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A Quarterly Newsletter of the
West Africa Competitiveness
Programme (WACOMP) Ghana

Learn more about
**Ishmael Boafo: A fruits
processor & farmer,
adding value for exports**

... featured in, 'Voice from the field' P. 34

In this Issue:

- 6. EU mission to fruits cluster in the Eastern region
- 10. Training on sustainable waste management
- 11. 2nd International cluster conference
- 19. Ghana Standards Authority Accreditation
- 28. EU Village at the GISE 2023
- 30. From farm to market: The story of Agropal and Qualipine

Facts about WACOMP

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.

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

It seeks to improve the competitiveness of Ghanaian exports with a focus on three main value chains – cassava, fruits (mango and pineapple), cosmetics and personal care

products through enhanced value-addition, low carbon sustainable production and processing aimed at increased access to regional and international markets.

The project, launched in March 2019, 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).

WACOMP is funded through a EURO 120 million contribution from the Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) for West Africa (2014 – 2020) under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF).



➔ WACOMP'S Overall Objectives

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.

WACOMP in Ghana

In Ghana, the EU is contributing a total of 6,200,000 EURO with other funding support of 150,000 EURO from UNIDO making a total of 6,350,000 EURO of donor fund.

The programme is implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in coordination with the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI).

LOGIC OF INTERVENTION

OBJECTIVE

The export competitiveness of the Ghanaian economy is strengthened through enhanced value-added, low carbon, sustainable production & processing, and access to regional and international markets increases.

PROGRAMME'S EXPECTED RESULTS

SMEs and intermediate organizations of the 3 selected value chains - Fruits, Cassava and Cosmetics & Personal-Care Products - have increased capacity to produce quality products integrated into the global value chains and acceptable to the regional and international markets.



Steering Committee Meeting



WACOMP - Ghana seventh Steering Committee attendees

WACOMP – Ghana, held its seventh Steering Committee Meeting on the 21st of June 2023 to discuss the progress of the project implementation and provide recommendations for further action.

Representatives of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI), Ministry of Finance, European Union, Food and Drugs Authority (FDA), Ghana Standards Authority (GSA), Ghana Export Promotion Authority (GEPA), Association of Ghana Industries (AGI), One District and One Factory (1D1F) Secretariat and other stakeholders reviewed the outcomes of the project and discussed future interventions for the last year of the project.

Mrs. Malgorzata Pitura, Programs Officer from the European Union Delegation responsible for WACOMP, indicated the EU was satisfied with how UNIDO has led the implementation of WACOMP in Ghana. She recounted the contribution of WACOMP during the European month where SMEs supported by the project exhibited their products.

She said: **“WACOMP is a flagship project for the EU in Ghana, and we are happy with the results**

achieved and very happy with the field visit to Dodowa belt mango producers within the Europe month activities. We got to see for ourselves the impact of EU support in the fruit value Chain”.

Mrs. Ebe Muschiali, WACOMP – Ghana Project Manager thanked the members of the Steering Committee and acknowledged the support of all stakeholder representatives in the smooth implementation of the project.

She further expressed UNIDO’s desire to work with the EU in consolidating all the gains achieved under WACOMP and go beyond the targeted value chains



EU Mission to Fruits Cluster in the Eastern Region



EU delegation with UNIDO and Hendy farm team

WACOMP – Ghana in collaboration with the European Union Delegation in Ghana organized a field trip to the fruits cluster in the Eastern region², as part of the European Week celebration in the month of May 2023.

H.E. Mr. Irchad Razaaly, the European Union (EU) Ambassador to Ghana together with three other EU member states' Ambassadors to Ghana: France Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Jules-Armand Aniambossou; Germany Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Daniel Krull and Hungarian Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Tamás Endre Fehér had the occasion to visit some mango farms that have benefited from the WACOMP – Ghana and witnessed the transformation and innovation achieved through the project technical support.

The delegation visited Hendy Farms, Akorley packhouse as well as mango nursery located at Dodowa established by Cotton Weblink.

H.E. Mr. Razaaly declared he was impressed with the impact of the project and that the visit was very insightful from a consumer perspective.

He highlighted that through the UNIDO implemented WACOMP – Ghana, the EU aim to achieve and help Ghanaian farmers meet certification and have access to EU market adding that,

“mangoes are already in the European market, and I will be delighted to see more of Ghanaian mangoes in the EU market.”

Hendy Farms, which has a mango plantation and a processing unit for dry mango, has been supported with E-Marketing to E-Commerce training, branding, and marketing programmes, product packaging as well as Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) and Ghana Standards Authority (GSA) product registration and certification process by WACOMP.

The farm has also benefited from Sub-Contracting Matching Scheme, direct one-on-one coaching, trade fairs and shows.

The Co-managers of Hendy Farms, Sandra Snowden and Rita Brobbey, presented the set-up of a processing unit that uses solar to dry mangoes which they export to Spain, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Germany.

Akorley Packhouse also received WACOMP support in harvest and post-harvest management training and documentary on mango harvesting.

Cotton Web link, which setup a greenhouse nursery received training on nursery management, private extension and capacity building on good mango agronomic practices.

Cont'd from pg. 6

The Chief Executive Officer of Cotton-Weblink Limited Portfolio, Davies Narh Korboe, explained the impact of UNIDO and EU's support and shared examples of how WACOMP is seeking to transform the mango industry, through the setup of a greenhouse nursery at Cotton-Weblink Portfolio Limited near Somanya.

He described the initiative by WACOMP as a game-changer and a huge boost to the mango industry's growth and success, explaining that prior to the greenhouse facility's presence, seedlings were nursed in unsafe environments.

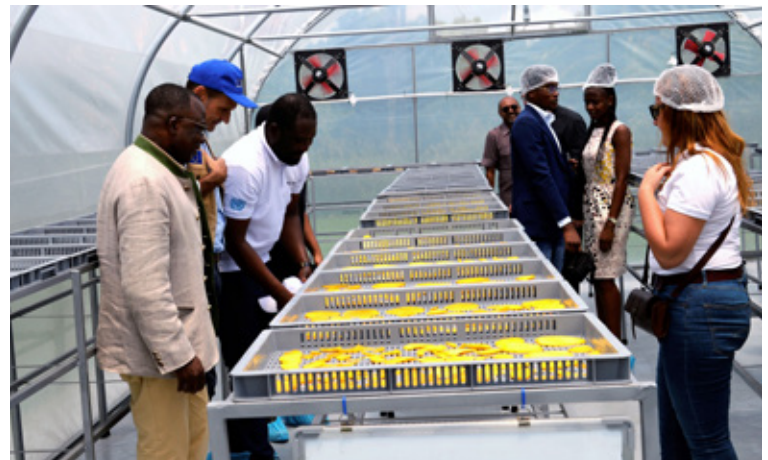
"To me, the green house nursery's presence has been a game-changer because initially, we had a challenge in addressing the Black Bacteria Spot (BBS) issue which was limiting our production. We realized that for us to curtail the disease we needed to start from the farm. Thanks to the support of WACOMP, we have now a greenhouse nursery that plays a pivotal role in the mango industry in the country", he explained.

