

## UniBRAIN: The first ever full-fledged agribusiness incubator officially launched in Mali

The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) teamed up with its UniBRAIN partners to establish the West African Agri-Business Resource Incubator (WAARI).

WAARI was officially inaugurated on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2014 in Selingue province of Mali by Prof Moustapha Dicko, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Government of Mali, in the presence of Dr William Dar, ICRISAT director-general.



Cutting of the ribbon by Prof Moustapha Dicko, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research during the launching ceremony

WAARI is one of the six agribusiness incubators being established under the Universities, Business and Research in Agricultural Innovation ([UniBRAIN](#)) project of FARA, with the Agri-Business Incubation (ABI) program of ICRISAT's Agribusiness and Innovation Platform (AIP) as the handholding and mentoring partner. The Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) is financially supporting this initiative in Africa.

FARA –UniBRAIN is supporting other incubators in Africa. Some of the incubators are located in the following countries: **Ghana**, on *Creating Competitive Livestock Entrepreneurs in Agribusiness Consortium (CCLEAR)*; **Kenya**, on *Sorghum Value-Chain Development Consortium (SVCD)*; in **Uganda**, on *Afri Banana Product (ABP) Limited* and on *Consortium for Enhancing University Responsiveness to Agribusiness*

*CDevelopment (CURAD)*; and in **Zambia**, on *Agribusiness Incubation Trust (AgBIT)*

FARA's partners in UniBRAIN are the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics ([ICRISAT](#)) based in India, the Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa ([CCARDESA](#)), in Botswana, the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development ([CORAF/WECARD](#)), in Senegal, the Association for strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa ([ASARECA](#)), the African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education ([ANAFE](#)), in Kenya, and the Pan African Agribusiness and Agro Industry Consortium ([PanAAC](#)), in Kenya,

UniBRAIN pioneers a new approach to promoting agricultural innovation and improving tertiary agribusiness education in Africa.

The UniBRAIN initiative promotes innovation by improving the flow of technology and knowledge by removing barriers between actors in the value chains. It is the synergy and linkage between the diverse actors that catalyzes and drives innovations. UniBRAIN links university education, research and business in sustainable agriculture, with the following objectives:

1. To develop and implement collaborative programmes fostering innovation among universities, research institutions and the private sector.
2. To strengthen African agricultural innovation systems, which are expected to deliver the new and improved technologies that are required to improve agricultural



Location of the incubators established under UniBRAIN.

productivity

3. To develop and implement improved and better contextualized undergraduate and postgraduate agribusiness teaching and learning.
4. To facilitate exchange of experiences and sharing of resources and knowledge.

The UniBRAIN Agribusiness Innovation Incubators function as training, research and advisory centres for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), start-ups and enterprises undertaking change and innovation. They are also businesses in their own right providing problem solving, testing and validation, and business development services to innovators and agribusinesses. UniBRAIN promotes a value chain approach so that the incubators will be able to support innovations to address constraints and opportunities at any point in the value chain. As such, the term private enterprise encompasses entrepreneurs and innovators across the board, including but not limited to farmers and producers associations, input suppliers and produce buyers, processors and marketers.

One of the key results of UniBRAIN model is the establishment of African Agribusiness Incubator Network(AAIN).The African Agribusiness Incubator network (AAIN) is recognized to establish knowledge systems for validation or affirmation that inform advocacy, sharing of experiences and networking in order to contribute to the development of Agribusiness incubation in Africa.

AAIN aims to work together as an African family of Agribusiness incubators bringing together incubator leaders, managers, and partnership with both state and non-state actors at continental level, to have the potential of providing Africa a strong policy platform that can engage globally with other incubators and organizations for mutual benefit.

More about [UniBRAIN](#)

