

Africa Trade Competitiveness and Market
Access Programme (ATCMA)
ECOWAS Regional Programme

2025-2028

Table of Contents

A. SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAMME	8
B. CONTEXT.....	9
B.1 Background	9
B.2 Baseline Scenario	10
B.3 Alignment of the programme to relevant continental and regional framework policies and strategies	10
B.3.1 Supporting continental integration	10
B.3.2 Supporting ECOWAS regional frameworks and priorities	11
B.3.3 Key need areas identified through prior interventions in the region	12
C. REASONS FOR UNIDO AND ITC ASSISTANCE.....	12
D. SYNERGIES AND COORDINATION	13
E. LESSONS LEARNED FROM WACOMP	13
F. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION OVERALL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	14
F.1 Theory of Change	14
F.2 Programme description.....	16
F.3 Outputs and Activities	17
OUTPUT 1.1 MARKET ACCESS BARRIERS IDENTIFIED AND REDUCED.....	18
OUTPUT 1.2 STRENGTHENED QUALITY COMPLIANCE AND STANDARDS	27
OUTPUT 1.3 VALUE-CHAIN REVISION MECHANISM FACILITATED	44
OUTPUT 2.1 ENHANCED VALUE ADDITION AND DIVERSIFICATION.....	49
OUTPUT 2.2 ENHANCED SME CAPACITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS AND EXPORT	66
G. TARGET GROUPS AND BENEFICIARIES	76
H. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS AND SUSTAINABILITY	77
H.1 Programme governance and management.....	77
H.1.1 Programme governance.....	77
H.1.2 Programme management.....	79
H.1.3 Coordination between UNIDO and ITC	84
H.2 Inception phase	85
H.2.1 Core activities	85
H.2.2 Value chain selection	86

H.2.3 Inception phase results	86
H.3 Monitoring & evaluation.....	86
H.3.1 Monitoring	86
H.3.2 Reporting.....	87
H.3.3 Evaluation	87
H.4 Risks.....	87
H.5 Programme sustainability.....	92
H.6 Outreach and Advocacy	92
I. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL MAINSTREAMING	93
I.1 UNIDO Environmental and Social Safeguards Policies and Procedures (ESSPP)	93
I.2 ITC support to Environmental Preservation and Sustainable Development	94
J. GENDER AND YOUTH MAINSTREAMING	94
J.1 UNIDO approach	95
J.2 ITC approach.....	96
K. INPUTS	97
K.1 ECOWAS inputs.....	97
K.2 UNIDO inputs.....	98
K.3 ITC inputs	98
L. PRIOR OBLIGATIONS AND PREREQUISITES	99
M. UNIDO LEGAL CONTEXT	99
N. PROGRAMME LOGICAL FRAMEWORK	100
ANNEXES	114
Annex I: Workplan	114

List of tables

Table 1 - Needs assessment of target groups	77
Table 2 - UNIDO Management & Operations & Technical Experts	81
Table 3 – ITC Management & Operations and Technical Experts	83
Table 4 - Risk Assessment	88
Table 4 - Programme Logical Framework	100

List of figures

Figure 1 - Theory of Change	15
Figure 2 - Tentative linkages between Programme outputs	17

Acronyms

AA	Administrative Agent
ABs	Accreditation Bodies
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AFDB	African Development Bank
AFRAC	African Accreditation Cooperation
AFRIMETS	Intra-Africa Metrology System
AFREXIMBANK	African Export-Import Bank
AFSEC	The African Electrotechnical Standardization Commission
ALLPI	Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute
AQP	African Quality Policy
ARSO	African Organisation for Standardisation
ASC	Aquaculture Stewardship Council
ATIA	African Trade Insurance Agency
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
B2B	Business to Business
BIAT	Boosting Intra-African Trade
BIPM	Bureau International des Poids et Mesures
BSO	Business Support Organisation
CAAPs	Common African Agro-Parks Programme
CABs	Conformity Assessment Bodies
CBAM	Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism
CEN	European Committee for Standardization
CENELEC	European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization
CoEs	Centres of Excellence
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMFWB	COMESA Federation of Women in Business
CPM	Commission on Phyto-sanitary Measures
CQC	ECOWAS Community Council for Quality
CRMs	Certified Reference Materials
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
EAC	East African Community
EBID	ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development
eCo	Electronic Certificate of Origin
ECOCONF	ECOWAS Conformity Assessment System
ECOMET	ECOWAS Community Committee for Metrology
ECORAS	ECOWAS Regional Accreditation System
ECOREG	ECOWAS Technical Regulations Committee
ECOQMARK	ECOWAS Product Certification Mark
ECOQUAL	ECOWAS Quality Policy
ECOSHAM	ECOWAS Standards Harmonization System
ECOWAQ	ECOWAS Agency for Quality
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECOWAS FEBWE	ECOWAS Federation of Business Women Entrepreneurs
EDF	European Development Fund
EFSD+	European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus
EGDC	ECOWAS Gender Development Centre
EMIP	Enterprise Modernization and Innovation Programme
EMN	European Metrology Networks
EOI	Expression of interest
EPAs	Economic Partnership Agreements

ESG	Environmental Social Governance
ESSPP	Environmental and Social Safeguards Policies and Procedures
EU	European Union
EUDR	Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 on deforestation-free products
EUDs	European Union Delegations
EURAMET	European Association of National Metrology Institutes
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FEWACCI	Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry
FEWAMA	Federation of West African Manufacturers Associations
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFRSS	Global Food Regulatory Science Society
GHP	Good Hygiene Practices
GMP	Good Manufacturing Practices
GRP	Good Regulatory Practices
GVC	Global value chain
HACCP	Hazard analysis and critical control points
IA	Investment Agency
IAF	International Accreditation Forum
IAIP	Integrated Agro-Industrial Parks
IDDA III	Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
I-EPAs	Interim Economic Partnership Agreements
ILAC	International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPAs	Investment Promotion Agencies
IPPC	International Plant Protection Convention
IRPF	Integrated Results and Performance Framework
ISID	Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRA	Mutual Recognition Agreements
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
NCL	National Calibration Laboratories
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NMI	National Metrology Institute
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NQIS	National quality infrastructure system
NQP	National quality policy
NTBs	Non-Tariff Barriers
NTFC	National Trade Facilitation Committee
NTM	Non-tariff measure
OEC	Observatory of Economic Complexity
OIML	International Organization of Legal Metrology
PAQI	Pan-African Quality Infrastructure
PMU	Programme Management Unit
PPD	Public Private Dialogue
PPP	Public Private Partnership

PSC	Programme Steering Committee
PT	(Regional) Proficiency Testing
PUNO	Participating UN Organization
QI	Quality Infrastructure
QIS	Quality Infrastructure System
QMS	Quality Management System
RAERESA	Regional Association of Energy Regulators for Eastern and Southern Africa
RBM	Result-Based Management
RCA	Revealed comparative advantage
REC	Regional Economic Community
RECAMP	Regional Enterprise Competitiveness and Access to Markets Programme
RECP	Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production
RIA	Regional Investment Agency
RNF	Réseau Normalisation et Francophonie
RQI	Regional Quality Infrastructure
RTCUC	Regional Technical Coordination Unit
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
SECO	Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIMT	Strategy implementation management tool
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures
SQAM	Standardization, Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Metrology
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSCBT	Small-Scale Cross-Border Traders
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
STI	Science Technology and Innovation
TAG	Temporary Admission of Goods
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
TC	Technical committee
TDB	Trade and Development Bank
TEI	Team Europe Initiative
TEST	Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
TFTA	Tripartite Free Trade Area
TIPO	Trade and Investment Promotion Organizations
ToC	Theory of Change
TOAM	Trade Obstacles Alert Mechanism
ToT	Training of Trainers
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNJP	United Nations Joint Programme
VC	Value chain
VCRM	Value-Chain Revision Mechanism
VSS	Voluntary Sustainability Standards
VTPA	Voluntary Third-party Assurance
WACIP	West African Common Industrial Policy
WACOMP	West Africa Competitiveness Programme

WACTAF	West African Association for Cross-Border Trade, in Agro-Forestry-pastoral and Fisheries Products
WAQSP	West Africa Quality System Programme
WB	World Bank
WOAH	World Organisation for Animal Health
WPO	World Packaging Organisation
WTI	World Trade Institute
WTO	World Trade Organization

A. SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAMME

Title of the programme:	Africa Trade Competitiveness and Market Access Programme (ATCMA) - ECOWAS Regional Programme
Thematic Area Code:	IC2 Adv. Econ. Competitiveness, IC22 IC21: Investment, Technology, and SME Development IC22: Competitive Trade Capacities and Corporate Responsibility
Project site:	15 Member States of the Economic Community of West African States (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo) and Mauritania
Duration:	48 months (4 years)
Budget:	Total : €50 million (incl. 7% support costs)
Overall Objective, Specific Objectives and Outputs:	<p>Overall Objective: To increase sustainable intra-African and EU-Africa trade</p> <p>Specific Objective (Outcome) 1: Enhanced market access for selected value chains Specific Objective (Outcome) 2: Enhanced export competitiveness for MSMEs in selected value chains</p> <p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contributing to specific objective 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Market access barriers identified and reduced 1.2 Strengthened quality compliance and standards 1.3 Value-chain revision mechanism facilitated - Contributing to specific objective 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 Enhanced value addition and diversification 2.2 Enhanced SME capacities and opportunities for business and export
SDGs:	SDG 2 (Ending hunger, ensure food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture); SDG 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages); SDG 5 (Ensure gender equality); SDG 8 (Ensure decent work and promote development oriented policy strategies for economic growth); SDG 9 (Promote inclusive and sustainable industries, infrastructure and innovation); SDG 10 (Reduce inequalities through ensuring equal opportunities); SDG 12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns); SDG 13 (Promote and ensure resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and natural disasters); SDG 17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development)
Target groups/Direct beneficiaries:	MSMEs and cooperatives in selected value chains; ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania; quality and standards regulatory agencies in all Member States and other line ministries; and broader private sector and business association across the different value chains.
Main counterparts:	The ECOWAS Commission, Department Economic Affairs and Agriculture
Lead agency:	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)
Implementing agencies:	United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) (Organization) International Trade Centre (ITC) (Partner)

B. CONTEXT

B.1 Background

In February 2022, during the EU-AU Summit, leaders of the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) adopted the Joint Vision 2030, an ambitious plan aimed at creating a space of solidarity, security, peace, and sustainable prosperity between the two continents. The main objective of this mutual commitment is to stimulate regional and continental economic integration in Africa. To realize this vision, the EU has implemented the Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package, mobilizing over EUR 150 billion in investments for Africa by 2027. It primarily aims to support the development of more diversified, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient African economies.

At the continental level, this mutual commitment between the two unions builds on the momentum of African integration, with the entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in 2021 in Accra, Ghana. The AfCFTA is one of the flagship projects of the AU under its Agenda 2063, which aims to "create a single market for goods and services with free movement of people and investments", enhancing intra-African trade, boosting competitiveness, and supporting economic transformation in Africa.

In line with these commitments the EU is funding the Africa Trade Competitiveness and Market Access Programme (ATCMA), a continent-wide initiative aimed at sustainably increasing intra-African and EU-Africa trade. In addition to a Pan-African component, the programme foresees five regional components including one specifically targeting trade development in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region.

The overall focus of the Programme is on mature value chains in Sub-Saharan Africa, with market access challenges, through two pillars:

1. Supporting countries to benefit from trade opportunities by enabling them to conform with standards and technical regulations, requiring quality infrastructure and conformity assessment services, as well as by streamlining regulatory and procedural frameworks at the regional and national levels. The programme will help the African countries to benefit from trade opportunities by being able to conform with standards and technical regulations, which requires establishing efficient testing, certification and accreditation mechanisms that conform to the requirements of the SPS and TBT agreements and benefit from international recognition. It will also strengthen governmental institutions in their capacity of creating a more conducive business environment for MSMEs.
2. Maximizing MSME export potential and access to new markets by overcoming constraints or developing enablers like value addition, and export capacities: In order to maximise MSMEs export potential and support them to enter new markets, the Programme will also address other market access constraints or enablers: enhance value addition and export capacities through marketing, labelling, branding strategies, sustainability and environmental issues, technology transfer and processing for export, business promotion through market linkages and capacitate trade and investment support institutions. Support will be provided both at institutional and policy level, as well as at private sector level, with a primary focus on selected key export-oriented regional priority value chains. Particular focus on intra-African exports as well as exports to the EU will be given, so regions can fully exploit their trade-driven growth potential, with a view to contribute to sustainable growth and jobs creation.

B.2 Baseline Scenario

Obstacles to intra-regional trade in West Africa consist of poor transport infrastructure, low manufacturing production and low quality of exported products, mismatch between the needs of other regions in Africa and exports of West African countries, technical barriers to trade, weak financial integration and the lack of market information on existing opportunities in other African regional communities. Moreover, enterprises, especially women and youth led MSMEs within the continent, continue to face challenges that hinder their ability to participate effectively in sustainable intra-regional trade. The West Africa Common Industrial Policy (WACIP) sets out to address some of these challenges through its objective to drive sustainable industrialization that contributes to job creation, poverty reduction, and increased competitiveness in the region. More specifically, it sets out to enhance the value addition of raw materials and promote the export of manufactured goods. In addition, the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) is another initiative put in place to promote trade in the region.

The ECOWAS has a vital role in achieving the goals of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the AfCFTA instruments allow different layers and levels of economic integration to continue, with the Protocol on Trade in Goods, stating that “*State Parties that are members of other RECs, which have attained among themselves higher levels of elimination of customs duties and trade barriers than those provided for in this Protocol, shall maintain, and where possible improve upon, those higher levels of trade liberalisation among themselves*”. The alignment of trade in the ECOWAS region to the AfCFTA therefore starts with the shared and aligned mandates of increasing intra-regional trade and providing enabling environments for enterprise development and the emergence of RVCs.

Further details are being included in the ATCMA ECOEAS – Complementary Annex document (*ref. Annex I: Baseline Scenario*).

B.3 Alignment of the programme to relevant continental and regional framework policies and strategies

Firstly, the proposed programme is in alignment and directly contributes to the Pan-African objectives of the broader framework of the ATCMA. By strengthening the trade integration of the ECOWAS region, the programme not only boosts competitiveness but also promotes the integration of African value chains at both continental and global level.

Secondly, this regional component is coherent and will foster complementarities with ongoing or previous initiatives implemented in the region in order to enhance synergies, avoid duplication, benefit from lessons learned and the acquired regional expertise. Notably, the programme is aligned with the objectives pursued under the EU-funded West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP), aimed at strengthening the ECOWAS regional economic integration through private sector competitiveness

B.3.1 Supporting continental integration

This regional programme fits into the EU-Africa Trade Competitiveness and Market Access Programme (ATCMA), a continental initiative designed to improve livelihoods, employment and economic growth in Africa through supporting the development and strengthening of key export-oriented priority value chains with high potential to contribute to sustainable and inclusive intra-African and EU-Africa trade. The International Trade Centre (ITC) estimates that intra-African trade has the potential to increase by \$22 billion as of 2025. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) serves as a leading framework for boosting intra-African trade and developing intra-regional value chains. The start of trading in 2021 set a key milestone to the operationalization of a single market with a combined GDP close to €2.5 trillion, and liberalizing tariffs estimated to increase intra-regional trade by more than €17 billion. Building a single market with a clear and strong regulatory framework will present an

opportunity to develop regional value chains with enormous additional potential to increase value-added trade and employment. It will open doors to a potential consumer base of 1.3 billion people, which is projected to reach 2.5 billion by 2050, creating strong incentives for investment.

