

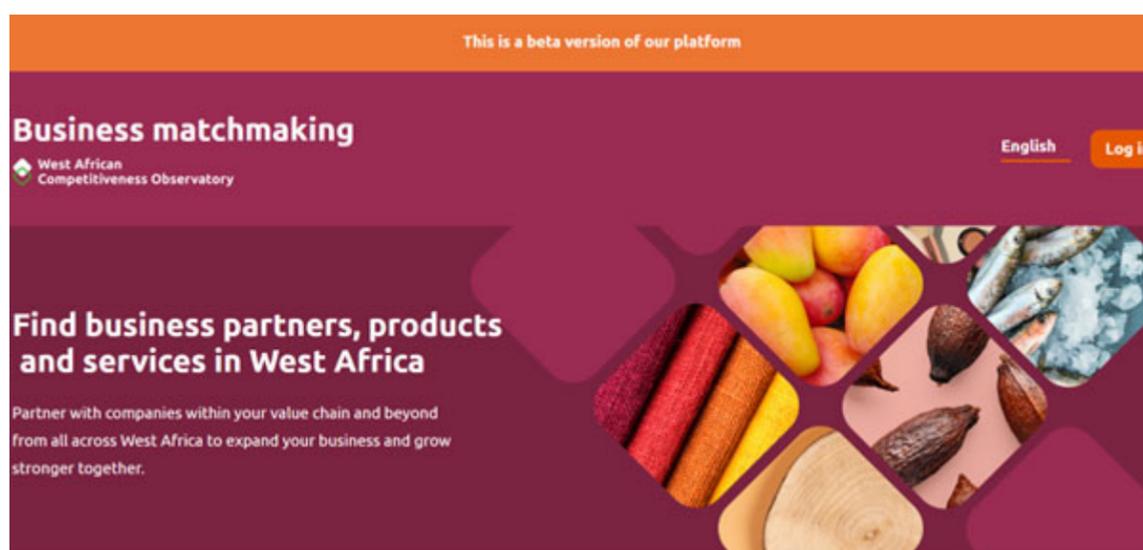


WACOMP Programme Highlights

Quarter 4 - January 2024 - Issue #16

Regional Component

Advancing Economic Growth: Updates on Our ECOWAS Initiatives



Pleased to share progress and achievements within the ECOWAS region. The upcoming launch of the Regional Value Chain module of the West African Competitiveness Observatory, following ECOWAS confirmation of its focus value chains, marks a significant step forward. The module allows businesses and policy-makers to discover opportunities for regional value chain development within the region. Additionally, a beta version of the [Business Matchmaking tool](#) was launched and piloted with businesses in Abuja, coupled with ongoing collaboration with trade promotion organizations. Capacity-building initiatives, instructional videos and additional features for the platform all contribute to providing valuable insights to our users. Noteworthy accomplishments include the identification and validation of five regional focus value chains, the active development and implementation of the Business Matchmaking tool, and the ongoing integration of West African countries into the African Trade Observatory.

WACOMP Cassava and Mango Directories Unveiled

Presenting two noteworthy and insightful compilations showcasing the resilience and innovation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) within the cassava and mango value chains. The "WACOMP Cassava Directory" which can be found [here](#), spotlights 38 selected MSMEs, offering a glimpse into their locations, products, and impactful contributions to the cassava sector's growth across ECOWAS countries and Mauritania.



Simultaneously, the "WACOMP Mango Directory" which can be found [here](#), introduces 37 mango companies, carefully chosen from 263 eligible applicants in ECOWAS countries and Mauritania. Delve into the diverse stories of these enterprises that have leveraged WACOMP's Capacity Development to enhance their market access and competitiveness within the dynamic mango value chains.

Both directories, rich in insights, provides a window into the remarkable journeys of these SMEs. As valuable resources, also available in French, ([Cassava](#) and [Mango](#)) we hope these compilations inspire, foster connections, and contribute to the continued growth of the cassava and mango value chains in West Africa.

ITC's Courtesy Visit to NEPC: A Grateful Acknowledgment of Partnership

On December 4, 2023, ITC undertook a purposeful courtesy visit to extend gratitude to Mrs. Nonye Ayeni, the newly appointed Executive Director of the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC). The meeting served as a momentous occasion to express appreciation for NEPC's longstanding support and significant contributions to collaborative projects, such as the West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP).

The focus of the meeting centered on acknowledging NEPC's pivotal role in joint initiatives, particularly within the framework of the TPO Network. The discussions revolved around expressing gratitude for NEPC's substantial contributions to the success of WACOMP. Both organizations recognized the importance of their collaborative efforts, and ITC expressed dedication to further supporting key sectors that align with NEPC's focus areas.

This visit reaffirmed the strong partnership between ITC and NEPC, emphasizing shared values and commitments to fostering economic growth and competitiveness in Nigeria.



