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# Newsletter

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## WEST AFRICA COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAMME (WACOMP)

Increasing Sierra Leone's Competitiveness through Enhanced Productivity and Trade Compliance in Selected Value Chains



Sierra Leone



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The West Africa Competitiveness Programme aims to support a number of selected value chains at the national and regional levels 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).

Mr. Jacek Jankowski



Ambassador of the European Union to Sierra Leone

## Foreword

It is a pleasure to introduce this edition of the West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) newsletter, highlighting our journey toward quality standards in Sierra Leone. Quality standards are essential to the trade competitiveness of every region and country, including the European Union, ECOWAS, and Sierra Leone. By adhering to high standards across industries, products and services gain a reputation for excellence. Quality standards not only enhance product consistency and consumer protection but also reduce trade barriers, facilitating smoother market access. As a result, they drive innovation, increase market share, and ensure that enterprises remain competitive in a rapidly evolving global economy.

This is why, five years ago, the European Union, in partnership with UNIDO, ITC and the Government of Sierra Leone, launched the WACOMP Sierra Leone programme. WACOMP has driven transformative progress across Sierra Leone's private and public sectors. Key achievements include establishing the country's first globally accredited certification body, the Management System Certification Body under the Sierra Leone Standards Bureau. Training initiatives at the Standards Bureau have further strengthened the national quality infrastructure system.



WACOMP's support also extends to sustainable agriculture and food processing. Over 2,600 farmers have benefited from training in best practices for cocoa, cassava, and palm oil. The project has also fostered compliance with WTO trade requirements, including establishing the National Notification Authority and the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) National Enquiry Point. Notably, trainings in food safety standards and quality management systems have laid the groundwork for Sierra Leone's first-ever ISO 22000 (Food Safety Management) certifications for companies, assuring global-standard quality and safety. When companies in Sierra Leone adhere to international standards

for quality management, they unlock significant opportunities to access EU markets. Compliance with these globally recognized standards assures EU buyers and regulators of the quality, safety, and reliability of Sierra Leonean products, meeting the stringent requirements necessary for export into the EU. This alignment with EU standards not only increases Sierra Leone's trade potential but also strengthens the credibility of its businesses on the international stage.

Mr. Emmanuel Konjoh



Chief Director  
Ministry of Trade and Industry  
Government of Sierra Leone



we have made. The program has equipped local businesses and institutions with the skills, knowledge, and networks needed to compete in international markets, creating a foundation that will support Sierra Leone's ongoing economic transformation. Our work has underscored

the value of partnership and collaboration, demonstrating that when we work together toward shared goals, we can achieve sustainable, meaningful progress.

## Foreword

I have seen firsthand the profound impact of WACOMP on Sierra Leone's value chains, bringing significant benefits to farmers, smallholders, cooperatives, and SMEs across the nation. This program has elevated local standards and strengthened Sierra Leone's connection to regional and international markets in line with the requirement of AfCFTA, WTO and EU regulations, creating new economic opportunities for those who were previously marginalized.

UNIDO and ITC as implementing agencies have enhanced local capacities in quality management, export facilitation, and market linkage development. These partnerships have

amplified our impact, enabling Sierra Leonean MSMEs to access services that drive long-term growth, from quality certification to market readiness and sector-specific training.

This initiative, a collaboration between the European Union and the Government of Sierra Leone, has been pivotal in strengthening the country's productive capabilities, especially within the Quality Infrastructure framework and among MSMEs, farmers, and agricultural cooperatives in the cassava, cocoa, and palm oil sectors.

As we approach the conclusion of WACOMP Sierra Leone, it is inspiring to see the progress



Ms. Mariatu Swaray

UNIDO Country Representative  
Country Office in Sierra Leone

On behalf of UNIDO, I extend sincere appreciation to the European Union, the Government of Sierra Leone, and all dedicated partners and stakeholders. Their commitment to advancing Sierra Leone's competitive edge has

been invaluable. I hope this newsletter serves as a testament to the transformative power of partnership and resilience, as well as an inspiring reflection of what we have achieved together.

## Foreword

It is a privilege, as UNIDO Country Representative, to present this newsletter showcasing the significant milestones achieved under the West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) in Sierra Leone. Through partnership with the International Trade Centre (ITC), UNIDO has focused on establishing resilient value chains, enhancing productivity, and fostering trade compliance, yielding impactful results across Sierra Leone's agro-industrial landscape.

Supported by the European Union and implemented by UNIDO and ITC, WACOMP has been a transformative effort aimed at strengthening the capacity of local SMEs to compete in regional and international markets.

Our commitment remains firm in empowering these businesses with the necessary tools, expertise, and standards to unlock new opportunities, create jobs, and drive economic growth in alignment with SDG 8 and SDG 9.

As WACOMP Sierra Leone reaches its conclusion, we view these accomplishments not as endpoints but as catalysts for ongoing growth and cooperation. With an enhanced National Quality Infrastructure, a growing network of quality-focused SMEs, and strengthened public-private partnerships, Sierra Leone is well-prepared to build on these successes. We look forward to witnessing further development across these industries and to empowering communities nationwide.

Mr. Shaukat Hussain



Chief Technical Advisor, UNIDO



have shown incredible commitment to growth, quality, and resilience. May this newsletter inspire others as it inspires us—to continue striving for excellence and to work collaboratively toward a prosperous future for Sierra Leone and beyond.

## Foreword

It is a great honor to show the significant advancements of the West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) in Sierra Leone. This transformative initiative, led by the European Union in partnership the Government of Sierra Leone, UNIDO and ITC has established a robust foundation for inclusive and sustainable growth within the standards and compliance sector and the agriculture sector like cassava, cocoa, and palm oil sectors.

I am proud to share this summary of our achievements, highlighting the resilience of Sierra Leone's businesses, the dedication of our

local partners, and the commitment of every individual who has contributed to this initiative.