B.3.2 Supporting ECOWAS regional frameworks and priorities

Building on the achievements of the WACOMP and aligning with the continental vision set by the AfCFTA, the ATCMA ECOWAS programme will further contribute to key objectives set across West Africa regional policies by boosting competitiveness at a regional level and strengthening regional frameworks that allow integration to broader continental and global value chains. The programme is aligned to support the implementation of the West African regional policies and programmes, including the West Africa Common Industrial Policy (WACIP), the ECOWAS Quality Policy (ECOQUAL), the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), the ECOWAS Trade Promotion and Investment Strategy (ECOTIPS), the ECOWAS eCommerce Strategy, the ECOWAS Private Sector Development Strategy, and the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP), among others. This will be accrued through interventions targeted at strengthening selected priority value chains in the region while supporting an enabling business environment for the business community and positioning MSMEs to take advantage of the new continental market through the AfCFTA.

The ECOWAS Industrialization Policy aims to promote regional integration by fostering industrial linkages and cooperation among member states. The objective is to create a harmonized and integrated regional market that allows for the free movement of goods, services, and capital, and encourages intra-regional trade and investment. Through its interventions, the ATCMA ECOWAS programme aligns with this vision to drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth, enhance regional integration, and improve the competitiveness of industries in West Africa. The programme is well positioned to achieve this by catalysing export of products from priority value chains across the region and working with MSMEs to strengthen competitiveness and through *inter alia* trade barrier removal, value addition and the improvement of product quality and safety.

With international trends pointing to an increasingly globalized and concentrated agribusiness sector in developing countries and global political instability leading to world agricultural markets undersupply and volatile prices, it is critical for agricultural policies in the region to better align and contribute to several key objectives simultaneously and in an environmentally, economically and socially sustainable way. The ATCMA ECOWAS programme will be positioned to support in the strengthening of an enabling business environment where regional policies are more aligned to the current demands of global markets. Interventions will target support for increased stakeholder engagement in policy formulation and implementation to ensure trade policies align with the needs and challenges faced by businesses. Activities will also promote cross-border cooperation and collaboration to address non-tariff barriers, smuggling, and informal trade through joint border management initiatives, information sharing mechanisms, etc. This is in addition to supporting government in the harmonization of trade policies and standardization of trade procedure, as well as building the capacity of trade-related institutions. In view of environmental and social standards, the ATCMA ECOWAS will prioritize environmentally friendly value chains and provide support for exporting MSMEs in the use environmental practices to reduce their waste through a market driven approach. This approach is vital for building the competitiveness of MSMEs looking to integrate into international markets and global value chains, in line with strict requirements from buyers in more sophisticated markets (like the EU or the US).

B.3.3 Key need areas identified through prior interventions in the region

Some of the key needs and related actions emerge from previous implementation in West Africa. They include: Streamlining domestic regulation and administrative procedures, strengthening trade supporting service sectors, supporting trade facilitation reforms in the region by border crossing points, addressing the import dimension in the value chain development, promoting trade and investment in the region as a whole, enforcing IPR in key sectors that are essential for the improvement of final and intermediary inputs in selected value chains, reducing anti-competitiveness practices and enhancing MSMEs benefit from trade and investments through competition law, addressing environmental and social standards and the green economy, harmonizing quality and branding at the regional level, Increasing knowledge on AfCFTA opportunities and challenges, strengthening coordinated approach to address upstream and downstream challenges to access to finance and piloting the implementation of a VCRM to support more coherent VC action in the ECOWAS region under the ATCMA programme.

Details are provided in the ATCMA ECOWAS – Complementary Annexes document (*ref. Annex II Key needs areas identified through prior interventions in the region*) and further key needs areas will be identified in the Inception Phase and included in the Inception Phase Report.

The needs areas to be addressed by the ATCMA ECOWAS programme will be further identified and confirmed during the Inception Phase, while also considering the VC selected. It will be detailed in the Inception Phase Report.

C. REASONS FOR UNIDO AND ITC ASSISTANCE

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has a strong track record of supporting governments, industry, and stakeholders to enhance manufacturing productivity, competitiveness, and trade facilitation. It focuses on strengthening national and regional QIS, industrial policies, and MSME competitiveness. For over 40 years, UNIDO has promoted MSME integration into global markets by helping them meet international standards and regulations. In particular in West Africa, UNIDO has supported the strengthening of capacitating the ECOWAS Regional Quality System and Policy (ECOQUAL) since the early 2000's. UNIDO's holistic approach to trade capacity building includes governance, QI institutions, services, enterprises, and consumers. Strengthening QIS increases MSMEs' access to global markets, boosts consumer confidence, and reduces trade barriers. UNIDO also emphasizes value addition, green investment, and sustainable supply chains, particularly in agribusiness. By promoting digitalization, innovation, and green practices, UNIDO helps MSMEs produce high-quality, export-ready goods. At the policy level, UNIDO identifies sectors with competitive potential and formulates strategies to enhance industrial competitiveness while promoting inclusivity and sustainability.

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is a joint technical cooperation agency of the UN and the WTO. Its mandate is to promote trade, in particular, the export of goods and services from developing countries and transition economies with a particular focus on improving the competitiveness of MSMEs and linking them to global value chains. With a vision to build inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous economies, ITC works with governments, industry, and other stakeholders across the world and particularly in Africa, to strengthen MSMEs' competitiveness, access new markets, and drive trade-led economic growth. Its work aligns directly with the priorities of ECOWAS to improve trade facilitation and competitiveness. This mandate positions ITC as the only international UN organisation that focuses exclusively on helping MSMEs to increase their competitiveness and engage in more trade at regional and international levels. In its work, ITC employs a modular and customized approach to its service offer. ITC's 4 core services (Improved MSMEs firm-level capacities to trade; A more supportive

business ecosystem for MSMEs; a more conducive policy and regulatory framework for MSMEs; Improved business, trade and market intelligence) are organized around the three intervention levels that influence MSME competitiveness (impact, outcome, output). These four areas of technical expertise have been developed and nurtured over the lifetime of the organization and are the fundamental building blocks for supporting our clients.

Together and individually, UNIDO and ITC have a strong track-record of implementing technical assistance programmes benefitting ECOWAS Member States aimed at the development of market access and trade development. By promoting synergies and complementing each other's strengths, the Organizations will implement their expertise to the benefit of the ECOWAS region and Mauritania.

D. SYNERGIES AND COORDINATION

Synergies and coordination are critical aspects that will ensure strong buy-in and sustained participation from the various stakeholders and will facilitate the successful implementation of ATCMA – ECOWAS within the allocated budget and deadlines. The program will be implemented in coherence with past and current programs in view to reinforce their achievements. In addition, the program will be implemented in liaison with the ECOWAS's common trade and industry policies objectives.

Some general principles, such as coordination with other ongoing programs/initiatives, harmonization of ATCMA interventions, as well as synchronization and continuation of activities of the West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP), will need to be respected in the implementation of ATCMA ECOWAS Programme.

A detailed description of the above is included in the ATCMA ECOWAS – Complementary Annexes document (*ref. Annex III: Synergies and Coordination*).

E. LESSONS LEARNED FROM WACOMP

The EU established the West Africa Competitiveness Programme along with the ECOWAS Commission to increase competitiveness in the region by promoting selected regional value chains as WACOMP Regional catalysts for growth in the regional market. The programme is implemented by ITC and UNIDO (<https://wacomp.projects.ecowas.int/>).

A summary of these lessons learned in the areas of i) management and coordination, ii) partnership and iii) ownership and inclusiveness from the WACOMP regional and national components is included in the ATCMA ECOWAS – Complementary Annexes document (*ref. Annex IV Lessons Learned from WACOMP*).

These lessons were compiled during the preparation of the programmes annual reports and other feedback received from beneficiaries during the implementation of programme activities and a further assessment will be done during the Inception Phase and included in the Inception Report.

F. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION OVERALL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

F.1 Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (ToC) outlines the pathways, and intended outputs of the proposed programme, and provides a roadmap for understanding how foreseen activities lead to desired impacts. It also serves as a framework for planning, implementing, and evaluating the intervention, and provides a structured approach to identifying underlying assumptions and corresponding expected results. It considers relevant groups of actors, and their respective desired behavioural changes.

The proposed programme's ToC (see visual representation below) considers the ECOWAS region's complexity and significant heterogeneity in economic, political, social, and environmental terms as a starting point: Current key economic sectors vary between Member States; poverty indices at either end of the scale attest to the complexity of the region's Member States' socioeconomic efforts and struggles, and political systems of governance are representative of the region's historical diversity, and indicative of current trends and conflicts playing out across the West African Region. An increase in intraregional trade as well as enhanced market access to foreign markets outside ECOWAS, particularly to the European Union, constitute key visions to propel the region on a clear path to inclusive and sustainable development.

In line with relevant AU and ECOWAS plans and strategies, and capitalizing on UNIDO's and ITC's respective organizational expertise, the programme's focus lies on quality infrastructure and value chain development as a means to achieving increased intra-ECOWAS and EU-ECOWAS trade.

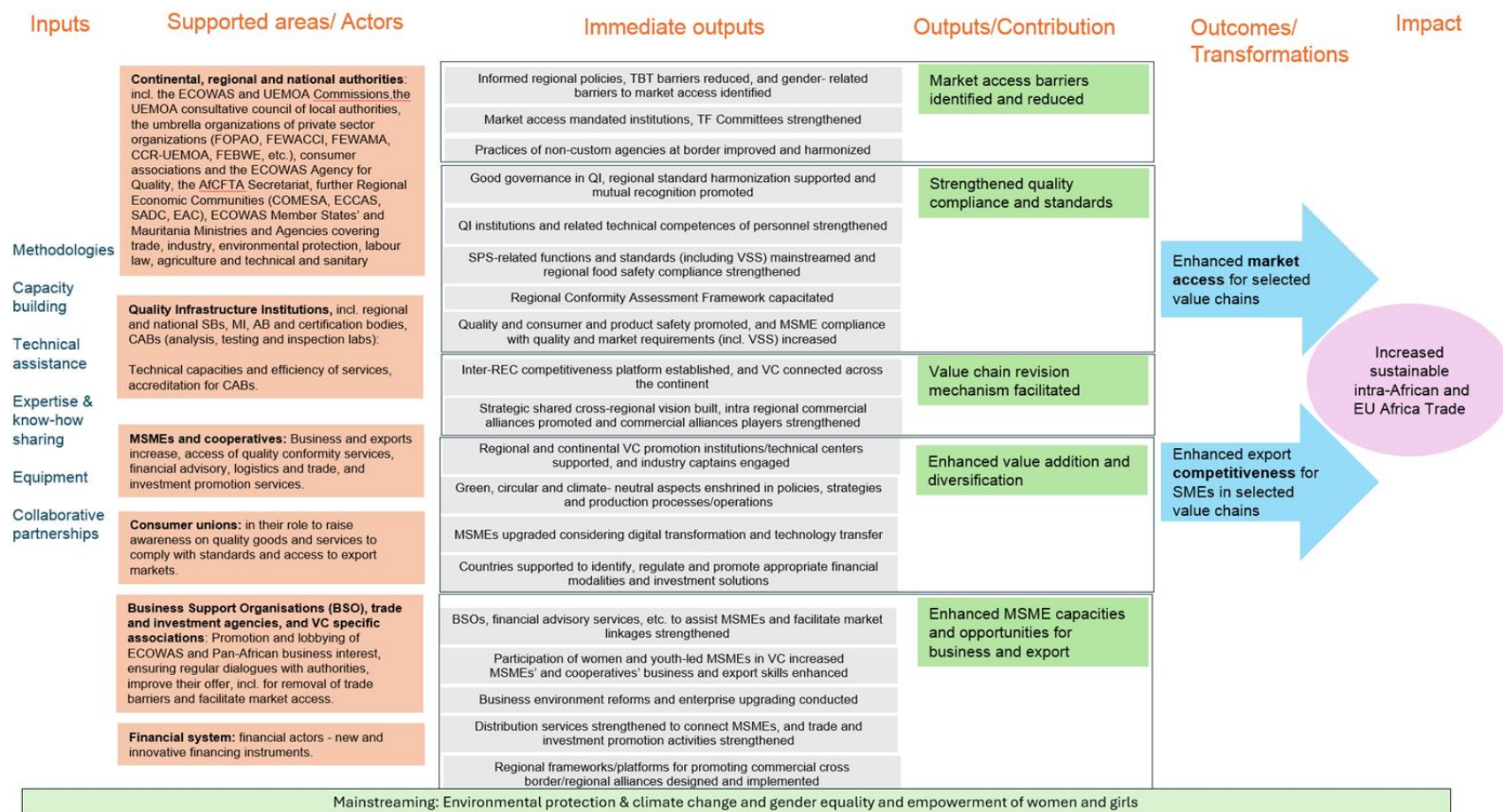


Figure 1 - Theory of Change

F.2 Programme description

Overall Objective (Impact): To increase sustainable intra-African and EU-Africa trade

Specific Objectives:

1. Enhanced market access for selected value chains
2. Enhanced export competitiveness for SMEs in selected value chains

The programme is geared towards enhancing market access and strengthening competitiveness as essential drivers for trade development and economic growth.

As such, in order to enhance market access, under Specific Objective 1, the programme will spearhead the identification of trade barriers, being those tariffs, non-tariff barriers, as well as regulatory constraints, and support ECOWAS and its Member States in formulating and implementing targeted strategies to address these challenges. Further it will enhance the regional and national quality infrastructure systems by defining quality-related policies and good governance strategies and by strengthening selected quality infrastructure institutions at the national and regional levels. As success hinges on complementing the overall governance with a robust value chain approach, the programme will focus on ensuring market access for specific target value chains which will be selected through a consultative approach with key stakeholders during the programme inception phase.

Secondly, under Specific Objective 2, the programme will prioritize the enhancement of competitiveness as a crucial enabler towards trade development, anchoring its interventions around the capacity building of MSMEs and ensuring their compliance with regulatory frameworks. A pivotal role under this Objective will be played by the private sector and business associations that will facilitate the implementation of services aimed at enhancing competitiveness and maximizing opportunities for MSMEs. Under this objective, forward looking and innovative practices will be at the core of the programme's approach. Indeed, the intervention will support the development of sustainable (green, blue, circular and climate-neutral) policies, strategies and actions for the target value chains. It will promote the upgrading/modernization of MSMEs (including digital transformation and the adoption of new technologies), the development of clusters and consortia fostering resilient business alliances and reliable institutional networks, the enhancement of MSMEs capacities and opportunities for business and export, and support to MSMEs for accessing innovative financing and investment solutions.

As the ATCMA ECOWAS is a multi-implementation agency programme, it is also extremely important to establish clear connection among the different outputs in order to ensure that they jointly contribute to both the overall and specific objectives of the programme in a coordinated manner.

In order to ensure the result chain consistency and build from the WACOMP implementation, ITC and UNIDO will harmonize, where needed, their respective logical frameworks prior or during the inception phase of the programme.

In addition to that, each output and activity in the present document will provide clear references to the inputs that will be needed from outputs and activities implemented by other implementing agencies, as well as indications of how they feed into activities of other implementing agencies.

