



West Africa Regional Economic Bulletin | October 2022

Dear Colleagues, Partners, and Friends,

In this month's edition, we highlight the swearing-in of our new Mission Director Jo Lesser-Oltheten by USAID Administrator Samantha Power. Mission Director Lesser-Oltheten will lead a Mission with a robust portfolio of activities that address critical challenges in climate and agriculture, strengthen health services and systems, preserve biodiversity, and improve private sector productivity, profitability, and competitiveness across the sub-region while also supporting peaceful democratic processes. This edition also highlights our partnerships to enhance food security, preserve wildlife and mitigate climate change, improve trade and promote economic growth, and support clean energy transitions.

You can view this month's edition on our website as well as stay abreast with [previous editions](#).

Enjoy, and continue to stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Matthew Anderson

Office Director

USAID/West Africa | Regional Economic Growth Office (REGO)

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THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS

USAID/West Africa Mission Director sworn in by USAID Administrator Samantha Power



USAID/West Africa Mission Director, Jo Lesser-Oltheten, delivers remarks following her swearing in. Photo Credit: Oswald Suonbai-kyi

Accra, Ghana, October 12: USAID Administrator Samantha Power formally swore in the new USAID/West Africa Mission Director, Jo Lesser-Oltheten in a hybrid ceremony held both in-person in Accra and attended virtually by USAID staff in Washington, Yaounde, Cotonou, and Abidjan.

The virtual participants included USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator Janean Davis (former Deputy Mission Director for USAID/Ghana); while in-person participants included U.S. Ambassador to Ghana, Virginia E. Palmer, USAID/WA Deputy Mission Director, Greg Howell, and USAID/Ghana Mission Director, Kimberly Rosen along with USAID staff in Accra.

Mission Director Lesser-Oltheten will be leading programs that cover 21 countries in the region to address critical challenges in climate and agriculture, strengthen health services and systems, preserve biodiversity, improve private sector productivity, profitability, and competitiveness across the sub-region and support peaceful democratic processes.

As part of the broader USAID West Africa portfolio, she will lead teams in the critical task of supporting regional, national and local stakeholders across the Sahel and Coastal West African countries to ensure peaceful elections and political processes, and help host governments and civil society counterparts mitigate conflict triggers before they escalate into violence.

Mission Director Lesser-Oltheten has served for over twenty-five years in Asia and Africa. She has served in Uganda, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mali, Guinea, and Niger. Her portfolios have included food security, disaster and humanitarian assistance, economic growth, and education.

USAID and the Economic Community of West Africa Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) Train Businesses on International Trade



Participants at the workshop in Lomé. Photo credit: ECOWAS

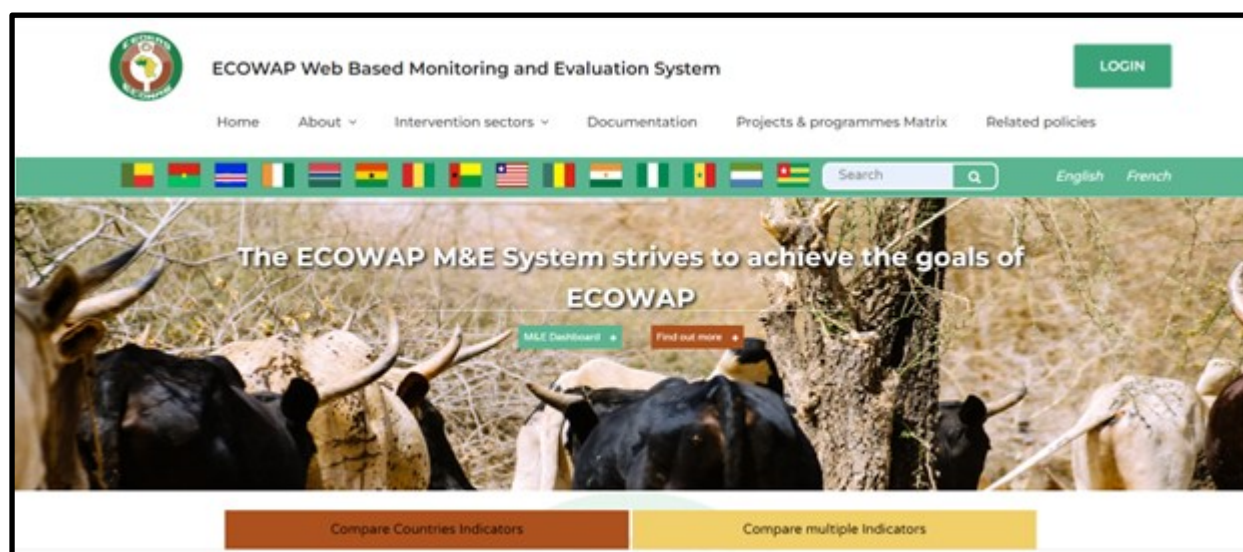
Lomé, Togo, September 21: The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Economic Community of West Africa Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) organized a capacity building workshop in Togo on the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Supported by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Togo (CCI-T), the workshop trained 42 participants, including 20 women, eager to explore the business opportunities and requirements of the US market.