From the beginning, WACOMP's objectives have been rooted in the belief that quality and competitiveness are intertwined. Through rigorous training programs and hands-on support, we have empowered local SMEs to adopt internationally recognized quality standards that will open new doors for exports and reinforce the trust and confidence of international buyers. I also want to acknowledge the exceptional dedication of Sierra Leone's entrepreneurs and farmers' cooperative, who

Mr. Shiaka Kawa



ITC National Coordinator  
Sierra Leone Office for Africa  
International Trade Centre



These accomplishments, along with the enhancement of service portfolios for Business Support Organizations (BSOs) and support provided to policymakers in addressing trade policy challenges, contribute to the

improvement and sustainability of the country's competitiveness. They reflect our collective efforts and underscore the progress and impact of the WACOMP programme in Sierra Leone.

## Foreword

I am pleased, as National Coordinator of ITC, to present the results of the work conducted by ITC in collaboration with UNIDO under the West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) in Sierra Leone, highlighting some of the most inspiring success stories from this initiative.

WACOMP supported selected value chains at both national and regional levels, promoting economic transformation and facilitating access to regional and international markets. Under this initiative, ITC focused on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and Business Support Organizations (BSOs) through tailored

capacity-building activities aimed at fostering their growth and improving practices.

The successes we present today, which I have actively contributed to and witnessed firsthand, encompass various achievements. These include participation in international trade fairs, providing beneficiaries with broader opportunities through increased market knowledge and enhanced international presence. Additionally, expert training has contributed to improvements in their practices, leading to enhanced performance, enabling them to better meet international demand.

# The Project at a Glance



## Duration

2019 - 2024



## Budget

€ 4,700,000

1 Donor



The European Union

1 National Counterpart: MTI



## Beneficiaries

- Sierra Leonean MSMEs
- Growers
- Associations
- Cooperatives
- Processors and exporters
- MTI, SLSB, SLECAD, NIB, PMB, SMEDA & SLIEPA

2 Implementing Agencies



International Trade Centre



UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

3 Value Chains



Cassava



Cocoa



Palm Oil

## Focus

Enhancing the National Quality Infrastructure Services



# Introduction

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.

The project aims to enhance the competitiveness of Sierra Leone's cocoa, palm oil, and cassava sectors to strengthen the country's connections to regional and global value chains, creating more jobs, and bolster resilience against economic shocks. By adding value and identifying new markets for agricultural products, it aims to diversify the economy beyond minerals. Ensuring equal access for female and male entrepreneurs to the benefits of national policies being crucial for its success.

WACOMP Sierra Leone was implemented by UNIDO in partnership with International Trade Centre (ITC) to achieve the overall objective of strengthening the competitiveness of Sierra Leone and enhance its integration into the regional and international trading systems. Under this initiative, ITC focused on Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and Business Support Organizations (BSOs) through tailored capacity-building activities aimed at fostering their growth and improving practices. While UNIDO focused on strengthening the national quality infrastructure as well as on providing capacity building to smallholders, cooperatives and MSMEs to increase their compliance with quality requirements and therefore improve their competitiveness and expand market access of the priority value chains.



The project lasted from 2019 to 2024 and had two specific objectives:

▶ **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1:** To improve the performance, growth and contribution to industry, regional trade and exports of cassava, cocoa and palm oil value chains.

**Output 1.1** - Competitiveness at firms' level is improved, especially through the Clusters' approach.

**Output 1.2** - Intermediate organizations of the selected value chains are strengthened and service delivery to MSME is improved and expanded (quality, norms/standards, new green solutions, market access, etc.).

▶ **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2:** To improve the climate for business at national level.

**Output 2.1** - Regional policies in favor of industrial competitiveness are mainstreamed in the country and help enable a business-friendly environment.

This last publication of WACOMP Sierra Leone aims to showcase the main success stories and milestones in each of the ten sub-outputs of

the project. Each one of the chapters in this publication refers to the three above-mentioned outputs of the project.



# 1

**Competitiveness  
at firms' level  
is improved,  
especially through  
the Cluster's  
approach**





## Success stories of sub-output 1.1.1

### Post-harvest handling and processing practices, industrial upgrading through the cluster approach are strengthened



#### Internationally Registered Global G.A.P Trainer for the First Time in Sierra Leone

Since 2021 UNIDO has been supporting cassava farmers in Sierra Leone for the implementation of Global G.A.P. Global G.A.P. is a farm assurance program, translating consumer requirements into Good Agricultural Practices and is accepted in over 100 countries.

After completing several workshops with internationally registered trainers, a selection of cassava cooperatives were identified for implementation, and to ensure sustainability, some members of the cooperatives were trained as Farmer Support Officers (FSO). The role of a FSO was to work closely with UNIDO, creating a direct link with the cooperatives. They received regular training and were guided through the implementation process of Global G.A.P Primary Farm Assurance.

On November 2023, FSO from Tegloma Youth Empowerment Organization and Bondayila Cooperative participated in the Global G.A.P online registered trainers Integrated Farm Assurance (IFA) V6 Plants course. IFA is the leading smart farm assurance solution for fruits and vegetables – enabling producers worldwide to assess, demonstrate, and improve their responsible farming practices. IFA certification is requested by retailers across the globe and provides a practical path for producers to implement best practices at farm level that contribute to the long-term viability of the sector,



the welfare of farming communities, and the sustainability of surrounding ecosystems.

Through a series of participatory exercises, self-study and direction from a registered trainer, the course covered an introduction into GLOBALG.A.P. and the IFA scope, traceability, food safety, workers' health, welfare, biodiversity and habitats, energy efficiency, waste management, fertilizers and biostimulants, water management, integrated pest management and plant protection products.

On the last day all participants were required to complete two exams with a pass rate of 70% within three hours. Mr. Mustapha Tucker from Tegloma Youth Empowerment Organization successfully passed the course with 90% pass rate. This was a huge achievement not only for Mustapha, but for Sierra Leone, as this is the first time there will be an internationally registered trainer in country.

Mustapha now appears on the Global G.A.P website as a registered trainer and can be engaged on an international level. Having access to this resource will benefit farmers in Sierra Leone and

within the region immensely, due to the high cost that is usually incurred by bringing in a registered trainer to complete workshops and trainings. His expertise can now be utilised by the government, NGO's and cooperatives to continue raising awareness and hold trainings on Global G.A.P.

#### Tool Banks, Centralized Nurseries and School Farms for Cocoa Farmers

Under the UNIDO developed Cocoa Farmer Coaching Initiative, 29 tool banks have been procured in addition to the development of four school farms and four centralized nurseries in Kenema district, with 1,000 Moawoma Cocoa Cooperative farmers as beneficiaries.