Mr. Victor Avah, a mango and agribusiness expert, also confirmed the success chalked up after implementing the greenhouse, stating: "When seedlings are in the open air, it takes six months to get them ready for sale; but when they are placed under the greenhouse, the gestation period is reduced from six months to three and half months, making it possible to sell more seedlings within a period."

Mr. Avah added that since the nursery's inception in 2021, the company has raised three batches of seedlings and sold them to the Tree Crop Development Authority (TCDA), individuals and other associations.

"The greenhouse seedlings have helped us increase the number of seedlings produced, and since its inception, we have sold about 16,000 seedlings. Previously, though the total seedlings produced in the open space was similar to the current quantity, most of them turned out to be affected by diseases – especially during the dry season – and this limited the number of seedlings we could sell," a farmer at the greenhouse nursery, David Tetteh, confirmed.

Turning his attention to how other parts of the country can benefit from the mango nursery, the Chief Technical Advisor of WACOMP, Dr. Charles Kwame Sackey, explained that two more nurseries to support the mango industry in the middle belt will be set up.



Drying mango facility at Hendy Farms



EU delegation with UNIDO and Cotton weblink team at the Green House Nursery in Somanya



Packaging of mangoes at the Akoley Pack House

Compete

EU Month: MSMEs Exhibition



Group photo of the EU Ambassador, Irchad Razaaly (middle) with the Chief Director of MoTI (in blue suit at far left) flanked by other entrepreneurs and WACOMP team after the exhibition

An exhibition to showcase the contribution of the European Union to Ghanaian Micro Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) through the UNIDO implemented WACOMP – Ghana project and to boost the competitiveness of the country's cassava, fruits and cosmetics exports was held in Accra at the La Plam Royal Beach Hotel on 10th of May 2023.

The exhibition showcased more than 50 SMEs of fruits, cassava

and shea butter products and was part of the 2023 EU Month celebrations which spanned May 9 to May 27, this year.

H.E. Ambassador Irchad Razaaly, the EU Ambassador to Ghana, speaking at the WACOMP - Ghana MSMEs Product Exhibition described the event as a unique opportunity to promote the success stories of MSMEs in the country, as they represent an important share of the country's exports.

Compete

Cont'd from pg. 8

He further reiterated the significance of the event as it corroborates with the theme for this year's EU celebration month which is focused on "Youth and Skills" and highlighted the role of the MSMEs as a driving force in making the country a continental economic and trade hub.

He explained that cassava, tropical fruits and cosmetics and personal care products were exported to all corners of the world such as Asia and the Middle East, the United States, the EU.

"Under WACOMP, we are constantly working with SMEs to keep increasing export opportunities in particular to the EU. Our SME clusters provide a more enabling environment for exports and exporters," he added.

He urged the SMEs participating in the exhibition to make cautious efforts to expand their operations starting from the West African sub-region.

Mr. Patrick Yaw Nimo Chief Director of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI) also expressed his excitement about the UNIDO implemented WACOMP which has impacted, predominantly the lives of women "who are just not

consumers of the product, but significant producers of them as well".

He said it was refreshing to note that the WACOMP initiative had impacted more women-owned firms to boost their export fortunes.

"I have been associated with WACOMP from its inception and Ghana has performed appreciably well," he declared, urging individuals who have benefited from the project to continue producing and charging them to penetrate the market of other African countries and shine there as well.

"Our concern has always been how we continue to engage, connect, conform and compete and I urge you to pay attention to that as you go forward", he stressed.

For his part, the Director of Development Services of the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI), Johnson Opoku-Boateng, pledged the support of the AGI to all the 57 SMEs who are beneficiaries of the project, and asked them to "knock on their doors at all times for anything they need to make their businesses better".

Feedback on EU Week Exhibition



Lily Crentsil, CEO of Shea Butter Boss, Cosmetic Company:

" WACOMP - Ghana has helped improve the technical knowledge and standardized cosmetics formulation of my shea-based products. Making sure that what my company produces for the consumer is safe for the skin and even edible. I have experienced a huge growth in my entrepreneurial journey as a beneficiary allowing me to mentor the youths in my community and create more job opportunities for many women. My products are now sold in Abidjan, Nigeria, the UK, USA and working on other documentation to be able to sell to the EU market soon. Thank you European Union and UNIDO for the support for my business through WACOMP -Ghana."

Compete

Training on Sustainable Waste Management for 29 Fruits Cluster Entrepreneurs



Participants of the waste management training in Accra

Alongside the EU Month, WACOMP - Ghana held a two-day training on sustainable waste management for the fruit clusters in Ghana on 9th and 10th of May 2023 in Accra.

Aligned with the project's goal of enhancing sustainable consumption and production patterns and supporting SMEs to reduce inefficiency and contribute towards resource optimization, the training on sustainable waste management enhanced the skills of 29 entrepreneurs to optimize their resource usage and remain competitive.

The participants were also taken through key sessions to identify their current waste and propose good management practices to develop new products from existing waste streams.

Mr. Frank Kwesi, WACOMP – Ghana Cluster and Networks expert for the Fruits Value Chain, commenting on the training revealed “most of the businesses in the food processing sector were under performing and the reasons for that included wastage linked to improper waste management practices. This training will reduce inefficiency and help churn out other value-added products”.

Compete

Ghana International Cluster Conference 2023 Demonstrated Impact on Product Quality and Market Access



Participants at the 2nd Ghana International Cluster Conference held in Accra on the 22nd of August 2023

After a successful version in 2022, the UNIDO-WACOMP team in Ghana organized a second international conference on 22nd August 2023 in Accra, in partnership with the European Union (EU) and the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI).

