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WACOMP Programme Highlights

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Regional Component

West Africa Connect 2022 facilitates intra-regional partnerships and over 170 B2B agri-business connections



The second edition of the West Africa Connect took place in Accra, Ghana on 20 and 21 September 2022. Over 100 small businesses, 20 regional and international buyers, as well as trade promotion organizations and business associations from the ECOWAS region representing the mango, cassava, and ICT sectors gathered at the Alisa Hotel along with 53 online participants using the event's hybrid option. Over 170 B2B meetings took place during the two-day event which focused on business in the mango cassava sectors, as well as the ICT sector which is considered an enhancer for agribusiness trade.

Through the event, several businesses were able identify market opportunities

and form partnerships with businesses from other countries to fill these market gaps. Angele Tawari, CEO of Angels Floor an agrifood business that processes and sells mango by-products. based in the Benin Republic partnered with Nigerian Agri-Tech business Kitovu Technology Company.

Through the partnership, Tawari will gain entry to the "WealthX" product which includes her business in the cooperative financing platform to increase finances by saving and incorporating expense management practices. "This event has been a great opportunity to showcase my product and collaborate with key partners, I am glad that my participation at this event has led to a potential opportunity for me to get financing. I look forward to many events like this in the future," she said. The platform will also expand her business opportunities by connecting her to a database of targeted customers, investments opportunities, savings, and capital. Thereafter, she plans to establish a Kitovu agency in Natitingou, Benin.



The event was commissioned by Timothy Dolan representatives of the European Union Delegation to Ghana, Kola Sofola, Acting Director of Trade, ECOWAS Commission, Fakhruddin Azizi, UNIDO Representative to Ghana and Liberia, , and Ruben Phoolchund, Chief of the Office of Africa, ITC. The West Africa Connect 2022 is an event organized by the West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) to facilitate links between suppliers and buyers to boost regional investments and partnerships.

Participants engaged in discussions on opportunities for regional trade during panel discussions on export potential, digitalization, quality, investment, gender inclusion and product certification. Regional products in the cassava and mango sectors (including gari, acheke, dried mango, mango juice, etc) were also displayed at the event's exhibition booths for participating businesses and institutional representatives. At the end of the event, the West Africa Connect platform remained open for an additional 8 days giving companies the opportunity to continue meeting, matching and trading online at westafricaconnect.com.



Small businesses reap the benefits of ICT trade fair by securing investments



On 30 May to 2 June 2022, ITC supported nine enterprises in the ICT sector from Senegal, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Togo to attend the SITIC Africa

international trade fair. The trade fair which is focused on Information and Communication technologies took place in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. This year businesses learned the most recent developments in 5G, discussed “the internet of things,” and explored big data and industry 4.0.

Ivorian business Resomatick held 105 B2B meetings with international buyers and secured interest in investment from up to 5 buyers. Three out of the nine participating businesses confirmed receiving expressions of interest for investment. At the exhibition, the WACOMP booth was also visited by the Ministers of Digitization from Côte d'Ivoire and Tunisia.

Participating businesses took the opportunity to learn about the Ivorian market and seek out opportunities for possible synergies and partnerships with local businesses.

Find highlights from the WACOMP delegation at the SITIC Africa trade fair [here](#).



West African fashion businesses present spring-summer 2023 collections at trade fairs



Fashion businesses CM by Cindy Monteiro based in Cabo Verde, Bazem'se from Burkina Faso, and Cotton Loops based in Nigeria attended the Pure London, New York Now and Impact Paris fashion trade fairs.

CM by Cindy Monteiro received interest in her complete catalogue from international buyers and met between 40 to 60. The business' garments also featured several times during the runway show and peaked buyers interest. Bazem'se also reported similar outcomes garnering 40 to 60 potential leads after meeting with up to 60 international buyers. The Burkinabé business employs women based in rural areas to weave and transform fabric through dyeing. Bazem'se is also committed to promoting local materials using an innovative process.

Cotton Loops received interest from 53 buyers and engaged with 97 contacts during the fairs and reported a total value projection above \$7,500. Founded by Bolupe Adebiji, Cotton Loops is a sustainable and ethical high street womenswear fashion brand. It's edgy, minimal, comfortable aesthetic and iconic 'dress with pockets' has made the brand an instant favourite in over 25 countries around the world in only a few years since its launch.

Prior to attending these trade fairs, the fashion businesses took part in several

WACOMP training sessions in 2021 supporting fashion entrepreneurs to improve in areas such as export marketing.

Mango, Cassava, Textile and ICT regional investment profiles go live on ITC website



ITC has developed four regional investment profiles to boost foreign direct investment (FDI) in West Africa. The profiles were developed to improve exchange of data and information between West African countries and international investors. The profiles look at the mango, cassava, textile and ICT value chains and give an analysis of the most lucrative investment opportunities. Investors will benefit from a guided look at the region's investment climate, a breakdown of the latest market research and have contact information of national representatives linked to the three sectors. The investment profiles also empower the public and private sector to identify and channel investment to the select value chains.