The scheme has developed two Farmer Support Officers (FSOs) who have received training on how to use the procured tools. Items such as pruning saws, secateurs and local harvesting tools were supplied. The objective of the tools is to improve the quality and quantity of the cocoa harvested. To date, over 1,500 tools have been supplied. Farmers noted that since the distribution of tools, they have been able to manage the black pods in their farm more easily, therefore reducing the post-harvest loss.

Farmers are also trained to use the tools in the school farms, which were developed as training farms for good agricultural practices. One of

the key challenges FSOs have is changing the mindset of farmers. Even through participatory trainings, farmers are reluctant to implement unless they see the results first. In this way the school farms are to show the benefits and results of the trainings. Farmers have received trainings on shade management, pruning and rehabilitation pruning in the school farms.

During the inception phase of the farmer coaching initiative, WACOMP project observed that many cocoa farmers had small cocoa nurseries in their farms but were not managed well. This meant that gap filling exercises were inefficient as the new plants were not strong or prone to disease. With this in mind, the project implemented centralized nurseries where FSOs could train them on best practices such as soil health and shade management. They were also trained on how to identify pests and diseases and how to prepare the organic inputs to solve these issues.





## Success stories of sub-output 1.1.2



Product design/development, sector/product-specific marketing and sales development/market access including for smallholders are enhanced

### Enhancing Competitiveness in Sierra Leone's Cassava, Cocoa and Palm Oil Industries: A Success Story

In Sierra Leone, businesses in the cocoa, cassava, and palm oil sectors have undergone significant transformations through targeted training and support from the West Africa Competitiveness

Programme (WACOMP). These efforts have boosted competitiveness at the MSME level, driving economic growth and innovation.



Centralized nurseries and school farms are also part of the community, and not an individual farmer's responsibility. The cooperative was encouraged to work as a group to manage both the school farm and centralized nursery. FSOs

taught them how to create byelaws to govern activities which farmers accredited to part of their success.





## Reviving the Palm Oil Industry

Goldtree, a key player in Sierra Leone's palm oil industry, revitalized its plantation using an innovative model that integrates harvests from hundreds of small farm families. This collaboration increased production and helped many smallholders achieve certification from the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), ensuring sustainable and ethical practices.

In 2023, WACOMP organized a study tour (ST) for farmers to learn from Goldtree's successful model. This initiative is part of WACOMP's mission to enhance local processing capabilities and improve export potential. The ST, building on trainings that began in 2022, provided insights into advanced agronomic practices, such as improved pruning and harvesting methods.

Practical sessions led by a National Expert on converting pruned palm fronds into organic fertilizer fostered new collaborations and helped farmers work towards RSPO certification.



A survey revealed that all participating companies had expanded their capacity, with two-thirds acquiring new equipment. WaYADI, for instance, began producing higher-value cassava products such as vegetable and meat pies, sausages, and

croquettes, significantly boosting their sales and economic potential. "Now we are processing more recipes and offer vegetable and meat pies, sausages, and croquettes," Kanneh said.

## Transforming Cassava Businesses

Beneficiaries in the cassava sector have also reported significant advancements. Matthew Jusu Kanneh, head of the Women and Youth in Agricultural Development Initiative (WaYADI), exemplifies this transformation. Initially limited to producing traditional cassava products like gari and flour, WaYADI expanded its offerings after joining WACOMP's trainings.

Starting with Value Addition and Product Diversification Trainings followed by Branding and Marketing Trainings further helped them develop new visual identities and marketing materials, including logos, business cards, brochures, and websites.



## Activating market linkages in the three sectors

Through collaborative efforts and the adoption of best practices, businesses in Sierra Leone's cassava, cocoa and palm oil sectors have also strengthened their market linkages and improved their visibility in local, regional and international markets. For instance, 11 MSMEs made significant changes to their business operations, focusing on developing new products, improving packaging and labeling, and enhancing production and processing practices. Concrete examples include improved branding with informative labels and graphics while conducting trainings to their staff based on the ITC workshops delivered.



Equipped with deeper market knowledge and



new marketing kits, supported MSMEs were able to showcase their products and know-how at the Food and Beverage West Africa (FAB) trade fair in Lagos, the FIARA trade fairs in Senegal, and the Inter-Africa Trade Fair in Egypt, providing them with new platforms and experience.

Throughout this journey, over 15 WACOMP MSME beneficiaries achieved significant sales both locally and internationally, exploring 13 new markets. Local sales were valued at over \$900,000 USD, and international sales at over

\$700,000 USD, with MSMEs being able to access new regional (Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Senegal) and extra-regional markets (Germany, Switzerland, French Guiana, UAE, and the USA).

These achievements exemplify the impact of the cluster approach, underscoring the potential for economic growth and development in West Africa.



*Before attending the various ITC trainings, our level of production and processing was very low, which greatly affected our export quota. After attending both trainings, our company developed a basic oil palm training manual that included key best management practices such as pruning, pest, and disease management.*

**Noellen Barber**  
CEO, Nianda Agriculture and Trading Company



## Success stories of sub-output 1.1.3

Quality management and quality improvement are achieved at SME level including for smallholders



First Cohort of Trainers on Quality Management Successfully Developed and Evaluated at the University of Sierra Leone



The EU-funded [WACOMP-Sierra Leone project](#) in its efforts towards developing Quality Infrastructure (QI) in the country, in collaboration with the University of Sierra Leone (USL) and the University of the West of Scotland (UWS), held a Trainer's capacity evaluation during the month of February 2024 in Freetown.

In earlier phases of the project, a series of training packages were developed, "Core Skills on Quality Management", and "ISO 9001 Implementation". This material was aimed to be delivered, in partnership with the Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM)

of USL, to local SMEs, students of USL and public bodies in order to raise awareness and build knowledge on Quality Management (QM) System as an enabler for economic development and sustainable communities.

To ensure the success of the above-mentioned courses, an auditor training of selected IPAM staff, signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between USL and UWS, preparation of training material for IPAM potential trainers, and competency assessment of the prospective trainers on QM took place at various stages.