The conference held under the theme, “Ghanaian Clusters, A Driving Force for the Economy” also created a platform to exhibit different pioneering cassava, fruits and cosmetics products, developed by UNIDO-supported cluster groups in Ghana.

Successful outcomes on joint cluster actions towards competitiveness, compliance to standards, innovative financing, and market integration through the AfCFTA have been the key topics discussed.

The Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. K.T. Hammond, in a speech read on his behalf, reiterated the government’s dedication to prioritising vital sectors – such as agriculture, trade and industry.

This, he stated, will breathe new life into the Ghanaian economy and set it firmly on an unstoppable path of growth.

He commended UNIDO and the European Union for the quality delivery and coordination they had demonstrated over the years, working with the government to promote cluster development, industrial competitiveness, and economic integration.

Compete

Cont'd from pg. 11

“The impact of our collaboration has been keenly felt across our nation. Companies under the government’s 1D1F programme have undergone transformative training in quality management principles, aligning their practices with national and international standards. This advancement has undeniably improved their competitiveness. Thanks to UNIDO and WACOMP, we have bolstered their capacities in areas such as labelling, branding and good manufacturing practices (GMPs), all of which are essential pillars of sustainable growth,” he stated.

On her part, Mrs. Ebe Muschialli, UNIDO Industrial Development Expert and WACOMP- Ghana Project Manager added: “The joint commitment of UNIDO and the Government of Ghana have helped the supported Clusters and SMEs members to be more competitive to enter the international market. We are proud of the SMEs we have been working with over the past years, as they have gone a long way. They are producing new and more attractive products that are compliant with international

standards. They are now equipped to promote Ghanaian products in Africa and around the world”.

Dr. Christian Namalguebzanga Kafando in a speech read on behalf of Mr. Lassane Kabore, Director of Industry at the ECOWAS Commission confirmed that the ECOWAS Commission, in coordination with Member States, is promoting the development of regional and national value chains by supporting the establishment of clusters, networks and partnerships among actors to promote a Sustainable Industrial Development of the region.

This year’s event was attended by more than 200 participants from the African Union Commission, ECOWAS Commission, Federation of the West African Chambers of Commerce, and Industry (FEWACCI), representatives of AUDA/NEPAD, Business Councils and cluster practitioners from Ghana, Liberia, South Africa, Nigeria, Uganda and Morocco.

2nd Ghana International Cluster Conference



Compete

UNIDO Cluster Approach helps MSMEs to grow



From Right: Mrs. Francesca Brenda Opoku (2nd), Mrs. Hajia Safia Alhasan (3rd), Mrs. Mabel Akoto Kwudzo (4th), Mr. Asenso(5th) and Mrs. Christiana Akua Adjei (6th) discussing cluster joint actions towards competitiveness

Across the globe, MSMEs play a critical role in economic development and employment and are the driving force of innovation and sustainability in the private sector. In Africa, they are largely acknowledged as forming the backbone of Africa's economy, representing over 90% of businesses and employing about 60% of women and youth. However, most of these businesses are startups facing a myriad of challenges, including financing constraints and restrictive market conformity requirements among others.

Within the framework of the West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) in Ghana, UNIDO supported the strengthening of 11 regional-based clusters in the Greater Accra Region, Northern Region, Eastern Region, Western Region, Ashanti Region, Bono Region, and Northern Volta Region.

Here are some of the direct testimonials collected from cluster members:

" Before the standardized GMPs training for the clusters, it was sometimes difficult to get quality and safe sources of large quantities of raw materials to complete my productions on time, as it meant having to rely on only a few producers to buy large quantities. Not only did the WACOMP cluster approach facilitate the sharing of tools that positively impacted industrial

and economic development through cost-sharing initiatives but it helped us learn enhanced skills to get the right funding and provided equipment to produce to market standards", Francesca Brenda Opoku, CEO of Oasis Solution.

Madam Mabel Akoto Kwudzo, Chief Executive Officer of Okata Farms and a member of the Northern Volta cluster, said they had problems marketing their produce until the cluster was formed.

"Through the establishment and coaching of cooperatives and associations in a newly created region that mainly specialised in planting and processing of cassava, the farmers were able to get together and tackle sanitation issues and established demonstration farms to test new variety of cassava with higher yields", Madam Mabel Akoto Kwudzo, Chief Executive Officer of Okata Farms and a member of the Northern Volta cluster.

Mr Asenso Mensah, Managing Director of Plant Pests and Disease Control Management Limited and a Member of the Middle Belt Mango Cluster, highlighted that the cluster had improved the manpower of farmers to control diseases on 18 out of 20 mango farms. " The production of the cluster increased from 1.2 tonnes per acre to 5 tonnes per acre," he proudly stated.



Compete

43 Cassava Processors Trained in Sustainable Cassava Processing



Participants of the training displaying their products

In West Africa, many cassava processors have no solutions to their wastewater and peels except a few livestock keepers who pick small quantities to feed their livestock.

In Ghana, the situation is no different as many are still faced with sustainably managing solid and liquid wastes at their processing factories.

WACOMP – Ghana, with the aim of finding innovative solutions to such age-old problems and creating a more conducive and healthier environment for cassava processing, has launched a training to strengthen the capacity to face such challenges at the Abura Cluster level in the Central Region.

The training conducted for 43 participants from the 23rd to 30th April 2023 promoted the sustainable use of all raw materials and supported interventions that generate value-added products from cassava wastes.

The participants from Tropical Starch Company, Oxy Industries and Adikye Nsoroma Cassava Processing Group underwent practical training to become innovative in the uses of cassava peels and wastewater, diversify their income sources and increase their revenue generation to ultimately make their businesses more sustainable.

At the end of the training, participants were able to transform cassava peels to cultivate mushrooms and adopted the use of

Compete

Liberia Delegation Visits the Cassava Derivatives Cluster in the Ashanti Region



Field visit to a cassava demonstration farms in Mampong at the Ashanti region

WACOMP – Ghana hosted a delegation from Liberia from the 3rd to the 5th of July, 2023 to present the cassava cluster results in the Ashanti region.

The team visited JOSMA Agro-processing and Christaa Agricultural Ventures in the Atebubu-Amantin cluster. As part of the mission, the team also interacted with cocoa farmers in the cocoa-growing areas of Ashanti Mampong and Juabeng, cocoa being one of the target value chains for the Liberia delegation

Madam Christiana Akua Adjei, Manager of Christaa during the visit to her processing factory, highlighted the technical support from WACOMP.