Exploring opportunities for intra-African trade: WACOMP SMEs at Cairo Trade Fair

WACOMP, with the support of ITC, actively participated in the Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF). ITC showcased 24 entrepreneurs and empowered 102 businesses through the AfCFTA Export Readiness Masterclass. Three SMEs sponsored by WACOMP Regional participated to the IATF. During the fair, the three SMEs reported establishing valuable business contacts with companies from Malawi, Ghana, and Egypt. Additionally, the beneficiaries attended a master class session, acquiring new skills on attracting investors.

The event also marked the launch of SheTrades Egypt's second phase, benefiting 70 women-led agribusinesses. Furthermore, through collaboration with Afreximbank, ITC aims to unlock \$1 billion in export potential. Various ITC initiatives, including study tours and workshops, have contributed to the advancement of agri-tech and facilitated market access. You can [read more from the webstory](#).

Empowering African-Caribbean Trade with WACOMP

In our ongoing efforts to strengthen trade ties between Africa and the Caribbean, the WACOMP program participated in the AfriCaribbean Trade and Investment Forum (ACTIF) in Guyana. All supported SMEs acquired a more profound insight into the crucial challenges and obstacles necessary for fostering enhanced trade and investment between the two regions. Institutions (Ghana Investment Promotion Council and ECOWAS TPO Network) managed to improve their knowledge on the potential for business with the Caribbean and also allowed them to conduct B2B meetings.

Two sponsored SMEs, including one women-owned, enhanced their understanding of Caribbean business potential and successfully conducted all planned B2B meetings. For example, Macks Industries Ltd (Ghana) explored cassava trade in the Caribbean, and Psaltry International Company Ltd (Nigeria) engaged in fruitful discussions. While no sales were reported, participants conducted over four successful B2B meetings, highlighting the positive impact of their participation.

Additionally, at the ACC, three WACOMP Sierra Leone companies (including one woman-owned) reported direct sales or secured contracts. . You can [read more from the webstory](#).

African Cassava Conference Highlights

ITC, along with partners, such as the Pan-African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI), delved into the transformative potential of cassava in trade and economic growth at the African Cassava Conference held in Abuja. Throughout the event, various partners and experts illuminated the significant role this unassuming plant plays in powering trade and fostering economic opportunities. Three IPAs sponsored by WACOMP Regional which two of them greatly appreciated the opportunity to share and learn on the development of the cassava sector. A total of 13 Participants sponsored by the WACOMP Regional and WACOMP Sierra Leone programme from which seven SMEs informed they had made secured sales during the event. You [can read more from the webstory](#).

National Components

Advancing Trade Information Services: Collaborative Achievements at SLIEPA's Upgrade Sessions

During a working session led by ITC from September 12-14 to SLIEPA's Trade Information Centre , key milestones were achieved, including the presentation and full approval of SLIEPA's "Trade Information Services Upgrade Plan (TIS-UP). ITC also provided guidance on enhancing their trade information center services. . The TIS-UP aims to assist SLIEPA in achieving the following objectives:

- Elevate the profile of Sierra Leone exporters in international markets
- Disseminate timely, relevant market research data to help Sierra Leone companies gain a competitive advantage in international markets.
- Introduce Sierra Leone companies to foreign buyers.
- Promote exports of Sierra Leone goods and services in overseas markets
- Capitalize on institutional networking opportunities by making other export development- related organizations in Sierra Leone visible.

Capacity-building to elected representatives of cooperative societies, in collaboration with the SME Development and Support Agency (ADEPME)

In partnership with ADEPME, ITC, under WACOMP-Senegal, has assisted 24 elected representatives from agricultural cooperatives in enhancing their commercial and management skills. A total of 9 training sessions, involving 77 elected representatives, were organized on accounting and costing, cooperative management and administration, marketing, and commercialization. The sessions, each lasting three days, took place from November 20 to December 1, 2023, in Thiès, Saint-

Louis, and Ziguinchor. The beneficiaries included treasurers, general secretaries, and marketing committee chairpersons of each cooperative society.



Mapping of Mango and Onion Farms of Senegalese Cooperatives

As part of strengthening their productive capacities, ITC under WACOMP Senegal has initiated the mapping of mango and onion farms owned by cooperative members of agricultural cooperative societies. The objective is to empower cooperative societies to formulate marketing and campaign plans based on reliable and disaggregated information. This information includes cultivated areas, onion and mango varieties produced along with their availability periods, georeferenced land use maps, input and production equipment needs, and marketing channels.

In the initial phase, the farms of 20 cooperative societies established in Thiès, Louga, Saint-Louis, Matam, Sédhiou, Ziguinchor, and Kolda have been mapped. A second phase will involve mapping the farms of 6 other cooperative societies in the future.

Cooperative Companies Establishing New Business Plans



The agricultural cooperative societies debuted a strategic development and business plans, to facilitate their access to financing. This initiative will enable the 30 agricultural cooperative societies supported by the WACOMP-Senegal to set their short, medium and long-term objectives on production and marketing, while determining the necessary means to achieve these objectives.

In the initial phase, five firms were deployed to develop business plans for 13 cooperative societies. To ensure the involvement of all stakeholders, these business plans undergo validation during meetings with all members of the cooperatives, administrative and technical services, and local authorities. A second cohort of service providers is currently being recruited to provide business plans for 17 other cooperative companies.