Linkages between Programme Outputs

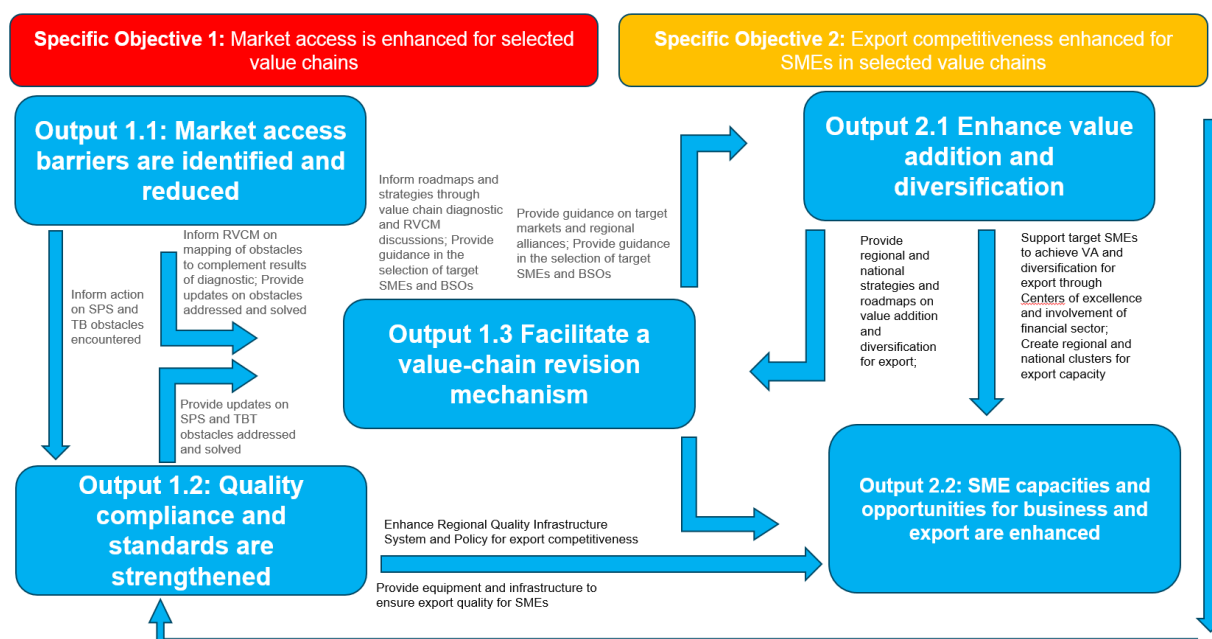


Figure 2 - Tentative linkages between Programme outputs

F.3 Outputs and Activities

The programme is thematically structured into five components leading to 5 outputs as follows:

In relation to Specific Objective 1:

- Output 1.1: Market access barriers identified and reduced
- Output 1.2: Strengthened quality compliance and standards
- Output 1.3: Value-chain revision mechanism facilitated

In relation to Specific Objective 2:

- Output 2.1: Enhanced value addition and diversification
- Output 2.2: Enhanced SME capacities and opportunities for business and export

Each output consists of multiple deliverables (activities). The following paragraphs outline the main interventions and provide a list of proposed activities. These activities are tentative, pending the selection of the regional priority value chains by ECOWAS, and will be reviewed and updated during a 6-month inception phase of the programme.

While UNIDO will be in charge of implementing output 1.2 and 2.2., ITC will be responsible for the implementation of output 1.1, 1.3 and 2.2.

OUTPUT 1.1 MARKET ACCESS BARRIERS IDENTIFIED AND REDUCED

More than 73% of the MSMEs interviewed through the ITC business surveys conducted in 8 ECOWAS countries¹ reported facing regulatory and procedural obstacles related to NTMs. The majority of the regulatory and procedural obstacles faced in agriculture and manufacturing exports are applied by ECOWAS partners and home countries, rather than overseas partners such as the EU². Among these obstacles hindering the intra-regional trade in ECOWAS, more than one third are due to sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures and technical barriers to trade (TBT), with conformity assessment appearing to be the most burdensome NTM category for agriculture exporters. Rules of origin and related certificates of origin account for one-third of NTM cases applied on products exported within ECOWAS. Procedural hinderances area the major concern to exporters and make compliance with regulations difficult, especially in relation to the transparency and predictability of said administrative procedures (delays, unexpected payments). In the home countries, export inspections, export taxes and charges, export/product certification, export licensing and permits are frequently perceived as burdensome for both agriculture and manufacturing exporters. Challenges faced by the private sector also stem from insufficient understanding and ability to comply with requirements³. Aside from addressing key market access barriers is also important to address regulatory gaps and prevent distortive effects of NTM to trade and investments (also in relation to AfCFTA implementation). This requires the design and operationalization of adequate policy frameworks and monitoring action also to areas that are transversal to trade and investments as competition law and IPRs, which are vital to support the development of regional VC and provide tools to ensure that MSMEs can benefit from the process.

The objective of the action under this output will be to address regulatory and procedural market access barriers related to trade and investment, as well as to prevent the insurgence of new ones in relation to the implementation of the AfCFTA and other relevant trade and investment agreements covering the ECOWAS region.

Broad action areas might include support to:

- Harmonization and implementation of dedicated reforms to facilitate intra-regional trade supported by the ETLs and ECOWAS Customs Code, incl. through support to joint border posts, establishment and strengthening of trade information desks, digitalization of customs procedures (e.g. dematerialisation of COO), implementation of priority lanes at the customs to reduce wastes in staple food trade across the region, facilitation of transport and logistics services procedures at border points, implementation of simplified trade regimes for small cross border traders.
- Implementation of the ECOWAS Common Investment Code and alignment with AfCFTA Investment Protocol and the WTO Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement, incl. through support in the harmonization of the functions and operations of export processing zones (EPZ)⁴, strengthening the capacity of AIPAWAS and its IPAs members to better cooperate and advocate for the private sector towards the implementation and negotiation the above

¹ Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal. For agricultural products, the share of ECOWAS' exports covered by the surveyed countries represents 60% of intra-ECOWAS exports and 27% of ECOWAS' exports to the EU. Similarly, for manufacturing products, the surveyed countries account for 48% of intra-ECOWAS exports and 12% of exports to the EU.

² Namely, 30% of agriculture and 46 % of manufacturing products are related to ECOWAS regulations while 26% of agriculture and 32 % of manufacturing products are related to domestic regulation of exporting countries.

³ The survey findings are also confirmed by the ECOWAS Trade Obstacles Alert Mechanism, where over 75% the obstacles reported through the online platform are related to burdensome administrative procedures

⁴ There are several instances of ECOWAS Member states that have established EPZ. Nigeria has several EPZs, including the Calabar Free Trade Zone, the Lekki Free Zone, among others. These zones offer incentives to attract investment in sectors such as manufacturing and logistics. Ghana has established the Tema Export Processing Zone and the Sekondi-Takoradi Industrial Free Zone, among others. These zones aim to promote manufacturing, export-oriented industries, and technology transfer. Senegal has the Dakar Industrial Free Zone, which offers incentives to attract investment in manufacturing, agribusiness, and other sectors. Côte d'Ivoire has the Abidjan Industrial Park, which includes an export processing zone to promote manufacturing and export-oriented industries.

initiatives, supporting investment facilitation (*building on the WACOMP action on strengthening regional investment promotion*)

- Harmonization and better design of competition practices and prevention of anti-competitive practices having adverse market access effects in the selected VC to support MSMEs, in alignment with the ECOWAS Regional Competition Framework and the AfCFTA Protocol on Competition (*building on the WACOMP action on competition law*)
- Regional harmonization and implementation of IPR reforms to provide better access to agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizers and basic machinery) through intra and extra regional trade and private sector involvement⁵, support digitalization of value added services trade (as craftsmen, stylists and couturiers in the cotton, textile and apparel sector), facilitate technology transfer and promote geographical indications for targeted products within selected VC, in alignment with ARIPSO, the ECOWAS Investment Common Code and the AfCFTA IP pillar⁶
- Operationalization of an ECOWAS NTB resolution strategy and mechanism, based on existing monitoring and reporting systems, active regional committees and regional best practices

Support to regional coordination: Ensure the ECOWAS Commission capacity to: facilitate exchanges with national members in the identification of shared solutions to identified trade obstacles; promote the ECOWAS TOAM in member countries and through relevant fora; provide guidance in the process needed to spearhead NTM reforms.

Baseline: ECOWAS Framework for Regional Policy and Strategy for Elimination of NTBs (ongoing); ITC NTM Business surveys conducted in 8 ECOWAS members and regional reports; WACOMP Regional Investment Profiles; Trade obstacles reported through the TOAM and related national networks built through this initiative; Policy work on Competition law to benefit MSMEs under the AfCFTA conducted under the WACOMP.

Activity 1.1.1: Market access barriers to be addressed by the programme at the regional and national level and in selected value chains have been identified.

Lead: ITC

Key partners: Ministries of Trade, Chambers of commerce, Customs offices, WACTAF, RTFC, ETL Task Force

The activity aims to identify key market access barriers in selected value chains across West Africa as an essential step for promoting regional trade integration and seizing international market opportunities. This involves a thorough examination of the primary constraints impeding the flow of trade and investments within the ECOWAS region. By utilizing data from diverse sources, the goal is to develop targeted interventions that address these obstacles and create a more inclusive trade environment, for MSMEs and Small-Scale Cross-Border Traders (SSCBTs), including women and youth. The insights gained will contribute to the market access barriers identification, the initiation of dialogues on this subject with key competent agencies but also to the formulation of practical solutions at both national

⁵ “[...] key issues pertaining to the protection of intellectual property rights and quarantine pest lists that are fundamental parts of international seed trade have so far not been addressed. [...] Until private seed companies are certain of maintaining permanent ownership and even physical control of their research at all stages of the supply chain, it is likely that West Africa will continue to lag behind in access to new varieties and seed quality” Towards an Integrated Market for Seeds and Fertilizers in West Africa, 2015. Available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/ar/886471468119063004/pdf/936300REVISED00REVISED0FINAL0TO0DC.pdf>

⁶ The ECOWAS Commission has already started to engage into preparatory workshops for the negotiation of the AfCFTA pillar on IP. Actions in partnership with other UN agencies has WPO have already been undertaken to protect the IPR of designers across the regions (as the joint ECOWAS-WIPO development of the AfricDeezayn Mobile App https://www.wipo.int/about-wipo/en/offices/nigeria/news/2024/news_0001.html)

and regional levels, fostering sustainable economic development and enhancing competitiveness in the global market.

Expected deliverables of the activity: Equip the ECOWAS Commission and member states with a list of key regulatory and procedural trade obstacles (incl. regulations on the book, administrative procedures and business perspectives) affecting the expansion of trade and investments and recommendations in target value chains, in order to be able to prioritize support and elaborate more coherent policy action to unlock trade potential in selected value chains.

Sustainability of the activity: The ECOWAS Commission will be fully informed about the tools and methodologies used to identify target market access barriers to ensure the replicability of the action. Data collection activities will be conducted in partnership with local BSOs and technical experts that will be able to upgrade their skills.

Linkages with other Outputs: The activity will help to inform the action under Outcome 1. The methodology adopted and the insights of the mapping will inform and complement the results of the value chain scan (**Activity 1.3.1**), support the implementation of an ECOWAS VCRM (**Activity 1.3.3**), as well as, provide background information for the VC strategies/roadmaps (**Output 2.1**) and export and investment opportunity studies (**Activity 1.3.2**) to be conducted by the programme. SPS and TBT measures to be targeted more specifically by **Output 1.2** might also be covered by the mapping of market access barriers.

Sub-activity 1.1.1.1: Conduct desk research and consultations with experts on key market access barriers on trade and investment.

The sub-activity aims to consolidate findings on regional and national key market access barriers (focus on target value chains) in relation to intraregional and international trade, based on desk research, analysis of available NTM data and consultations with key experts. Documentation on national and regional regulations and administrative procedures that is strictly needed to support and seek for regional harmonization in selected value chains final and intermediary products as well as for some of their key inputs (as seeds and fertilizers)⁷, will be stored in repertories and made available to beneficiaries of the action (e.g. supporting transparency on market access conditions)⁸, in close coordination with similar tasks under Activity 1.1.3. In relation to intra-regional trade, the action will identify key trade corridors and related border crossing points (BCP) to be targeted to improve intra-regional trade in the selected VC, building on the body of corridor studies conducted in the framework of the EU funded Trade Facilitation West Africa programme, available information on informal cross border trade and additional inputs from ongoing ITC activities on intra-regional agricultural trade.⁹ The market access barriers identified will be clustered by destination market (intra-regional, intra-African and international markets), selected value chain and mostly affected country groups. The objective is to identify documented, specific and interlinked areas of action on policy development, advocacy,

⁷ “Despite the amount of work that has gone into harmonization, the regional regulations and implementing regulations for seed and fertilizer are not available online which makes the rules unnecessarily difficult for public and private stakeholders to access and discuss. Moreover, although the regulations themselves call for full transparency, some of the implementing regulations for seed have not yet been translated to English so are currently inaccessible to Anglophone countries.” Towards an Integrated Market for Seeds and Fertilizers in West Africa, 2015. Available at: <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/ar/886471468119063004/pdf/936300REVISED00REVISED0FINAL0TO0DC.pdf>

⁸ The creation of inventories of regulations and administrative procedures will only be functional to the identification of market access barriers to be addressed by the programme. Therefore, these activities will be conducted only if judged necessary in order to define specific areas of intervention, in the absence of clear guidance from partners (ECOWAS Commission, national governments and other regional partners) or due to the lack of sufficient data and documentation in the body of literature that is already available.

⁹ In 2021, the Trade Facilitation West Africa (TFWA) programme has developed assessment reports on the following 6 trade corridors: Dakar-Bamako; Abidjan- Ouagadougou, Tema-Ouagadougou, Lomé-Ouagadougou, Cotonou-Niamey; Lagos-Kano-Niamey. UNECA conducted collection and analysis of informal trade data along the Lagos/Abidjan corridor. The results published in 2021 in the report “Enhancing the quality of informal cross-border trade in the Economic Community of West African States African” will be shortly updated by a 2nd phase of same programme. Under the GIZ funded ECOWAS Agricultural Trade programme, ITC has conducted consultation with regional experts to identify 14 key border crossing points across the Lagos-Abidjan corridor and other 4 bilateral corridors (Abidjan-Ouagadougou; Cotonou-Niamey; Cotonou-Ouagadougou; Lagos-Agadez).

regulatory and administrative procedures on trade and investments that can support to unlock trade and investment potential in the region, with a focus on the selected value chains (and related sectors) and in line with key ECOWAS instruments by subject area, that might include:

- Strengthening ETLS and ECOWAS Customs Code operationalization
- Strengthening the ECOWAS Common Investment Code operationalization
- Strengthening the ECOWAS Competition Regulatory framework in relation to anticompetitive trade and investment practice¹⁰
- Supporting regional harmonization and implementation of IPR reforms
- Supporting the implementation of an ECOWAS NTB resolution mechanism

Wherever specific guidance (in terms of detailed regulations, procedures, products, target markets and affected countries) on the market access barriers to be targeted by the programme will be provided by the ECOWAS Commission or by national partners, desk research and data consolidation activities will not be required.

Sub-activity 1.1.1.2: Shortlisting of key market access barriers and formulation of dedicated recommendations for implementation.