“My team and I were trained on how to know the distinction between costing and pricing including product diversification. We were also able to set up and construct a solar dryer through the subcontracting matching scheme under the project and WACOMP continues to support us. We will not have been able to diversify and produce for export without WACOMP-Ghana.”

The team were also taken to see the JOSMA demonstration farm set up by WACOMP and taken through the process of processing cassava at the new factory set up under the Sub-Contracting Machine Scheme.





Compete

Lotions training in Accra



Participants of lotion formulation workshops

WACOMP – Ghana trained 50 Cosmetics formulators in standardized lotion formulations to produce products that are safe for the skin and to enhance consistency in the quality of locally produced lotions.

This technical training introduced entrepreneurs to simple and different methods of formulation techniques in terms of process upgrading, quality enhancement and product diversification.

The skills and knowledge received by the selected 50 representatives are expected to be transferred through subsequent various training within the clusters and benefit the over 2000 members of the WACOMP - Ghana cosmetics clusters across the country.

Interview



Getting To Know about WACOMP Fruit Value Chain Expert



Interview with **Mr. Stephen Mintah, Fruits Value Chain Sub-Committee Chairperson and General Manager of SPEG**

E-mail: spegpine@yahoo.co.uk

Stephen was trained at the University of Ghana in Agriculture and worked at a Development Bank between 1977 and 1997.

He has been the General Manager of SPEG since 1998 and currently chairman of COLEAD since June 2013.

1. How is capacity building enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs?

The matching scheme grant was used to provide the best pineapple production management training to new pineapple farmers and commercial pineapple farm managers to understand factors that can be managed to improve yield and quality.

Improving productivity leads to cost savings and allows products to be delivered at a competitive price. I expect that production volumes will increase in the years to come and export volumes will also improve accordingly.

2. What would you recommend for future capacity building for fruit (mango and pineapple farmers and food processors)?

In the face of diminishing available land for farming, due to competing development coupled with the increasing cost of land acquisition, I am of the view that more investment should be made in research and development in the fruits sector.

This will allow farmers to explore yield improvement practices such as crop protection (pest disease management) and nutrition to continuously bring yield up to international levels.

For example, 10tons/ha and 80tons/ha in mangoes and pineapple production respectively can be achieved by the use of modern production methods and improved practices instead of current yields of 3ton/ha and 45tons/ha for mangoes and

pineapples respectively. In addition, capacity building in market access requirements and assistance in obtaining the necessary certifications and licenses will improve our competitiveness in the international market.

3. What is your general impression of the WACOMP fruit value chain activities in terms of the technology?

I am generally satisfied with the various strategies adopted to deliver the fruits value chain activities specifically:

- (a) The virtual meetings and training ensured more numbers participated in activities;
- (b) Physical and on-site training enabled beneficiaries to benefit from more practical demonstrations;
- (c) Participation in exhibitions assured real market situations to guide operators' production, export and marketing strategies;
- (d) Support to obtain various certifications improved conformity and competitiveness.

4. What are your observations about the current state (in terms of technical knowledge and quality culture) of Ghanaian fruit and which gaps have you identified?

In terms of quality, we are trying hard and improving. I have seen from recent exhibitions by WACOMP - Ghana that a lot has improved in quality in the areas of product labelling, product content and branding.

Generally, as Ghanaians, we have become aware of the importance of quality in this competitive world of business, and without it, we have no share in both local and international markets.

Interview

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5. What is your general impression of the WACOMP fruit value chain activities in terms of supporting SMEs to be competitive in the global market?

The approach by WACOMP has been good so far. Operators now have a full understanding of international market access requirements, skills and the knowledge to produce to meet the market requirements.

Though our market share may not have increased over the period on the international market, the reason may be low production volumes and not skills and knowledge to access the market.

6. How has the SPEG and WACOMP Collaboration boosted the competitiveness of the farmers and exporters?

WACOMP has supported SPEG to participate in international trade fairs, trade missions and training in production practices.

This has created awareness of the huge potential in the various varieties of pineapple sector such as international demand for pineapple and processed pineapple products.

Again, there has been an increase in job creation and employment. As a result of these, many new ones have shown interest in the export market and are working on expanding their production and fulfilling market access requirement.

The collaboration has also increased SPEG's activities in the sector, made SPEG more visible and contributed to an increase in our membership numbers in the last year. For example, through our collaboration with WACOMP, a pineapple-producing group in the Volta region now knows about SPEG.

We expect that WACOMP will continue to collaborate with SPEG in finding solutions to unlock the potential of the pineapple value chain and improve international trading to bring more foreign exchange earnings for the country.

803 KNUST students trained on Cluster Development and Agri-business

To promote youth skills and to raise awareness on food safety and quality assurance WACOMP - Ghana organised a two-day capacity building seminar held on the 2nd and 3rd August 2023 in Kumasi for the students of the College of Agribusiness and College of Science, Food Science Department.

A total of 803 students and teaching assistants participated in the two-day event.

The seminar introduced the WACOMP cluster development approach and highlighted agribusiness opportunities within the WACOMP-supported clusters including training them

on key elements of business visibility, communication and branding and strengthening their capacities in Quality Infrastructure (QI) Systems and application of food safety management tools.

Mr. Joseph Yeboah, UNIDO WACOMP - Ghana Cluster and Network Expert for the Cassava Value Chain explained the operational mandate of UNIDO as a UN Agency and shared examples of how UNIDO Cluster development approach is supporting Ghanaian SMEs and encouraged the students to start their businesses even while in school.

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Students with WACOMP Ghana team in Kumasi

Mrs. Linda Gyala Hofe, UNIDO WACOMP – Ghana National Marketing and Visibility Expert also provided highlights on agribusiness communication and visibility opportunities in agribusinesses and the food processing sector and provided guidelines for personal and product branding.

Sharing recent research data on patterns and usage of social media in Ghana, she helped the students understand how to use

social media for advocacies and campaigns, including how to maximize their social media accounts to sell their business ideas.

Mr. Frederick Gyamera Owusu, WACOMP – Ghana National Quality Infrastructural Expert introduced the students to Quality Assurance and the challenges for assuring food safety and standardization concepts and the benefits of applying standards.

Conform

Ghana Standards Authority Accreditation



Lab technicians at the Cosmetics laboratory of GSA

National Laboratories' testing capacity is an essential component of the National Quality Infrastructure System as most traded products require proof that they comply with specifications and safety standards and regulations before they can access national and international markets.

