



West Africa Regional Economic Bulletin | June 2023

Dear Colleagues, Partners, and Friends,

Greetings from West Africa. In this newsletter we aim to provide notable updates regarding our collaborative efforts in the realms of enhancing food security and sustainability, bolstering power and energy systems, and driving business sustainability. Through strategic partnerships, we actively contribute to conservation initiatives, foster greater business prospects, and enhance overall livelihoods.

For your convenience, you can access the current edition of our newsletter on our website, where you will also find an archive of [previous editions](#).

We hope you find this information enriching. We extend our wishes for your continued well-being and safety.

Sincerely,

Matthew Anderson

Office Director

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

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THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS

USAID Supports 'Building Resilient Supply Chains' through the Sustainable Shea Initiative (SSI)



Deputy Chief of Mission, Joann M. Lockard meeting exhibitors at the Expo. Photo credit: GSA

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, June 12: The [Global Shea Alliance \(GSA\)](#) held its Annual Conference, Shea 2023, themed 'Building Resilient Supply Chains', with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Sustainable Shea Initiative. The conference brought together experts, manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and women shea collectors to discuss the current trends and growth of the industry.

The United States' Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Joann M. Lockard, delivered remarks at the opening ceremony acknowledging the hardworking women collectors who play a vital role in collecting and processing shea. She urged all present to take steps to help preserve shea trees, as shea is an important source of income for women in the region. The Deputy Chief of Mission visited the Shea Expo where vendors and businesses showcased their goods to enable small producers to establish business connections within the global shea industry and promote their products.

The three-day event hosted more than 400 participants who gained valuable insights from the diverse range of presenters. More than 250 small businesses and private sector partners engaged in Business-to-Business networking sessions facilitated by the GSA. Approximately 130 start-ups and small businesses attended training sessions. Delegates also visited the Port of Abidjan to get a better understanding of the logistic process and how to optimize shipping within supply chains. This year, the conference introduced the Cooperative Corner, providing women's cooperatives from different countries an opportunity to share knowledge and ideas.

The GSA is committed to addressing declining tree populations by protecting existing trees and encouraging planting. It continues to advocate for the promotion of industry sustainability, good practices, high standards, and the increase of demand for shea in food and cosmetics.

USAID Supports the Development of Fertilizer and Soil Health Roadmap for West African Countries



The president of Togo and other high level officials at the event. Photo credit: IFDC

Lomé, Togo, May 30-31: The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) convened a high-level roundtable to adopt a region-specific fertilizer and soil health roadmap for West Africa and the Sahel in preparation for the African Union Fertilizer and

Soil Health Summit. The event hosted 300 participants from donor organizations as well as public and private sector actors in the fertilizer industry.

The roadmap, developed within the framework of the African Union's action plan for Africa on fertilizer and soil health, encompasses 12 priority actions for the region to improve soil fertility and health to increase crop productivity and increase food security.

Experts from the World Bank and the Feed the Future Enhancing Growth through Regional Agricultural Input Systems (EnGRAIS) Project for West Africa, funded by USAID and implemented by the International Fertilizer Development Center, provided technical support to ECOWAS to develop the roadmap.

Ministers in charge of agriculture and finance from 17 countries in the region, led by President Faure Essouzimna Gnassingbé of Togo, together with President Mohammed Bazoum of Niger and President Umaro Sissoco Embaló of Guinea-Bissau, committed to implementing the roadmap through a declaration read by the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Dr. Omar Alieu Touray.

The declaration pledged to remove all barriers to free movement of mineral and organic fertilizers in the region, invest more in the soil health programs and triple nutrient application on the soil by 2035.

During the roundtable, the World Bank Group pledged its commitment to support policy reform to improve soil health and strengthen the fertilizer sector regarding subsidy management, quality control, and traceability while also promoting green fertilizer production.

Click [here](#) to read the draft declaration and roadmap.

USAID Commends CILSS on 50th Anniversary and Spearheads Call for Sustainable Financing



Group photo of participants. Photo Credit: CILSS

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, June 15 - The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) joined global leaders and key stakeholders in celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS). As Chair of the CILSS Technical and Financial Partners, USAID took the opportunity to underscore the critical importance of sustainable financing for the future success of CILSS and its vital initiatives.