The sub-activity aims to shortlist market access related policy, regulatory and trade facilitation measures to be addressed by the programme. This will be done through dedicated PPDs and inclusive consultations (possibly, in the framework of the VCRM under **Output 1.3**). The process of validating of selected market access related policy, regulations, administrative procedures, trade facilitation and data transparency measures to be addressed will be conducted under the guidance of the ECOWAS Commission (for barriers, that are of overall relevance for the region) and ECOWAS member states (for barriers, that affect country groups or individual countries) and supported by dedicated consultations on trade facilitation and data transparency measures to be addressed. Ultimately, summary reports will be drafted to provide overall guidance for the action and recommendations provided by the above-mentioned assessments (also, in the framework of the VCRM under **Output 1.3** and of PSSC and PMU meetings).

Activity 1.1.2: Priority trade and investment reforms to ease market access conditions have been implemented

Lead: ITC

Key partners: ECB Council and its members, incl. FEWACCI, FEBWE, FWAEA and FEWAMA (on private sector advocacy); RTFC and ETLS Taskforce (on trade regulations and procedures); AIPAWAS and its members and EBID (on investments facilitation); ERCA (on competition); WASA WAFWA and AFAP (on access to agricultural inputs); REFATRA and UCRAO (on transport and logistics services); ARIPO and OAPI (on intellectual property rights)

The activity aims to support the implementation of selected reforms to address trade and investment barriers faced by MSMEs in the ECOWAS region. While the specific focus of the foreseen reforms (in terms of countries, involved institutions, selected value chains formalities) will be refined by the result of **Activity 1.1.1**, existing studies on market access barriers in ECOWAS (e.g. ITC's NTM surveys, reports from ITC Trade Obstacle Alert Mechanisms), and ITC's longstanding experience in the region can already provide guidance on tentative areas for interventions. Reforms might be piloted at the regional level or in selected country groups or country-pairs depending on the specific demand from ECOWAS members and relevance for the target VCs. The implementation modalities of selected reforms might involve:

¹⁰ In this regards the ECOWAS Regional Competition Policy Framework refers to "Specific Prohibition of Limiting or Controlling Production, Markets, Technical Development, or Investment" as a specific area of action, for which provisions have been included in competition law of some member countries (WAEMU members, Nigeria and Ghana) and proposed by the ECOWAS framework.

- Development of guiding policies (where no suitable existing regional policies or regulations are available)
- Revision of legal texts and accompanying the official approval process
- Drafting of streamlined procedures to be applied at the customs (digitization of ECOWAS Certificate of Origin; streamline queues of trucks; adopting simplified trade regimes for small trade amounts; etc.)
- Development of step-by-step guidelines to enhance transparency on trade and investment procedures to be applied by trade promotion and investment agencies, as well as chambers of commerce
- Provision of equipment and facilities at selected border crossing points to support the implementation of trade facilitation measures for MSMEs, as well as SSCBT and women cross border traders
- Establishment or re-structuring of Committees and PPDs to ensure private sector involvement and gender inclusiveness.

Expected deliverables of the activity: Processes have been streamlined, administrative burdens have been reduced, and the capacity of public and private stakeholders to effectively engage on key technical areas for the resolution of market access barriers and support the ECOWAS business community to structure value chain specific advocacy programmes has been built.

Sustainability of the activity: Reforms will be designed in cooperation with selected public and private partners who will be equipped with the expertise and tool to accompany their implementation.

Linkages with other Outputs: The VCRM process activated under **Activity 1.3.3** will play a key role to ensure coordination and effective planning of reforms supported through this activity.

Sub-activity 1.1.2.1: Elaboration of tailored trade and investment trade reforms to address the market access barriers selected within agreed timeframes through focused public private dialogues.

The sub-activity aims to formulate concrete actions addressing selected market access barriers through a coordinated and consistent approach to support target VC. This will be achieved through the facilitation focused public-private dialogues and consensus building on the implementation modalities of tailored trade and investment trade reforms priority reforms, with a focus on selected value chains, making use whenever possible of existing discussion platforms (incl. the ETLs Task Force annual meetings; the ECOWAS RTFC meetings; etc.). Dedicated actions to address the market access barriers selected within agreed timeframes in cooperation with selected line public and private sector agencies (at the regional level or by country groups) will be developed.

Sub-activity 1.1.2.2: Equipping selected regional and national agencies to jointly implement trade and investments reforms.

The sub-activity aims to build capacity of public and private stakeholders on key technical areas for the resolution of market access barriers. It will then support the ECOWAS business community to structure value chain specific advocacy programmes to effectively relay private sector challenges and needs in the policy process.

- Assessment of expertise and equipment of public and private sector regional and national partners to support in the implementation
- Selection of leading agencies in the implementation and piloting of trade and investment reforms

- Delivery of capacity building and equipment, eventually through financial and non-financial MoU
- Development of resources and tools needed for the implementation. These might include websites; MSMEs guidelines for compliance to regional directives; policy position papers; ready available training materials; step by step trade and investment procedures databases

Sub-activity 1.1.2.3: Piloting and rollout of trade and investments reforms.

The sub-activity aims to accompany the roll out and monitoring of identified actions in partnership with public and private sector regional and national partners through dedicated advisory services and consultations. The action will address procedural and administrative obstacles; risks related to intra-regional informal trade; limits posed by inadequate regulatory frameworks (e.g. competition; IPRs; investments).

Increase transparency, digitalization and streamlining of administrative procedures to facilitate compliance

- **Implement simplification and/or digitalisation of trade and investment formalities relevant to the selected VC** to address market access barriers stemming from the complexity of administrative procedures. The task will require reengineering business processes and introducing digital solutions in trade and investment regulatory agencies and key documents (e.g. the ECOWAS Certificate of Origin) to cut the red-tape by promoting paperless formalities and cross-border recognition of electronic documents. In doing so, the action will ensure that simplification and digitalization reforms are aligned with regional and international frameworks.¹¹
- **Implement key recommendations to address SSCBTs sensitive market access barriers** which could include inter alia implement/scale up national or bilateral facilitation initiatives for SSCBTs, develop draft regulation to establish one ECOWAS Simplified Trade Regime (STR) or pilot its implementation at selected borders to reduce administrative burdens, streamline documentation requirements, and minimize regulatory obstacles for SSCBTs. ITC will leverage its experience in the COMESA and ECOWAS regions in addressing SSCBTs sensitive market access barriers by reducing their paperwork while reducing opportunities for corruption, bribery, and illicit activities.

Implement tailored solution to reduce transport and logistics costs and delays

- **Streamline queues of trucks at selected border crossings, ports and/or logistics centres**, by introducing virtual queues management systems in close connection with the ECOWAS' interconnected System for the Management of Goods in Transit (SIGMAT). The project will support ECOWAS and its Member States in implementing virtual queuing solutions. This approach enables hauliers to register in a virtual queue via a website or mobile application (i.e., to make an appointment) and to arrive at the border post, rail terminal or port terminal just a few minutes before their processing time (i.e., their appointment). This approach also makes it possible to give priority to urgent cargo, so that trucks loaded with perishable goods are not unnecessarily stuck in queues. Such solutions have already proved their worth in Europe (France, Estonia, Finland) but also in West Africa, at Abidjan Terminal in Côte d'Ivoire.
- **Enhance storage conditions at remote border office(s) relevant for designated VC.** Remote border office(s) often suffer from various inefficiencies due to long distances and transportation

¹¹ e.g., ECOWAS Investment Policy and Code, ECOWAS Customs code, WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, WTO Investment Facilitation Framework, UNCITRAL Model Laws, UN Layout Key, WCO data model, etc.

challenges, regular power cuts, limited connectivity and access to support services or not suitable infrastructures. The action will support the implementation of sustainable practices and enhanced facilities at targeted borders (e.g., energy-efficient low technologies, waste management systems, renewable energy sources, and eco-friendly infrastructure) to help address these challenges.

Addressing regulatory and policy framework gaps to prevent the insurgence of market access barriers

- **Minimize anti-competitive practices having adverse market access effects in designated Value Chains in selected countries** through increased advocacy, awareness, and collaboration among the National and Regional Competition Authorities and with the private sector. This sub-activity may entail developing tools and methodologies for simplifying procedures for MSMEs (by including blanket exemptions for prohibitions on horizontal and vertical agreements), addressing unfair practices (e.g., abuse of dominance, cartels, bid rigging, etc.), delivering advisory services and/or help formulate and implement a competition advocacy strategy.
- **Conduct a gap analysis between ECOWAS Investment Common Code**, the WTO agreement on investment facilitation for development (IFD) and the AfCFTA investment framework, with a focus on the selected value chains.
- **Enhance the enforcement of intellectual property rights in the ECOWAS region** through regulatory assessments of IPRs laws and regulations. Focus may be placed on legal frameworks governing patent rights, given their particular importance in the investment decision-making process. This sub-activity will help ascertain conformity of those legal and regulatory frameworks, identify the causes of their deviation from, and propose ways of ensuring their alignment with, WTO law, applicable PTAs and other legal commitments with a view to providing adequate incentives for innovation, creativity, and investment in knowledge-based assets.

Sub-activity 1.1.2.4: Piloting and rollout of transversal reforms to ensure gender inclusion.

This sub-activity will complement **Sub-activity 1.1.2.3** and will depend on the evidence found for specific regulatory and procedural obstacles faced by women in selected areas of action¹².

- Crafting women angle for including implementation of selected trade and investment reforms by ensuring the involvement of the ECOWAS Gender centre women associations (i.e. FEBWE) in the PPD process;
- Support the implementation of women representation requirements in selected committees, including a gender focal point in the ECOWAS RTFC;
- Provide advisory support in the elaboration of a clear definition of women-owned/led businesses in ECOWAS regional policy frameworks supported by the action;
- Identify gender-sensitive services in existing TIBAD in close collaboration with women traders' association. The Action will build the capacity of women traders' association to provide dedicated support to women in their cross-border operations. This could include the establishment of "safe spaces" for women as well as dedicated helpline in case they are faced with harassment or gender-discriminatory practices by border stakeholders.

¹² The sub-activity will build on the "Empowering Women in the AfCFTA" support already provided by the SheTrades initiative to foster inclusion of ECOWAS women associations in the AfCFTA negotiations and implementation process.

Activity 1.1.3: The implementation of an ECOWAS NTB resolution mechanism has been supported

Lead: ITC

Key partners: ECOWAS Commission, WAEMU Commission, ECOWAS RTFC, ERCA, ECOWAS Business Council, Regional Business Associations (FEWACCI, FWAEA, FEBWE, WACTAF), ETL Task Force, ECOWS TPO Network

This activity aims to establish a coordinated framework for regional and national action on NTBs, setting clear institutional responsibilities and processes to be able to address regulatory and procedural obstacles to trade in a sustainable manner. The removal of market access barriers is best achieved when coordinated at the regional level. The ECOWAS Commission plays a pivotal role in removing market access obstacles as illustrated by the Commission's ongoing efforts to develop a regional framework for the elimination of NTB, as part of the ECOWAS 4x4 Strategic Objective 2 on Deeper Regional Integration. The new framework encompasses several new instruments, including an NTB Strategy, an NTB Policy, an NTB resolution roadmap, and NTB reporting and addressing mechanisms. In this context, the Action will build the capacity of relevant Directorates and Committees of the ECOWAS Commission to ensure it has the institutional capacity to steer—and sustain—a regionally coordinated approach towards the removal of market access barriers to trade and investments.

Expected deliverables of the activity: A more coordinated approach towards the monitoring and resolution market access barriers has been achieved.

Sustainability of the activity: The activity will equip the ECOWAS Commission and well established committees in the region, which are focusing on the resolution with a sustainable, with a practical methodological approach to ensure coordination of the action and pursue the revision of NTB beyond the programme life cycle.

Linkages with other Outputs: The ECOWAS NTB resolution mechanism will support in addressing the SPS and TBT measure covered under **Output 1.2**.

Sub-activity 1.1.3.1: Equip the ECOWAS Regional Trade Facilitation Committee to effectively address market access barriers.

This sub-activity aims to support the further **operationalization of the ECOWAS RTFC** to design and monitor the implementation of harmonized and coordinated cross-border reforms to remove procedure related market access barriers in the region. This could entail capacity building for RTFC Members, assistance to the RTFC's permanent secretariat, advisory services on the development of relevant action plans, the drafting of reform specific guidelines or legal frameworks and the implementation of an online RTFC monitoring tool. Legal text and on regulations and procedures on market access barriers that affect the NTM harmonization process in the country will be stored in online repositories that will be updated, where needed, in order to allow for the revision and monitoring of the RTFC nad available repositories will be updated¹³. The activity will also require the design and implementation of an approach to for the identification and assessment (expertise; equipment) of regional and national focal points for the implementation of capacity building programmes.

¹³ Data on non-tariff measures collected by UNCTAD in the region are in many cases outdated or not available, namely Benin (last update 2014), Burkina Faso (last update 2012), Cabo Verde (last update 2014), Cote d'Ivoire (last update 2019), The Gambia (last update 2013), Ghana (last update 2014), Guinea (last update 2012), Guinea-Bissau (no data); Liberia (last update 2014), Mali (last update 2014), Niger (last update 2014), Nigeria (last update 2013), Sierra Leone (no data), Togo (last update 2014).

Sub-activity 1.1.3.2: Support the ECOWAS Commission to establish a NTB reporting and resolution mechanism.

The sub-activity will support the set-up and effective operationalization of an ECOWAS NTB resolution mechanism through technical documents preparation, institutional reinforcement, awareness raising activities and coaching of officials to review the NTB filed by ECOWAS stakeholders.

- Provision of technical guidance in the drafting of policy and background papers requested by the ECOWAS Commission
- Provide advisory services to define the *modus operandi* of the ECOWAS NTB resolution mechanism, including its articulation with national TOAMs focal points and AfCFTA provisions.
- Support the Commission in identifying relevant best-practices to inform the elaboration of these new instruments. It will also provide technical assistance towards the drafting of the strategy and policy through a structured consultation process of ECOWAS Member States to ensure a wide ownership across the region.
- Strengthen the coordination between ECOWAS and WAEMU Commissions to facilitate policy and regulatory convergence for the removal of market access barriers in the two regional economic community. This would entail the establishment and/or strengthening of joint (informal) working groups, advisory services to identify potential gaps or inconsistencies between the Commissions framework for removal of obstacles to trade and investment and support to the development of joint roadmap to further harmonize and coordinate the two commissions efforts towards a more conducive business environment.
- Support the ECOWAS Commission to conduct regional Trade & Investment Policy Review (TIPR) to help monitor the level of domestication of multilateral, continental and regional agreements in ECOWAS Member States and steer convergence of member states' trade policies against common regulatory frameworks. This TIPR could build upon WAEMU successful experience in developing annual “Trade Surveillance Reports”.

Sub-activity 1.1.3.3: Tailor digital tools for the improvement of regional market barriers reporting, monitoring and resolution processes.

The sub-activity will primarily focus on enhancing awareness and usage of the ECOWAS Trade Obstacles Alert Mechanism (TOAM) to ensure a continuous flow of information for ECOWAS policy and decision-makers. The objective of the action is to enable national institutions already involved in supporting MSMEs in overcoming trade obstacles—such as Chambers of Commerce, Shippers Councils, Sectoral Associations, and governmental agencies like the Ministries of Trade and Customs Offices—to monitor their achievements in a more transparent way while simultaneously informing MSMEs about actions taken and providing them with guidance. The action will also aim to allow the ECOWAS TOAM to connect different reporting initiatives, with a view to consolidating the obstacle reporting at the regional level without discouraging effective national initiatives in this regard. This will be achieved by:

- further integrating the online reporting tool into national trade intelligence platforms, single windows for trade and customs systems of selected countries, and other NTM notification systems as the ePing¹⁴

¹⁴ In relation to work done on quality under **Output 1.2**, which will cover SPS and TBT measures, ITC might be able to provide complementary support through dedicated services for selected countries to tailor available SPS and TBT notifications systems (as the WTO-ITC-UNDESA ePing alert system, providing daily information on SPS and TBT regulatory changes) to the ECOWAS region needs, including through embedded versions, translation of notifications of high relevance for selected value chains into additional languages in cooperation with universities and build the capacity of SPS and TBT enquiry points in the region to upload additional content in the ePing alert system and engaging with businesses for feedback on regulatory changes. The system will allow the private sector to be informed about the latest SPS and TBT official notification and request support, where needed, from their local SPS and TBT enquiry points to react to the notification within the delays allowed by the WTO.