To strengthen the capacities of Ghanaian Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) to test and certify products to be sold on the national and international market, WACOMP-Ghana provided laboratory equipment to the Ghana Standards

Authority (GSA) cosmetics laboratory.

The laboratory was also trained towards international accreditation against ISO 17025, to enhance the testing capacities of the national laboratories.

The cosmetic and personal care assessment laboratory is now accredited and its tests will be internationally recognized, positioning GSA to service the cosmetics businesses in the ECOWAS region as well.



Connect

AfCFTA Workshop for 150 Cluster Members in Tamale and Techiman



Mr. Dode Seidu, UNIDO expert on AfCFTA interacting with participants at one of the training sessions

A workshop on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) targeting MSMEs from Tamale, Wa, Bolgatanga, Techiman, Kintampo, Sunyani and Atebubu has been organized by WACOMP from the 7th to 11th of August 2023.

The workshop aimed at training and providing entrepreneurs with technical assistance to unlock their export capacities and guide them through the process of registering and taking advantage of the AfCFTA framework.

Mr. Dode Seidu, WACOMP – Ghana trainer used the workshops to provide information on the stages of business growth, the

needs at every stage as well as the opportunities, challenges, and requirements of the AfCFTA. With the support of the WACOMP team, he guided the participants to complete registration forms for the AfCFTA.

Participants assessed their readiness for export and demonstrated a real interest in entering the African Continental Free Trade Area, as it progressively eliminates tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade in goods, cooperate in all trade-related area and allow free movement of capital.



Connect

WACOMP – Ghana Branding and Marketing Support to MSMEs

↑ 110% BRANDING OVERACHIEVED (20 VS. 42)



- Cosmetic - 92
- Fruit - 18
- Cassava - 3



- KOBS - 5
- Justo - 9
- Numbi - 6
- Melow - 4
- Sippa - 3
- D'Organikan - 4
- Chrislaw - 3
- Yorkumi - 7
- Gyanewa Farms - 1



- Cosmetic - 31
- Fruit - 11
- Cassava - 0



- **Agape**
 - Namibia - Cosmetics
 - USA
- **K.O.B.S. Farms** Ghana Ltd.
 - Rwanda High Commission
- **True Native**
 - Relish Natural Market
 - Hotel Association

Brand identity plays a key role in growing a competitive brand and being competitive however, SMEs often face challenges such as lack of brand strategy, inconsistent brand messaging, poor visual identity, limited brand awareness, lack of brand differentiation and a host of others.

To ensure that SMEs overcome these challenges and implement effective branding strategies, build a strong brand presence and increase their competitiveness in the market, WACOMP has recently coached MSMEs to be competitive.

A total of 107 SMEs have been diagnosed and in total 320

Products have also been thoroughly reviewed to fit their brand's purpose (40% Fruits, 57% Cosmetics and 3% Cassava).

Some of these companies are Vicca Jucie Plus, Corbanys, Numbi Naturals, Sugarland, Damfa Farms, KOBS Farms, Mellow Fruits, Green Gold, Henky Farms, Boss Fruity, Fruity Fresh, Enjoy Juice, Shall Abide, Juicy Juice, Bubuduzi Multi Services, Yilo Krobo Mango Farmers Association, Chrislaw Ventures, Joyspring, Juice Up, Oskhalim, Adepa, Bismark, Gyanewa Farms, Justo Naturals, Unifresh Fruit, D' Organikan, Florico Fruit, KLO Mango Farmers Association, Bosep Co. Ltd, Sippa, Yorkumi Ghana.



Connect

Made in ECOWAS Fair



Dr. Afua Asabea Asare , CEO of GEPA cutting the tape for the opening of the ceremony assisted by Dr. Charles Kwame Sackey, UNIDO WACOMP - Ghana Chief Technical Advisor and other members of the UNIDO and GEPA team

Over 80 MSMEs in West Africa showcased new products at the first WACOMP Made in ECOWAS exhibition. MSMEs operating in the cassava, cosmetics and fruits (mango & pineapple) value chains exhibited their products and services at the three-day event jointly organized by WACOMP – Ghana and the Ghana Export Promotion Authority (GEPA).

The “Made in ECOWAS Fair” exhibition held from Thursday 29th June to Saturday 1st July 2023 at the forecourt of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly focused on the theme “Building SMEs Competitiveness for Intra Africa Trade”.

The main objective of the exhibition was to promote products produced in Ghana and ECOWAS. The fair also sought to create an avenue for promoting value chain development and encourage regional sourcing and a more vibrant regional market.

Dr. Afua Asabea Asare, the Chief Executive Officer of GEPA, in her opening remarks, highlighted initiatives undertaken by GEPA to support SMEs to market their products across Africa and indicated that GEPA recently opened the Ghana Trade House in Kenya to enhance trade relations, create market access, increase export opportunities, increase product promotion and branding of made in Ghana products.

Dr. Asare expressed the belief that this UNIDO and GEPA WACOMP initiative would provide an avenue for SMEs to increase awareness of the high-quality products in the sub-region and encourage sourcing components and raw materials support for manufacturing.

Dr. Charles Kwame Sackey, WACOMP – Ghana Chief Technical Advisor, reiterating UNIDO and the EU’s commitment to building MSMEs to be globally competitive, encouraged them to build networks to increase exports to new markets.

He indicated that the WACOMP project has since 2019 supported the cassava, fruits and cosmetics value chains at national and regional levels to promote structural transformation and improved access to regional and international markets while considering social and environmental concerns.

As part of the activities marking the exhibition, a two-day side-event workshop on trading opportunities within ECOWAS in processed fruits, cassava cosmetics and personal care products was organized for attending MSMEs.

The exhibition attracted businesses from Liberia and other neighbouring countries in West Africa.

Connect

WACOMP SMEs Expo in Accra



A view of the exhibition hall

Over 60 MSMEs showcased their products at an SMEs Trade Expo held at the Labadi Beach Hotel, as part of activities of the International Cluster Conference, organized by WACOMP-Ghana.

The event brought together key stakeholders to network and explore business opportunities, foster partnerships, and contribute to the growth and development of businesses across the country.

69 potential investors and buyers within the tourism, food processing and creative industries engaged the entrepreneurs and established new and durable business partnerships and increased commercial transactions, therefore ensuring the sustainability of the casava, fruits and cosmetics regional value chains in West Africa.



