



West Africa Regional Economic Bulletin | April 2023

Dear Colleagues, Partners, and Friends,

We bring you tidings from West Africa and updates on our recent activities. This month, we share highlights of our work with our partners to promote food security and sustainability; protect and preserve wildlife; improve power and energy systems; and advance business sustainability. Our partnerships help support conservation efforts, increase business opportunities, and improve livelihoods.

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

Celebrating International Day of Forests on “Forests and Health: A Path to Recovery and Well-being.”



The Managing Director of Liberia's FDA planting a tree outside Buchanan City Hall in Liberia. Photo credit: CILSS

Liberia, March 21, 2023: With funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED) and the Liberia Conservation Works Activity (CWA) embarked on a four-day awareness and outreach campaign to spread this year's International Day of Forests (IDF) message, “Forests and Health: a path to recovery and well-being.”

The four-day road trip started on March 21, 2023, at Buchanan City Hall in Liberia with a team of officials from the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and the Eddie Theatre Production cultural performers and dramatists. The event also included a tree planting activity and visits to various conservation sites.

Liberia is home to 42 percent of the remaining Upper Guinean Forest Ecosystem in West Africa. With this richness comes high levels of tropical forest biodiversity ranging from endangered forest elephants, western chimpanzees, pygmy hippos, and rare floral species including the African ebony (*Diospyros gracilis*), and the African mahogany (*Entandrophragma and Khaya*). Read more [here](#).

Power Africa Drives a Connected Power System in West Africa



An electrical substation in Kamakwie, Sierra Leone; part of the CLSG interconnection line. Photo Credit: Power Africa

Power Africa supported the signing of power purchase agreements and transmission service agreements for electricity sharing through the Côte d'Ivoire–Liberia–Sierra Leone–Guinea (CLSG) energy interconnection project. The project is bringing together these four countries to share electricity that will benefit 20 million people. Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea, where connectivity rates are low, can now import power at a lower cost from neighboring Cote d'Ivoire.

Power Africa also provided infrastructure-related technical support and conducted a series of training and workshops in project management, operating standards and procedures, business operations, and monitoring and evaluation, with plans to deliver future training on

the use of geographic information systems. The training was provided to staff of the Project Management Unit (PMU) of the CLSG Secretariat.

In regions near the transmission lines, CLSG enabled more than 96,000 connections in more than 100 localities. Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea may eventually be able to import power at a rate as low as \$0.13/kWh, as opposed to the previous average cost of domestically generated power of up to \$0.50/kWh (depending on the locality). The CLSG interconnector may also enable the power importers to replace thermal power generators, such as diesel plants, that are high greenhouse gas emitters.

CLSG is part of the larger West African Power Pool (WAPP) effort to develop an electricity market across West Africa. Power Africa works closely with WAPP to allow all countries to benefit from economies of scale in power production.

USAID Evaluates Five-Year Agricultural Program in West Africa



A group photograph of participants at the learning event. Photo Credit: CORAF

Dakar, Senegal, April 3-6, 2023: USAID and the West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (known by its French acronym as CORAF) organized a learning event and co-creation workshop to discuss the findings and recommendations from the evaluation of the Partnership for Agricultural Research, Education, and Development (PAIRED) program. PAIRED, a five-year USAID program implemented by CORAF, was designed to increase the availability of quality seeds and scale up proven agricultural technologies to improve the agricultural sector in West Africa.

The hybrid workshop brought together representatives and stakeholders in the West African seed sector such as ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS, CORAF, AGRA, USAID, as well as private sector

seed and national agricultural research institutes to discuss the evaluation findings, followed by a co-creation workshop to reflect on next steps in designing USAID/West Africa's future seed and agri-input programming. The event created a platform for collaboration and knowledge sharing which is critical for the success of any development initiative. Agriculture is the backbone of many West African economies, and improving the sector is crucial for economic growth, food security, and poverty reduction in the region.

The event highlighted the role of partnerships in development, and the significant milestones the PAIRED program has achieved in improving the agricultural sector in the region. The event also created a platform for designing effective programming to advance the region's agricultural sector partnerships, building institutional capacity, and a systemic approach to development, all of which are essential for sustainable and inclusive development in West Africa.

The West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED) Makes Strides in Combating Wildlife Crime



Participants at the needs assessment workshop held in Côte d'Ivoire. Photo Credit: WABiLED

The USAID-funded West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED) program is engaging the financial, transport, and law enforcement sectors in West Africa as part of the program's mandate to combat wildlife trafficking. Between October 2022 and March 2023, WABiLED has held workshops focusing on assessing the needs of these sectors and raising awareness on their respective roles in combating wildlife crimes. To date, the workshops have been held in Ghana, Liberia, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire, with a larger regional workshop coming soon.

