



## West Africa Regional Economic Bulletin | July 2023

Dear Colleagues, Partners, and Friends,

We are delighted to share with you the latest news and updates from West Africa through our monthly newsletter. In this edition, we highlight our significant progress in interconnecting power transmission networks to ensure electricity access in the region. Our efforts to protect the environment and biodiversity have yielded positive results, with wildlife preservation, increased forest cover, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Furthermore, we take pride in our initiatives to grow thousands of shea trees, contributing to environmental sustainability and empowering communities. Our partnerships are driving conservation efforts, promoting business sustainability, and creating new opportunities for growth and livelihood improvement.

You can find this month's edition on our website, along with [previous editions](#). We encourage you to stay connected with us as we continue to provide you with updates on our programming in West Africa.

Sincerely,

Abdrahamane Dicko

Acting Office Director

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

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## The West African Power Pool (WAPP) Synchronizes Power Grid Towards Regional Electricity Integration in West Africa



*An electricity substation in West Africa. Photo credit: WAPP*

The West African Power Pool (WAPP) has achieved a significant milestone in the journey towards regional electricity integration in West Africa. By permanently synchronizing the power grids of twelve West African countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo, WAPP is forging a unified regional electricity market. This major accomplishment, realized under the supervision of the WAPP Information and Coordination Centre (ICC) and the national control centers of the respective countries, marks a crucial step in interconnecting the power transmission networks of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) members.

Achieved on Saturday July 8, 2023, at 4:50 am (GMT), this synchronization now enables the power grids of these nations to operate as a single synchronous network. It represents a major stride towards achieving energy security and reliability across the region.

This achievement is the culmination of many years of concerted effort by all parties involved, made possible by grants from the World Bank and the European Union, which financed the needed network studies and the acquisition and installation of the necessary equipment and enabled the construction and equipping of the ICC, the regional reliability coordinator.

The final stage in the integration process is the synchronization with Zone 1, which includes the interconnected grids of Nigeria, Niger and parts of Togo and Benin; This crucial step is expected to be completed by the end of 2023.

The synchronization of all national power grids and the implementation of the Regional Electricity Market will enable the pooling of the sub-region's energy resources, improving the security of electricity supply to the population at a competitive cost. It will also promote the sharing of frequency reserves and mutual assistance in the event of disturbances, improve the overall reliability of the WAPP interconnected transmission network, and build a strong and sustainable energy future for West Africa.

## Power Africa Maps the Future of Electricity in Côte d'Ivoire



*A distribution line in Côte d'Ivoire. Photo Credit: WAEP*

[Power Africa](#) has held a series of training sessions on improving field data collection through the use of tablet-based technologies and open-source software to address challenges in the use of geospatial information systems (GIS). Through these trainings and the use of the new data collection systems, Côte d'Ivoire's national utility company, CI-ENERGIES, has made advancements in achieving its Electricity for All Program (*in French, Programme Électricité Pour Tous [PEPT]*) goals.

CI-ENERGIES uses GIS as a key enabler in achieving its PEPT goals. Until recently, CI-ENERGIES was unable to fully leverage its GIS technology. The utility had faced a number of challenges, including poor data quality, lack of data uniformity, and lack of technical capacity. Power Africa's intervention has led to reduced data entry time, increased data precision, and increased data access from additional sites, like substations or transmission towers. Additionally, a streamlined and uniform data entry schema has been implemented to further optimize operations.

By prioritizing data quality measures, strengthening knowledge capacity, and exploring innovative ways to leverage geospatial technology, CI-ENERGIES is now better equipped to achieve its PEPT goals. With Power Africa's support, CI-ENERGIES is set to drive significant progress in the accessibility and sustainability of electricity for all in Côte d'Ivoire.

## **Ghanaian Private Sector Associations Commit to Developing Operational and Financial Management Capacities through the Connect and Learn for Sustainable Associations (CLOSA) Project**



*Some participants after an FMA debrief session in Accra. Photo Credit: HSDF*

Ten selected private sector associations (PSAs) in Ghana have reviewed their financial management assessment (FMA) results, and demonstrated their readiness to develop their operational and financial management capacities with support from the USAID-funded Connect and Learn for Sustainable Associations ([CLOSA](#)) project. These PSAs span a wide breadth of sectors and include; the Ghana Registered Nurses and Midwives Association, the Federation of Associations of Ghanaian Exporters, the Ghana Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Private Enterprise Federation, and the National Association of Beauticians and Hairdressers.

The rest are, the National Seed Trade Association of Ghana, the Ghana Association of Barbers and Barbering Salon Owners, the Farmers Organization Network of Ghana, the Ecumenical Association for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development, and the Ghana Association of Women Entrepreneurs.