During this workshop, participants were taken through AGOA's objectives and benefits, the Act's requirements, and export procedures for products. They also explored country eligibility, product eligibility criteria, and the value of products exported via AGOA. The team encouraged participants to explore the opportunities AGOA offers, and invited the exporters to group exports to achieve greater

quantities of goods in order to be more competitive in the US market. The mechanism also generates significant savings for importers.

The workshop recommended a community of practice to support the businesses and share experiences and opportunities. The AGOA Desk Officer at the CCI-T created a WhatsApp group as a platform to share relevant information and best practices between participants and companies that are already exporting to the US market. In addition to the producers and exporters, the platform includes professional transport and logistics companies such as FedEx and Nova Link Logistics who are ready to assist the exporters.

USAID Supports the Automated Monitoring and Evaluation System for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)



Screenshot of the ECOWAP Monitoring and Evaluation interface

With the support of USAID West Africa, the Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has automated its Monitoring and Evaluation system to serve as a common tool for data collection, analysis and reporting.

This automated system will increase the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation system of the Economic Community of West Africa Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP).

Currently, 70 key stakeholders, including regional institutions, agriculture officials in the ECOWAS region and staff of the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the Directorate of Agriculture and Rural Development have been trained and are ready to use the system. This achievement is a major step towards better governance of ECOWAP and the agricultural sector in the region.

Click [here](#) to watch the video and [explore the site](#).

USAID, Power Africa, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Discuss Energy Transitions Towards Mitigating Climate Change



USAID, Power Africa, and ECOWAS representatives at the Regional Energy Roundtable. Photo Credit: Power Africa

Accra, Ghana, October 6: The Power Africa Coordinator, Mark Carrato and his delegation, including Deputy Coordinator David Thompson and Development Assistance Specialist Samson Masebinu, met with leaders and representatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) energy institutions to discuss their roles in implementing the region's energy transition from fossil fuel-based energy systems to a low carbon system.

Africa is a minor contributor to the global emission rate, however, the continent has not been spared the ravages of climate change. ECOWAS and the energy institutions are working towards mitigating the adverse effects of energy generation activities. The meeting discussed approaches, achievements and challenges to accelerating West Africa's energy transition, while advancing universal electricity access and the role of civil society organizations in energy transition. It also highlighted Power Africa's commitment to helping the region pursue its goal of universal access to energy in a sustainable manner.

Attendees included USAID/West Africa Regional Mission Director, Jo Lesser-Oltheten, representatives from the West Africa Energy Program (WAEP), the West African Power Pool (WAPP), the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA), the ECOWAS Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE), and the Africa Center for Energy Policy.

The West Africa Trade and Investment Hub (WATIH) Highlights Gender Strides at USAID Women’s Economic Empowerment Community of Practice (WEE CoP) Event



WATIH female beneficiaries weaving crafts for export. Photo Credit: WATIH

October 4: The USAID Women’s Economic Empowerment Community of Practice (USAIDWEE CoP) hosted its quarterly learning event focused on women’s economic empowerment and trade on the theme “The Nexus of Trade and Gender Equality.”