Connect

Fruits Cluster Mission to Morocco



UNIDO -WACOMP and GEPA team and selected fruits cluster representatives in Morocco

WACOMP – Ghana sponsored a ten-member delegation from Ghana to Casablanca, Morocco in July with support from the Ambassador of Ghana to Morocco, H.E Jojo Effah Broni.

Led by the Chief Executive Officer of the Ghana Export Promotion Authority (GEPA), Dr. Afua Asabea Asare, the mission engaged Moroccan businesses to establish business deals that will translate into exports of fresh and value-added fruits from Ghana.

The delegation made up of trade facilitators, value chain enablers and representatives of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI), the Sea-Freight Pineapple Exporters of Ghana (SPEG), and the Mango Producers and Processors of Ghana gained a first-hand understanding of the market requirements, to meet export orders and to bridge the gap between buyers and suppliers of mango and pineapple.

It is expected that the effort will help to seal permanent deals with major supermarkets from Morocco for the fruit sector in Ghana and connect the Moroccan and Ghanaian markets.

The mission formed part of the WACOMP - Ghana's efforts to sustain the competitiveness of exports from Ghana.

WACOMP – Ghana Sector Export Marketing Plan (SEMP) for the Fruit Value Chain identified Morocco as a promising market with an average growth of 26.5% and a suitable transit centre for imports and exports.

This mission was therefore organized to bridge the gap between the buyers, producers and suppliers of mangoes and pineapples. During the mission, the delegation met with the management of Morocco Fruit Bord, Les Fruitiers, IRRI Froid Atlas, PAX Fruit, Label'Ve group, Smart Fruit/Saveur Naturelle, MELWI and FRESHEX and Marjane Holding.

Connect

Cassava Derivatives Cluster Mission to Egypt



UNIDO – WACOMP Cassava Cluster Representatives in Egypt

An eight-member delegation of WACOMP - Ghana cassava cluster and institutional partners travelled to Egypt on a study tour and participated in the Africa Food Manufacturing Expo held at the Egypt International Exhibition Centre (EIEC) from the 26th to 30th May 2023.

The mission exposed the cluster members to innovations, equipment and packaging material suppliers and emerging trends in manufacturing and packaging. They also participated in B2B meetings with potential suppliers of equipment and packaging materials and made contacts for future business engagements.

As part of activities marking the food expo, the delegation held a series of one-on-one meetings with packaging converters, machine manufacturers and producers of food

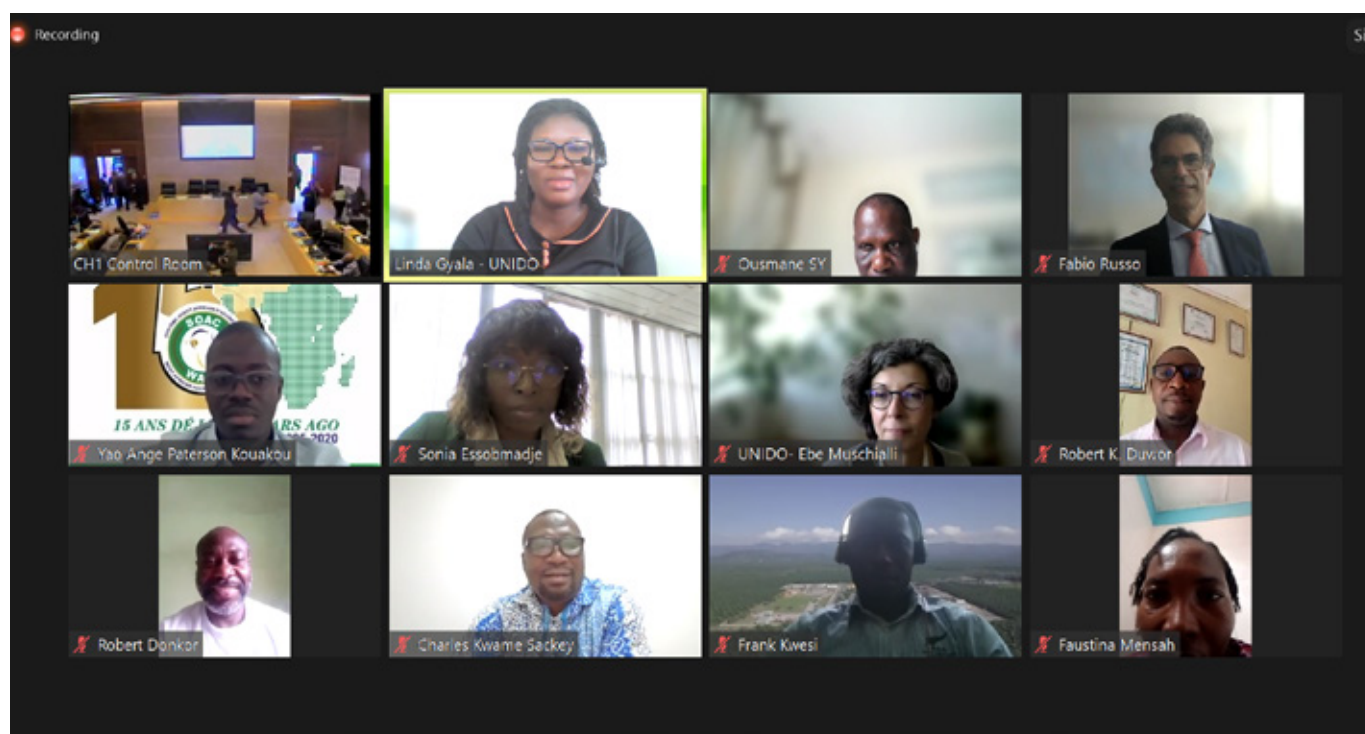
additives providing an opportunity to discuss specific issues of interest with the prospects of resulting in a business deal.

Mr. Joseph Yeboah, WACOMP – Ghana Cluster and Networks expert for Casava Value Chain and Professor Charles Tortoe, WACOMP – Chair of the Cassava Value Chain Strategic Committee, made a promotional presentation on the topic “High-Quality Cassava Flour and other cassava products from Ghana: a new paradigm in the global consumer market”.

The objective of the presentation was to promote HQCF as a viable composite to wheat flour, with high prospects for the Egyptian market and the global consumer market, as it has the potential to minimize cost while improving nutritional outcomes. Other cassava derivatives such as plain gari, fortified gari, konkonte and fufu flour were also promoted during the trade expo.