Prior to these debrief sessions, the Health Strategy and Delivery Foundation (HSDF) developed and deployed a Financial Management Assessment toolkit to assess the current performance of PSAs across Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal. This FMA focuses on five foundational and growth performance parameters relevant to PSAs: strategic planning, strong financial and operational systems, robust governance and accountability, value proposition, and sustainable revenue model.



Based on the results from the debrief, CLOSA will collaborate with the PSAs to co-create customized solutions that will elevate ownership and sustainability and enhance the financial management capacities of the associations. Going forward, CLOSA will organize a learning series, designed to address some of the identified challenges for PSAs across Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal with the goal of fostering the development of a vibrant private sector ecosystem in West Africa.

Read [more](#).

## **The West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED) Validates National Combating Wildlife Crime Strategy in Niger**



*A giraffe walking through the savannah grass in Africa. Photo credit: poco\_bw/GettyImages*

The USAID-funded West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development ([WABiLED](#)) program continues to build on the successes of its predecessor, the West Africa Biodiversity and Climate Change ([WA BiCC](#)) program, in combating wildlife crime. Through these efforts, Niger has passed its national strategy to combat wildlife crime, the second country in the region to validate and complete its national combating wildlife crime strategy.

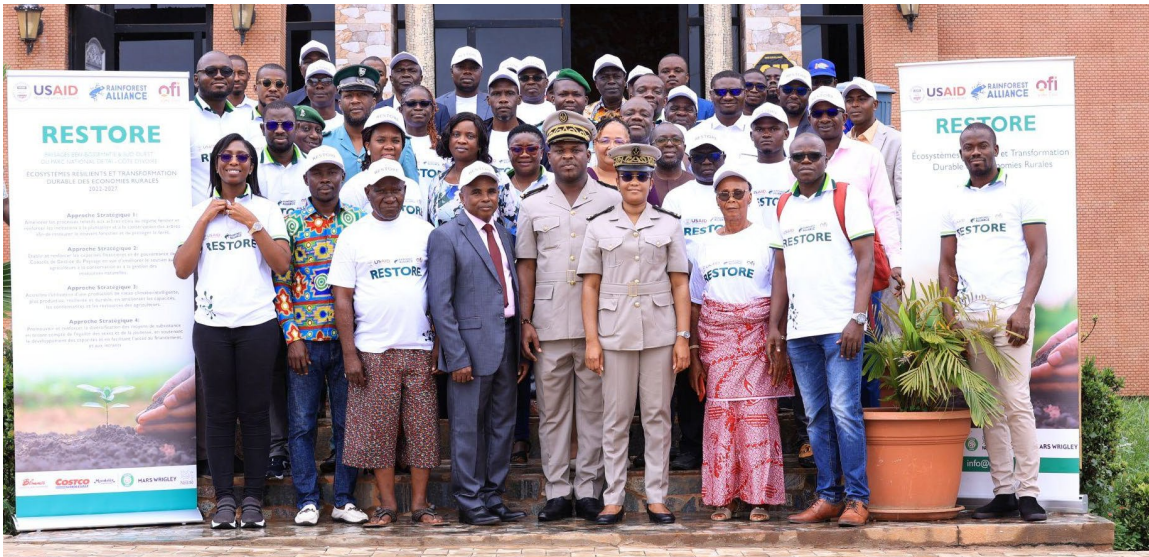
This achievement was co-led by the efforts of Dr. Abdoulaziz Seyni, the former Niger focal point and recipient of a Master of Science degree on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) supported by WA BiCC. The validation of this strategy, which encompasses a comprehensive approach and vision to address wildlife trafficking in Niger, does not only represent a

significant achievement for the country, but also highlights its commitment to regional collaboration. This is in concurrence with the goals and objectives of the West Africa Strategy to Combat Wildlife Crime (WASCWC), which was developed by WA BiCC and its implementation supported by WABiLED, under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Niger's wildlife crime strategy encompasses four strategic aspects: technical, capacity-building, community, and financing. These axes serve as the key elements guiding the strategy's implementation, which aims to be dynamic rather than static, with actions supporting each of the axes.

