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## Overview of WACOMP

The West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) was adopted under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) of the Regional Indicative Programme for a total €116m. WACOMP aims to support a number of selected value chains at both national and regional level, to promote structural transformation and better access to regional and international markets.

The major objective of WACOMP is to strengthen trade competitiveness of West African countries and enhance their integration into the regional and international trading system. To reach this overarching goal, the programme will work to:

- improve the performance, growth and contribution to industry, regional trade and exports of selected value chains, and
- improve the business climate at national and regional levels.

The programme, which is aligned to support the implementation of the West African regional policies and programmes, including the West Africa Common Industrial Policy (WACIP), West Africa Quality System Programme (WAQSP) and ECOWAS Private Sector Development Strategy, will be instrumental in creating the foundations and promoting access of West African countries to the EU External Investment Plan (EIP).

## West Africa Connect 2022: a unique opportunity for mango, cassava and ICT companies to find business partners



In November 2021, the first edition of 'West Africa Connect' brought together nearly 300 West African professionals from the textile and clothing, information and communication technology (ICT) sectors, as well as some 70 regional and international buyers. Building on this success, the WACOMP programme plans to organise a second regional business-to-business event on 20 and 21 September, with the technical support of the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). The event is set to take place in the coming weeks.

West Africa Connect 2022 will target the mango and cassava value chains as well as ICT as a cross-cutting value chain supporting sustainable agribusiness development in the region. Selected SMEs in the region will receive technical and financial support to participate in the event. This includes a training programme on trade fair preparation, export promotion, business plan development and other relevant topics. Selected regional and international buyers of mango and cassava will have their sourcing needs carefully assessed with a view to providing tailored guidance to local suppliers.

The B2B matchmaking activities will be coupled with webinar sessions on the latest market trends and developments, led by experts. Participants will exchange with seasoned experts on agribusiness trends, including aspects related to sourcing, production, competitiveness, markets, products, and other innovative solutions.

The West Africa Connect 2022 will seek to facilitate linkages between actors in the mango, cassava and ICT value chains, establish new and sustainable business partnerships, increase trade transactions and ensure the sustainability of regional value chains.

For more information, please visit [www.westafricaconnect.com](http://www.westafricaconnect.com)

## Francophone Africa Investors Summit 2022 brought start-ups and investors together



14 start-ups from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Senegal and Cameroon attended the Francophone Africa Investors Summit (FAIS) held in Dakar on 3 to 4 March 2022. With 20 investors participating in the event, entrepreneurs had the opportunity to learn, network, pitch as well as seek potential collaboration and investment opportunities.

First, the event allowed entrepreneurs to engage with companies from Francophone Africa, including Partech Ventures, Haské Ventures and the Delegation for Youth and Women's Rapid Entrepreneurship. Afterwards, participants took part in a series of panels covering topics such as fundraising in the post COVID-19 period, the participation of women in tech entrepreneurship and the importance of inclusion.

The event concluded with a networking session facilitated by WACOMP Senegal where start-ups and investors continued to seek out opportunities to engage.

## Accreditation progresses in the region: the NiNAS and SOAC experience



Launched in 2015 as a component of the National Quality Infrastructure Project (NQIP) for Nigeria, the Nigeria National Accreditation System (NiNAS) has the mission of providing cost-effective and accessible accreditation services by organisations operating both in Nigeria and the rest of West Africa. This has been a complex task, not least because of a lack of public knowledge on the subject. In the early stages of the NQIP project, a series of ISO/IEC 17025 conformity assessment bodies were sponsored for accreditation, which provided considerable support to the project and created an opportunity for direct and indirect awareness through the implementation of accreditation in laboratories in Nigeria (Lagos, Kaduna, Ogun, Port Harcourt, etc.)

By 2019, NiNAS had been able to accredit over 26 testing and calibration laboratories, including one in Niger. However, the need to reach out to more laboratories and expand its scope was quickly felt to fulfil its mandate.

To date, NiNAS has extended its scope beyond ISO/IEC 17025:2017 - which covers the general requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories - to eight other conformity assessment programmes. In addition, it has conducted more than 100 training courses, 90 assessments and reassessments, and has successfully accredited 38 conformity assessment bodies for various standards and scopes.

NiNAS believes that more needs to be done to build national and international confidence in the laboratory results, inspection reports, certifications and other conformity assessment services provided by the conformity assessment bodies (CABs) it has accredited.

In the UEMOA region, the West African Accreditation System (SOAC) has already accredited 34 conformity assessment bodies, including 9 medical laboratories, notably the Centre for diagnosis and research on AIDS and other infectious diseases (CEDRES). This public laboratory of the university hospital center (CHU) of Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) received its accreditation during a ceremony organised on 31 March 2022, under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene. It should be noted that this accreditation also concerns the COVID 19 screening test.

'CEDRES is a public sector laboratory that has the particularity of doing research. In this context, we have established several external partnerships with countries such as France and the United States, to name but a few. In this context, it became increasingly urgent to obtain accreditation to benefit from the recognition of our partners and to allow us to work with serenity and confidence' said Professor Hervé Menan, Director of CEDRES. He added that this accreditation, although recent, will allow them to carry out a range of medical biology tests at reduced costs, which is a great advantage for the Ivorian population, while specifying that the Centre has a management system with a results server, accessible remotely for clients.

This follows the headquarters agreement granted by Côte d'Ivoire to the SOAC, whose Director General, Mr Marcel Gbaguidi, has become its Resident Representative. With this agreement, Côte d'Ivoire wants to prove that the presence of such an organisation in the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) constitutes an added value for the quality of products.



## PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

Ensuring a smooth implementation of the  
West Africa Competitiveness Programme



During the first quarter of the year, WACOMP implementing partners met regularly to ensure the smooth coordination of the programme regional component activities. Focus has especially been set on the organisation of the 2022 West Africa Connect event and the operationalisation of the ECOWAS Trade Promotion Organisation (TPO) Network.

With regard to the organisation of the 2022 edition of West Africa Connect, a special steering committee - composed of the ECOWAS and UEMOA commissions, the European Union and regional implementing partners - has been set up. Consultations led to the election of the Ghanaian capital, Accra, as the host city for the event and to the definition of its holding on 20 and 21 September 2022. The committee also defined a series of actions to be carried out to ensure the sustainability of the event and the implementation of a communication plan for its promotion.

Regarding the operationalisation of the ECOWAS TPO network, the Commission organised an internal consultation to present it to its various technical departments and discuss the support that the Commission could provide.

In addition, the Commission participated in the network's working sessions on financial affairs and resource mobilisation, trade policy and strategy, trade promotion events and communication and marketing.

During these sessions, it was decided to hold a regional meeting (28-31 March 2022) in order to finalise the main documents to be considered by the Annual General Meeting of the TPO network.