Connect

Presentation of Cluster Experience in Ghana at the AU Summit



Hybrid meeting of the AU Summit on Cluster Development and Industrial Upgrading

UNIDO and the African Union (AU), in a continuous effort to foster cluster development and industrial upgrading as strategic tools for inclusive and sustainable industrial development in Africa, organised an awareness session on “Cluster development and industrial upgrading” on 6th September as part of the second edition of the annual AU Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) forum and exhibition, held in Addis Ababa from the 4th-8th of September 2023.

The summit showcased good practices implemented by UNIDO in Africa to support SMEs’ competitiveness and enhance their participation in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and international markets, as well as AU’s SME Strategy targeted at MSMEs and private sector-led development. In this contest, WACOMP – Ghana cluster results were showcased as one of the best in Africa.

Mr. Fabio Russo, UNIDO Chief, SME Development and Job Creation Unit said:

“UNIDO’s modular approach to supporting clusters has been tried and tested in various countries in Africa fostering an enabling environment and building capacities of Governments, business support organizations, young entrepreneurs and start-ups resulting in sustainable value chains, SMEs competitiveness, enhanced conformity, and better connectivity.”

Mrs. Ebe Muschialli, UNIDO Industrial Development Expert and WACOMP – Ghana project manager, shared experiences from the implementation of cluster development in Ghana and Tunisia and encouraged the African Union to take advantage of the available clusters to ensure better economic integration of SMEs. She stated: “Cluster Development is a very adaptable and flexible approach to creating vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable ecosystems that foster entrepreneurship, embrace digital technologies and connect globally”.

Over 200 Participants and key stakeholders from across the continent joined the hybrid session.

Connect

WACOMP and other EU-financed projects Showcased at GISE 2023



H.E. Mr. Irchad Razaaly, the European Union (EU) Ambassador to Ghana with some of the EU and WACOMP team at the EU Village sharing success stories of EU

WACOMP – Ghana and SME beneficiaries participated in the 6th Ghana Industrial Summit and Exhibition (GISE) 2023.

The project was exhibited at the EU village pavilion alongside other key projects funded by the European Union from the 18th to the 20th of September at the Accra International Conference Centre.

The GISE is an annual event which creates a platform for promoting industrialization and initiatives driving export development and free trade.

The European Union Delegation in Ghana showcased the success stories of WACOMP Ghana support to the country's industrial transformation, 1D1F initiatives, Planting for Food and Jobs, and Ghana's export development agenda and also used the EU pavilion to show successes related to green economy and agribusinesses.

Besides being part of the EU Pavillion, WACOMP-Ghana supported 40 SMEs to participate in the GISE 2023 exhibition.



Hon. K.T. Hammond, Minister of Trade & Industry (left) having a taste of dry fruits and interacting with team EU



One of the WACOMP supported SMEs engaging a customer at he GISE 2023

Connect

Study Tour and Participation in Beauty Istanbul



Selected cosmetics entrepreneurs at the Beauty Instabul

As safety, self-care and wellness become more important for consumers globally, the cosmetics industry has become more conscious of innovations to protect consumers and to expand. In Africa, the beauty and personal care market raked in \$ 57.12 billion in revenue as of August 2023 according to research data from Statista.

WACOMP – Ghana, to further strengthen the capacity of beneficiaries in the cosmetics sector to export, organized a study for representative from the Cosmetics Value Chain Strategic Committee to Beauty Istanbul (B2B Cosmetics and Beauty Exhibition) from 27th to 29th September 2023.

The main objective of the study tour was to explore and understand the cosmetics market trends and promotional

stands of other cosmetic clusters towards, to benchmark the work to be done in Ghana for giving the right visibility to the cosmetics clusters.

The participation also allowed the entrepreneurs to scout for packaging suppliers who have the relevant documentation required by SMEs to conform with the stringent EU Market requirements, defined in the product Information File

Attending the fair also allowed Ghanaian cluster members to build direct linkages with suppliers of natural raw materials currently unavailable in Ghana (essential oils, carrier oils and powders) and take advantage of opportunities to source new markets for Ghanaian cosmetics products.

Credit

From Farm to Market: The Story of Qualipine and Agropal



Pineapple harvesting by cluster members at one of the WACOMP - Ghana demonstration farm

WACOMP - Ghana has impacted and built the capacity of the Qualipine Union, a pineapple-producing cluster to support processors.

Under the Credit Axis of UNIDO's innovative 5C approach, WACOMP supported Qualipine Union, a group of 280 pineapple farmers from 12 cooperatives through the Sub-Contracting Matching Scheme.

The group was supported with a 4-wheel drive Massey Ferguson combo tractor with 18 harrow discs for land preparation, harrowing and ridging.

This has contributed to a 29.8% increase in the area under cultivation from 852 acres in the 2021/2022 planting season to 1106 acres in the 2022/2023 planting season.

The investment has helped address a key problem which was limiting the production capacity of the cluster partly, considering the time needed for manual land preparation and tractor services hiring.

WACOMP further boosted the capacity of Qualipine through training in financial management and group dynamics and also linked the group to access financial support from a microfinance company, Maroon Capital to purchase much-needed inputs to increase capacity to supply off-takers.

Credit

Cont'd from pg.30

As part of the Sub-Contracting Matching Scheme, WACOMP also supported the CERATH Development Organization (CDO) to provide technical assistance (TA) to selected actors within the mango and pineapple value chains.

One of the key beneficiaries has been AGROPAL West Africa Limited, a prominent fruit processing company, whose capacity has been enhanced with training for staff and quality processing standards to purchase fruits for drying and export.

WACOMP's objective to enhance market access is being materialized through a strategic partnership by connecting the Qualipine Union with AGROPAL West Africa Limited.

As a result of this collaborative effort, AGROPAL sourced over 90 tons of high-quality pineapples from the Qualipine Union for export to Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg).

Thanks to this successful collaboration, there has been a substantial increase in the volume of pineapples sourced from the Qualipine Union.

This not only bolsters the livelihoods of local farmers but also ensures a consistent supply of fresh, high-grade pineapples for AGROPAL West Africa Limited for processing and export to international markets.

This strategic partnership between the Qualipine Union, CERATH Development Organization and AGROPAL West Africa Limited stands as a testament to WACOMP's commitment to fostering sustainable growth in the agricultural sector.

Over 90 tons of pineapple have already been sourced from the Qualipine Union cementing a continuous cooperation between these three strategic enterprises.