Nestled in the Sahel and linking the wide desert plains of the Sahara and the West African savannah, Niger's arid landscapes are home to rare species found in few other places in the region, such as the West African lion and Northwest African cheetah. Read [more](#)

## **The Resilient Ecosystems and Sustainable Transformation of Rural Economies (RESTORE) Project Makes Strides in Environmental Sustainability and Livelihood Improvement in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana**



*A group photograph of the participants at the workshop in Yamoussoukro. Photo Credit: Rainforest Alliance*

**June 26-27, Yamoussoukro, Côte d’Ivoire:** To enhance the livelihoods of farmers, while increasing forest cover and reducing greenhouse gas emission, the Resilient Ecosystems and Sustainable Transformation of Rural Economies ([RESTORE](#)) has developed an innovative mechanism called Landscape Management Board (LMB) for participatory landscape management. This mechanism is funded by USAID and implemented by the Rainforest Alliance in partnership with Olam Food Ingredients (OFI), and local partners in Cote d’Ivoire and Ghana.

At a recent consultation workshop held in Yamoussoukro, key stakeholders designed an integrated LMB model tailored to local contexts. This model integrates lessons learned from existing mechanisms and aims to foster synergy among different actors. The workshop laid the foundation for effective and inclusive participatory landscape governance, which actively involves local communities in decision-making processes; promotes forest preservation, restoration of degraded lands, and sustainable natural resource management. This approach ensures the engagement of local stakeholders and maximizes the impact of implemented actions.

The workshop played a crucial role in raising awareness among participants about the objectives of the RESTORE project, the significance of the landscape approach, and how the establishment of an LMB can improve farmers' livelihoods while promoting environmental sustainability.

## **The African Water and Sanitation Association (AfWASA) Equips Ghana and Burkina Faso for Better Management of Water Quality**





*A group photograph of the participants at the workshop in Accra. Photo Credit: AfWASA*

**Accra, Ghana, June 7-9, 2023:** The USAID-funded African Water and Sanitation Association (AfWASA) has organized a workshop on the development of laboratory quality assurance manual as part of its capacity building mandate, in partnership with the Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL) and the water and sanitation company of Burkina Faso (Office National de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement [ONEA]). The workshop's focus was on developing a comprehensive laboratory quality assurance manual, aiming to strengthen the capacity of participating companies in managing water quality analysis and control laboratories.

The water quality laboratory management manual serves as a crucial tool to ensure consistent and quality-controlled laboratory processes. By maintaining the reliability of water quality testing and complying with regulatory standards, the production of accurate and dependable water quality data for decision-making is achieved. Continuous capacity improvement through training, staying updated on technological advancements in lab equipment, approved testing methods, and regulatory requirements is essential for laboratory personnel.

The workshop featured engaging presentations, group activities, and peer-to-peer discussions, providing participants with valuable insights to update their knowledge and appreciate the significance of the manual for enhanced laboratory management. By the end of the workshop, participants unanimously agreed to develop their own Laboratory Technical Management Manuals.

AfWASA's efforts in equipping Ghana and Burkina Faso with better water quality management practices contribute to ensuring safe and reliable water supply, benefiting communities and promoting sustainable water management in the region.

## **USAID Supports the Global Shea Alliance (GSA) to Graft 6,000 Shea Trees**





*Dr Francis Chimsah and the women at the grafted shea nursery. Photo Credit: GSA*

**July 13, 2023:** USAID has supported the shea sector over the years through different initiatives, particularly the Sustainable Shea Initiative (SSI), which provides technical assistance, market linkages and co-funding to projects to improve the sustainability of shea value chains. The project was extended in 2021 for three years, to support the implementation of the Global Shea Alliance's ([GSA](#)) Action for Shea Parklands initiative; to protect shea resources and empower women collectors and processors by growing 10 million trees and protecting 4 million hectares of shea parklands.

To mark July as Shea Month and as part of the SSI project, the GSA conducted a live Facebook event, which offered a comprehensive presentation of the grafting process with the goal of building the technical proficiency of women collectors to replicate the procedure. This initiative is part of a concerted effort to optimize tree productivity and preserve shea parklands.

During the live stream, Dr Francis Chimsah, an expert from the University of Development Studies in Tamale, guided viewers through each step of the grafting process, sharing insights on its significance and answering questions. Two women shea farmers, Hawa Yussif and Hawa Abukari, who maintain a local shea nursery and who have become shea grafting experts, also joined the live stream.

As part of the initiative, the GSA has grafted more than 6,000 shea trees and established 41 nurseries. To learn about the grafting process, click [here](#).

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## **ASSESS to Host Module Four of Virtual Workshop on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning**

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

The workshop is scheduled for August 2 and 3, 2023, running from 8:30 GMT each day. The topics for discussion are:

- *Outcome Mapping*
- *Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) in USAID*
- *Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for Learning, and*
- *Communicating evidence to inform and influence stakeholder decision-making.*

Join the workshops via [Zoom](#).



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