- conducting consultation within countries that established the TOAM to ensure further institutional foothold of the system through formal multi-agency partnerships ;
- equipping selected border posts and trade information desks with reporting facilities and communication materials in cooperation with border authorities and operators;
- streamlining accessibility to the TOAM mobile app by making it available through Apps stores and simplifying registration process to report an obstacle in the system;
- exploring IT options to seamlessly blending SMS, email, and phone reporting methods within the ECOWAS TOAM system;
- facilitating TOAM public-private sector workshops on obstacles reporting for selected trading partners pairs and by value chain;
- organizing dedicated capacity building on the processing of trade obstacles data with focal points in regional authorities and committees (e.g. ECOWAS Commission, WAEMU Commission, RTFC);
- providing advisory services to TOAM national focal points to improve the institutional foothold of the system at the national level.

OUTPUT 1.2 STRENGTHENED QUALITY COMPLIANCE AND STANDARDS

While identifying and reducing market access barriers is being achieved under output 1.1, it is essential that parallel measures be put in place to develop a sustainable and targeted Quality Infrastructure System as a catalyst for improving the quality and safety of ECOWAS products. It is essential for MSMEs to conform to the demanding standards, technical regulations and other export market requirements, so as to expand their market share, connect to new markets and compete in the global trade arena. It contributes in turn to increasing consumer confidence in product safety and quality.

This output 1.2 aims primarily to capacitate the ECOWAS Quality Infrastructure System (QIS), both at the regional and national levels, in line with the needs of the priority value chains. This will include aspects such as:

- i) **QI governance**, harmonization of national and regional quality **policies**, TBT and SPS measures, and coordination in QI functions;
- ii) Development of the institutional capacity and capability of **quality pillars** (including NSBs, NABs, and NMIs as well as regional entities entrusted with the QI mandate);
- iii) Enhancement of the operational capacity of **Conformity Assessment Bodies** (CABs), including calibration laboratories, testing laboratories, proficiency testing providers, validation and verification bodies, inspection bodies, and certification bodies for systems, services, products and persons;
- iv) Promotion of a **culture for quality** and standards compliance to ensure ECOWAS can reap the benefits of a stronger QI system and its enterprises and several VC actors are capacitated to strengthen their competitiveness sustainably to effectively compete in global markets, by the implementation of standards, technical regulations, quality management systems and building on the results of previous regional programmes.

The expected impact is an improved coordination and governance of the overall QIS in the region, the effective functioning and operationalization of quality pillars and conformity assessment bodies at the national and regional level, and the development of a quality culture among governments, economic operators, and consumers to enhance sustainable and future-proof trade competitiveness and market access.

Activity: 1.2.1 Regional harmonization and integration of QI governance, policy, standards and technical regulations facilitated

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC), ECOWAS QI-related Committees/Working Groups, national QI Institutions, Pan-African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI) Institutions (African Organisation for Standardization (ARSO), African Electrotechnical Standardization Commission (AFSEC)), national Ministries of Industry, Trade, Agriculture (depending on the selected value chains and national contexts).

The activity will focus on strengthening the implementation of the requirements of Annex 6 on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and Annex 7 on Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary measures (SPS) of the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Goods, in the ECOWAS region, by updating the Regional Quality Infrastructure and regulatory system in coherence with the African Quality Policy (AQP) and the AfCFTA agreement and enhancing the coordination and governance of the overall QI system in the region.

This activity will support the alignment of the Regional ECOWAS Quality Policy (ECOQUAL) and some national policies to the AQP which lays down policy directions for the operationalization of the Pan-African Quality Infrastructure (PAQI), in complementarity with the work being done under other projects (PTB, UNIDO ACP QI); fostering coordination of regional Quality structures through the support to the functioning of the Community Council for Quality (CCQ), its five Committees acting in the areas of accreditation, standardization, conformity assessment, metrology and technical regulations (ECORAS, ECOSHAM, ECOCONF, ECOMET, and ECOREG) its secretariat, the Regional Quality Agency and including monitoring of national and continental work; strengthening the SPS coordination mechanism in ECOWAS in connection with the work of the African Union for the harmonization of food safety standards, the development and implementation of regional SPS protocols including the strengthening of the skills of health personnel; Assistance will be provided to ECOWAS in the design of a rapid alert system for products intended for human and animal food and in the design of an electronic SPS certification; The action will also lead to the development of mutual recognition activities between States and between ECOWAS and international strategic partners in the different areas of QI, first targeting areas falling within priority value chains.

QI Governance and Quality Policy

The Regional Quality Policy, serving as the backbone of the regional QI, must evolve, to take into account changes in the socio-economic environment, within the objectives of the Regional Economic Community and their alignment with the African Union's Agenda 2063 through the recently adopted Pan-African Quality Policy (AQP). The policy aims to ensure compliance of West African goods and services with relevant standards and technical regulations, thereby enhancing their competitiveness in regional, continental and international markets.

The activity will support the alignment of the ECOWAS Quality Policy (ECOQUAL) and national policies to the continental framework (AQP), support the regional and selected national Quality Infrastructure institutions in ECOWAS as well as their steering bodies to consolidate their alignment to and integration within the Pan-African QIS, fostering dialogue with the continental institutions (ARSO, AFSEC, AFRIMETS, AFRAC), and supporting them to coordinate, in collaboration with the other

RECs, the development and strengthening of quality infrastructure across the five regions of the continent in conformity with Annex 6 and Annex 7 of the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Goods, aiming to boost intra-African trade and build progressively, a continental common market.

Standardisation

Key organizations, including the African Organization for Standardisation (ARSO) and the African Electrotechnical Standardization Commission (AFSEC) drive continental standardization in Africa, while Regional Economic Communities (RECs) lead regional efforts, bolstered by contributions from the National Standardization Bodies (NSBs).

ECOSHAM is the Standards Harmonization Model of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), that allows the 15 Member States to work together to develop and adopt common standards for the region. It was established in 2012 through the regulation C/REG.14/12/12 that created also the Technical Management Committee (TMC), ensuring the implementation of ECOSHAM and the coordination of activities related to standardization. To date, about 200 standards were harmonized by the TMC. Despite these efforts, the need for standards remains high and calls for even greater efforts in this area, in view to cover most of the region's needs.

This activity aims to strengthen the existing regional system on standards harmonization with a view to develop, harmonize and promote standards for selected value chains (VCs) as well as identifying standards compliance challenges. It also seeks to amplify the voice of ECOWAS countries in the international standards-setting activities by further enhancing the participation of NSBs not only in traditional ISO committees, but also the mirror committees related to the priority VCs.

Cooperation between UNIDO and the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) and the European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC), in short CEN-CENELEC, are foreseen under Output 1.1.

CEN-CENELEC are public institutions and business catalysts in Europe, removing trade barriers for European industry and consumers. Their mission is to foster the European economy in global trading, the welfare of European citizens and the environment. Through their services they provide platforms for the development of European Standards and other technical specifications.

Indicative joint activities will be identified during the programme inception phase and sub-contracted to CEN-CENELEC. Under this scope, contractual arrangements with CEN-CENELEC will be in accordance with applicable UNIDO rules and procedures and will pre-empt any competitive procurement procedure.

The activity aims to identify standards compliance challenges related to the selected VCs; strengthen the capacity of the regional standards entity to develop standards in the selected VCs; and promote good regulatory practices and good governance in standards, including a systematic consideration of gender dimensions and Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) specific needs in standards development. Furthermore, this activity will aim to strengthen the digitalization process of the regional standards harmonization system.

The expected impact is the regional system for standards harmonization (ECOSHAM) strengthened, and improved quality compliance within selected VCs, aligned with regional and international standards, in support of competitiveness of MSMEs to access regional and continental market.

Technical Regulations

Technical regulations are mandatory rules established by public authorities (Government ministries or departments) to protect the health and safety of people and property against hazards related to fire, explosions, food, chemical materials, the transport and handling of dangerous products, electrical and gas appliances and other dangers.

ECOREG is the ECOWAS Committee for Technical Regulation. Composed of representatives of the 15 ECOWAS member states, ECOREG was established in 2017 through the regulation C/REG.9/6/17. In a view to working together and developing common technical regulations for the region, the committee has also established the ECOWAS Technical Regulation Harmonization procedures (ECOTRHAM), adopted by the ECOWAS Council of Ministers in 2021.

The activity also aims to strengthen the existing regional system on technical regulations in view of developing, harmonizing and promoting Technical Regulations for the select value chains, in particular by provision of policy and legal advice on harmonization of technical regulations and SQMT acts related to TBT frameworks, building on the efforts of the AUC and the AfCFTA Secretariat to institutionalize cooperation between regulators in the light of the African Quality Policy. UNIDO will use its [Quality Policy Development guidelines and tools](#) for this endeavor.

Furthermore, this activity will aim to develop regional guidelines on good regulatory practices applicable to technical regulations for the implementation of the ECOWAS Community Regulation on Technical Regulations, including training of regulators on these guidelines.

The expected impact is the region's commitment to harmonised technical regulations that will lead to reducing Technical Barriers to Trade (TBTs).

Transversal dimensions such as gender and women empowerment, climate mitigation and transition to green economy notably through digitalization, will be systematically introduced and strengthened in the further development of the Regional Quality Infrastructure.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities include:

HARMONIZATION OF QI GOVERNANCE AND POLICY

- 1.2.1.1 Reviewing, updating and alignment of the Regional Quality Infrastructure regulatory framework and the regional quality policy (ECOQUAL) with Africa Quality Policy and AfCFTA agreement, in coordination with ATMAP continental and regional components
- 1.2.1.2 Updating and alignment of the National Quality Policies with the Africa Quality Policy
- 1.2.1.3 Supporting the functioning of the Community Quality Council (CCQ), its 5 Technical Committees (ECORAS, ECOSHAM, ECOCONF, ECOMET and ECOREG) and of its secretariat that is the Regional Quality Agency (ECOWAQ) and including a follow-up of national and continental work.
- 1.2.1.4 Identifying and implementing opportunities for digitalization of processes related to QI governance.

STANDARDIZATION

- 1.2.1.5 Raising awareness on standards harmonization through campaigns, awareness sessions and support pilot value chain actors to implement the adopted standards and technical regulations as well as needed quality processes and instruments to generate value addition.
- 1.2.1.6 Enhancing capacity and capabilities for standards harmonization, in close coordination with ECOSHAM & ECOREG Committees, ARSO/AFSEC and NSBs.
- 1.2.1.7 Supporting the development of standards on selected value chains based on the needs of the private sector
- 1.2.1.8 Promoting good governance in standardization, in close coordination with ECOSHAM & ECOREG Committees and NSBs.
- 1.2.1.9 Strengthening ECOWAS' representation in ARSO and supporting participation of ECOWAS Member States at ARSO and ISO, in priority technical committees.
- 1.2.1.10 Identifying standards compliance challenges in the selected VCs.
- 1.2.1.11 Supporting the monitoring, dissemination and implementation of relevant regional international/continental standards towards supported pilot value chain actors
- 1.2.1.12 Identifying and implementing standards that are relevant for sustainability management and climate change, in particular ISO 14020 series, ISO 14030 series, ISO 14040 series, ISO 14060 series, ISO 14090 series, ISO 59000 series, ISO 37120 series, ISO 20400 series, ISO 20121 and ISO 32210:2022.

TECHNICAL REGULATIONS

- 1.2.1.13 Developing a roadmap for strengthening the capacities and capabilities of ECOREG for harmonization of technical regulations.
- 1.2.1.14 Supporting ECOREG in implementation of the roadmap for strengthening their capacities and capabilities for harmonization of technical regulations. Support will include technical advice, strengthening the digitalization of the processes, and training to ECOREG members.
- 1.2.1.15 Supporting ECOWAS in the implementation of harmonized technical regulations and for their promotion in ECOWAS countries.
- 1.2.1.16 Identifying needs for harmonization of technical regulations in priority value chains. Consider alignment with the EU Green deal, and in particular needs and opportunities related to green technologies, circular economy, energy efficiency, critical raw materials (CRMs), biodiversity, finance and other climate-neutral areas within each selected value chain.
- 1.2.1.17 Identifying and harmonizing climate-related technical regulations linked to emissions, energy efficiency, renewable energy, fuel quality, carbon offsetting and trading, forestry and land use, waste management, monitoring and reporting of GHG emissions.
- 1.2.1.18 Developing harmonized technical regulations for priority value chains, as per the identified needs, and guidelines as necessary.
- 1.2.1.19 Supporting ECOWAS for the development of technical regulations related to the selected value chains, as well as the proposed guidelines. Include awareness sessions among value chains stakeholders and training of national inspection bodies (NIBs) staff as necessary.
- 1.2.1.20 Supporting the implementation of Good Regulatory Practices.

[Activity: 1.2.2 Regional harmonization and integration in SPS-related functions and standards supported](#)

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, COMESA SPS Sub Committees and working groups, national Ministries of Industry, Trade, Agriculture (depending on the selected value chains and national

contexts), the African Union Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR), Africa Food Safety Agency.

African countries face many challenges in the area of quality and SPS, and certainly do not need more bureaucracy, but rather practical means of supporting the implementation, at national level, of technical regulations and agreements such as the SPS Agreement, the vast majority of which are legally binding. The efforts currently being made by ECOWAS to develop regulations in the areas of quality and SPS, while taking account of existing regulations, are also a significant example.

The challenge is to ensure that these regulations are widely understood, adopted and used by member states in the region. Otherwise, the usefulness of these tools, which are developed to protect consumers and boost the competitiveness of the region's products, including those in value chains, is questionable. This action of the program aims to facilitate the implementation of technical regulations by strengthening the capacities of the relevant concerned actors.

This activity addresses the relevant levers to facilitate enhanced trade of agrifood products in compliance with national and regional SPS regulations. The action will provide technical assistance to ECOWAS and its Member States in enhancing the SPS regulatory and policy framework and streamlining improved food safety practices for the selected value chains. The action will also have intervention at the regional level to ensure enhanced enabling SPS system in place and pilot improved practices in selected countries. Although ECOWAS is characterized by a functional SPS Subcommittee dedicated to regional policy development and standards harmonization, there is still a need for the continuation of these endeavors in assisting the coordination mechanism for food safety standards harmonization in all premarket authorizations and the management of food and agrifood inputs such as food additive, use of pesticides and veterinary applications, product labelling, novel foods and novel processes, as well as horizontal food regulatory requirements including microbiological criteria, contaminants in food, management of food business operators and imports requirements. This will also allow the harmonization or coordination of the different work streams required for a robust food control system and having aligned requirements within technical regulation or mandated legislation.