## The ECOWAS Trade Promotion Organisations (TPO) Network holds its 2nd Annual General Assembly



The ECOWAS Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Network held its 4th consultative meeting at the Azalaï Hotel in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 29-30 March 2022. The aim was to consider the network's 2022-2023 workplan and trade-related technical assistance (TRTA) programme document. The event was organised in collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission and the International Trade Centre (ITC).

In his opening remarks, Dr. Ezra Yakuzak, CEO of the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) and President of the ECOWAS TPO Network, expressed his satisfaction with the level of implementation of activities since the last annual general meeting (AGM) in July 2021 and called on all members to ensure their effective engagement in its activities.

Speaking on behalf of ECOWAS Commissioner for Trade, Customs and Free Movement, Mr. Kolawole SOFOLA, Acting Director of Trade, recalled the importance of trade as an instrument for deepening regional integration, and creating employment. The ECOWAS Commission has a number of flagship programmes which could be enhanced with the work of the network.

On behalf of Ms. Pamela COKE-HAMILTON, ITC Executive Director, Ms. Miyoba Lubemba, Senior Programme Officer, thanked the European Union and the ECOWAS Commission for the trust placed in ITC to support the establishment and operationalisation of the network. ITC has over 50 years of experience in building TPO capabilities to deliver tangible results in export development and promotion.

The consultative meeting considered key documents including the activity report undertaken since the first AGM; proposed activities for the four (4) ECOWAS TPO Network technical committees in charge of (i) trade policies and strategies, (ii) financial affairs and resource mobilisation, (iii) trade promotion events, (iv) communication & marketing; and the proposed ECOWAS TPO network programme document.

Key recommendations from the meeting included the need to: (i) ensure the alignment of the ECOWAS TPO network workplan with the ECOWAS Vision 2050; (ii) support regional trade promotion initiatives driven by the ECOWAS Commission; (iii) undertake capacity building activities for members of the Network as well as key stakeholders; (iv) finalise the resource mobilisation strategy and (v) ensure the participation of the ECOWAS TPO Network in the World Trade Promotion Organisations Conference and Awards to be held in Accra (Ghana) in May 2022 and the upcoming Inter-African Trade Fair scheduled for November 2023 in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire).

The meeting of the ECOWAS TPO Network was chaired by Dr. Ezra YAKUSAK, CEO of the Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC) and President of the ECOWAS TPO Network, with the support from Mr. Guy M'BENGUE, Chief Executive Officer of Côte d'Ivoire Export Promotion Agency (APEX-CI) and Vice President of the ECOWAS TPO Network. The meeting was attended by the heads of export promotion agencies of the ECOWAS region, as well as representatives from the ECOWAS Commission and ITC.

The ECOWAS TPO network was established by Decision C/DEC.2/06/21 relating to the establishment of the ECOWAS Trade Promotion Organisations Network by the 86th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers on 16 – 17 June 2021. The network, which draws from national trade promotion agencies in the ministries responsible for trade, as well as the ECOWAS Commission and ITC, seeks to contribute to strengthening the trade competitiveness of West Africa through the development of value chains and business linkages. With this network, ECOWAS joins Asia, Europe, Latin America and Arab States in applying a coordinated approach to trade development and promotion.

## ECOWAS Business Council to finalise its establishment



The ECOWAS Business Council (EBC) was established by the Authority of Heads of State and Government at its 29th session in Niamey (2006), as a strong and representative business body, covering development areas including agriculture, manufacturing, trade and services, women entrepreneurship and tourism, to promote interaction among economic operators and advise the ECOWAS decision-making bodies on appropriate business policy to enhance the competitiveness of the West African business community.

The EBC seeks to create an ECOWAS business community that is globally competitive and regionally integrated; capable of leading the emergence of West Africa as a preferred investment destination with one of the highest, most inclusive, and evenly distributed standards of living in the world.

Recognising the importance of the EBC, the 46th ordinary session of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers, held in June 2021, adopted EBC new statutes to ensure its efficient implementation while addressing emerging issues, such as the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, the envisaged Africa Business Council and specific criteria for submission and selection of the members.

Following this, a first consultative meeting, held on 4 March 2022 with the participation of the Private Sector Directorate of the ECOWAS Commission, ITC and representatives of regional business associations, led to the establishment of a technical working group for the establishment of the EBC with the objective of designing and implementing an inclusive procedure for the selection of the members of the EBC.

A draft schedule and key documents for the process were validated by the members of the technical working group who recommended the ECOWAS Commission to take necessary actions. The participants agreed to provide any needed support to facilitate the set-up of the EBC.

## Launch of the ECOWAS Regional Trade Facilitation Committee



The ECOWAS Commission, with the support of the Trade Facilitation West Africa (TFWA) Programme, launched the ECOWAS Regional Trade Facilitation Committee (RTFC) on 21 February 2022 in Lomé, Togo. WACOMP participated in the event to ensure synergies with other regional projects and to raise awareness of the programme's support to strengthening the region's competitiveness.

The Committee aims to provide recommendations to the ECOWAS Commission on the implementation of instruments associated with the simplification of export, import and transit within and outside the region.

It serves as a platform for cooperation and coordination among member states for a harmonised implementation of national, regional, continental and international trade facilitation reforms stemming from various commitments. The operationalisation of the committee marks a decisive turning point in the adoption and alignment of the measures contained in the Trade Facilitation Agreement, known as the Bali Agreement. The regional committee will be a lever to make our community market a free movement market.

The launching ceremony featured opening remarks by H.E. Kodjo Adedze, Minister of Trade, Industry and Local Consumption of Togo, H.E. Tei KONZI, ECOWAS Commissioner for Trade, Customs and Free Movement of Persons, and Mr. Kelechi Okoro RIPPEL, Head of Programme, representing GIZ.

Speaking on behalf of H.E. Faure Essozimna GNASSIMBE, President of the Republic of Togo, H. E. Kodjo Adedze welcomed the participants and underlined that the Togolese government was honoured to host the launch the first meeting of the ECOWAS Trade Facilitation Committee in Lomé.

He noted the importance of the RTFC in providing advice, proposing relevant reforms, and ensuring the effectiveness of the trade facilitation tools and initiatives put in place by the ECOWAS Commission at regional level.

On behalf of President of the ECOWAS Commission, H.E. Jean-Claude Kassi Brou, Mr. Tei Konzi said that the establishment of the RTFC was aimed to complete the initiatives already implemented in movement of goods and services in the countries of the region.

He stressed that to achieve this noble objective, a very strong collaboration between economic operators and customs, ministers and authorities in charge of trade regulation is necessary.

He also encouraged the representatives of ECOWAS national trade facilitation committees to substantially contribute to the achievement of the objectives of this first ECOWAS RTFC meeting. He also invited the representatives to substantially contribute to the achievement of the objectives of this first meeting.

On behalf of GIZ, Mr. Kelechi OKORO commended the efforts of the ECOWAS Commission to assist member States in implementing the WTO TFA. He recalled that the Trade facilitation in West Africa (TWFA) programme supports the private sector to improve the flow of goods and services in the region.