Strengthening of Startups' Digital Presence

As part of supporting the development potential of Tech SMEs, the startups ProXalys, AYWAJIEUNE SAS, NGIRWI S.A.R.L, JOKALANTE, Club Tioassane, Buur Logistics, and YESS - SUPER APP, beneficiaries of WACOMP-Senegal, participated in a training workshop on "Advanced Branding and Social Network Management Strategies for Businesses."

This session enabled the participants to acquire the necessary skills to, among other things, create and develop engaging content, establish an effective branding strategy, master the art of storytelling, and strengthen their online presence, especially on social networks, with the aim of increasing the visibility of their businesses and boosting their sales.



Tech SMEs for a positive social impact



Tech SMEs benefiting from WACOMP-Senegal participated in a collective webinar on the challenges of measuring environmental impact. Following the meeting, three of them, namely Jokalante, Tolbi, and Proxalys, were selected to take part in coaching sessions. After a group session to set up profiles on the B Impact Assessment platform, individual sessions will enable each SME to assess their current CSR practices using the B Impact Assessment (BIA).

By integrating them into a more comprehensive approach to measure their environmental and societal impact, ITC is preparing the startups to embark on the B Corp certification process.

Tech SME' management flourishing

Six SMEs and Startups benefiting from WACOMP-Senegal: Africa Smart Citizens, Buur Logistics, Nguirwi Sarl, Oui Carry, Sama Toll, and Yes APP, along with the incubators Innov'Zig and UGB, hosting the two ICT service centers established in the regions of Saint-Louis and Ziguinchor, have received assistance in salesforce, recruitment, HR management, and financial management (cash/working capital requirements). This support, encompassing individual interviews to develop a diagnosis, collective workshops dedicated to the three themes, and individual guidance, aims to equip the companies for operational management to enhance their competitiveness.

Startups at SARA Trade Fair



To facilitate startups' access to markets, the ITC under WACOMP-Senegal facilitated the participation of beneficiaries Proxalys, Buur Logistics, and OuiCarry, in the 6th edition of the International Agriculture and Animal Resources Fair (SARA), held from September 29 to October 8, 2023, at the Abidjan Exhibition Park in Côte d'Ivoire. The representatives of the three startups took part in conferences and networking sessions, where they promoted their agricultural solutions. OuiCARRY concluded a commercial contract with an Ivorian company for the management of its product shipment from Côte d'Ivoire to South America, thus enabling it to access a new market.

Study Tour in Egypt with senegalese Agricultural Cooperative Societies

With the aim of enhancing the technical capacities of cooperative members in terms of production, processing, and marketing, the coordination team of WACOMP-Senegal organized a study tour to Egyptian companies involved in mango and onion production and processing from November 9th to 15th, 2023, coinciding with the 3rd edition of the Intra-African Trade Fair held in Cairo.

The objective is to enable cooperative societies to learn from the Egyptian experience in onion production/storage/preservation and mango processing, and to establish contacts with potential partners in Africa and beyond. This initiative has created opportunities for collaboration between Egyptian companies and cooperative societies for knowledge transfer to Senegal, encompassing onion storage techniques, mango production and promotion, and onion transformation into powder/granules, among others.



Equipment Handover to the North Zone Service Center

The ITC, through WACOMP-Senegal, supports the deployment of the Gaston Berger University Incubator in Saint-Louis as a mobile digital service center in 9 regions of Senegal. This includes the provision of a significant amount of equipment, such as two printers and a professional 3D scanner, three laptops, and a 4x4 field vehicle.

The official handover ceremony took place on December 15, 2023, in Saint-Louis, in the presence of the Rector, Presidents of the University's Board of Directors, elected representatives of cooperative societies based in the Saint-Louis region, partners, and project holders. This support will promote the use of digital technology to enhance the employability of young people and foster the creation of digital services that can increase the competitiveness of businesses and their connection to markets.



Support for Entrepreneurship and Digital Transformation in the Agricultural Sector in Senegal

As part of strengthening the support capacity of the incubators, WACOMP-Senegal supported Impact Hub Dakar in organizing the Galsen AgriTech Hackathon on December 7th and 8th, 2023. Over 50 registered candidates participated, and a winner was selected for innovative solutions in the preservation of horticultural products such as onions and potatoes.

The systemic approach of WACOMP-Senegal was shared during a panel on agri-tech sector financing, along with its progress and successes. In parallel, Jokkolabs also received support from WACOMP-Senegal for organizing an event focused on youth entrepreneurship during the Global Entrepreneurship Week. The results of WACOMP-Senegal, particularly those related to establishing and operationalizing agricultural cooperative societies for the marketing and processing of mangoes and onions, were presented during a roundtable discussion on supporting agricultural entrepreneurs.

These initiatives reflect the active support of ITC for the development of the agricultural sector in Senegal, particularly driven by young project holders, to enable them to access sustainable business opportunities and decent income.



To learn more about the West Africa Competitiveness Programme visit:

WACOMP ITC



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