The former vice President of Niger and Ambassador for CILSS' anniversary, Dr. Mayaki, highlighted the shared commitment of partners towards charting a sustainable path for CILSS.

For five decades, CILSS has played a significant role as a leading institution in the areas of food security and agro-climate issues, providing invaluable services to development partners, member states, and inter-governmental organizations. However, the current landscape necessitates a paradigm shift to ensure CILSS' financial sustainability and USAID, as a longstanding partner of CILSS, recognized the need for innovative financing mechanisms that could empower CILSS to achieve a sustainable future. The approval of comprehensive organizational and institutional reforms for CILSS during the Heads of State and Government Conference in July 2020 served as a significant milestone in the collective efforts to implement strong measures that ensure CILSS can secure the resources it requires independently.

USAID Facilitates Intra-regional Trade Within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Sahel Region



Participants in a laboratory observation and identification session in Nigeria. Photo Credit: ECOWAS

USAID supported 15 pilot workshops to improve plant quarantine systems, including border quarantine operations, for safe trade in 17 countries (the 15 ECOWAS countries plus Chad and Mauritania). This initiative is in line with regional priorities and continued efforts by the United States Department of Agriculture–Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA-FAS) and USAID in West Africa and the Sahel.

This effort follows a regional workshop in June 2019 organized by USDA-FAS on “Phytosanitary Inspection and Decision-making” to support the implementation of the Regional Taskforce Action Plan developed on the basis of recommendations from previous Trade Africa initiative activities. An important outcome of the workshop was to develop a harmonized phytosanitary inspection and decision-making guide to help strengthen and harmonize the conduct of border quarantine operations in the region. This guide is a tool and opportunity to fast-track regional harmonization of phytosanitary inspection procedures in order to facilitate intra-regional and international safe trade.

Between 2020 and 2023, the series of 15 training sessions trained 335 phytosanitary inspectors and equipped them with inspection kits. The sessions also resulted in reduced export rejection (for mango in particular); joint collaboration and improved border inspections; a technical [document](#); and a regional platform of inspectors established for real-time exchanges and experience sharing.

Power Africa Fosters Regional Collaboration and Trade in the Power Sector of The Gambia River Basin



An aerial shot of the solar plant part of the OMVG Energy Project. Photo Credit: WAEP

[Power Africa](#) has inaugurated a shared electricity network with [Senegal](#) and The Gambia in line with its goal to expand the supply of and access to affordable and reliable electricity services.

Senegal, Gambia, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau comprise the Gambia River Basin Development Organization (OMVG) for which Power Africa supported the development of transmission services agreements. In addition to the agreements, Power Africa developed operations, maintenance, and monitoring best practices to align the grid codes of the two countries (Senegal and The Gambia). At the same time, Power Africa worked closely with the OMVG project management unit to provide training and roadmaps in reporting, data control systems, information sharing, social safeguards, and community engagement during line construction and maintenance.

The two countries' utilities signed a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) through a newly constructed transmission line within the scope of the OMVG Energy Project. The two utilities agreed to a tariff import rate of \$0.15 per kilowatt hour (kWh), about half of the prevailing average generation cost. Power Africa's work with OMVG has resulted in at least 60,000 connections in the country across more than 300 villages in the vicinity of the Soma and Brikama substations.

In addition Gambia is pushing to diversify power generation through clean energy sources such as solar, lowering the demand and use for local fossil fuel such as heavy fuel oil for power generation and leading to a reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions.

Furthermore, the interconnection bolsters the ECOWAS West African Power Pool (WAPP) goal of developing a unified regional electricity market.

The West Africa Trade and Investment Hub (WATIH) and Partners Collaborate to Beat Plastic Pollution



Heaps of crushed plastic bottles ready for recycling at Coliba Africa's collection site in Abidjan. Photo Credit: WATIH

June 7, 2023: To commemorate World Environment Day, the West Africa Trade and Investment Hub (WATIH) hosted a webinar "[#BeatPlasticPollution](#): The Trade Hub co-investment partners implementing smart actions to tackle plastic pollution in West Africa". Speakers from two co-investment partners—Coliba Africa and Global Mamas—and the Trade Hub's Environmental Compliance team discussed co-investment partnerships to support initiatives for environmentally friendly production, plastic collection and recycling, and building climate change resilience in West Africa.