It was critical to identify and assess individuals that had a deep understanding of the teaching material as well as the public speaking and engagement skills to deliver the training, since this is the first of its kind training in a higher education institution in the country and aims to be a catalyst for change in the existing professional and academic landscape.

A total of 11 potential trainers were assessed and evaluated in February 2024 at the USL. The overall assessment exercise resulted in four instructors being ready to deliver the training, four potential trainers to shadow the successful ones to build their practical knowledge on quality and three who have to receive further support in order to become authorized trainers.



The evaluators admired the research skills and preparations of all participants. The successful implementation of the above is important for the next phase of the training implementation and for its sustainability beyond the project.

## ISO 22000-Food Safety Management System, its Impact for Industries and the Role of HACCP Certification to Fulfill EU Regulations

ISO 22000 is an international standard that specifies requirements for a food safety management system (FSMS) in the food industry. It provides a framework for organizations to ensure food safety at all stages of the food supply chain, from production to consumption. Some of the benefits for industries implementing ISO 22000 include: improved food safety, enhanced customer confidence, legal compliance, efficiency and a competitive advantage.

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) is a systematic approach to identify, evaluate, and control food safety hazards. It focuses on identifying critical control points (CCPs) in the food production process where hazards can be prevented, eliminated, or reduced to acceptable levels. The role of HACCP certification for the export of cocoa liquor to the EU is crucial due to EU regulations that mandate strict food safety standards.

The specific EU regulation number for HACCP certification for exporting food products to the EU is Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs. This regulation lays down general hygiene requirements for food business operators throughout the food supply chain and requires the application of HACCP principles. HACCP certification is essential for compliance with this regulation when exporting food products to the EU.

Keeping in view the importance of food safety standards, trainings have been conducted by WACOMP Sierra Leone for the following public and private sector institutions and SMEs: Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI), Sierra Leone Standards Bureau (SLSB), Food Safety Authority under the Ministry of Health (MoH), Kadat



Beverages (SME), Real Value Foods (SME), Capitol Foods Ltd. (SME) and Kings Beverages (SME).



In addition, gap analysis have been conducted for five SMEs to analyze the suitability to implement ISO 2000 standard and subsequently certification for those SMEs. After a two days gap analysis for each SME, the following were selected for the implementation of ISO 22000 standard: Real Value Foods, Kadat Beverages, Capitol Foods Ltd. and Jolaks.



*I am confident that the trainers will be able to adapt the training materials and lead in cascading the training to our students. I am so happy to see the outcome of this.*

**Dr. Haja Ramatulai Wurie**  
Minister of Technical and Higher Education  
Ministry of Technical and Higher Education Sierra Leone





These four SMEs have received tailored technical assistance for ISO 22000 implementation from UNIDO since 2021 that included but was not limited to conducting training sessions, developing required safety Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as per ISO 22000 requirement and supporting SMEs towards implementation of different requirements. This hand-holding accompaniment culminated with two SMEs (Jolaks and Capitol Foods) that underwent the external audit by a Greek Certification Body in June 2024, resulting in the first two SMEs certified in ISO 22000 in Sierra Leone. An award ceremony with all the relevant stakeholders including the EU and MTI took place on 7 November 2024 at the premises of Jolaks to



formally submit the ISO 22000 certificates to the two SMEs.



*Jolaks Manufacturing Company was established in 2019 and has a Palm Oil Refinery, Saponification Plant and Soap Manufacturing Plant. We have been selling our products locally and exporting to various ECOWAS countries. Even after having quality products with good pricing, we were unable to sell in various European Markets and also some multinational companies within Africa. It was not because of our quality of the product or services but because we did not have ISO certification. Being a beneficiary of the WACOMP Sierra Leone has given us an opportunity to obtain the ISO 22000 which will bring trust to our partners on our quality of product and services. This technical assistance will open a lot of doors for Jolaks to stand and serve with its quality product and services”.*



**Shoheb Panjwani**  
**General Manager**  
 Jolaks Manufacturing Company Limited



# 2

**Intermediate organizations of the selected value chains are strengthened and service delivery to MSME is improved and expanded (quality, norms/standards, new green solutions, market access, etc.)**



## Success stories of sub-output 1.2.1



The operational and coordination capacities of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) pertaining to the competitiveness project are strengthened

### Empowering Sierra Leone Through WTO's TBT, SPS and ePing System Capacity Building

Sierra Leone, like many developing nations, stands at the cusp of significant economic transformation. Central to this transformation is the ability to engage effectively in international trade. The World Trade Organization (WTO) plays a crucial role in this regard, especially through its Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures. The implementation of a National Enquiry Point (NEP) and the utilization of the ePing system are pivotal components in navigating the complex landscape of international trade regulations. The ePing is an online alert mechanism developed by ITC,

UN and WTO to help businesses stay informed about changes in sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS) and technical barriers to trade (TBT) in international markets. WACOMP Sierra Leone has organized a series of capacity building workshops for TBT and SPS systems and previously has established the National Notification Authority (NNA) at the Ministry of Trade and Industry. In March 2024, it conducted a 5-days comprehensive workshop for TBT, SPS and ePing system where 32 participants from the public and private sector had attended.

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## Understanding TBT and SPS Measures



The TBT and SPS measures are essential frameworks developed by the WTO to ensure that regulations, standards, testing, and certification processes do not create unnecessary obstacles to international trade. While TBT measures apply to all industrial products, including agricultural products in aspects not covered by the SPS, the SPS focuses solely on food safety and animal and plant health standards.

For Sierra Leone, engaging effectively with these measures is not just about compliance; it is about leveraging these frameworks to enhance its market access globally. The TBT and SPS measures, when navigated efficiently, can open new markets for Sierra Leone's agricultural and industrial products, enhance the competitiveness of its exports, and ensure the safety and quality of imports.

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### Setting Up a National Enquiry Point (NEP) for TBT

A National Enquiry Point for TBT is a linchpin for any country's trade facilitation infrastructure. It serves as a focal point for the provision of information to exporters, importers, and other stakeholders on TBT and SPS measures. Establishing a NEP involves several key steps:

- ▶ **Regulatory Framework:** The government must ensure there is a legal and regulatory framework that mandates the establishment and functions of the NEP.

- ▶ **Institutional Arrangement:** Deciding on the host institution for the NEP, typically a ministry or agency responsible for trade, health, or agriculture.