In case of the regional level activities, the action will provide a required continuation in the improvement of SPS capacities in terms of regional coordination and identify an operational framework which could be ran sustainably. It will also provide assistance to ECOWAS engaging with continental SPS bodies (AU-IBAR, Africa Food Safety Agency) and other RECs through participation in the Continental SPS Coordination Forum, considering relevant continental strategies, particularly Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Policy Framework for Africa and Food Safety Strategy for Africa: 2022-2036. With regard to the deployment of the most recent approaches and Codex guidelines, particularly electronic food safety certificate (CXG 38-2001, rev. 2021) and voluntary third-party assurance (CXG 93-2021), the action will conceptualize a regional approach in consultation with ECOWAS Secretariat and selected Member States thus ensuring more flowless trade of food products.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities include:

- 1.2.2.1 Strengthening the operational framework of the ECOWAS SPS Working Group
- 1.2.2.2 Supporting the development of procedures to collaborate with the future Africa Food Safety Agency and participation in the Africa Food Regulatory Authorities Forum.
- 1.2.2.3 Supporting the convening function of ECOWAS on the harmonization of relevant food safety standards based on Codex Alimentarius.
- 1.2.2.4 Exploring regional approaches for voluntary third-party assurance (vTPA), electronic certification and remote audit
- 1.2.2.5 Supporting the participation of ECOWAS in relevant continental and global activities in SPS, e.g., the Codex Alimentarius, World Organization on Animal Health (WOAH), International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), Continental SPS Coordination Forum, CCAfrica.

Activity: 1.2.3 VSS and sustainability driven legislation developed and promoted

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission and related Departments, Private Sector, ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania, European Technical Partners

This activity identifies the most relevant sustainability requirements that constitute de-facto market access requirements and opportunities for increased competitiveness via integration into high-value adding supply chains and economic activities. These new requirements are partly codified in existing and emerging voluntary sustainability standards (VSS) as well as in new sustainability driven legislation (relating to human rights and environmental due diligence) or traceability matters (in particular related to the various EU and other legislation, e.g. the EU Deforestation Regulation, Corporate Social Due Diligence Directive). This activity supports ECOWAS in responding to these demands effectively and efficiently by assessing gaps to meet the sustainability requirements and identifying suitable solutions at a cross-company, cross-industry and regional level. The focus of this intervention is on laying the foundation for a sustainable service offer through the regional partners.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities include:

- 1.2.3.1 Conducting a Rapid Scan on the complex and newly emerging landscape of global supply chain legislation, such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, the EU's Critical Raw Materials Act, CSDDD and Deforestation-free value chains and how addressing two main questions: i) how do the new regulations impact ECOWAS countries and their value chains? and ii) how do governments and firms in these countries have to adapt to remain/become competitive?
- 1.2.3.2 Mapping of context-specific (local, regional, value chain-specific) best practices and approaches (including VSS and sustainability driven legislation)
- 1.2.3.3 Conducting a benchmarking study of feasible novel approaches to meeting emerging demands (e.g., specific VSS, cross-industry collaboration, ESG reporting mechanisms, etc.)
- 1.2.3.4 Implementing a regional awareness-raising campaign, building on a series of information sessions, hosted by and with strong ownership of a consortia of business associations, and export and investment promotion agencies.
- 1.2.3.5 Implementing solution-driven regional workshops bringing together relevant actors (including government actors, business associations, investment agencies, export promotion agencies, training providers such as Vocational Training Centres or Universities, quality infrastructure regional and national institutions, and companies) to identify actionable solutions and develop a regional strategy to meet and benefit from the sustainability drive.
- 1.2.3.6 Piloting and demonstrating a (set of) solution(s), possibly including implementation plans for required VSS, ESG reporting mechanisms, targeted training programs, visibility and awarding of high-performing companies, or creation of a network of sustainability experts, among others.

Activity: 1.2.4 Capacities of QI institutions (at national/regional level) strengthened by the provision of technical support

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, ECOWAS Community Committee for Metrology (ECOMET), ECOWAS Regional Accreditation System (ECORAS), the European Association of National Metrology Institutes (EURAMET) and select EURAMET Members, ECOWAS QI-related committees/Working Groups, AFRAC, Private Sector Associations, Consumer Unions, Academia, national Ministries of Industry, Trade, Agriculture (depending on the selected value chains and national contexts).

QI pillars – standardization, metrology, accreditation, and conformity assessment (including testing, proficiency testing, validation/verification, certification and inspection mechanisms) – must be strengthened to enjoy international recognition, which facilitates market access by enabling interoperability between new and existing products and services and stimulates better supply conditions.

While regional harmonization across quality governance, policies and standardization is being addressed under activity 1.2.1, this activity will capacitate the regional metrology and accreditation frameworks and their respective institutions.

It is important to note that there are significant disparities in the development levels of domestic QI institutions across ECOWAS Member States. While most of them have established the main pillars of the QI system, their operationalization and international recognition mainly through the support provided under the previous Quality Programmes, other Member States lag behind with a limited core QI system. Therefore, an updated diagnostic analysis of the capacity of selected institutions and service providers forming the respective QIS at the national level will be conducted during the inception phase. This will be the basis for the drafting of development plans highlighting the required human resources and skills necessary, including the provision of capacity building and technical assistance through trainings, awareness sessions, and twinning with other more advanced QI institutions in the region, in Europe, or other RECs. In parallel, there is a growing need to capacitate the QI institutions at the regional level in order to fortify them in their mandates to coordinate the development and strengthening of national QI systems across the region.

Furthermore, QI institutions and services are also essential for encouraging and supporting sustainable consumption and production. They provide accurate data on materials, energy, water, land usage, emissions and waste. Collaborative efforts are key in this endeavor, as exchanging these data points contribute to shaping and implementing sustainability policies and fostering eco-friendly behavior among all stakeholders.

The Community Council for Quality (CCQ), some of its committees, notably the regional Accreditation System (ECORAS) the ECOWAS Community Committee for Metrology (ECOMET), the Community Committee for Conformity Assessment (ECOCONF), and its secretariat that is the Regional Quality Agency (ECOWAQ), will be fully engaged in the deployment of this activity, and strengthened along the way in their function of coordinating these two pillars of the regional quality infrastructure (while the Standardization pillar is addressed under activity 1.2.1).

Metrology

The regional Metrology system of ECOWAS was established in 2017 with the adoption of the ECOWAS Quality Infrastructure scheme that created the ECOWAS Community Committee for Metrology (ECOMET). This achievement is a result of a long-term support provided by UNIDO and PTB through the implementation of various regional programmes funded respectively by the EU and the German Government¹⁵. PTB supports ECOMET in building up technical capacities, for example in the financing and technical realisation of inter-laboratory comparisons (ILCs) in the ECOWAS region and the implementation of various technical training courses (ISO17025; ISO17020; ISO 17043). In addition, PTB supports the strengthening of ECOMETS' organisational capacities (M&E system; management training, communication training; administrative support). Furthermore, PTB advises the ECOWAS Commission on metrology issues and carries out small-scale procurements for the least advanced NMIs in the ECOWAS region. ECOMET main role is to foster regional cooperation in the field of metrology, ensure metrological traceability through the development of calibration and measurement capabilities (CMC) and the harmonization of legal metrology activities in the region. The

¹⁵ PTB has an ongoing regional technical intervention in the area of Metrology, in support to ECOMET, funded by the Government of Germany.

UNIDO metrology component utilises existing synergies with PTB to efficiently strengthen the regional metrology system.

However, some ECOMET members and the national metrology institutes (NMIs) do not participate in the work of the Intra-African Metrology System (AFRIMETS) as well as the work of international metrology organizations such as the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM) and the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML), and therefore do not benefit from the advantages offered by these international organizations.

In addition, most of the NMIs of the ECOWAS member States are not associate members or members of the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM) and have not signed the agreements on the Mutual Recognition Arrangement for National Measurement Reference Standards and Calibration Certificates (CIPM/MRA) issued by the National Metrology Institutes of the International Committee of Weights and Measures (CIPM). This situation leads the need to strengthen ECOMET's capacities to ensure better coordination of metrology activities in support of MSME competitiveness.

Once the regional target value chains are known, an assessment of the needs in metrology will take place in order to identify the activities to be developed to fill the gaps relating to the management of the regional metrology system, the capacity building of the metrology quality structures, the service providers, the awareness of the government, population and consumer associations on metrology matters. The assessment will also identify the available metrology services in support to the alignment with the EU Green deal, notably related to green technologies, circular economy, energy efficiency, critical raw materials (CRMs), biodiversity, finance and other climate-neutral areas within each selected value chain.

The expected impact is that adequately calibrated instruments and accurate measurements traceable to the International System (SI) will ensure consistency and reliability of production, leading to increased trust and acceptance by importing markets. Parallel measures will be taken to enhance the efficiency of calibration laboratories through capacity building, equipment provision and support to becoming accreditation-ready.

While UNIDO will continue cooperating with its long-term partner in the region PTB (the German Metrology Institute), potential cooperation between UNIDO and the European Association of National Metrology Institutes (EURAMET) and select EURAMET Members is foreseen and will be identified and designed during the programme inception phase.

EURAMET is the Regional Metrology Organisation (RMO) of Europe and a public entity. It coordinates the cooperation of National Metrology Institutes (NMI) and Designated Institutes (DIs) in Europe in fields such as research in metrology, traceability of measurements to the SI units, international recognition of national measurement standards and related Calibration and Measurement Capabilities (CMC). EURAMET Members are detailed in the Complementary Annex document (*ref. Annex VI – EURAMET Members*).

Under this scope, any sub-contract with EURAMET and/or its Members will be in accordance with applicable UNIDO rules and procedures and will pre-empt any competitive procurement procedure.

Accreditation

Accreditation is the attestation of the competence of a conformity assessment body (laboratory, certifier, verifier, Proficiency Testing organizer, reference material provider, inspection body) to carry out its profession under strictly well-defined conditions (methods, equipment, environmental conditions, proven required skills, etc.).

ECOWAS has established a regional system for accreditation named ECORAS in 2017 through the regulation C/REG. 10/6/17. The missions of the regional system for accreditation are carried out by two

important subcommittees: the West African Forum for Accreditation Cooperation (FOACA) and the Assessment Committee for National Product Certification Bodies. In terms of accreditation, ECORAS has already achieved encouraging results through the activities of its accreditation bodies: The West African Accreditation System (SOAC, covering the West Africa Economic Union (UEMOA) Member States), The Ghana Accreditation Service (GHAS) and the Nigeria National Accreditation System (NINAS). Its operation has enabled the region's CABs to access accreditation services tailored to their needs. SOAC and NiNAS alone have registered around a hundred accreditation decisions (SOAC around seventy and NiNAS around fifty.). However, the challenges in this field remain numerous, such as the need to cover a wider field of competence (accreditation programs for targeted VCs not already covered).

In West Africa, the operation of accreditation bodies is very recent, thanks to the support from the European Union and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO). The ECOWAS accreditation system, established in 2017, is based on three accreditation bodies: Ghana's GHAS, Nigeria's NiNAS and SOAC, UEMOA member states. With a view to supporting the ECOWAS Certification Mark (ECOQMARK), the three bodies were prepared on new areas of accreditation, including ISO IEC 17020, ISO IEC 17065, ISO IEC 17021 and ISO IEC 17025. These fields are now covered by SOAC and NINAS.

This activity aims to enable ECORAS member structures [SOAC, GHAS (Ghana) and NINAS (Nigeria)] to propose relevant, complementary accreditation programs to conformity assessment bodies (CAB) in the West-African region that are necessary for the target regional value chains. In particular, these programs should align with the EU Green deal, within each relevant selected value chain. These structures should further engage in achieving their mutual recognition within ECOWAS and in their recognition by AFRAC, ILAC and IAF. Support is also foreseen to help the ECORAS Technical Secretariat monitor the work of AFRAC at continental level and ILAC IAF at global level. Support will also be provided for the training of technical accreditation assessors in VCs. The indicative activities will allow the concerned CABs to provide SMEs with accessible and competitive testing, calibration, proficiency testing, verification/validation, certification or inspection services that are recognised across the region, the continent and overseas.

Mindful of the urgent need to transition to a carbon-neutral economy, the project will also foster innovation and explore the opportunities, in cooperation with PTB, of further digitalization of the accreditation services available in the region, complementing a WTO funded project on “Digitalizing accreditation and conformity assessment systems in West Africa” (STDF Project Grant 770) implemented by UNIDO, whose objective is to improve compliance of UEMOA countries with key Food Safety Standards using digital tools. The gender dimension will also be paid due attention.

The expected impact of the indicative activities will be an easy, affordable access of conformity assessment bodies to local (regional) recognised accreditation programmes that in turn serve local enterprises.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities:

METROLOGY

- 1.2.4.1 Supporting ECOMET for the monitoring/participation of AFRIMETS & OIML work, for the organization of inter-comparison of metrology laboratories and for the management of the database of technical skills available in ECOWAS.
- 1.2.4.2 Reviewing existing metrology services and identification of areas where they can be strengthened and capacitated in support to the alignment with the EU Green deal, notably related to green technologies, circular economy, energy efficiency, critical raw materials

- (CRMs), biodiversity, finance and other climate-neutral areas within each selected value chain.
- 1.2.4.3 Supporting the development and implementation of technical guides in industrial and legal metrology domains.
 - 1.2.4.4 Supporting the development and implementation of harmonised technical regulations related to legal metrology activities in relation with metrology services needed to support the development of VCs.
 - 1.2.4.5 Strengthening of Regional Calibration Laboratories (RCLs) towards accreditation to enable VC MSMEs to have access to recognized metrology services
 - 1.2.4.6 Strengthening and equipping selected National Metrology Institutes with a regional vocation to provide needed services
 - 1.2.4.7 Strengthening of Regional Reference Calibration Laboratories (RRCLs) in collaboration with PTB regional interventions.
 - 1.2.4.8 Enhancing digitalization of metrology/calibration related services
 - 1.2.4.9 Conducting a comprehensive assessment of the calibration requirements across various sectors and industries within the ECOWAS region.
 - 1.2.4.10 Identification of critical measurement instruments and equipment that require calibration to ensure accuracy and reliability in measurements (aligned to the needs of the target value chains).
 - 1.2.4.11 Strengthening a number of priority calibration laboratories (i.e., capability and capacity of established calibration labs through procurement of relevant instruments).
 - 1.2.4.12 Supporting the ISO IEC 17025 accreditation of a number of calibration laboratories (calibration scopes aligned to the needs of the target value chains).
 - 1.2.4.13 Provide training and capacity building programmes for technicians and engineers on proper calibration techniques and procedures.
 - 1.2.4.14 Procurement of equipment for reference laboratories in the ECOWAS region.
 - 1.2.4.15 Leveraging and expanding the use of tools and approaches for data analysis and modelling within the regional metrology infrastructure, from aspects such as air quality or ocean acidification monitoring or to other aspects of climate change.

ACCREDITATION

- 1.2.4.16 Supporting SOAC (UEMOA countries), GAS (Ghana) and NINAS (Nigeria) to develop VC accreditation programs, in particular in support to the alignment with the EU Green deal, notably related to green technologies, circular economy, energy efficiency, critical raw materials (CRMs), biodiversity, finance and other climate-neutral areas within each selected value chain.
- 1.2.4.17 Supporting the ECORAS Technical Secretariat for monitoring ECORAS activities in liaison with the work of AFRAC, ILAC and IAF.
- 1.2.4.18 Enabling ECORAS to support the implementation of ECOQMARK by setting-up and/or strengthening relevant committees.
- 1.2.4.19 Identification and provision of relevant support to each entity of ECORAS in support of VCs.
- 1.2.4.20 Identification and implementation of opportunities for further digitalization of accreditation related services.
- 1.2.4.21 Strengthening of a pool of qualified quality and technical assessors in ECOWAS Member States to facilitate the organisation of accreditation assessments of conformity assessment bodies within the region
- 1.2.4.22 Upgrading of ECORAS accreditation bodies through peer evaluation.

