertaking further training in nursery management to enable them manage the nurseries. The trained grafters will further benefit from future ACi training programs such as top-working (grafting on unproductive trees), thinning, pruning, and pest and disease control. This will enable them carry out work on farmers' field for a fee as service providers.

Out of a total of 215 grafters trained this year, 60 are women, which represent 28% of grafters trained.

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