- ▶ **Capacity Building:** Staff need to be trained not only in the technical aspects of TBT and SPS measures but also on the use of tools like the ePing system.



- ▶ **Infrastructure Development:** Ensuring the necessary IT and communication infrastructure is in place for effective operation and dissemination of information.
- ▶ **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging with domestic stakeholders, including industries, associations, and other governmental agencies, is crucial for the NEP's effectiveness.

### Leveraging the ePing System

The ePing system is an invaluable tool for countries like Sierra Leone. It provides timely information on SPS and TBT notifications from member countries, which is crucial for both public and private sectors. Here is how Sierra Leone can leverage the ePing system:



**Registration:** Relevant stakeholders from the government, private sector, and civil society should register on the ePing platform to receive alerts.



**Custom Alerts:** Users can customize alerts based on their sector of interest or specific markets, ensuring that they receive relevant information.



**Market Access:** By staying informed about potential trade barriers, Sierra Leonean exporters can better prepare for market access requirements.



**Regulatory Input:** The ePing system allows for the provision of comments on notified measures, offering Sierra Leone an opportunity to influence international standards and regulations.

### Impact on Sierra Leone

The establishment of an TBT NEP and active use of the ePing system can have far-reaching impacts on Sierra Leone such as enhanced trade compliance, market diversification, economic growth, and protection of domestic industries from unfair competition. For Sierra Leone, the journey towards economic transformation through international trade is fraught with challenges. However, by harnessing the potential of WTO's TBT and SPS measures through the establishment of a National Enquiry Point and the effective use of the ePing system, Sierra Leone can navigate these challenges effectively. This not only ensures compliance with international trade regulations but also opens a world of opportunities for growth, development, and prosperity.

UNIDO supported Sierra Leone in establishing the NNA and NEPs for SPS and TBT at the MTI and SLSB respectively. Sierra Leone's National Notification Authority (NNA) was officially launched in January 2021. It will serve as a channel for Sierra Leone to interact with the international trade system as well as to provide direct support to SMEs in understanding market requirements when exporting their products.



## Success stories of sub-output 1.2.2

The operational capacity of key support institutions and agencies (SLIEPA, PMB, SLPMC, SMEDA, etc.) is reinforced



### Empowering Trade Support Services in Sierra Leone

In 2023, the International Trade Centre (ITC) rolled out a Trade Support Service Portfolio Development and Delivery training to improve the capabilities of local Trade and Investment Support Institutions (TISIs) such as the Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SLIEPA), the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDA), and the Sierra Leone Chamber for Agribusiness Development (SLECAD) to support their MSME members.



ITC facilitated workshops and coaching sessions to equip TISIs with essential skills for delivering effective trade support services. The training focused on areas including service portfolio design, export readiness, client management, and export project planning.

In a post-training evaluation, participants reported significant practical application of their new skills. Over 60% applied the knowledge daily, and 100% implemented client management techniques. Despite challenges such as limited financing and logistics, the training outcomes have been positive.

In relation to SLIEPA, the WACOMP project sponsored the development of the organization's Strategic Plan 2022-2025, with a particular focus on concrete actions to revamp their Trade Information Center and institutional website. In addition to that, through the establishment

of the ECOWAS Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Network under the WACOMP Regional, of which SLIEPA is a member, the organization was enabled to increase its network of contacts with other TPOs and potential investors.

Additionally, to support SMEDA in enhancing its access to finance services for MSME members, ITC experts provided training to SMEDA staff on how to conduct diagnostics of their private sector clients and better handle their profiles through ITC's free of charge software. ITC further assisted SMEDA by developing a guide for MSMEs on available financial sources in the country, that together with the MSME diagnostic tool has become part of SMEDA's website offer. As a result, 36 MSMEs have now been diagnosed by SMEDA with the new tools provided by the action.

Finally, as a result of the in-depth work on advocacy for MSMEs and cooperatives that was delivered by the programme in collaboration with SLECAD, the organization has been equipped with training materials and outreach outlets (brochures, webpages) to better communicate about its support to developing inclusive Public-Private Dialogues. SLECAD also took concrete steps to engage with remote communities on advocacy action by opening two new district chambers (in Kailahun and Bonthe), employing 10 staff, and witnessing to the registration of eight new members, since the start of the WACOMP Programme.



ITC's action plans under WACOMP have strengthened Sierra Leone's TISIs, equipping them to enhance export competitiveness and support economic growth. By focusing on practical skills and continuous improvement, ITC has laid a

solid foundation for future capacity-building efforts, ensuring that Sierra Leone's trade support institutions can meet the evolving needs of their clients and the global market.



*Following the initiatives and activities that followed on access to finance I will be using the diagnostic tool and what I learned during the workshop to improve my understanding of MSMEs' needs and the importance to their businesses.*

**Augustine Macarthy**  
Regional Coordinator  
Western Area SMEDA







**Sheku Lexmond Koroma**  
CEO, SLIEPA

*I have deliberately singled out the International Trade Centre (ITC) for their remarkable support to SLIEPA for its 14 year existence. Establishment of the SLIEPA Trade Information Centre, Capacity Building under the MOPSE and more especially the WACOMP project which has sponsored the staff retreat, established the ECOWAS TPO Network of which SLIEPA is a proud member and other staff capacity building activities. On behalf of the staff and the Board Chairman I wish to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the ITC Team.*

## Success stories of sub-output 1.2.3



The National Quality infrastructure and related services and in particular that of the SLSB and the relevant regulatory bodies are strengthened and expanded

**SLSB Management System Certification Body (MSCB) internationally accredited**



Under the EU-funded West Africa Competitiveness Programme, UNIDO established the Management System Certification Body (MSCB) of Sierra Leone Standards Bureau (SLSB) with the mission to help companies and organizations improve their professional results through certification, training and audit services based on consistency, impartiality, and integrity. As part of a broader UNIDO objective to develop an effective and efficient National Quality Infrastructure (NQI), it represented a landmark achievement as for the first time, Sierra Leone can certify its enterprises under the brand "Certified in Sierra Leone, Accepted Globally".

