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WACOMP Programme Highlights

July 2022 - Issue #10

Regional Component

ECOWAS Trade Promotion Organization Network elects new Executive Bureau at second Annual General Meeting



On 19 and 20 May 2022 the ECOWAS Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Network gathered for its second annual general meeting (AGM) in

Accra, Ghana. Members re-elected Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire for the positions of President and Vice President.

President of the Network, Ezra Yakusak expressed his commitment to expanding outreach and called on members to continue working cohesively by sharing ideas and best practices. Acting Trade Director of the ECOWAS Commission, Kolawole Sofola, emphasized the Network's role in enhancing the region's international recognition, reputation, credibility, and branding by promotion of regional products and services for sustainability.

ITC Executive Director, Pamela Coke-Hamilton, also underscored the role of the TPO Network in amplifying the voice of business in West Africa. "Resilience is what enables economies to withstand external shocks and economies with competitive firms are resilient economies. Therefore, to be resilient, SMEs need strong connections to agile Business Support Organizations such as TPOs, said Coke-Hamilton. More on this story [here](#)

Ahead of the meeting, leaders of the Network's Technical Committees met to decide on the criteria for defining focus areas. Three priority activities for each committee along with ten priority activities for the TPO Network were identified for implementation from 2022 to 2023. The technical committee on Communication and Marketing also gathered and consolidated members feedback on the logo and visual identity under development.

During the AGM, the Network also approved its 2022-2023 workplan and annual budget. Members also initiated preparations to take part in the 2023 Intra-Africa Trade Fair taking place in Côte d'Ivoire.



Secretariat of the ECOWAS TPO Network receives orientation and coaching on knowledge management systems

Members of the ECOWAS TPO Network Secretariat, constituted by staff of the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) attended a coaching and orientation session on roles and responsibilities of the secretariat, as well as relevant tools to support the storage, management and sharing of the Network's information, knowledge, and digital assets. The training held on 24 May 2022 in Abuja and aimed at ensuring sustainability in services provided to businesses across the region.

The session helped in identifying areas in which the Secretariat required upskilling. Staff of the Secretariat also learned to support the storage and management of systems for the Network, as well as the sharing of information, including digital resources, employing user friendly tools.

Ezra Yakusa, CEO of NEPC and President of the ECOWAS TPO Network stated that setting up the organization was the easy part and emphasized the main task of operationalizing the Network. ITC Senior Programmer Officer, Miyoba Lubemba also endorsed the training session as a step towards ensuring sustainability for the Network's Secretariat staff beyond the lifespan of the WACOMP project.



The Federation of West Africa Chambers of Commerce holds 9th General Assembly



The 9th Ordinary General Assembly of the Federation of West Africa Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FEWACCI) took place on 21 to 23 February 2022 in Niamey, Niger.

Chief among issues discussed was the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), the harmonization of business laws in the ECOWAS region and the cross-border agri-food value chain for women-owned businesses. Members also discussed the Good Governance in Companies and Organizations initiative, the benefits of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) to the Private Sector, Digital Transformation 2.0, as well as the FEWACCI Youth Start-up Initiative.

For each discussion, members pursued recommendations to improve the business environment. Members also considered recommendations for updating the Legal Instruments of FEWACCI to enable the organization to consolidate its regional mandate. The Legal analysis received support from ITC and the ECOWAS Commission.

Afreximbank, ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID), Africa Business Council AfBC, and the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) also attended the assembly. A key part of FEWACCI's mandate is to pursue greater involvement of the private sector in policy making decisions to improve the business climate and private investment opportunities.

ITC engages UEMOA and women entrepreneurs on trade obstacles in Senegal and The Gambia



Through its Trade and Market Intelligence team, ITC held workshops in Gambia and Senegal on 16 and 17 June 2022. The workshop sought to understand challenges and gather feedback from women entrepreneurs in their export operations using the Trade Obstacle Alert Mechanism (TOAM).

The workshops were organized in collaboration with the countries respective Ministries of Trade and Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The workshops sought to further collaborative efforts with focal institutions, provide training on the tool and empower women-led businesses to report obstacles on the platform.

CEO of The Gambia Women's Chamber of Commerce, Beatrice Mboge, highlighted the importance of training members to report obstacles using the TOAM as members experience insignificant delays with customs and immigration officials, therefore the platform can help address the

challenges faced by women traders when trading with neighbouring countries.

During the workshops, participants learned about the mobile application soon to be introduced, special focus was placed on its offline mode which will give users with poor connectivity the chance to report obstacles to trade as well.

- More on this story [here](#)
- Meet the women entrepreneurs [here](#)



The workshops in Senegal and Gambia followed a training delivered for representatives from the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) on 22 April 2022. The training presented nine representatives from across the region with updates made to the TOAM platform in 2021.

National focal points of the tool were encouraged to pay keen attention to obstacles reported and swiftly respond with solutions. Use of the TOAM in the region continues to increase public and private sector interaction by

creating a link between public institutions and business through the exchange of information on trade barriers.