The virtual event included presentations on President Biden’s 2022 Trade Policy Agenda, which described the Office of the United States Trade Representative’s work to implement the Biden Administration’s trade priorities and advance a worker-centered trade policy. The event also focused on the World Bank and World Trade Organization’s [2020 report on Women and Trade](#), which aims to improve the understanding of the relationship between trade and gender equality and identify opportunities where women can benefit from trade. Drawing 152 attendees, the event included a panel discussion with representatives from the International Trade Centre (ITC), USAID/West Africa, and the West Africa Trade and Investment Hub (WATIH).

The representatives from WATIH discussed the significant gender gap that exists, despite the integral role women play in economic growth. For instance, women and youth access to land, finance, technology adoption and other factors of production continue to be a challenge. Traditional and religious norms that do not allow women to work outside their homes still remain a challenge in some communities. Also,

insecurity in the West Africa Region due to terrorist attacks further imposes restrictions on women's mobility since families will not allow their daughters and wives to go out and work for fear of being attacked. The team highlighted USAID's key activities to bridge this gap through WATIH. WATIH ensures that its activities promote economic growth and gender equality by making it mandatory that all program proposals have at least 50 percent women and 50 percent youth inclusion; establish processes for partners' accountability concerning gender and youth in their activities and reporting; and promote community engagement on creating supportive environments for women and youth to actively engage in entrepreneurship.

Celebrating World Tourism Day: The West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED) Program Hosts a Podcast on Ecotourism



Ec lodge at the Tacugama Wildlife Sanctuary. Photo Credit: Tacugama Wildlife Sanctuary

World Tourism Day, September 27: The West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED) program hosted a podcast to highlight ecotourism in West Africa on the theme for this year's World Tourism Day, 'Rethinking Tourism'.

WABiLED's core goals are combating wildlife trafficking (CWT) and conservation of great apes; reducing deforestation, forest degradation and biodiversity loss; and promoting low emissions development.

WABiLED's new grantees, the Tacugama Wildlife Sanctuary, Sierra Leone and Libassa Wildlife Sanctuary, Liberia, shared key insights on the ecotourism approach to conserving and promoting West Africa's key biodiversity. These wildlife sanctuaries work to rehabilitate and reintroduce animals that

were kept as pets or abandoned back into the wild. They also do research, environmental education, advocacy, and undertake ecotourism activities to support conservation efforts and benefit the communities. Some of their ecotourism activities include sanctuary tours and birdwatching tours.

Listen to the [podcast](#) on ecotourism potentials in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and West Africa at large.

USAID/West Africa Regional Trade Team Holds a Roundtable Discussion on Trade Localization



Screenshot of Panelists at the Roundtable. Photo Credit: REGO

September 28: The USAID/West Africa Regional Trade Team held a virtual roundtable event to discuss localization in trade and investment interventions in West Africa. The meeting aimed to explore strategies that will gradually position aid and support in a manner that will render trade systems more resilient to emerging shocks.

In her opening remarks, the US Ambassador to Togo, Elizabeth Fitzsimmons, reiterated the US government's commitment to work with host country governments, partners, and the people towards enhancing the dynamics of doing business in West Africa to improve trade, security, health, education, and other areas in a more sustainable manner.

A series of presentations addressed program design towards localizing West African trade and demonstrated the importance of identifying and understanding the stakeholders in a project for long-term sustainability. This helps to identify the roles of potential partners who will be critical to the success of the project and the strategy for developing local capacity.

As a key takeaway from the discussions, West Africa needs a program design model that will move trade towards localization, diversifying production and increasing import substitution. The drive towards localization requires the formalization of small businesses, and the building of networks for capacity strengthening. It also requires the consultation of local communities in needs assessment to inform policies. This should be done at every stage of the project to make a sustainable impact.

Read the roundtable white paper [here](#).

Call for Expressions of Interest (EOIs): Facilitators for Monitoring and Evaluation and Communication Webinars

The Analytical Support Services and Evaluations for Sustainable Systems (ASSESS) Project is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from experienced individuals as facilitators for upcoming Capacity Building Workshops for Monitoring and Evaluation and Communication specialists.

Deadline for submissions is November 18, 2022.

Access detailed EOIs for [Monitoring and Evaluation](#) and [Communication](#).

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This newsletter is compiled by the USAID West Africa Analytical Support Services and Evaluations for Sustainable Systems (ASSESS) Project.