Wildlife crime is a global menace, often overlooked, and affecting regions all over the world. In West Africa it remains a particularly challenging problem, with a significant negative impact on the region's wildlife populations and biodiversity. To combat wildlife crime effectively, a holistic approach is needed involving various stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies, policymakers, non-governmental organizations, and financial institutions. To help mitigate this issue, WABiLED has been working closely with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and national governments in the region to conduct national and regional training workshops for transport, financial, and law enforcement institutions to raise awareness and build capacity to combat illegal wildlife trade. Read more [here](#).

The Connect and Learn for Sustainable Associations (CLOSA) Project Develops Knowledge Product for Private Sector Associations in the Agriculture Sector in West Africa



Cover of the Knowledge Product for Agriculture Sector Associations. Photo credit: HSDF

The USAID-funded Connect and Learn for Sustainable Associations (CLOSA) Project has developed a new knowledge product for Agriculture Sector associations in Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal. The knowledge product titled '*Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement: Potential Opportunities and Roles of Associations in the Agriculture Sector*' aims to enlighten actors on the potential opportunities of the AfCFTA Agreement and how associations can position themselves (and their members) to maximize these opportunities towards achieving commercial viability and financial sustainability.

The resource also highlights potential market opportunities for the agricultural sector, which exceeds \$30 billion in key commodities such as sugar, rice and rubber. The product will help strengthen the sector by enhancing regional integration and support the development of the African continent.

CLOSA hosted a webinar on Thursday April 20, 2023, to further engage private sector associations within its network on how to make the most of the information contained in the knowledge product using context specific case studies and connect associations with private sector experts to provide coaching and mentoring on specific topics such as supply chain management, product development and branding.

Register Now for Shea Day 2023 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.



The banner features a background image of a diverse audience seated in a conference hall. The text is overlaid on this image. In the top right corner, the Global Shea Alliance logo is displayed, consisting of the text 'Global Shea Alliance' and a circular icon with a map of Africa and arrows. The main title 'SHEA 2023' is in large, bold, white letters. Below it, the subtitle 'BUILDING RESILIENT SUPPLY CHAINS' is in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. To the left of the dates, there is a white calendar icon. The dates '12th - 14th June 2023' and the location 'Radisson Blu Hotel, Airport, Abidjan' are listed in white text. A large green banner across the middle contains the text 'REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!' in white, bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom left, there are social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter, followed by the text 'globalshea'. At the bottom right, the website 'www.globalshea.com' is listed.

Global Shea Alliance

SHEA 2023

BUILDING RESILIENT SUPPLY CHAINS

12th - 14th June 2023
Radisson Blu Hotel, Airport, Abidjan

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

globalshea

www.globalshea.com

We are delighted to announce that registration for Shea 2023 is now OPEN! The conference, 'Building Resilient Supply Chains' will be held from June 12-14, 2023, at the Radisson Blu Hotel, Airport in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. [Register here](#). You can find more information about the conference [here](#).

The Analytical Support Services and Evaluations for Sustainable Systems (ASSESS) Hosts Virtual Workshops on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and Communication



A collection of participant business cards from the workshops. Photo Credit: ASSESS

March 21-29, 2023: The Analytical Support Services and Evaluations for Sustainable Systems (ASSESS) project organized virtual capacity building workshops in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and Communications for implementing partners (IPs) of the Regional Economic Growth Office (REGO) of USAID/West Africa. The workshop brought together over 90 participants, over four days, from various projects and programs in Ghana, Nigeria, Benin, and Cameroon.

These workshops, the first in a series, discussed Key Concepts, Approaches and Methods in Monitoring and Evaluation; Communication Concepts, Advocacy, and Development Communication, to enhance the capacities of IPs.

In a sampling of participant expectations at the beginning of the workshops, participants indicated that they were looking to enhance their capacities; contextualize policies for their organizations and respond appropriately to their needs; scale up on the quality of their work; apply the various MEL and communication approaches; and develop tools to capture relevant data for improvement of their projects and programs.

Participants' feedback at the end of the sessions indicated that they had acquired knowledge relevant to their work, the content and quality of instruction was satisfactory, and overall, their expectations were met, and they looked forward to the next sessions.

This series of virtual workshops by ASSESS are to complement the existing training provided directly by USAID. The ASSESS team is hosting the second MEL Workshop from May 10-11.

Click [here](#) to register. Registration closes on May 3, 2023.

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