National Components

Guinean pineapple exporters tour Moroccan market



Pineapple exporters toured Morocco to gain a better understanding of the market for fresh pineapples as well as identify the best marketing approach for their product. The eight representatives included farmers, processors, by-product traders and a representative from the Guinean Agency of Export Promotion (AGUIPEX).

Representatives toured the National Single Window for Foreign Trade Procedures, the Customs department of the port of Casablanca, the Casablanca Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale Market, the Moroccan Association of Fruit and Vegetable Importers, among others.

Exporters described the tour as essential to understanding international competition as well as international market requirements. CEO of Nenefoexport, a Guinean pineapple produce company, Aminata Kourouma outlined the tour as beneficial in helping exporters identify areas for product improvement and improved export to the country.

“Doing this tour as a group of producers and processors was very beneficial because it allowed us to organize ourselves as a team to better face the market,” said Kourouma.



Guinean small businesses prepare for Trade Fair



Over 20 participants from the public and private sector took part in a four-day training organized in collaboration with COLEACP on 16 to 19 May 2022. The training improved the approaches of key representatives from the pineapple sector to develop a versatile marketing strategy to effectively participate in trade fairs and export pineapples to international markets.

Participants learned to create a visual identity and develop a target strategy for consumers, assess the cost of export for fresh pineapples and thereafter establish a pricing strategy for target countries. As part of the training, small businesses mastered product presentation and displaying for potential buyers, Fatoumata Cissoko found of dried fruits company Jedengui described the workshop as a learning hub that empowers producers and processors to understand market realities and effectively set export prices.

The training comes as part of a three-step programme of activities and ten identified companies will go through additional coaching to improve their visual identity and match international standards.



Reinforcing the mango sector in Casamance



After establishing five cooperative societies from 38 produce organizations in Ziguinchor, Bigogna, the north and south areas of Sédhiou and Kolda regions, ITC's WACOMP Senegal programme held a management and entrepreneurship training.

The Casamance committees of 145 produce organizations learned to establish a cooperative society exclusively for the mango sector. Ahead of the upcoming general assembly, the five cooperative societies attended a training on 16 to 18 June 2022 to continue learning how to set up and manage a cooperative society.

Producers form two major cooperative societies in the Fatick region



After several workshops held in May the region of Fatick is establishing two large cooperative societies to harmonize production processes using a cooperative model. Through an Initiative Committee set up during an initial workshop on 20 and 21 May 2022 in Toubacouta, the WACOMP Senegal in partnership with AGRILUX began establishing these cooperative societies.

Leading up to a workshop held in June, 95 producer organizations grouped in two sub-committees attended two additional trainings in Fimela and Toubacouta. Thereafter, representatives attended a workshop in Foundiougne and compiled proposals and recommendations to create the two overarching cooperative societies in the Fatick region on 9 and 10 June 2022.



Cooperative societies learn to increase production and improve marketing approaches



After local producers of mango and onion received support to form ten cooperative societies in Niayes, the WACOMP Senegal programme identified areas of support to improve marketing of produce in 2022. The ten cooperatives received financial support to attend the FIARA trade fair

in June 2022. Financial actors also mobilized to form an investment and guarantee fund for Senegalese cooperative societies.

A training took place on 28 June to 5 July with 180 participants from the mango cooperatives to learn about fruit fly control and techniques in harvesting. Cooperatives also received equipment for fruit fly control. Prior to the training in July, three webinars took place in April to explore potential means of financing for cooperative societies.

Senegal extends foothold in digital services and products



To improve its IT/BPO export strategy, Senegal with support from ITC designed a value proposition based on examples from seven African countries, namely Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Tunisia, Morocco, and South Africa. The value proposition aims to improve the country's approaches and market competitiveness in digital services and products.

On 1 June 2022, 50 representatives attended a workshop to outline a roadmap and indicate the key elements for inclusion in the value proposition such as product priorities, differentiation, placement, and communication. The ministries of commerce and digital economy,

implementing agencies, SMEs and start-ups were introduced to the "Smart & Safe Senegal" proposal.

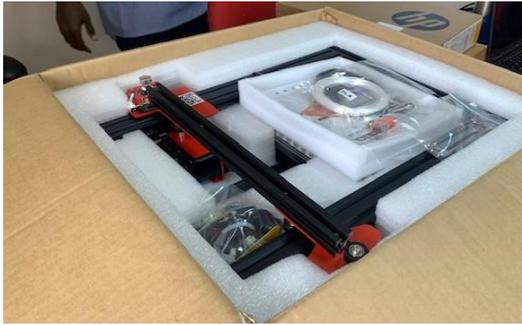
Incubators boost skills in digital tools and proposal writing



The incubators Concree, Jokkolab and CTIC received computer equipment through the WACOMP Senegal programme and attended a three-day workshop on 13 to 15 January 2022 for skills improvement in using digital tools and writing proposals.

This workshop trained 13 staff from CTIC as part of the capacity building activities organized in November 2021 to March 2022 to improve the support affiliated start-ups receive through the incubator. Participants also learned to improve selection and monitoring methods of start-ups.

The WACOMP programme is organizing additional trainings on business terminology in English, agrotech awareness, accounting, and taxation.



To learn more about the West Africa Competitiveness Programme visit:

[WACOMP ITC](#)



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