He also recalled the importance of the TFWA programme objectives in facilitating the movement of goods and services in the region and strengthening the collaboration at intra-sectoral, national and regional levels to ensure the implementation of trade facilitation agreements such as the WTO TFA and the AfCFTA.

The first meeting of the Committee discussed strategic regional trade facilitation projects, tools and policies related to trade facilitation and the status update on implementation of existing trade facilitation instruments. At the same time, the Committee members reviewed and adopted a work programme and defined strategic orientations to ensure the achievement of the Committee's objectives. They also expressed their appreciation for the series of tools developed and made available to facilitate trade inside and outside the region and commended the ECOWAS Commission for the ongoing development of the draft regional trade and transport facilitation.

As part of the event, the committee members visited the autonomous port of Lomé. The delegation was able to appreciate the modernity of the facilities as well as the digitised system that facilitates imports and exports and improves the circulation of goods in the region.



## The Nigeria Competitiveness Project review meeting was held in Kano



The Nigeria Competitiveness Project (NICOP) is the national component of WACOMP. In the context of its implementation, the project has scheduled a project implementation review meeting in March in Kano State, Nigeria, in which the regional component of WACOMP will participate.

During the meeting, participants discussed the need to consider gender mainstreaming, poverty reduction and social and environmental welfare in value chain development. The meeting also highlighted that the state could leverage value chains for certain products to stimulate growth. The case of Kano, one of the oldest cities in Nigeria and a major producer of tomatoes, ginger, chilli, leather and garments, was presented.

Despite the lack of linkages between value chain actors along the processes, some of the solutions identified relate to increasing the skills and production capacities of producers, reducing the cost of doing business, and adopting and using the added value of ICT. In addition, strengthening linkages, effective communication and coordination along value chains, a coherent and equitable fiscal environment and an appropriate institutional framework are important for the sustainable development of value chains.

Participants had the opportunity to record some of the results already achieved by NICOP. In terms of support to farmers and small and medium enterprises, these include support for access to finance for more than 1300 tomato producers, training of 2900 farmers in good agricultural practices, financial literacy and training of new clusters, training of 590 (68% women) leather craftsmen, support to 2500 (57% women) small farmers for access to finance, linking of farmers' associations with equipment suppliers. One of the impacts of this support is the creation of 4000 new jobs (25% women).

In the area of policy reforms and institutional support, trainings were organised on leather policy and policy advocacy, business-to-business meetings were organised at the national level for the development of the leather value chain and an association of leather producers emerged from the latter initiative. An association of leather producers has emerged from the latter initiative. In addition, capacity building on contract enforcement was conducted.

After the presentation, the participants made some recommendations to ensure the sustainability of the NICOP results.

At the end of the event, a mini exhibition on the value chains of ginger, pepper, leather and clothing was organised. The participation of the regional component allowed for a better understanding of the particular context of NICOP implementation, to note direct feedback from beneficiaries, to identify bottlenecks and to take note of key recommendations made for consideration at regional level.



## VALUE CHAINS AND REGIONAL INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATIONS

### FEWACCI holds its 9th General Assembly



The 9th General Assembly of the Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FEWACCI) was held from 21 to 23 February 2022 in Niamey, Niger. Afreximbank, the ECOWAS Bank for investment and development, the Africa Business Council and the Centre for International Private Enterprise were present for the occasion.

Key discussions focused on the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the harmonisation of business laws in the ECOWAS region and the strategic importance of agri-food value chains for women-led businesses in the region. Members also discussed the Good governance in business and organisations initiative, the benefits of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for the private sector, digital transformation 2.0 and the FEWACCI initiative for start-ups.

The members followed recommendations to improve the business environment for each topic discussed. They also considered recommendations to update FEWACCI's legal instruments to enable it to consolidate its regional mandate. The legal analysis was supported by ITC and the ECOWAS Commission.



Financed by European Union



Regional Components  
Implemented By



## ICT and textile businesses seek out synergies in Ghana



22 small businesses from the technology and textile sectors participated in a business training and networking workshop on 28 January 2022 in Accra, Ghana.

The participating companies took part in a business-to-business networking session, a design thinking workshop as well as a fireside chat. A panel discussion with experts from the financial technology, delivery technology, interior design and fashion sectors highlighted potential synergies between the technology and textile sectors. The panelists also shared their experiences in the business environment.

Paystack, Oze, Ghana Fintech and Payments Association, Interior Designers and Decorators Ghana, BlueCrest University, among other organisations, participated in the workshop.

## West African TPO Network holds series of meetings to outline working parameters



To begin shaping its working mechanisms, the ECOWAS Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Network held a series of technical meetings in February and March 2022.

Initial meetings held included:

- The technical committee of Financial Affairs and Resource Mobilization
- The technical committee of Trade Policy and Strategies
- The technical committee of Trade Promotion Events
- The technical committee of Communication and Marketing

On 22 February 2022, the Gambian Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) chaired the Technical Committee in charge of Financial Affairs and Resource Mobilization. The session sought to define and identify priority actions and activities as well as develop the committee's annual work plan for 2022-2023.

Thereafter, the Trade Policy and Strategies and the Trade Promotion Events technical committees met on the 1st and 3rd of March 2022 respectively. The strategies committee identifies opportunities at the national and sub-regional level brought about by newly implemented policies. To increase the region's participation in continental and international events is the main objective of the trade promotion events committee. The communication and marketing meeting discussed improving the TPO network's promotion, increasing media coverage for its activities as well as updating the network's website.

The TPO network works alongside the ECOWAS Commission with an aim to drive inclusive trade and development in the region. Achieving the goals identified by the technical committee is a primary objective for the network's members.

Once the technical committee meetings concluded, members of the ECOWAS Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Network gathered in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire for the network's 4th consultative meeting on 29 to 30 March 2022. Network attendees met to examine the proposed workplan for 2022 to 2023 and decide on its trade related technical assistance (TRTA) programme.

Other key items on the agenda included discussions on resource mobilization to jump start the network's activities. Network members agreed to hold the second General Assembly on 19 to 20 May 2022, following the World Trade Promotion Network Conference set to take place on 17 to 18 May 2022 in Accra, Ghana.

During the consultative meeting, Miyoba Lubemba, ITC Senior Programme Officer thanked the European Union and the ECOWAS Commission for placing its trust in ITC to support the establishment and operationalization of the regional network. Acting Director for Trade at the ECOWAS Commission, Kolawole Sofola, emphasized the importance of trade to further regional integration and employment creation efforts.

Members also agreed to pursue strategic engagements with the African Development Bank (AfDB), the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the African Export-Import Bank.



## REGIONAL QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEM AND BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Ghana Standards Authority lab technicians trained on ISO/IEC 17025:2017



In February, WACOMP built the capacity of laboratory technicians at the Ghana Standards Authority. The project organised a training on ISO/IEC 17025:2017 for 19 laboratory technicians to increase their knowledge and skills for better implementation of the standard in their daily activities. The training was conducted by Dr. (Rev.) William JONFIA ESSIEN, the national conformity assessment expert.