Activity: 1.2.5 Institutional capacity building for food safety structures provided (at national/regional level).

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, national Ministries of Industry, Trade, Agriculture (depending on the selected value chains and national contexts), ECOWAS SPS working groups, Global Food Regulatory Science Society (GFoRSS), regional and national food safety structures/entities.

The activity will continue building capacities of ECOWAS and its Member States in the region towards harmonized and risk-based procedures for import and export control of food products by collaborating with the relevant REC-level bodies on developing and rolling out training of trainers (ToT) programmes for Member States on risk-based food inspection, thus triggering their internal capacity building systems. It will also pilot the review of Member States' legislations based on a Good Regulatory Guide for reflecting the revised food safety standards and the risk analysis paradigm, particularly risk-based control procedures for control of domestic food establishments as well as import/export control, and considering Codex Guidelines for Developing Harmonized Food Safety Legislation for the CCAFRICA Region (CXG 98-2022).

As risk analysis is a legal requirement set in the WTO's SPS Agreement, the development of risk assessment capacities at the national and regional levels will be crucial in order to be part of in the global food trade regime. The action will also conduct executive trainings for heads of agencies to ensure that modernization practices are based on international standards and best practices. In addition, training will be conducted to relevant competent authorities to identify potential gaps in the implementation of risk analysis principles, looking into the gaps of existing policies and institutions for compliance within the value chain and identifying potential solutions for their improvement.

The activity will also assist ECOWAS and its Member States in developing Good Regulatory Practices (GRPs), such as good hygiene practice guides (GHPs) based on international standards set by Codex Alimentarius, and making use of them in the SME upgrade-related activities under output 2.1.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities:

- 1.2.5.1 Supporting technical activities of ECOWAS SPS Working Group and related entities through facilitation of Member States' participation.
- 1.2.5.2 Organizing food safety risk analysis training for regulators and executive training for food safety competent authority agency heads.
- 1.2.5.3 Conducting risk assessment training to a number of regulators and approaches to integrate food safety standards within national frameworks.
- 1.2.5.4 Enhancing competencies of food safety inspectors for the target value chains based on evidence-based risk principles in import/border and domestic control.
- 1.2.5.5 Developing internal capacity building programmes for inspection and train the trainers from relevant food safety authorities on good regulatory practice (GRP), considering risk analysis principles.

Activity: 1.2.6 Institutional Capacity Building for Conformity Assessment Bodies delivered (national/regional level)

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, ECOWAS Community Committee for conformity assessment (ECOCONF)

This activity which will be geared towards strengthening the existing ECOWAS conformity assessment system and services so that the targeted MSMEs have access to internationally recognized conformity assessment services. It aims to capacitate a number of regional and national conformity assessment bodies (laboratories, verification bodies, proficiency testing providers, reference material providers certification bodies and inspection entities) to support the development of ECOWAS priority value chains. UNIDO will use its “QI for value chains” approach that was successfully applied during WACOMP. Furthermore, this activity will facilitate the identification and strengthening of reference conformity assessment bodies in the selected value chains with a view to transforming them into regional centres of excellence and preparing them for accreditation.

Therefore, a review of the currently available conformity assessment services and identification of areas where they can be strengthened will be performed. This includes possible support to the alignment with the EU Green Deal, notably related to green technologies, circular economy, energy efficiency, biodiversity, finance and other climate-neutral areas within each of the selected value chains.

In line with the overall sustainability considerations of this intervention, this activity also aims to offer capacity development for Conformity Assessment Bodies to enhance their respective competence to be able to attest the conformity of MSMEs’ products against various prevailing voluntary/private standards, be they related to sustainability (aiming to comply with social requirements and to protect biodiversity and environmental systems, like the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), the Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), and the Rainforest Alliance certifications, etc.) or food safety (like GFSI). Activities in this regard will be focused on developing regional capacity on mainstreaming private/voluntary/sustainability standards and related conformity assessment schemes into respective national and regional systems. Activities will be in synergy with those from output 1.3.

Through an enhanced cooperation between conformity assessment bodies and the private sector, this activity will provide technical assistance to the CABs to become ready to be recognised/mandated for these specific standards (system development, training of auditors, etc.) that are in high demand in European markets. It should be noted that private scheme owners are more and more relying on accreditation bodies signatories of the mutual recognition agreements of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) to mandate certification bodies. This is why the program has planned to support ECOWAS ABs with the prompt signing of the IAF MRAs. The program will also aim to develop a pool of regional experts to accompany MSMEs in implementing these VSS.

In ECOWAS, differences in conformity assessment practices and processes at the Member State level subsist and cause significant impediments in intra-regional and international trade. Furthermore, the limited funding for conformity assessment services, both at the national and regional levels, leads to limited services, low efficiency, and inadequate equipment, in particular for testing and calibration. In particular, there is a need to expand the availability and scope of domestic and regional testing and calibration facilities by capacitating laboratory staff to provide evidence-based information to regulators, authorities, sector-support institutions and direct (industry) clients. Synergies with activity 1.2.4. are foreseen in the indicative activities.

The regional conformity assessment architecture comprises the ECOWAS Committee for Conformity Assessment (ECOCONF) whose function is to ensure the compliance with ECOWAS standards and technical regulations through notably testing, certification and inspection. Created in 2017, ECOCONF is now operational and has enabled, among others, the development of the ECOWAS Quality Mark (ECOQMARK), which is an opportunity for enterprises (in particular SMEs) in the region to demonstrate their level of quality with a view to their competitiveness.

This activity will also support ECOCONF to fulfil its regional mandate: monitor international work in the field of conformity assessment, coordinate the development and implementation of regional certification schemes (like ECOQMARK), organize inter-comparison of testing laboratories, the revision of technical documents and the management of the database of technical skills available in

ECOWAS. These schemes eventually aim to facilitate exports to the EU as well as enhance the region's economy. National Certification Bodies will be accompanied to become mandated by the ECOWAS Commission for the application of the regional Mark.

Many CABs are already known and listed in the regional database (ECOQUIB) established during the previous EU-supported WACOMP programme and maintained by the ECOWAS Commission. A review of presently available conformity assessment services and identification of areas where they can be strengthened will be performed, in particular in support to the alignment with the EU Green deal, notably related to green technologies, circular economy, energy efficiency, critical raw materials (CRMs), biodiversity, finance and other climate-neutral areas within each selected value chain.

This activity will furthermore facilitate the identification and strengthening of reference testing CABs in the selected VCs with a view to erecting them into regional centres of excellence and preparing them for accreditation. It will also strengthen the regional pool of qualified quality auditors /assessors, technical auditors / assessors and inspectors in order to reach a critical mass serving the needs of the private sector.

Furthermore, this activity will coordinate the further development of sectoral applications, notably the extension of the missions of ECOCONF to cover new areas (proficiency testing, validation/verification, reference material production) and support the development of a digital platform for the deployment of the regional certification mark (ECOQMARK).

Given the new context and new needs, it has become necessary to extend the scope of ECOQMARK to include other products in order to achieve its objective of being the ultimate mark in the region, supporting the competitiveness of the products being traded in the region. In order to implement the regional mark effectively and make it easily accessible to beneficiaries (reduced service costs, availability and accessibility of information), the digitisation of its process is an obvious solution. This activity therefore aims to support the promotion, updating and digitalization of ECOQMARK.

It will identify further opportunities for the digitalization of conformity assessment related services in general across this component. Similarly, conformity assessment services should assist to respond to gender specific elements of standards and technical regulations.

The action will ultimately allow SMEs within the region to access affordable and internationally recognised testing, certification, verification, proficiency testing, and inspection services, conducive to the development of sustainable and inclusive priority value chains, expanding their export capacity in regional, continental as well as EU markets.

The impact expected is the increase of confidence in the region's products and services and the reduction of control operations on targeted products and services covered by relevant services of conformity assessment and their easy access to regional and international markets.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities:

- 1.2.6.1 Building capacity of ECOWAS Community Committee for conformity assessment (ECOCONF), including the extension of its scope to new area (proficiency testing, reference material producers, verification / validation).
- 1.2.6.2 Promoting CABs among VC actors and updating of the ECOQUIB database to consider data relating to the identified value chains.
- 1.2.6.3 Supporting the implementation and digitalization of the ECOWAS Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Inspection Certificates
- 1.2.6.4 Promoting, upgrading and digitalizing the ECOWAS Certification Mark (ECOQMARK).
- 1.2.6.5 Strengthening of a pool of qualified quality and technical auditors in ECOWAS in order to reach a critical mass serving the private sector's conformity assessment needs in the region.

- 1.2.6.6 Supporting the setting-up of regional reference laboratories by identification of testing needs for the value chains as well as the laboratories likely to carry them out considering the achievement of previous programs.
- 1.2.6.7 Building capacity of the identified laboratories and procuring needed equipment in view of international accreditation towards ISO/IEC 17025.
- 1.2.6.8 Regional harmonization of identified conformity assessment practices considering the new needs from value chains (testing methods, proficiency testing methods, etc.).
- 1.2.6.9 Identifying and strengthen regional reference proficiency testing providers and reference material producers towards ISO/IEC 17043 and ISO/IEC 17034 accreditation, in cooperation with PTB regional interventions.
- 1.2.6.10 Identifying and strengthen regional reference validation/verification bodies towards ISO/IEC 17029 /ISO 14065 accreditation.
- 1.2.6.11 Capacitating certification bodies (ISO/IEC 17021-1, ISO/IEC 17065) to obtain international recognition considering the new needs from value chains and supporting their accreditation.
- 1.2.6.12 Identifying and capacitating CABs in new conformity assessment fields considering the new needs of value chains (notably in view of the alignment with the EU Green Deal) and supporting their accreditation (proficiency testing providers (ISO/IEC 17043), reference material producers (ISO 17034), validation /verification bodies (ISO/IEC 17029 /ISO 14065).

Activity: 1.2.7 Institutional capacity building for inspection and related services (at national and regional level) provided

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, national Ministries of Industry, Trade, Agriculture (depending on the selected value chains and national contexts), inspection bodies

The programme will assist ECOWAS and Member States, including Mauritania, in developing Good Regulatory Practices (GRPs), such as good hygiene practice guides (GHPs) based on international standards set by the Codex Alimentarius, and making use of them in the MSME upgrading-related activities under Output 2.1. The GRPs will also contribute to the uptake of technical regulations by businesses, complying with domestic regulations, and advancing towards high-end markets. Using GRPs improves compliance with the SPS and TBT Agreements, including supporting businesses towards international market compliance. These GRPs will also serve as a standard for the development of a regional voluntary third-party assurance (vTPA) programme or quality assurance schemes, which will allow MSMEs to have access to more affordable voluntary certifications. This vTPA programme, focusing on agro-processing, will serve as a pedestal for advancing towards conformity with international vTPA programmes and integrate Environmental Social Governance (ESG) requirements corresponding to the regulations set under the EU Green Deal.

To ensure the integrity of this vTPA programme, the programme will also build the capacities of food safety auditors, and identify and train certification service providers to potentially become accredited certification bodies. These will allow agri-businesses to address the issue of audit and certifications costs that are the result of auditor scarcity and high-price linked certification fees. The programme will also consider remote audit practices as part of conformity assessment, which could be applied in situations where international best practice is being applied. The GRPs and voluntary scheme will be used as a tool under activities of Output 2.1, targeting the upgrade of MSMEs from the selected value chains. This activity on SPS will also closely coordinate with the activity focusing on accreditation systems, and the accreditation scope of the ISO 17000 family of standards will be strengthened. The developed vTPA programme will also play a key role in advancing food safety competent authorities

towards modernized practices by establishing legal agreement with the owners of these industry schemes, and using the data for their own risk profiling of relevant sectors.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities:

- 1.2.7.1 Enhancing competencies of food safety inspectors for the target value chains based on evidence-based risk principles in import/border and domestic control.
- 1.2.7.2 Supporting piloted inspection bodies toward Accreditation and provision of inspection kits to enhance their capacities.
- 1.2.7.3 Supporting the development of a regional approach for the assessment and use of data generated by voluntary standards programmes (vTPA approach) and training of regulators on the vTPA assessment toolkit.
- 1.2.7.4 Developing internal capacity building programmes for inspection and training the trainers from relevant food safety authorities on good regulatory practices (GRP), HACCP and voluntary standards, considering risk analysis principles.
- 1.2.7.5 Identifying the potential of upgrading from local to regional certification schemes for targeted agri-value chains, covering food safety and ESG requirements.
- 1.2.7.6 Identifying potential certification service providers and supporting them to become partners of certification schemes (linked to accreditation scope).

Activity: 1.2.8 Quality Culture throughout the region promoted

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, ECOWAS QI-related Committees/Working Groups, Member States and national QI institutions, Consumer Unions/associations, regional and national private sector federations, the media, professional organizations and consumer unions.

The lack of quality in products and services is one of the major obstacles to the participation of the Member States of the West African region in world trade. Among the measures to be implemented to overcome this issue, effective information and awareness-raising campaigns on quality are needed for economic actors, in particular decision-makers, public bodies, private sector actors and consumers within selected value chains. The intervention will help to build on the achievements of previous programs and prepare the target groups for full involvement in the activities of this program.

Raising awareness, providing training and developing knowledge around the theme of quality are the basic ingredients of a quality culture development. This action aims to promote standards and quality through sensitization and training programs targeting quality institutions, value chain actors such as SMEs/MSMEs and business support institutions, professional organizations, consumer unions etc. It is further envisaged to organize regional quality awards promoting the performance of champion SMEs/MSMEs in VCs, building on the success of similar past initiatives, correlated to the 16 national Awards and aligned with the Continental Award for quality in VCs (heavily involving Consumer Associations and employers' organizations for sustainability purposes); and through other target actions in support of Consumer Unions, employers' organizations, industry quality associations, network of journalists etc. Opportunities for systematic integration of the gender specific dimension in the proposed activities will be identified and promoted.

UNIDO will assess the overall state of development of countries' and the region's Quality Infrastructure (QI) readiness to support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), using the Quality Infrastructure for Sustainable Development (QI4SD) Index. The QI4SD Index analyses QI from five dimensions — standardization, metrology, accreditation, conformity assessment and policy — and maps out indicators for each that are linked to the three pillars of sustainable development, namely people, prosperity, and planet. The “Culture for Quality” on-line tool (C4Q) will be used to identify potential gaps in the values,

behaviours and actions of the various influencers within the selected value chains to ensure an appropriate quality culture throughout the value chain. Implemented at different points in time, these tools can measure progress at national/regional level and inform about the impact of interventions.

