



WEST AFRICA COMPETITIVENESS AND QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT (WACQIP)

Sustainable value
chain development
and successful trade
integration

THE WEST AFRICA COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME

The West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) is a partnership initiative between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union (EU). It has a bearing on regional economic integration and highlights a commitment to the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the EU and West Africa. WACOMP is funded through a EUR 120 million contribution from the Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) for West Africa (2014 – 2020) under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF).

The main economic challenges in West Africa include competitiveness of enterprises and the need for better value-chain integration at regional and national levels in order to scale up sustainable structural transformation.

The overall objective of the programme is to strengthen the competitiveness of West Africa and to enhance the countries' integration into the regional and international trading system, including the newly established African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The WACOMP embraces the vision of the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa (IDDA III) and is also aligned to UNIDO's mandate of fostering Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID).

The action will be carried out in the ECOWAS member states (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo) and in Mauritania, through national components in each country, as well as a regional one. For each country, priority value chains have been identified and the type of activities selected involves a combination of long and short term technical assistance, training, coaching, equipment and studies. The country components will be implemented by selected specialized agencies or through national execution while the regional component will be led by the ECOWAS Commission with the technical assistance of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the International Trade Centre (ITC).

Specific Objective 1

Improve the performance, growth and contribution to industry, regional trade and exports of selected Value Chains

Country level

- Competitiveness at firms level is improved, especially through the Cluster's approach.
- Intermediate organisations of the selected VC's are strengthened and service delivery to SMEs is improved and expanded (quality standards, new green solutions, market access, etc..).

Regional level

- Better regional linkages among selected VCs actors are promoted and key regional intermediary organisations are supported.
- Regional quality infrastructure system is strengthened, with a view to promote environmental issue.

Specific Objective 2

Improve the climate for business at national and regional levels

Country level

- Regional policies in favour of competitiveness are mainstreamed in the country and help enable a business-friendly environment.

Regional level

- The regional policy and framework to improve competitiveness are harmonised, formulated and monitored.
- The capacity of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions and Member States to successfully manage, coordinate and monitor the programme is strengthened.



THE WEST AFRICA COMPETITIVENESS AND QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

The West Africa Competitiveness and Quality Infrastructure Project (WACQIP) is implemented under the framework of the West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) and aims to stimulate the competitiveness of SMEs in the 16 project countries through value chain development and an enhanced level of production, transformation and export capacities of the private sector.

The project focuses on supporting quality along value chains at both national and regional levels in the following sectors: (i) cassava and its derivatives, (ii) mango, (iii) textiles & garments, as well as (iv) information, communication and technology (ICT) as a horizontal value chain. The project will promote transformation, better access to regional and international markets and will consider social and environmental perspectives. It will cover the preparation of the regional policy framework for the development of the value chains within the ECOWAS regional industrial strategy aiming at stimulating industrialization and job creation in the region.

The project fosters synergies between the regional component and national projects under the

WACOMP that target selected national and regional value chains. These are especially important synergies as the value chains' meeting quality requirements is key to a company's competitiveness and success of the project.

Furthermore, it will promote linkages between private sector operators and organizations involved in the selected value chains to strengthen competitiveness and to optimize quality infrastructure.

The project aims to improve the regional business environment as well as contribute towards regional industrial strategy goals, including: (i) increasing the rate of local raw material processing from the current average of 15-20%, to 30%, (ii) increasing the contribution of manufacturing industries to GDP from the present average of 6-7% to over 20%, (iii) increasing intra-community trade in West Africa from less than 12% to 40%, with a 50% share of the region's trade in manufactured products, (iv) increasing the volume of manufactured exports in West Africa to the world market from 0.1% to 1%.



THE APPROACH

The main project interventions include the development of sustainable value chains, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) support and facilitation of a platform for dialogue on industrialisation between states and the private sector. The dialogue will also focus on the capacity of member states to develop and implement industrial development policies along value chains.

The project will put an emphasis on value chains that align with the West Africa Economic Partnership Agreement Development Programme (PAPED) and regional industrial and private sector strategies.

With the dual approach of optimizing quality infrastructure and encouraging

a conducive business environment, the selected value chains will be enhanced. The project also aims to develop recommendations for regional directives related to the development of regional priority value chains in line with the regional industrial strategy.

The various project activities will finally improve the performance and growth of selected priority value chains and related services in terms of transformation, industrialisation, regional trade and exports to enable better access to regional and international markets. Furthermore, the project will build the capacity of countries in selected value chains by enabling them to understand product requirements imposed by national, regional and export markets.

SYNERGIES

UNIDO works in close collaboration with the International Trade Center (ITC) under the regional component of WACOMP. From the outset of the Programme, the two partners pursued synergies by carrying out jointly the initial value chain analysis. Furthermore,

both organizations constantly ensure the complementarity of their activities implemented within the business environment segment.



LOGIC OF INTERVENTION

1. Regional quality infrastructure system is strengthened, in particular in relation to promoting environmental issues through:

Consolidating ongoing support and enhancing the regional quality infrastructure to develop and implement standards and regulations with a focus on selected value chains

Supporting the establishment and promotion of regional reference laboratories

Promoting quality and the ECOWAS Certification Mark

Coordinating quality infrastructure of member states as well as encouraging networking of national quality units

2. The regional policy and framework to improve competitiveness are harmonized, formulated and monitored through:

Supporting ECOWAS/UEMOA to operationalize the regional industrial/private sector strategy through elaboration of regional directives on key value chains of regional and national interest, and implementation of regional investment and

Supporting the implementation of the ECOWAS MSME Strategy and MSME

Establishing a regional Public Private Partnership (PPP) Network and online

Setting up, within ECOWAS/UEMOA, in the areas of quality promotion, of management tools, supervision, coordination and networking

The project is fully relevant for the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It contributes primarily to the progressive achievement of the following SDG targets



BENEFICIARIES

The ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions

The organised private sector

Research centres and training institutions

The Governments of ECOWAS Member States (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo) and of Mauritania

West African member states (ECOWAS + Mauritania), governments and national agencies, professional associations, quality institutions and business and trade support organisations

MSMEs operating in selected value chains

The ECOWAS Agency for Quality (ECOWAQ)

AT A GLANCE

Donor:

European Union

Duration:

48 months

Coordinating Agency :

ECOWAS Commission (Department for Industry and the Promotion of the Private Sector)

Budget:

5,664,000 EUR
(100,000 EUR UNIDO Co-funding from Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany).

Implementing Agency:

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

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