Support to the development and the adoption of national and regional standards



As part of strengthening the quality infrastructure in West Africa, WACOMP continued to work on the development and adoption of standards to support the competitiveness of the four regional value chains targeted by the programme.

During the first quarter of the year, WACOMP provided technical assistance for the development of 36 draft standards for the mango, cassava and textile value chains. National standardisation bodies (NSBs) in Benin, Cape Verde, Senegal, Ghana, Guinea Bissau and ECOSHAM technical management committee were provided with IT equipment. The equipment will facilitate the preparation of working documents and the participation of NSB representatives in regional meetings.

The digitalisation of the standards harmonisation process is being prepared. To this end, a call for tender has been organised to identify a provider of IT tools to facilitate the harmonisation of standards. In this case, the aim is to reduce the cost of the process, facilitate broad public and stakeholder participation and organise the traceability of standards and documents.

At the end of the harmonisation process, the region will have 94 additional standards that will support the competitiveness of the four target value chains, while the ECOSHAM Technical Management Committee and its technical committees will have a relevant working tool.



## COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

Connecting with stakeholders and spotting results of the WACOMP in the region



In an effort to constantly improve the visibility of the WACOMP programme, the website has undergone a series of updates to improve the ranking of the pages on search engines.

Five additional MSME groups have been gathered as target audience groups on LinkedIn, these groups are micro-communities that need to know more about the objectives of WACOMP and how the initiatives can directly benefit them as small business owners.

So far, a total of 10 LinkedIn groups have been joined to spread more information and activities.

On Twitter, all national components were monitored to map the flow of information to establish an adequate strategy for the optimal use of Twitter as a communication platform.

During the first quarter of 2022, WACOMP's Twitter page received 15,379 impressions, a 5.9% increase over the previous quarter, 423 engagements, a 54.4% increase over the previous quarter, and 21 link clicks, a 110% increase over the previous quarter. The number of followers also increased to 426.

2022 saw a relaxation of the COVID-19 protocols in several countries, which meant that physical meetings were also encouraged. The first face-to-face WACOMP meeting in the first quarter was the Trade Promotion Organisation technical workshop from 29-30 March in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire).

Thanks to a good circulation of a press release, the event generated proper media coverage. A professionally edited video documented the success of the workshop.



## NATIONAL COMPONENTS



Picture: WACOMP officials and the representatives of marketing federations in Kerewan, North Bank region



## THE GAMBIA

### WACOMP stakeholders selected sites for the construction of onion drying and storage facilities

WACOMP Gambia, in collaboration with the regional agriculture directorates, marketing federations and implementing partners, has identified gardens for the construction of curing and storage facilities for onion.

The selection was made in the regions during a WACOMP field mission that conducted a rapid market analysis (RMA) on tomatoes, chillies and sweet potatoes, the results of which will complement an existing study on onions carried out in August 2021.

The facilities will consist of two compartments: one area containing wooden shelves where freshly dug onions will be placed for drying; and the second area will be a palletised room where the dried onions – graded, weighed and bagged – will be packed.

‘Properly dried onions keep longer without spoiling. This will benefit the whole value chain. Women will not have to sell their onions at low prices at harvest. They can keep them longer and get better prices during the year’, said Mr Musa Saihou Mbenga, UNIDO’s international horticulture value chain specialist. The availability of the facilities will greatly help to reduce post-harvest losses in the onion sector.

Mr Mbenga added that the RMAs revealed many problems that need to be addressed before greater compliance and marketing of Gambian onions can be achieved. He concluded that the RMAs’ findings will form the basis for negotiations with the government on the restoration of a moratorium on imports during the country’s onion harvest periods.

## Connecting SMEs to markets: onion producers participated in an international trade fair



Photo: Locally produced onions for sale at the WACOMP stand

WACOMP Gambia (WACOMP-GM) participated in the 15th edition of The Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) International Trade Fair at Brusubi. The fair, which attracted over 450 participants from West Africa, Europe and Asia, was held from 26 February to 27 March 2022.

With the theme "Accelerating Intra-Africa trade for the realisation of AFCFTA through innovation", the platform availed participants the opportunity to network and promote their goods and services.

With funding from the European Union, WACOMP-GM is implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and United Purpose (UP). The project is increasing The Gambia's competitiveness through enhanced quality compliance along the onion value chain by improving the performance, growth and contribution to industry, regional trade and exports of onion and other horticulture value chain.

UNIDO and United Purpose (UP) - implementing partners of WACOMP-GM - jointly facilitated the setting up of stands for onion producers and marketing federation representatives to promote locally produced onions and related crops, but also to create much-needed market linkages.

Mr. Malamin Drammeh, UNIDO's national horticulture value chain expert, said that through WACOMP, market linkages will be created for onion and related crop producers to meet potential buyers.

Ms. Ngansa Touray, WACOMP project manager for UP, was pleased with the variety of rainy season onions on sale at the fair for the first time in recent history. 'This is a step forward', she said, adding that it will promote year-round onion production, as desired by WACOMP.

Jimbi Ceesay, President of the National Vegetable Growers Association (Sosalaso), expressed gratitude for the programme, saying it will greatly assist vegetable growers to promote their products, network and learn from other participants at the trade fair. Jimbi and other participants at the WACOMP stand sold their products and found markets for those they have yet to harvest.

'This is a huge empowerment for women. We have learned a lot since we have been here, and we have also sold our products. We have been introduced to the use of measurement in marketing our products and this has increased our profits', she said.

Maimuna Jabang of Pirang Mansa Garden called on fellow onion farmers to adhere to the standards and promote the rainy season onion variety for year-round production.



## WACOMP Gambia organised training on ISO 22000:2018 - Food safety management system



Photo: Participants during the training

WACOMP Gambia held a two-day virtual awareness training on ISO 22000:2018 – Food Safety Management System (FSMS) standard in March.

29 participants from The Gambia Standards Bureau (TGSB) and other institutions were introduced to the Food Safety Management System (FSMS) Standard, which is applicable to any organisation in the food chain.

An effective food safety management system enhances an organisation's control over food safety hazards and ensures that its products are safe for consumption.

According to WACOMP-GM's national technical coordinator, Mr. Joseph Ndenn, the training is the beginning of a process to build national capacity for professional auditing of food safety management systems. The awareness training is a prerequisite for the more advanced ISO 22000:2018 Lead Implementer and Lead Auditor courses.

**It is also hoped that the training will contribute to enhancing the participants' interest in food safety management in general and the ISO 22000:2018 food safety management standard in particular',** he noted.

UNIDO's expert on quality infrastructure, Prof. Dr. Adalberto Vieira, said the training shared the structure of the standard with the participants, the key steps for implementation as well as the importance of having an FSMS in food sector organisations as a means to ensure safe food manufacturing and access to new reference markets.