The MSCB was established as per the requirements of ISO 17021, which is an international standard for certification bodies that provide management system certification. The standard provides guidelines for the management system certification process, including the requirements for the certification body's management system and the processes for conducting audits and issuing certifications. A management system body as per ISO 17021 is an organization that provides certification services for management systems such as ISO 9001 (Quality Management System), ISO 14001 (Environmental Management System), ISO 22000 (Food Safety Management System) and

others. The body's role is to assess and certify organizations' management systems against the requirements of the relevant management system standards.

In 2022, with support from UNIDO, the MSCB pursued accreditation from the International Accreditation Service (IAS), a prestigious accreditation body based in the United States. Following remote and on-site assessments, on 23 March 2023, SLSB-MSCB achieved international accreditation, marking a significant milestone in Sierra Leone. The accomplishment

was commemorated through a ceremony held in Freetown, attended by esteemed guests including Dr. Edward Hinga Sandy, the Minister of Trade and Industry, and Mr. Gerald Hatler, Head of Cooperation of the Delegation of the European Union to Sierra Leone. This was also the opportunity to award certificates to the first SMEs in Sierra Leone certified for ISO 9001 by the newly established certification body.

### ISO 9001 Certification, Success Story for MSMEs in Sierra Leone



Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) are particularly impacted by the implementation of standards. SME's benefit from standards in various ways, such as improved quality, safety, productivity, competitiveness and sustainability.

During the inception phase of WACOMP Sierra Leone, it was observed that Sierra Leonean MSMEs had not implemented basic practices of ISO 9001:2015. At that time (2019) in Sierra Leone, no company was certified for ISO 9001:2015 and this was mainly due to the following reasons:

- ▶ Low awareness in the country about ISO standards and certifications.
- ▶ Scarcity of accredited certification bodies.
- ▶ Set-up challenges for certification bodies: allocation of start-up funding, registration, staffing and more importantly technical competency, etc.
- ▶ Low possibility on the customers side to afford extra costs and therefore low willingness to pay for certification services.
- ▶ Non availability of ISO 9001 consultants/implementers, trainers and auditors in the country.

Since 2019, UNIDO has supported SLSB in establishing the MSCB through the following steps:



Conducted repeated awareness training courses on ISO17021 and ISO9001:2015 in 2019.



Provided detailed ISO17021 training courses in 2020 and 2021, adapting to remote or on-site delivery based on COVID-19 restrictions.



Developed ISO 17021-compliant policies and procedures in 2021.



Established the SLSB MSCB management system according to ISO17021 in 2021.



Trained MSCB staff on ISO 9001, ISO 17021-1, ISO 17021-3, and ISO 19011, including an ISO 9001 IRCA Lead Auditor course, with 18 participants successfully passing a third-party exam.



Pursued accreditation from the International Accreditation Service (IAS), a renowned US-based accreditation body, following a competitive international bidding process. SLSB MSCB obtained international accreditation after remote and on-site assessments.



The WACOMP Sierra Leone team conducted pre-visits to several MSMEs in order to better understand the challenges they were facing in terms of standards implementation. This was necessary to tailor technical support and training for MSMEs interested in implementing standards. UNIDO prepared a call for expressions of interest for MSMEs in the country to receive support in implementing ISO 9001:2015. A special emphasis was placed on export-oriented MSMEs who demonstrated solid financial and market performance.

More than 50 MSMEs have shown interest. The selection of MSMEs has been based on the criteria for implementing ISO 9001 and at the end, seven of them were selected as beneficiaries. There have been a number of courses conducted for ISO 9001 standards to develop the national consultants/trainers from the basic level up to the medium and high-level understanding for the public, academia and private sectors. Several MSMEs were assisted in implementing ISO 9001 by international and national consultants. Experts from UNIDO guided the development of individual SMEs experts for ISO 9001 implementation.



This hand-holding support culminated with a remarkable achievement for Sierra Leone's micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) with the first ISO 9001 certification achieved by Real Value Foods and Kings Production. Dr. Edward Hinga Sandy, ex-Minister of the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Sierra Leone emphasized the importance of quality in the efforts of Sierra Leone to fully benefit from its membership in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The ISO 9001 certification can benefit businesses operating in the AfCFTA regime in a number of

ways, as it ensures quality, competitiveness, and compliance, ultimately contributing to business growth and success. This is a unique achievement in the country and support for SDG-8 & SDG-9. Achieving this milestone demonstrates the commitment to quality, continuous improvement, and the ability of MSMEs to succeed on a global scale. As for WACOMP, it reflects dedication, hard work, and commitment to the project's implementation.

## Success stories of sub-output 1.2.4



Intermediary organisations are supported in the provision of services to their members and engagement in effective policy dialogue and advocacy with government

### Empowering Rural Growth: Journey of Sierra Leone's Cooperatives



In Sierra Leone's rural heartlands, three farming cooperatives went through a journey of growth to better support farmers in the remote interiors of the country, namely the cooperatives SIMCAT, Tegloma Youth Empowerment Organization, and Heuwolacheo Farmers' Cooperative (HFC).

The journey started, with the assessment of 30 cooperatives, conducted through interviews and evaluations focusing on governance, leadership, management, resources, and competitiveness, revealing that while most cooperatives had a defined constitution and committed leadership, there was considerable variation in organization

across sectors. Following the assessment, a governance and leadership training session was organized, attended by 18 participants. This training aimed to enhance understanding of effective governance, member engagement, and the roles of boards and management within cooperatives. It included specific modules on services, conflict resolution, and the importance of Annual General Meetings for maintaining transparency.

Subsequently, participants underwent training in advocacy skills and public-private dialogue, which equipped them with a better understanding of





trade policy and effective strategies to address sector-specific challenges. The assessment and subsequent training also provided an opportunity to select three cooperatives with a large member base in the three sectors targeted by the programme (cassava, cocoa and palm oil) for tailored support and individual coaching session.

With support from ITC and local experts, the three cooperatives engaged in coaching sessions based on the GROW Model, which helped them establish their Goals, current Reality, Options (or Obstacles), and Will (or Way Forward), these cooperatives have been accompanied through the process of restructuring their engagement strategies with their members and becoming officially recognized. Despite facing paperwork and bureaucratic challenges, they remained determined, steadily navigating through the complexities.

Beneficiaries were successful in their process toward formal registration with the cooperatives department for Tegloma, SIMCAT, and HFC's.