Feedback on Support to Qualipine



Abigail Amponsah Addy, CEO of Hencky Farms, Member of Qualipine:

„I have benefitted from various WACOMP training and has been part of international trade fairs. My cluster group, Qualipine Producers Union benefitted from the Sub-Contracting Matching Scheme which has aided the mechanization of our farms. The support increased our production in the 2022 planting by 120% and we now sell our fruits directly to multinational fruit processors such as HPW, Blue Skies, Bomart and Nanofood, known for processing fresh cut, canned and dry fruits for the export market.

Thank you European Union and UNIDO for your continuous support to farmers.”



Voice

From the field

Mr. Ishmael Boafo
CEO of KOBs Farms Limited

„Sometimes all a person needs to support a business idea and create wealth is kindness from those around them“

I started KOBs Farm on a small family-owned land in the year 2000. My Startup capital was mainly a family business. In 2015, I registered it as a limited liability company now employing 25 permanent workers and during every mango season we hire an average of 30 casuals to support our operations.

Compete

What has sustained my interest in farming was my passion and quest to make a living out of agriculture.

It made me treat farming as a business venture instead of farming to feed a family.

K.O.B.S is a known name for our family businesses in Somanya in the Eastern Region so when I thought of registering an agribusiness, I deemed it right to use the name people already know for all our family business.

As an entrepreneur in Ghana, some of the challenges I have encountered are: access to finance without collateral, and lack of standardization in fresh export processing, including high air freight charges that make our pricing not competitive, and poor fruit quality, which limits the volumes we can pick for fresh exports

It's been an awesome journey so far with WACOMP as far as my agribusiness enterprise is concerned. First, the outlook of our dried fruits packaging has received a magnificent makeover, thanks to WACOMP branding expert. Our products have now the desired appearance to conquer not just local markets but also supermarkets in Europe and other destinations in the international markets, as we intend to export our products.

WACOMP is also supporting with registering our product through the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA).

Our international trade fair participation trip gave me firsthand knowledge about what the markets demand, and we now produce to meet their demand.

The opportunity to participate in Fruit Logistica gave me a huge boost in my fresh exports business and helped me to meet with real buyers.

I also signed supplier contracts with buyers outside Ghana and I have since been shipping and having no issues with payments.

„Our fresh mangoes and pineapples have also been exported to Antwerp, Belgium and Morocco and I met these customers through the international fruit fair participation in Berlin, Germany through WACOMP.“

I have had the opportunity to participate in a trade mission to Morocco with WACOMP and took samples along to meet potential customers.

Most of them expressed interest and we are presently awaiting full certifications of products to enable us to start exports.

We intend to ship to all the destinations, particularly our fresh produce to Europe, the Gulf and Africa and penetrate the American markets as well with our dried products.

We also benefited from Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) training.

My workers and I were taken through various harvesting and post-harvest training to enhance our farm's conformity to standards and GMPs.

Through the WACOMP Sub-Contracting Matching Scheme, we also secured a brand new 500kg fruit dehydrator and my drying capacity has increased from 1.5 tons to 2 tons per batch.

Through the WACOMP Sub-Contracting Matching Scheme, we also secured a brand new 500kg fruit dehydrator and my drying capacity has increased from 1.5 tons to 2 tons per batch.

My cluster network, the Yilo Krobo mango farmers association have benefited from Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and business management organized by the WACOMP – Ghana.

These were particularly important, as it helped us with the required knowledge to manage our various farming enterprises.

Awards:

In 2016, I was recognized as the overall best farmer in the Yilo Krobo municipality, at the national Farmers Day celebrations and I have been nominated for national best farmer for 2023 in the upcoming National Best Farmers Awards, scheduled for the first Friday in December.

I am currently a zonal chairman of the Yilo Krobo Mango Farmers Association.

The association is comprised of over 100 farmers with an estimated 4000 acres of farmland.

Compete

Cont'd from pg.33

Community Impact:

I believe that value addition is the way to go for agribusiness in Ghana and I demonstrate this by constantly researching and innovating at the level of my farm and enterprise.

Every harvesting season allows us to employ a lot more women and youth for our fresh export business.

90% of our employees are from the communities we operate creating employment for many more youths in the Yilo Krobo districts.

I expect that WACOMP – Ghana will continue to build the capacity of many more fruit companies like mine.

I wish they had more years to stay and help strengthen and build up the capacity of our various fruit FBOs.

The support received for value addition has had a tremendous impact on my business by reducing the losses most fruit producers face, due to the perishability nature of our commodities.

“I am forever grateful to WACOMP - Ghana, UNIDO and the European Union for exposing us to the real world of fruit export competitiveness.

The training we have received contributed to our success increasing our revenue by 50%, taking us from \$100,000 per mango season to \$200,000 per mango season.”

AT A GLANCE

Donor:
European Union

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United Nations Industrial
Development Organization (UNIDO)

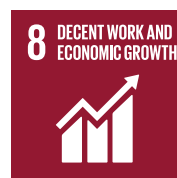
Duration:
60 months

Government co-ordinating agency
Ministry of Trade and Industry of
Ghana (MoTI)

Budget:
6,350,000 EUR

**EU is contributing a total of 6,200,000 EURO with other
funding support of 150,000 EURO from UNIDO**

WACOMP GHANA'S CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)



WACOMP REGIONAL INTERVENTION

West Africa Competitiveness and Quality Infrastructure Project

The value chains identified in the EU action document for regional value chain development and upgrading include:

- Mango
- Cassava
- Textile and Garment
- Information, Communication and Technology (ICT)

Each of these value chain are identified as relevant for several ECOWAS member states and will be thoroughly reviewed during the inception phase of the project for their regional development potential.



Ghana Competitive News



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The Delegation of the European Union to Ghana is part of the European Union External Service and is one of the more than 130 Delegations throughout the world. The Delegation has the status of a diplomatic mission and officially represents the European Union in Ghana.

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Implementing Agency: UNIDO

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Ministry of Trade and Industry
Republic of Ghana

In Partnership with Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI)

The Ministry of Trade & Industry is the supporting government agency of this programme and the lead policy advisor to the government on trade, industrial and private sector development with responsibility for the formulation and implementation of policies for the promotion, growth and development of domestic, international trade, and industry.

For more information, visit: <http://moti.gov.gh>

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The West Africa Competitiveness Programme aims to support a number of selected value chains at national and regional level to promote structural transformation and better access to regional and international markets, while taking into account social and environmental concerns. The WACOMP consists of one regional component and sixteen national components (15 ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania)

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