One participant, Saikou Darmmeh, Head of Food and Agriculture Standards at the TGSB, stressed the importance of training: **'As the person responsible for food and agricultural standards, I have gained the knowledge to help stakeholders, especially food processors, to better process their food in a way that is safer for everyone',** he said.

This training followed the ISO/IEC 17025:2017 General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories and the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system trainings, which took place in December and February respectively.

## Institutions Trained on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System



Photo: Participants during the training

WACOMP Gambia organised a virtual training course on food safety based on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system for inspection and certification technicians from conformity assessment institutions in February.

The training attracted participants from the Food Safety and Quality Authority (FSQA), The Gambia Standards Bureau (TGSB), and Plant Protection Services (PPS).

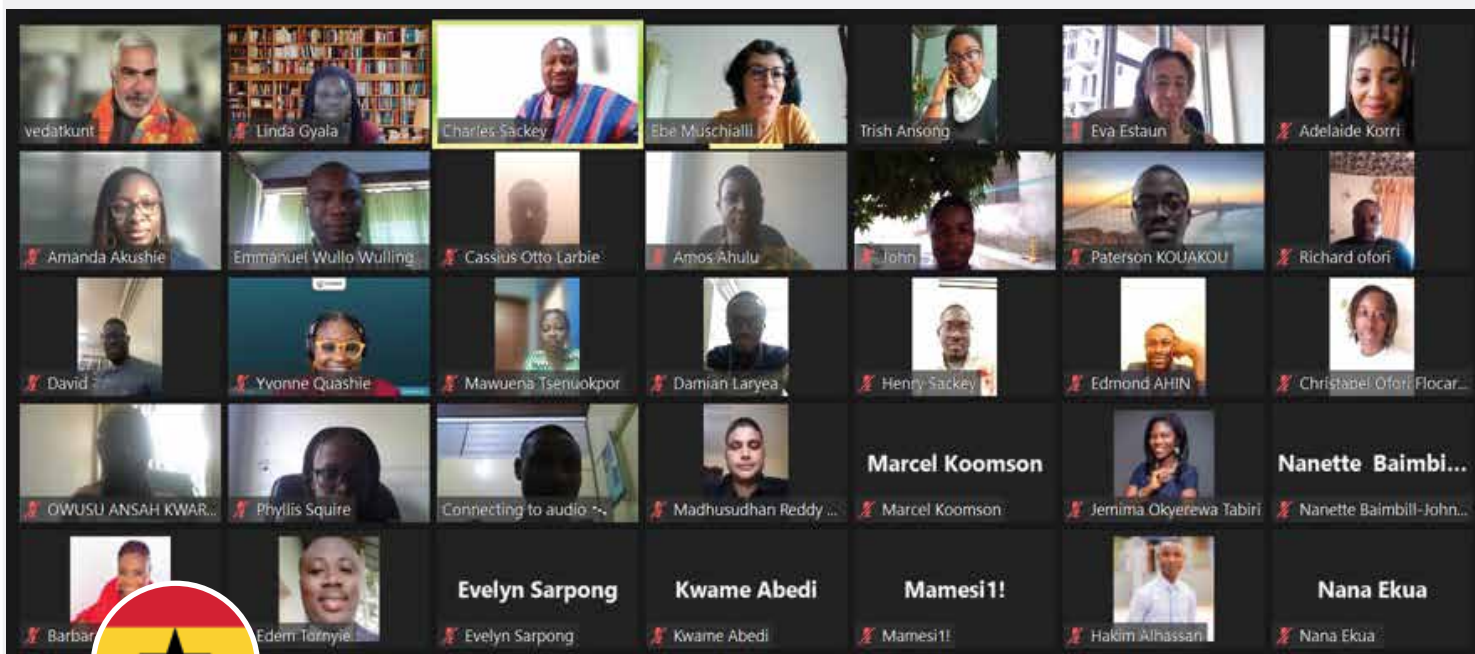
HACCP identifies specific hazards and the measures for to them to ensure the safety of food. It is a tool for assessing hazards and establish control systems that focus on prevention rather than relying mainly on testing the final product.

'WACOMP is committed to providing this support so that FSQA, TGSB and PPS staff acquire the necessary HACCP expertise to carry out their inspection and auditing work', said Joseph Ndenn, WACOMP national technical coordinator.

He commended the participants for their interest and commitment, enjoining them to effectively apply and share the knowledge gained.

UNIDO's international expert on quality infrastructure (QI), Prof. Dr. Adalberto Vieira, said the training focused on the HACCP system and the main prerequisites associated with it, namely good hygienic practices (GHP) and good manufacturing practices (GMP), underlining the importance of its implementation to allow access to new reference markets.

'Successful implementation of HACCP opens up a number of opportunities in terms of accessing new markets and giving end consumers/customers more confidence that mandatory food safety requirements are being met', he noted.



## GHANA

### 79 Coaches Complete Cluster Coaching Programme

Exporting can be extremely difficult for Ghanaian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as they have to compete with several brands that are already well positioned in the European market.

In September 2021, the project launched a comprehensive 12-week group coaching course to strengthen the competitiveness of small businesses in Ghana by providing on-the-ground support from business coaches who can reach out to businesses.

The first cohort of 37 coaches graduated last December, and a second cohort of 42 coaches graduated in late February.

So far, 17 SMEs have been coached (11 in the cosmetics sector, 2 in the cassava sector and 4 in the fruit sector). They have improved costing, budgeting, marketing, quality documentation, export documentation and packaging thanks to the coaching received.

## 35 entrepreneurs received training in artisanal soap making



Practical session of un moulding handcraft soap bars at the cosmetics formulation training for SMEs



Practical session of cutting handcraft soap bars at the cosmetics formulation training for SMEs

In early March, as part of its support to young Ghanaian entrepreneurs in the natural cosmetics sector, WACOMP Ghana organised a training course on cosmetic formulation to improve their manufacturing processes and differentiate their products.

In Europe alone, thanks to the consumers awareness of the benefits of natural cosmetics, sales of natural and organic cosmetics have grown by an average of more than 7% per year in recent years and are expected to reach 5 billion euros by 2023.

During the training, 35 SMEs focused on using the standards for shea butter creams, artisanal soap bars, lip balms and black soap cosmetics for local and international markets. Last year, WACOMP Ghana had already trained 110 cosmetic SMEs in the formulation of artisanal cosmetics (35 cosmetic SMEs in the northern cluster in Tamale, 25 SMEs in the intermediate cluster area in Kumasi and 50 SMEs in Accra). In the coming period, UNIDO plans to organise a master class in cosmetics formulation.

Trained SMEs receive constant technical support and remote coaching on how to maintain their newly acquired skills and ensure their competitiveness. They have a WhatsApp platform that facilitates communication between the SMEs (inter-cluster interaction) and the resource person.

## Mango farmers in Shai Osudoku are battling Bacteria Black Spot disease



With support from WACOMP Ghana, 48 mango farmers and 20 agricultural extension workers from the Shai Osudoku and Somanya districts were trained in plant disease control and the safe handling of agrochemicals in March.