Since the coaching programme, the cooperatives have demonstrated improvements. HFC started member sensitization for recruitment, renovated and furnished their office, and renovated community structures (barray and bore halls) to improve access to clean water. SIMCAT introduced and is selling palm kernel products to generate additional revenue. They also participated in a trade fair, receiving positive recognition for their products. On Tegloma's end, the developed bylaws and constitution enhanced leadership credibility among their partners. SIMCAT and Tegloma already presented copies of their bylaws to the Registrar of Cooperatives and now became formally registered cooperatives. HFC has endorsed the new strategic plan developed through the support of ITC during its Annual General Meeting held on August 2024.



*We have made different improvements to our business on so many areas but mainly on best management practices and record keeping following ITC trainings and support.*

**Simeon K Charles**  
Executive director  
SIMCAT





# 3

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





## Success stories of sub-output 2.1.1



### Regional trade rules & MSME regulations mainstreamed into national policies and implemented

#### Boosting Sierra Leone's Agricultural Sector through Public-Private Dialogue

Sierra Leone launched an initiative to revitalize its agricultural sector, led by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) in cooperation with the International Trade Centre (ITC) through the West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP).



Following the preparation of policy position papers on critical issues for trade policy focusing on strengthening the trade aspects of the cocoa national policy, addressing access to agricultural inputs (including seeds, fertilizers, and essential machinery), and updating the country inspection rules for produce (whose body of regulations is known as CAP 185), a series of Public-Private Dialogue (PPD) sessions were organized to convene diverse stakeholders, including government officials, private sector representatives, and experts. The dialogues fostered robust exchanges of ideas and produced actionable recommendations aimed at addressing significant challenges across Sierra Leone's agricultural landscape.

In addressing trade policy challenges in the cocoa sector, proposed actions included increasing the National Cocoa Policy focus on quality and related controls, as well as integrating framework guidance on value addition and related incentives, such as promoting the trade of organic cocoa using Geographical Indicators.

Among the key recommendations identified to facilitate access to agricultural inputs, priority was given to developing a fertilizer blending plant (in order to create blends of dedicated nutrients for specific soil and crop requirements), strengthening cooperation with research institutions and academia to support the development of improved seed varieties and setting standards for machinery that is locally manufactured, while delivering training programs on the development and maintenance of essential machinery.

It was also agreed with stakeholders that efforts to modernize inspection rules for produce will require alignment with current export opportunities, namely expanding the definition of "produce" to include processed and semi-processed goods and establishing comprehensive criteria for inclusion based on market potential, growth, and value addition. This also entails developing regulations

on adulteration, transportation, and storage to elevate the quality and safety of agricultural products for export. In coordination with the Produce Monitoring Board (PMB) action has been taken to update, with the support of local legal firms, the current regulatory framework set by CAP 185.

The pursuance of the measures identified aims to overcome existing barriers, stimulate productivity, enhance product quality, and bolster competitiveness in Sierra Leone's agricultural sector while establishing a healthy and inclusive dialogue among private and public stakeholders.





## Success stories of sub-output 2.1.2

### Access to financial institutions facilitated



#### Cultivating Growth: Empowering Agribusinesses Through Access to Finance

In Sierra Leone's pursuit of economic growth, access to finance has emerged as a pressing necessity for agribusinesses. Recognizing this imperative, the ITC and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDA) initiated collaborative efforts to address this challenge.

The journey towards accessing finance began with a clear understanding of the barriers hindering agribusinesses' growth and development, as well as the limits faced by financial sources to try to reach MSMEs.

Bootcamps to address the essential financial literacy requirements in order to be able to access finance were delivered to over 40 small businesses (including companies, cooperatives, and associations) set the stage for the follow-up action that included the development, in cooperation with SMEDA, of a practical MSMEs guide to available financial sources in the country such as equity, debt, and grants, including the processes and requirements for accessing funds.

In order to ensure the sustainability and replicability of the action, ITC partnered with SMEDA, who has already experience in the management of dedicated MSMEs funds, to train its staff in the roll-out of in-depth diagnostics of MSMEs to better identify their financial needs and elaborate appropriate support.



38 robust business plans for MSMEs were developed through the action, each tailored to address the specific financial requirements of the agribusinesses involved. These plans served as blueprints for growth, outlining strategies for sustainable development and expansion, which as a result three MSMEs got their funding approved for a total value of \$55,741 USD. Additionally, seven MSMEs supported for the business plans, were also able to compete and gain access to an equipment grant scheme set in place by UNIDO, as part of WACOMP.

Equipped with comprehensive business plans, the agribusiness owners advanced in their journey toward financial empowerment. In 2024, a series of online training sessions on pitching ideas was provided to beneficiaries, preparing them for the final stages of their journey. As a result, 26 MSMEs successfully pitched their business

ideas to four financial institutions, namely Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDA), AIDE-SL (BDS Provider), UBA Bank, and Lapo Microfinance, forging connections and seeking partnerships to realize their visions.

This journey embodies a testament to the power of collaboration and determination in overcoming financial barriers. Through concerted efforts and strategic planning, Sierra Leone's agribusiness sector is poised to realize its full potential, driving economic growth and prosperity.



**Salomon Prince Sesay**  
CEO and Founder  
Ends Bright Limited/CPRA

*It was a great opportunity to pitch our business plans to financial institutions on the panel. The feedback from the panelists were words of encouragement.*



## Success stories of sub-output 2.1.3

### Access to acquisition of equipment is facilitated for selected beneficiaries of the project



#### Improving the livelihoods of 19 beneficiaries through access to equipment



In February 2024, UNIDO launched a Call for Expressions of Interest (CoI) for the acquisition of agricultural and/or productive equipment under the matching grant scheme of the project. The overall objective of the call was to identify interested potential beneficiaries (e.g. smallholders, cooperatives and MSMEs) with needs regarding agricultural and/or productive equipment primarily working (but not only) in the cocoa, cassava and/or palm oil value chains in Sierra Leone. The aim of this matching grant scheme was to facilitate the acquisition of equipment in order to enhance productivity, quality compliance, or in order to comply with national or international technical/hygiene regulations and/or standards. During the time that this call was opened, 80 applications were received and evaluated paying particular attention to beneficiary firms/cooperatives composed of youth or women. After a thorough assessment, 19 beneficiaries were selected, out of which 53% are led by women. These 19 beneficiaries

selected provide full-time job to 234 people (49% women / 51%men). The value of the grant to be implemented was defined at EUR 180,000 and selected beneficiaries will have to make a contribution of the 10% of the total value requested either in kind or in cash.