Developed with support from the ECOWAS Commission, the regional investment profiles and brochures aim to increase value-chain investments and boost intra-regional trade by providing targeted data and information on the identified value chains.

The profiles and brochures are now available [here](#).

National Components

Cooperatives and associations in Sierra Leone's cocoa, cassava and palm oil sectors hone governance and service delivery skills



After an assessment conducted in 2021 to explore the governance and service portfolio delivery capabilities of identified cooperatives and farmers associations, ITC held a training on 29 June to 1 July 2022 focused on three thematic areas. These included the effective governance framework, strengthening leadership and strategic vision, planning and service portfolio design methodology. 20 participants from the three sectors learned key strategic leadership and service delivery practices to integrate as well as effective member management approaches during the three-day training in Kenema, Sierra Leone.

The training provided cooperatives with solutions to identified weaknesses based on findings from the assessment conducted in 2021 by ITC. The WACOMP Sierra Leone programme continues to equip these cooperatives to ensure farmers in remote locations of the country continue to benefit from the efforts of

these associations to mobilize and ensure they have access to services and information.

SME, cooperative, and farmer associations seek to improve exports in Sierra Leone's cocoa, cassava and palm oil sectors



In a bid to increase the competitiveness of Sierra Leone's exports in the Cocoa, Cassava and Palm Oil sectors, 35 SME, cooperative, and farmer organisations and cooperatives attended a training in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The introductory capacity building training covered export capacity, value addition and product diversification and was held from 12 to 14 July 2022.

Representatives from the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDA), Sierra Leone Chamber for Agribusiness Development (SLECAD), and the Cooperatives Department of the Ministry of Trade and Industry also attended the event. Organizations attending ran assessments to identify gaps and areas in need of strengthening using group and interactive activities. Placing an interest in pursuing sustainable practices, organizations also took part in environmental waste management, supply chain management and efficient cultivation activities.

The export focused training was held as part of a series seeking to develop the

institutional capabilities of cooperatives and improve their productivity, expand market access and entry opportunities as well as export capabilities.

Digital tools enhance young entrepreneurs projects in Senegal



Through the Innovation Hubs Support Programme and WACOMP Senegal programme, incubators have begun using digital tools to enhance young entrepreneurs' projects. The digital equipment was received by several incubators including Jokkolabs and Impact Hub Dakar.

Entrepreneurs have built working tools through the 3D printer at Impact Hub Dakar to enhance their projects. The technological equipment is also set up at the hub to increase involvement and equip young entrepreneurs with high-performance digital equipment to bring project ideas to life. The equipment was also used to train young entrepreneurs in the Thies region and establish an ecosystem of users.

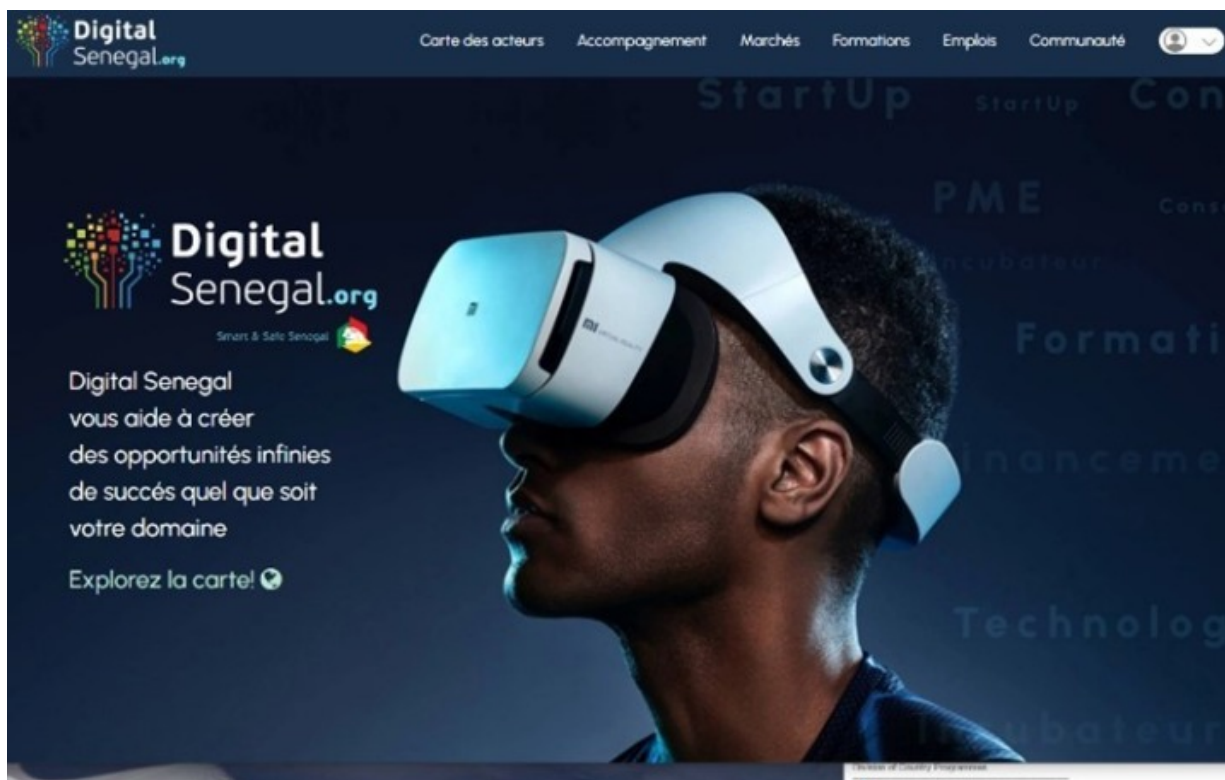
Senegal moves to take up space in Africa's digital ecosystem