In Ghana, the mango sub-sector is exposed to many challenges, including the incidence of pests and diseases and the abuse of agrochemicals, which affect fruit exports. Bacteria Black Spot (BBS) is a disease that has a significant impact on the mango sector. The disease was first observed in Ghana in 2012 and has reached epidemic levels in most mango growing areas in Ghana.

Bacterial black spot can lead to an 80% yield loss if left uncontrolled and is the main problem for mango growers in Ghana.

Until now, the country used to earn almost EUR 100,000 per month from exports, but this figure has dropped to EUR 60,000 due to the incidence of the disease.

As part of its contribution to issues of quality mango export compliance and BBS management, WACOMP Ghana organised a 4-day training for mango growers from the Damfa, Yilo and Klu enclaves and Agricultural Extension Officers (AEOs) working in the districts to monitor the spread and appropriate use of agrochemicals to meet export requirements.

## WACOMP Ghana supports the ISO 22000 certification of nine lead auditors by IRCA



To contribute, promote and accelerate inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID) and ensure that actors in the targeted value chains meet the requirements of recognised national and international best practices, WACOMP Ghana has supported nine quality experts who have successfully passed the IRCA ISO 22000 certified lead auditors' examinations.

Certified lead auditors will assist SMEs in the fruit and cassava value chain to implement the necessary good manufacturing practices (GMPs) and all compliance requirements.

On 17 March 2022, a short graduation ceremony was held for the successful candidates at the Labone project office. Strengthening the skills of national experts is extremely strategic for Ghana, UNIDO and the European Union, as it ensures that the number of certified auditors in the country increases, which would make companies more competitive. Mr. Fakhruddin Azizi, UNIDO Representative in Ghana and Liberia, congratulated the graduates and encouraged them to apply their skills in capacity building and to support Ghana in its industrialisation effort.

Last year, WACOMP helped 10 experts to obtain IRCA ISO 9001:2015 lead auditor certification and launched a quality resource training for 41 quality experts to increase the number of national experts and improve the experts' knowledge of ISO 22 000, ISO 9001 and ISO 22 716 standards.



## GUINEA

### Market research explores export potential of Guinea's Baronne De Rothschild pineapple

To improve the export volume of the pineapple sector in Guinea, two market studies were carried out exploring the potential of the "Baronne de Rothschild" pineapple. The market studies built on the findings of a previous study in 2020 and provided a marketing mix strategy based on the 2020 findings and following an audit of the Moroccan and French premium pineapple markets. The design of the strategy considers the characteristics of Baronne de Rothschild pineapple as well as the stipulations of the audited export markets.

In addition, an analytical survey on consumer behaviour for both the French and Moroccan markets indicating key factors such as product specifications, pricing, distribution, and communication was also undertaken. In France, premium pineapples are primarily marketed by specialised retailers. Areas of consideration for the French market include quality, compliance to pesticide standards product presentation and traceability. In Morocco 54.8% of respondents were willing to buy the Baronne de Rothschild pineapple even if priced higher than other pineapples.

The studies also look at consumer trends in the fresh pineapple market and are available to read [here](#).

## Selection of the best nurserymen for the reinforcement of theories and techniques of pineapple cultivation



In February, REFILA's team of agronomists travelled to Maferinyah, Benty and Kindia to identify and select 21 USAID-trained pineapple shoot growers for the DAKMA and REFILA projects.

This action carried out with the prefectural directorates of agriculture, the municipal councillors, the FEPAF-BG, and the UGPAM made it possible to strengthen the knowledge of technicians and other partners on agriculture and organic pineapple production.

These days were also an opportunity to organise practical and theoretical training on:

- the concept and definition of organic farming;
- the principles of organic farming;
- the origin and history;
- areas of application of organic farming (fertilisation, phytosanitary protection, floral induction treatment, fruit harvesting and packaging);
- audits, control of the value chain and document management of organic farming;
- technical itineraries for organic pineapple production.

Finally, the nurserymen selected will be equipped with a better understanding and management skills of the pineapple value chain and will strengthen the involvement of our partners.

## Governance: the REFILA project held the third session of its steering committee



In March 2022 in Conakry, the 3rd Session of the Steering Committee of the Pineapple Sector Revival Project (REFILA) was held under the chairmanship of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Small and Medium Enterprises. Also present were the UNIDO representative in the country and the Head of Cooperation of the European Union Delegation in Guinea.

This session reviewed the evolution of the channel's activities for the period from August 2020 to July 2021, validated the work plan for the year 2022 and made strategic and operational adjustments to the project recommendations.

The steering committee also shared the progress made in improving the competitiveness of key agents in the pineapple value chain in Guinea and strengthening the intermediary organisations supporting the sector.

This was an opportunity to discuss the completion of several diagnostic studies of Guinean industries, the launch of the inclusive and participatory consultation framework on the process of setting up the national competitiveness observatory. Finally, emphasis was placed on the training and support provided, from which more than 200 actors have benefited.

It is important to note that the Committee validated many recommendations to facilitate the achievement of the objectives, and committed to:

- Support actions in favour of the empowerment of apex organisations in the supply of inputs;
- Ensure the facilitation of an inclusive and integrated framework of actions for the establishment of financial mechanisms adapted to the pineapple sector;
- Set up a partnership with the online incubator "Bridge for Billions", for the deployment of the IDEA APP in the training and coaching of 50 young entrepreneurs.



## Towards the creation of a women-led consortium



In the framework of the creation of a consortium for the revival of the pineapple sector in Guinea, a workshop was organised in March in Kindia by REFILA experts to inform and sensitise businesses created and managed by women. In consideration of the creation of strategic alliances and collaboration within the dynamics of expanding the possibility of improving production and access to the export market, the experts shared their knowledge and experiences on the issues of developing a strategic alliance of SMEs.

To this end, the presentations focused on the methodological tools useful for the creation of a consortium likely to favour the emergence of the sector at both national and international levels.

The workshop provides an opportunity to collect relevant information on the realities on the ground and to identify the future leaders of this union of women involved in the sector.

## Towards improving the competitiveness of industrial VSEs and SMEs in Guinea



In response to the needs of enterprises to improve productivity and quality, the REFILA project organised an information and stakeholder consultation meeting on small enterprise upgrading approaches in March in Conakry, with the aim of strengthening the knowledge and practical skills of officials from the Ministry of Trade, Industry and SMEs, consultants and experts selected by UNIDO.

This meeting made it possible to tackle subjects such as: the notions of competitiveness and upgrading of industry, the specific field of a National Programme for the upgrading of the manufacturing industry within the framework of an Industrial Policy and the international classification of manufacturing activities of the United Nations.

REFILA experts then shared the intervention methodology and defined the role of the consultant in relation to the competitiveness of enterprises. As a result of this information sharing, the meeting participants are better equipped to intervene and support industrial enterprises and will be able to provide training, strategic advice and technical assistance to small businesses, especially to the beneficiary enterprises of the project.