One of the beneficiaries is Sinava Women Agricultural Development Association (SiWADA). SiWADA is a women-owned and controlled partnership agricultural business promotion entity registered with the government of Sierra Leone. The enterprise works with individuals, groups and communities to promote and scale up improved rights based agricultural production, processing and marketing strategies with a view to enhance productivity, efficiency, quality and incomes. SiWADA Organic Foods is the enterprise wing of the entity that has since 2019 been actively engaged in the cassava products line of business- specifically working with women and youth farmers to grow cassava which are bought from the growers, processed into diverse products and sold to customers both within and out of Sierra Leone.

The enterprise has been participating in the EU-funded WACOMP project as beneficiary of other trainings and initiatives since 2020 such as boot camps/training events and internationally organized trade fairs and products' exhibition opportunities from which they have acquired tremendous skills in the areas of working with cassava out growers, processing of cassava into diverse high quality food products, packaging

and preservation of cassava products and the gainful marketing of those products.

SiWADA is an enterprise looking for sustainable growth opportunities to scale up their investment in the cassava products line of business. So, they set up in 2022 the cassava products processing facility at Kpetema in the Tikonko chiefdom of Bo district. With quite low investment capital and the lack of access to suitable loans/equity investment, they have since then been struggling to acquire the machines, equipment and tools needed to operate a viable enterprise.

Notwithstanding, the current level of demand for their products (including the related food safety standards requirements), particularly from international customers, far outweighs their production capacity as they are still using much of manual production procedures for package filling, pulp dewatering and garri frying that are not only slower but equally relatively risky in terms of food safety. This is adversely limiting their aspiration to increase the quantity of products for export to overseas customers.

In October and November 2024, SiWADA received one automated cassava dewatering machine and one automated garri frying machine that will directly benefit the following people:

**1** 300 cassava farmers (220 women and 80 men) working with the enterprise as permanent out growers. These farmers largely depend on cassava farming for addressing their domestic and other socio-economic needs. Increasing the production and marketing capacity through the proposed acquisitions has strong potential for providing a dependable sale point for all the cassava produced by the 300 farmers. SiWADA will significantly reduce post-harvest losses for the beneficiary farmers, offer them fairer prices- thus enhancing the



incomes they generate each crop season and consequently improve their wellbeing.

- 2** 16 legal owners of the enterprise (12 of whom are women): The acquisition of the proposed machines/equipment will contribute to significant increase in the production and marketing levels for their products. Increased sale volumes translate to increased revenues and incomes for the business owners from the cassava products line of business. Increased revenues would also render the enterprise more resilient and allow more opportunities for expanding investment.
- 3** 8 cassava products processors (6 of whom are women) and 12 sales agents (8 of whom are women): These will become more gainfully employed.

Like SiWADA, other 18 beneficiaries (47% cooperatives, 37% MSMEs and 16% NGOs) will receive selected equipment that will enhance their production capacities, bringing many benefits to them. As Aminata Abdulai, Business Manager at SiWADA mentioned: "Indeed this is a big boost to our Enterprise as we are now assured of increasing our production at income levels in the cassava products line of business".

# The Project in Numbers

## OUTPUT 1.1

	<b>6705</b>	cocoa, cassava and palm oil processing small equipment/tools supplied to farmer cooperatives
	<b>6</b>	support institutions improved to support their members
	<b>4</b>	market orientation mission conducted (SME)
	<b>7</b>	Number of new market opportunities identified and accessed
	<b>5</b>	business opportunities and transactions events organized
		Total value of local and international transactions: <b>1,656,859 USD</b> for <b>19</b> SMEs, including <b>7</b> women-led
	<b>28</b>	MSMEs reported having made changes to their business operations for increased international competitiveness thanks to the programme, including 4 women-led businesses
	<b>1</b>	MoU signed between the University of Sierra Leone and the University of West Scotland
	<b>2</b>	Quality Management courses developed
	<b>2</b>	SMEs certified in ISO 9001
	<b>2</b>	SMEs received ISO 22000 certification

## OUTPUT 1.2

	<b>1</b>	National Notification Authority (NNA) officially established at the MTI as per WTO requirement
	<b>25</b>	representatives of different ministries and government agencies trained on TBT requirements for NNA and NEP
	<b>5</b>	Number of sector advocacy public-private dialogues organized
	<b>14</b>	capacity trainings organized to BSOs
	<b>5</b>	BSO reported improvement to support their members thanks to the programme
	<b>1</b>	Management System Certification Body established and accredited at SLSB
	<b>32</b>	SLSB staff trained for ISO/IEC 17025
	<b>1</b>	TBT NEP established as per WTO requirement at SLSB
	<b>17</b>	qualified IRCA Lead Auditors for ISO 9001
	<b>1</b>	Mass Metrology Calibration Laboratory at SLSB was equipped with E2 weights and comparators
	<b>2</b>	parameters were qualified in the global proficiency testing (PT) programme at the SLSB Food chemistry Laboratory

## OUTPUT 1.3

	<b>25</b>	Number of financial advisers trained
	<b>7</b>	studies/policy papers produced to promote domestic reforms to improve regional trading opportunities
	<b>30</b>	bankable business plans developed and submitted for funding
	<b>1</b>	Call for Expressions of Interest for the acquisition of agricultural and/or productive equipment launched (matching grant scheme)
	<b>78</b>	expressions of interest for the matching grant scheme received
	<b>20</b>	cooperatives and MSMEs selected for the matching grant scheme
	<b>53%</b>	of the selected beneficiaries are women-led
	<b>68%</b>	of selected beneficiaries are part of the cassava value chain
	<b>47%</b>	of selected beneficiaries are cooperatives or Community Based Organizations (CBO)
	<b>31</b>	pieces of equipment have been selected to be delivered to beneficiaries
	<b>180,000 EUR</b>	disbursed to selected beneficiaries in equipment





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