Over 80 participants joined the webinar and engaged with speakers on measures to reduce single-use plastic waste, promote recycling, and build production models that are sustainable from the product concept to the point of sale. Participants also learned simple changes they could implement in their daily lives to support the movement to minimize plastic pollution and preserve the natural environment.

Listen to the webinar recording in [English](#) and [French](#).

The Municipal Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene activity (MuniWASH) Reforms the Sanitation Sector in Benin



Abomey-Calavi FSTP's sludge disposal channel and buffer tank. Photo Credit: MuniWASH

April 11, 2023, Abomey-Calavi, Benin: The USAID Municipal Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene activity (MuniWASH) in partnership with the Waste and Sanitation Management Company (Société de Gestion des Déchets et de la Salubrité, SGDS) has held an official handover ceremony to mark the operation of the country's first viable Fecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP) in Abomey-Calavi.

The handover of the FSTP in Abomey-Calavi holds particular importance for the Government of Benin and private actors in the sanitation sector, as it represents a crucial step in implementing recent reforms in the wastewater management sector. MuniWASH represents the diversified and multifaceted support that USAID provides for effective fecal sludge collection, transport, and treatment in Benin. USAID MuniWASH actively supports the implementation of reforms alongside the Government and through SGDS by preparing sanitation operators to adapt to the sub-sector changes. One remarkable achievement is the

transformation of disorganized and fragmented emptying companies to well-structured businesses capable of meeting the organizational, legal, technical, and business management requirements to obtain the necessary approvals to provide emptying services to the population. MuniWASH has also enhanced the capacity of these companies by providing training in areas such as bookkeeping, personnel and productivity management, marketing, and costing in order to strengthen the overall sanitation ecosystem and improve sanitation services.

The USAID Municipal Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (MuniWASH) Activity Secures Flexible Financing for Low-income Populations in Benin's Sanitation Sector



Promotion of sanitation products in Allada Municipality, Benin. Photo credit: MuniWASH

The USAID Municipal Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (MuniWASH) Activity has initiated a collaborative partnership with the National Microfinance Fund (Fonds National de la Microfinance, FNM) to offer technical and financial support to MuniWASH's activity partners: microfinance institutions PEBCo-BETSHEEDA and AFRICA FINANCES. This partnership will enhance sustainable access to finance for households and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Benin's sanitation sector. The collaboration aims to ease access to sanitation loans for households and MSMEs operating in the sanitation sector by lowering interest rates, removing barriers, and simplifying the application process.

The FNM made a commitment to invest FCFA 500 million (\$820,000) to help facilitate the provision of water and sanitation loans to households and MSMEs. The FNM's support will empower the two MFIs to offer credit at a reduced cost, making sanitation facilities more affordable for low-income communities and vulnerable households. It will also enable MSMEs to expand their business activities and contribute to increasing the supply of sanitation products and services in Benin. MuniWASH will continue to engage the FNM to provide the necessary support and technical assistance to ensure successful implementation.

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The Analytical Support Services and Evaluations for Sustainable Systems (ASSESS) to Host Module Four of Virtual Workshop

The Analytical Support Services and Evaluations for Sustainable Systems (ASSESS) is hosting the fourth module of the virtual capacity building workshops in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) for implementing partners (IPs) of USAID/West Africa's Regional Economic Growth Office (REGO). This is the final one in a series of virtual workshops by ASSESS to complement existing USAID training and enhance IP capacity.

The workshop, slated for August 2-4, 2023, will discuss Outcome Mapping and Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) in interactive sessions.

For further information, please contact mashiteye@assess-wa.org

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Our mailing address is:
REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH OFFICE (REGO), USAID/WA
No. 24 Fourth Circular Rd., Cantonments
P.O. Box 1630,
Accra, Ghana

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