## GUINEA-BISSAU

### Economic agents of the mango industry receive training in business management and agri-entrepreneurship

Within the framework of the project to improve the competitiveness of the mango sector in Guinea-Bissau, 40 economic agents of the mango value chain in Guinea-Bissau, made up of businessmen, managers, directors, future entrepreneurs and leaders of partner organisations (APRODEL, KAFO, COAJOO, RENAJ, FUNDEI, AMAE, ANEJ, TINIGUENA), have benefited from a free and entirely face-to-face training in business management and agri-entrepreneurship.

Organised in two sessions on the same theme, in February and March, the training, which took place in Penha, was delivered by COLEACP and focused on strengthening the knowledge of national actors on how to manage a business, covering the following topics: developing an agribusiness model, making investment decisions based on financial and market information, preparing a business plan and sources of funding.

Participants in the programme learnt to develop skills in organisation and planning, scenario analysis, customer and supplier relations, innovation, and financial literacy. These skills will be useful both in developing a business plan and in realising their life projects. All this while respecting good sustainability practices and taking advantage of current market practices.



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## WACOMP Guinea-Bissau distributes fruit fly traps in Bafatá and Oio regions



With the financial support of the European Union in Guinea-Bissau, the first phase of distribution of fruit fly traps was successfully completed in April in the regions of Bafatá and Oio, with the second phase planned for the region of Cacheu in May.

Distribution, which started in March, was accompanied by awareness raising and necessary training on the use of the chemicals used in the traps.

The aim is to gradually eradicate the fruit fly, which can considerably reduce the harvest and therefore impact on the production of mango and its derivatives, using chemical and pheromonal capture methods. The trap consists of a plastic bottle with an average capacity of 1.5 litres, placed every 50 metres on a tree, containing a solution that gives off an odour that attracts the pests and another solution that, once the insects are inside, captures them.

This is the second year that traps have been effectively distributed in these areas, also using them to collect information through samples in the containers. The replacement period for the traps is three months, when the effect of the chemicals starts to diminish.

One of the greatest benefits of applying traps that control fruit flies is the support of food security, encouraging harvesting and promoting the mango trade.



## NIGERIA

### Nigerian women entrepreneurs learn to use the trade obstacles alert mechanism

25 members of the African Women's Entrepreneurship Programme (AWEP) participated in a training on the Trade Barriers Alert Mechanism (TOAM). The training, which took place on 27 September 2021, familiarised the women entrepreneurs with the ITC tool, providing them with guidance on how to gather real-time information on existing barriers encountered in cross-border processes.

ITC and the Nigerian Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment took note of the barriers once they were uploaded on the TOAM platform. Hajara Usman, who represented the Permanent Secretary, thanked ITC and the team working on TOAM in the Ministry for resolving these trade barriers. Local institutions are responsible for ensuring that barriers are addressed and resolved.

During the workshop, participants described some of the obstacles they continue to face in their daily activities, such as difficulties in obtaining export permits, high compliance costs, cultural barriers, multiple taxes and checkpoints, and foreign exchange. These disadvantages provided information on where TOAM could focus based on the experiences of the women entrepreneurs.

Angela Ajala, President of AWEP, thanked ITC, through the WACOMP programme, for introducing women entrepreneurs to this innovative tool, recognizing the role of the platform in supporting exporters who currently lack information. The tool will support efforts to boost Nigeria's export competitiveness and provide solutions to existing challenges, Ms Ajala said.



## SÉNÉGAL

### 10 commercial cooperative societies established in Niayes

After a campaign to build the knowledge and capacity of onion and mango farmers in the Niayes, farmers learned the benefits of grouping together to form cooperative societies. As a result, the WACOMP Senegal programme supported groups of producers in the Niayes to come together and form multi-sectoral cooperative societies to engage in commercial activities in November and December 2021.

An official delegation including representatives from the Ministry of Trade and Small and Medium Enterprises, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Equipment and the Regulation and Markets Agency participated in a general assembly of the ten commercial cooperative societies.

Cooperatives have been established across the Niayes as follows: two in Saint-Louis, two in Louga, five in Thiès and one in Dakar. The societies are large and have absorbed existing producer associations to strengthen these groups, and once this has been achieved, the societies will evolve into unions and federations in the future. The ongoing support programme trains cooperatives in marketing, management, good governance, and access to finance.



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## Cooperatives learn essentials to finance growth



40 participants from commercial cooperative societies as well as representatives from the Government of Senegal, commercial banks, microfinance institutions, agricultural business support institutions and the European Union delegation to Senegal attended a workshop on cooperative financing mechanisms on 7 December 2021.

During the session, participants reviewed the financial study of cooperative societies and then exchanged views on the financial practices proposed by the study for cooperatives in the mango and onion value chains. The session gave cooperatives the opportunity to identify their financial needs to achieve growth.

## P2R programme held a workshop to build the resilience of Senegalese MSMEs post-Covid



The Programme de résilience et de relance des micro, petites et moyennes entreprises au Sénégal (P2R) organised a workshop on "Market access: the challenges of FRA1 authorisation and the use of barcodes, selling through online platforms" on 22 March 2022.

This workshop is one of a series of activities planned by the programme, which is a component of the WACOMP Senegal component. From August 2021 to January 2022, P2R conducted information, awareness and promotion missions of the programme in the 14 regions of Senegal. These missions have helped identify the support needs of businesses in the various sectors and activities conducted. An in-depth analysis of these needs has allowed the selection of very important and cross-cutting themes of interest to eligible companies selected by P2R.

The Secretary General of the Ministry of Trade and Small and Medium Enterprises, Samba Ndao welcomed the opportunity offered to these companies by the P2R. "Capacitate these MSMEs whose leaders are present at this workshop is an important lever to facilitate their access to markets," he said at the end of the opening ceremony he chaired.



This was an opportunity for Christophe Yvetot, UNIDO's Resident Representative in Senegal, to recall that one of the three components of the programme aims to "strengthen the capacities of at least 200 local MSMEs (of which at least 30% are headed by women and 20% by youth), in the agri-food, health and other sectors, health and other sectors identified as priorities, with the objective of improving production processes and adopting technical standards and regulations to meet not only local demand but also export to other ECOWAS countries.

It was in the presence of Amaury Hoste, Head of the Governance and Stability section of the EU Delegation in Senegal, according to whom, "thanks to the partnership between the European Union, UNIDO and the State of Senegal, P2R/WACOMP Senegal will accompany, hand in hand, MSMEs. Through this partnership, the European Union seeks to improve businesses, to promote employment, especially that of youth and women. To do this, it has decided to work with UNIDO, which has good expertise in working with the private sector and governments.