The WACOMP Senegal programme held a workshop on 1 June 2022 following several collaborative working sessions to establish a strong technological hub in Senegal. During the workshop key stakeholders from the country's digital sector discussed the proposed slogan "Smart & Safe Senegal" as well as the visual elements representing the slogan.

50 representatives from the ministries of trade and digital economy as well as the European Commission's Directorate-General for the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection also contributed towards the workshop's discussions. Stakeholders agreed to create a framework for complementary working mechanisms, draft a roadmap outlining the roadmap's implementation approach and to ensure robust participation from the country's private and public tech sector.

Platform set to unify and boost information sharing in Senegal



After several consultative workshops, WACOMP Senegal alongside local partners is set to launch a digital platform to serve as a one-stop shop streamlining information on the country's tech sector. www.digitalsenegal.org will support start-ups with advice, training, and financial support.

The platform also includes a space for users to interact and share information as well as updates. The platform will be launched by the year's end following stakeholders' agreement on its legal status, objectives, and sustainability.

Senegal strengthens digital sector through dual programme for young graduates

Through the dual learning programme, students study ICT subjects and work as interns simultaneously. The experience aims to successfully integrate them into Senegal's workforce. The dual learning programme is managed by two local companies, SenStartup and OPTIC.

Together, they aim to train 100 youth through seven partnerships that have been established in support of this programme. With the first candidates already identified by the partnering organisations, interest is continuing to grow for the learning programme with more schools and companies expressing interest to join the programme.

WACOMP Senegal establishes cooperative societies in more regions



Continuing its activities in Senegal's Mango and Onion sectors of Casamance Naturelle, River Valley and Fatick regions, WACOMP Senegal is advancing towards its goal of engaging and training 30 multi-sector cooperatives in business. So far, 1870 producers based in Casamance working in the mango industry have received business training. A further 621 producers in Foundiougne and Fatick organized awareness-raising across nine municipalities along Senegal's River Valley.

In September and October 2022, the Constituent General Assemblies from 15 new cooperative societies from these three regions will rally bringing the number of cooperative societies up to 25. A further four groups are expected to band together in the Niayes area namely, Saint Louis, Fatick, Matam and Natural Casamance area towards the year's end.

Cooperative societies in Niayes receive equipment and training to boost production in Senegal's mango sector

In its continued support of cooperative societies in Senegal, the WACOMP Senegal programme took 148 mango farmers through five practical training sessions between 28 June and 5 July 2022. Led by the Directorate of Plant

Protection (DPV) alongside a hygiene and quality expert of horticultural produce, the trainings provided farmers from five cooperatives in Niayes with techniques to harvest mango as well as effective pest control measures such as fruit flies.

Thereafter, on 22 to 23 August 2022, ten mango-producing cooperatives received 120 personal protective equipment (PPE) including helmets, gloves, coveralls, and boots and 20 backpack sprayers. Once an additional 20 cooperatives are established in Fatick, Casamance naturelle and Vallée du Fleuve Sénégal, the programme will provide equipment to boost these cooperatives as well.

Five cooperatives attend agricultural trade fair in Senegal

During the 22nd edition of the FIARA agricultural trade fair in Senegal, five cooperatives were supported by the WACOMP Senegal programme to attend and exhibit their products. The cooperatives attended the fair from 26 May to 20 June 2022 and also took part in five B2B meetings with potential partners to explore prospective opportunities for collaboration.

To learn more about the West Africa Competitiveness Programme visit:

WACOMP ITC



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