Senegalese industry players gathering for the ICT event

To facilitate dialogue between ICT representatives in Senegal, the Organisation des professionnels des technologies de l'information et de la communication au Sénégal (OPTIC) and the Association sénégalaise des chercheurs en informatique (ASCI) organised the Scientific Days in Informatics in collaboration with WACOMP Senegal. The event provided a platform for academic researchers, ICT industry professionals and development actors to identify challenges, share ideas and propose solutions. Participants at the event identified key developments in computing and its respective applications.

Through three panel discussions, the workshop was able to identify the technical and regulatory constraints related to the marketing of local products to access the market, the new opportunities offered by online sales but also the possibilities for capacity building of the enterprises selected by P2R.

Ousmane Sy, Coordinator of the P2R for MSMEs recalled that the P2R was integrated into WACOMP Senegal to include consideration of the difficulties encountered by MSMEs.

Developed to contribute to the economic and social response to the COVID-19 pandemic that emerged in Senegal, it aims to support the operationalisation of the Economic and Social Resilience Programme (ESRP) dedicated to businesses, as well as the post-COVID Emerging Senegal Programme (ESP), considering the priority sectors identified in it. It is implemented by UNIDO and will run from April 2021 to March 2024.



## SIERRA LEONE

### Chamber for Agribusiness Development in Sierra Leone improves its advocacy strategy approaches

14 representatives of the Sierra Leone Chamber for Agribusiness Development (SLECAD) attended an advocacy and strategy training on 19-20 January 2022. The training provided strategic approaches to improve the advocacy and advisory services of SLECAD representatives.

The representatives identified some key areas for advocacy activities, including access to market and finance. Trainees were encouraged to research the support needs of member trade support institutions and to provide a platform to highlight areas of concern encountered in the private sector to improve the value of the support members receive.

WACOMP Sierra Leone has structured this training in a sustainable format with the aim of replicating this support for other cooperatives in agribusiness.

Over 30 participants from eight cooperatives in Sierra Leone attended a pilot training on advocacy skills on 26-27 January 2022. The session was organised in collaboration with previously trained SLECAD staff. The training enabled the cooperatives to learn about the challenges and opportunities that exist for agribusinesses seeking to improve their competitiveness in the palm oil, cassava and cocoa sectors.

Participants improved market access procedures by addressing changing market access conditions and applying sustainability standards. The workshop also allowed SLECAD to put its advocacy strategy into practice after extensive work with ITC experts. SLECAD also gained the tools and practical expertise to effectively replicate this type of advocacy training.



## Cooperation with academic institutions in Sierra Leone promotes a culture of quality



Under the WACOMP, UNIDO has established collaboration with the country's academic institutions to find ways of cooperation that will include awareness classes, curriculum development on quality infrastructure and its better positioning in the academic curriculum. The promotion of quality infrastructure is important to establish a culture of quality, which will raise the level of quality of products or services consumed by Sierra Leoneans.

In 2020, UNIDO organised a sensitisation event for lecturers, heads of faculty and graduate students at the University of Sierra Leone (USL). In 2021, this event was followed by the implementation of several short courses on quality management to build internal capacity at USL.

UNIDO recently issued a call for proposals and selected the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) to develop a strategic partnership with USL to deliver courses on quality management topics. UWS will review course outlines, training materials and course organisation. It will also be involved in the examination of students, leading to the award of UWS certificates to successful participants.

USL was established in February 1827 and is the oldest university in Africa. It currently has 7430 students and 1500 staff. The Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM) was established on 5 November 1980. It has two faculties, the Faculty of Management Sciences with four departments - Accounting and Finance, Business Administration, Banking and Finance and Public Administration. The Faculty of Information Systems and Technology comprises the Department of Information Systems and the Department of Technology.

UWS is one of Scotland's largest universities with around 17,000 students. It has a strong reputation for its professional undergraduate and postgraduate courses. UWS offers undergraduate and postgraduate training in quality management. It was the first university in the UK to receive Chartered Quality Institute (CQI) accreditation for its Master's in Quality management, and remains one of only two institutions in the UK to hold this accreditation.

## UNIDO supports Sierra Leonean SMEs to certify their products with global recognition



In March 2022, Mr. Mario Caivano, Head of Economic and Social Sectors at the EU Delegation to Sierra Leone, visited Capitol Trading, a cocoa liquor processing company, one of the beneficiaries of the UNIDO-supported project for the implementation of ISO 9001 and 22000 management standards. Their potential European buyers require a food safety management system, including HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) certification, to establish a business relationship.

Under UNIDO's first round of technical support, seven SMEs were selected based on their ability to absorb the standard. The SMEs have all received extensive online training on the early stages of COVID-19 as well as on-site coaching by international experts, including on practical ways to implement the required documentation and procedures. Implementation of the standards is ongoing, and SMEs are receiving weekly follow-up from the UNIDO team.

As UNIDO is also supporting the Sierra Leone Standards Bureau (SLSB), Capitol Trading and other SMEs will be able to receive globally recognised certifications in Sierra Leone, which will be a first in Sierra Leone for both certifications. With UNIDO's support, the Management Systems Certification Body (MSCB) has already been established and SMEs will now be able to certify their quality management systems for ISO9001 without having to rely on foreign certification bodies.



UNIDO targets cassava cooperatives for the implementation of good agricultural practices. As a follow-up to the training of trainers (ToT) on good agricultural practices (GAP) held in 2021, UNIDO is identifying cassava farms and cooperatives for the implementation of GAP.

Through the Ministry of Agriculture and a cooperative assessment report by the International Trade Centre (ITC), selected districts have been identified as key players in the cassava value chain. The selected districts are Bombali, Moyamba, Bo, Tonkolili, Bonthe, and Pujehun.

UNIDO staff developed an evaluation criterion using the Global GAP standard as a reference. The cooperatives in Bo, Moyamba and Bombali were selected based on the survey results, the ITC report and their participation in previous GAP trainings. Each cooperative was interviewed, and all farms were visited to assess productivity, accessibility, and potential capacity to implement GAP standards. Of the nine cooperatives that were visited, three were selected and one association. These cooperatives will now undergo a 3-day training on quality management systems by an international expert.



## Partners



Established on May 28 1975 via the treaty of Lagos, ECOWAS is a 15-member regional group with a mandate of promoting economic integration in all fields of activity of the constituting countries. Considered one of the pillars of the African Economic Community, ECOWAS was set up to foster the ideal of collective self-sufficiency for its member states. As a trading union, it is also meant to create a single, large trading bloc through economic cooperation. Member countries making up ECOWAS are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d' Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo



The West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) is a West African organization created on January 10, 1994, whose mission is to achieve the economic integration of the Member States, by strengthening the competitiveness of economic activities in the West African region. Member countries making up ECOWAS are: Bénin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinée-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Sénégal and Togo



The Member States of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders



The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is the specialized agency of the United Nations that promotes industrial development for poverty reduction, inclusive globalization and environmental sustainability. The mandate of UNIDO is to promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID) in developing countries and economies in transition.



The International Trade Centre (ITC) is the joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization. ITC helps small and medium-sized enterprises in developing and emerging economies to be more competitive in global markets.

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