The expected impact is to ensure that QI institutions, business support associations and enterprises within the selected value chains embrace a culture for quality, are convinced of the benefits of continual quality improvements and committed to engage into quality management, appropriation of continental or regional harmonized standards and resort to testing and certification services in order to expand their markets, create value and jobs and contribute to an inclusive and sustainable industrial development and shared prosperity.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities:

- 1.2.8.1 Assessment the maturity level of QI in ECOWAS member states' through the SDGs Quality Infrastructure for Sustainable Development (QI4SD) Index and identification of areas of improvement and mutual learning.
- 1.2.8.2 Identification of additional culture for quality (C4Q) interventions in support to the awareness raising and promotion of the EU Green deal, notably those related to green technologies, circular economy, energy efficiency, critical raw materials (CRMs), biodiversity, finance and other climate-neutral areas within each selected value chain.
- 1.2.8.3 Identification of key quality issues related to value chains and raise awareness of these issues among key players.
- 1.2.8.4 Raising awareness among MSMEs through communications and visibility campaigns on the importance of the regional standards in view of their implementation in VC products.
- 1.2.8.5 Identification and train of a network of journalists interested in specific topics of quality.
- 1.2.8.6 Support Employer Organizations (EO) and Regional Business Organizations (CO) to offer Quality promotion services to VC MSMEs aimed at improving productivity and competitiveness.
- 1.2.8.7 Supporting the updating of the regional quality and industry database (ECOQUIB) to consider data relating to the identified value chains.
- 1.2.8.8 Supporting the administration of the regional data base in a view to updating the features, to better liaise with national focal points and to ensure its sustainability and promotion.
- 1.2.8.9 Supporting the organization of the ECOWAS Quality Award by involving VC actors, Consumer Unions/associations and employers' organizations.
- 1.2.8.10 Supporting ECOWAQ to develop and implement a sustainability process for Regional Quality Award.

Activity: 1.2.9 Rapid Response Facility for country interventions

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, ECOWAS Member States

Acknowledging that the above-mentioned activities will make the main contribution to the development of regional and national QI systems and services, it is however likely that it would further strengthen national capacities if the programme could also address small ad-hoc needs of individual countries that would not be tackled through regional activities. The facility is designed to address one to two short term targeted interventions per country for a typical amount not exceeding EUR 30,000. The interventions should contribute to the overall objectives of the regional action and allow the country to better benefit from the regional programme.

QI institutions in the ECOWAS member states will be called upon to submit small transformative project proposals to the Programme. With the support of the PMU, a committee chaired by ECOWAS Commission will be established to review and decide what project gets funded. Prior to that decisions, selection criteria and key impact indicators will be established and agreed upon.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities:

- 1.2.9.1 Call for project proposals to Member States in the area of QI for their priority value chains.
- 1.2.9.2 Establishment of technical committee to assess the proposals
- 1.2.9.3 Prioritization and selection of national projects for implementation.

OUTPUT 1.3 VALUE-CHAIN REVISION MECHANISM FACILITATED

Sector performance is largely a function of coordination of the links and interactions between multiple actors in a value chain and the ability of these actors to respond to market dynamics. Regional and national institutions tend to implement numerous projects and initiatives that contribute to value chain development. Yet ensuring a coherent and coordinated implementation remains a key challenge and often tools needed to monitor regional efficiency of the action are missing.

The objective of the action will be to ensure that value chains that are pre-selected (based on consultations among stakeholders and also based on ITC's tools) are relevant for intra and extra-regional trade (e.g. trade between the ECOWAS region and EU) and that there is a coherence across the value chains selected at the ECOWAS level in terms of approaches and interventions. The outcomes of the pre-selection of regional value chains to be led by ITC will inform the work to be carried out by UNIDO under output 1.2 and 2.1.

In addition, under this output, a regional value chain revision mechanism will be put in place with a view to create a platform to exchange, share information and best practices among value chains actors, and to develop synergies and complementarities with continental value chains prioritize under the "Continental" umbrella of the ATCMA Programme.

Baseline: Development and implementation of the West Africa Competitiveness Observatory; WACOMP Strategic Steering Committee and VC thematic meetings organized by the ECOWAS Commission

Support to regional coordination: Ensure the ECOWAS Commission capacity to: lead the organization of yearly value chain thematic sessions (for instance, on the heel of the Programme Strategic Steering Committee); mobilizing ECOWAS national focal points to gather information on national strategy documents and programmes to feed regional repositories; establish a team to monitor the tools developed by the action and capable to maintain the VCRM beyond the programme duration.

Activity 1.3.1: Trade intelligence for the identification and monitoring of VC with intra and extra regional export potential has been scaled up

Lead: ITC

Key partners: Regional research institutes; National statistical offices; ECOWAS TPO Network; ECOWAS Business Council; RBAs; AIPAWAS

The activity aims to analyse in further depth the VC shortlisted in order to inform the final choice of the priority value chains to be selected and promoted under this programme. The analysis will focus on trade data and export potential, and complement it, where possible, with already available and harmonized data on value addition and diversification, environmental impact and sustainability, the potential for inclusion of marginalized groups (women and youth), implications for job creation (including for women and youth) and other aspects of sustainable growth. This activity will build upon

the WACOMP implementation (incl. the WACOB VC selection process), preliminary value chain screening and stakeholder discussions carried out in the programme preparation phase to identify value chains of high potential for ECOWAS countries, and complement the work done at the continental level for value chain integration within Africa at large. Key market leaders and sector experts in the VC selected will be consulted to review the main findings of the data analysis. The action will also provide the ECOWAS Commission with the tools and knowledge needed to replicate similar VC selection exercise and better monitor trade and market intelligence data available in the region.

Expected deliverables of the activity: ECOWAS Commission and member states have a greater understanding of the target value chain structure from a trade flow point of view and of its export potential and regional integration opportunities; WACOB information feeds into the ECOWAS VCRM and facilitate the adoption of data driven policy action.

Sustainability of the activity: Automation of data update procedures will reduce future maintenance cost of the WACOB; The training and equipment of a Competitiveness Intelligence Unit within the ECOWAS Commission is supposed to improve coordination and usage of trade intelligence information at the regional level and also ensure replicability of the VC shortlisting process adopted.

Linkages with other Outputs: The value chain scan will provide background information to guide the development of value chain roadmaps/strategies (**Output 2.1**) and both products will be used as inputs by the VCRM sessions and deliberations (**Output 1.3**).

Sub-activity 1.3.1.1: VC Scan and identification of 2-3 VCs for programme selection

This sub-activity aims to provide the ECOWAS Commission and Member states with the needed trade intelligence in order to make informed decision about the selection of the programme VC. Tasks might include:

- Further narrow down shortlisted VC for value addition, diversification and export promotion and detail their structure (through specific HS codes)
- Indicate countries that can contribute (through intermediary inputs and final outputs) to the selected value chains, considering the potential interdependence with other regional and continental VCs
- Use the WACOB methodology to assess the competitiveness performance of the selected value chains and the competitiveness drivers in the participating countries. The assessment of additional competitiveness parameters beyond trade indicators, as potential of the value chains for job creation (including for women and youth), sustainable growth, economic development, trade integration, value addition and diversification will be conducted in selected countries for which data are available
- Conduct a gender-based analysis of priority VCs, leveraging on existing quantitative and qualitative data, to guide the necessary action to ensure gender responsive approaches throughout the programme activities
- Leverage existing survey data to understand key constraints of businesses in the selected value chains and conduct consultations with selected stakeholders to fill gaps
- Conduct interviews with key regional and international buyers, sector experts, market leaders and investors to confirm the relevance of the VC identified through the VC Scan, leveraging on and in close coordination with the exchange platforms set by **Activity 1.3.3**
- Include additional VC selected by the programme to the WACOB (if applicable)

Sub-activity 1.3.1.2: Support the creation of a competitive intelligence unit and network to maintain and exploit the WACOB for trade and investment policy decision making.

This sub-activity aims to support the creation of a competitive intelligence unit within the ECOWAS Commission to fully operationalize the West Africa Competitiveness Observatory (WACOB) with a view to consolidate and manage the various dedicated trade information tools created for the ECOWAS

region. Synergies will be sought with other ongoing initiatives as the African Trade Observatory (which already has dedicated funds for the training of ECOWAS staff), to ensure that support to the ECOWAS Commission in relation to trade data analysis will be channelled in a consistent way to the prospective members of the competitive intelligence unit, in close coordination with the ECOWAS Commission. This action will contribute to further inform regional partners and beneficiaries (ECOWAS TPO Network, ECOWAS business Council, RBAs, IPAs etc.) about opportunities and challenges related to the selected VCs. Tasks might include:

- Develop in partnership with the ECOWAS Commission the ToR of the Competitive Intelligence Unit
- Assess the equipment and expertise needs of up of the ECOWAS statistical and IT related staff to make use and update information on the WACOB, by conducting joint data update exercises
- Conduct ToT for the Competitive Intelligence Unit to leverage information from the WACOB and other relevant trade intelligence sources for policy advisory;
- Automate to the extent possible the data compilation, processing and quality check steps and prepare programmes and documentation for handover to the Competitive Intelligence Unit (incl. tasks and costs involved);
- Conduct an assessment of statistical needs of national and regional institutions, in close collaboration with the ECOWAS Research and Statistics Directorate, and roll out dedicated individual remote coaching programme on needs identified to maintain the WACOB (incl. on data compilation, quality and management for trade and other indicators feeding the WACOB);
- Launch an awareness raising campaign for West African universities and research institutes to enhance the usage of the WACOB.

Sub-activity 1.3.1.3: Support the consolidation of ECOWAS regional databases on trade intelligence.

This sub-activity aims to capitalize on the trade intelligence already available and facilitate its accessibility to ECOWAS users through a more integrated approach. The action will primarily rely on the ECOWAS Trade and Information System (ECOTIS) as a basis to further strengthen trade and market intelligence data consolidation in the region. Tasks might include:

- Identifying with the ECOWAS Commission options to improve accessibility, complementarity and an effective consolidation of existing regional trade and value chains information portals;
- Providing advisory services and technical guidance on the presentation of informal cross border trade data (collected by regional and national organizations) to complement official trade statistics;
- Implementing selected actions that can be maintained by the ECOWAS Commission and other regional partners, for instance through the creation of a dashboard on the ECOWAS website to serve as an entry point to relevant portals; guidelines on how to consult effectively available trade intelligence databases; a consolidated online list of useful websites; etc.)

Activity 1.3.2: Demand analysis studies to inform key capacity building interventions have been developed

Lead: ITC

Key partners: National/regional BSOs, ECOWAS TPO Network; AIPAWAS, IPA from ECOWAS Member States.

The objective is to identify specific intermediary inputs, final outputs and promising destination markets on which export and investment attraction action should focus on, in relation to the targeted VCs. Key tasks will include:

- Analysis of product /market combinations are identified and use to prepare the demand analysis that will inform about the market destination requirements.
- Preparation of demand/market studies to provide key information on the demand side in priority market destinations (identified under **Activity 1.3.1**), incl. market access conditions, voluntary standards, and marketing requirements for detailed products within the selected value chains. Interviews to consumers' associations and lead buyers and distributors in target markets will be also included, where relevant (i.e. depending on the value chains and sub products as some might not be at destination of consumers directly), to have a better picture of the demand gaps and opportunities identified.

Expected deliverables of the activity: Demand analyses completed for selected products.

Sustainability of the activity: Partners of the action have been involved in the design of the market studies.

Linkages with other Outputs: The activity will build on the findings of the VC scan and information on technology, value added, diversification and sustainability provided by other components of the programme (**Output 2.1**). Selling points of the ECOWAS target VC that will be promoted through the action will have to be updated based on the achievements made in relation to value addition and productive capacity under **Output 2.1**. The activity will also guide the other activities under Output 2.2.

Activity 1.3.3: A Regional VCRM has been established and operationalized

Lead: ITC

Key partners: Regional and national sectoral association (in target VC); ECOWAS TPO; AIPAWAS; Key market players in selected VC; RBAs (FEWACCI, FEBWE, FWAEA; WACTAF).

The VCRM will allow to: a) providing information on advancements made by the region in selected value chains by consolidating findings from different data sources; b) sharing expertise and best practices; c) facilitating opportunities for networking and collaborations among value chain actors as well as development partners.

The mechanism will be operated by a network of value chain actors and relevant public and private sector institutions (establishing and convening working group meetings, submitting reviews containing recommendations to the project steering committee meetings) and will be supported by the trade and market intelligence tools developed through the WACOMP programme (i.e., West Africa Competitiveness Observatory, ECOTIS Trade Map, Trade Obstacles Alert Mechanism, etc.) and other ECOWAS databases (ECOTIS; ECOQUIB; ECOAgris; ECO-IBCT).

The VCRM will feed and strengthen the overall governance and coordination of the EU Africa Trade Competitiveness and Market Access Programme, as it will provide information, analysis, and stakeholder engagement needed to successfully implement, monitor the overall programme. The new mechanism will provide an opportunity to develop clear linkages between the ECOWAS Chapter of the ATCMA and the continental umbrella programme and to allow more synergies and complementarities between interventions at all levels.

Expected deliverables of the activity: The establishment of a sustainable mechanism to inform regional and national stakeholders about challenges and opportunities existing in target value chains and ensure coordinated action has been facilitated.

Sustainability of the activity: The ToR, methodology, list of contacts and repositories of information on VC regional and national initiative established, will be handled as tools to the ECOWAS Commission and regional partners in to maintain and replicate the action on other VCs.

Linkages with other Outputs: The activity will be informed by the market barriers mapping (**Activity 1.1.1**) and the value chain scan (**Activity 1.3.1**), which will set a baseline for the revision mechanism, and continuously informed by the work conducted in relation to the development of RVC implementation roadmaps and strategies (**Output 2.1**). Identification of key actors that will contribute to the RVCM, will be informed by WACOMP findings (for same target VC) and the results of the work strategies and roadmap conducted under **Output 2.1**.

Sub-activity 1.3.3.1: VCRM TORs and methodologies have been developed and/or strengthened.

In cooperation with public and private sector stakeholders, the Terms of Reference and methodology for an ECOWAS Value Chains Revision Mechanism (VCRM) will be crafted. The TORs will include the selection criteria for key actors contributing to the VCRM. The selection process will contribute to further recommendations on potential partners to be considered for the implementation of the ECOWAS ATCMA programme.

Sub-activity 1.3.3.2: A customized repository of information on existing regional and national strategies and initiatives on selected value chain has been developed.

A customized online interactive repository of data on regional and national VC initiatives will be designed to allow nominated stakeholder to collect and monitor information on selected VCs. The digital tool will build on existing information and monitoring tools already developed by the ECOWAS and its member States. ITC will emphasize on the accessibility and sustainability of the tool after the end of the ATCMA Action.

- Tailoring of ITC Strategy Implementation Management Tool (SIMT) to the specific needs of the ECOWAS regional value chain revision mechanism;
- Training of regional and national officers on utilisation of the tool;
- Establishment of Focal points in lead implementing agencies for regular updates on activities implemented in the selected Value Chains;
- Capacity-building on data extraction and reporting through the mechanism.

Sub-activity 1.3.3.3: Yearly VCRM thematic meetings have been organized and work plans developed and monitored.

A (3) three-year value chain Work Plan (different from the value chains roadmaps to be developed by UNIDO under output 2.1) for each priority value chain, with clear annual priorities, to guide the work of the ECOWAS Value Chains Revision Mechanism (VCRM) will be developed. The Work Plan will help discuss and address issues related to the VCs ecosystem, market connexions, investment priorities..... For further alignment, the WP will also take into account the specific actions recommended in the VCs roadmaps to be developed by UNIDO under Output 2.1.

Sub-activity 1.3.3.4: Support and advocate for the participation of women and youth association in the VCRM.

This sub-activity aims to develop a gender mainstreaming approach for the VCRM and formulate practical recommendations for private and public sector stakeholders to ensure equal value chain participation and upgrading opportunities for women and youth (including in supply chains, out growers' schemes, employment practices and service delivery). The task covered might include:

- Ensuring the inclusion of a gender and a youth focal point within the VCRM, in consultation with the ECOWAS Gender Centre and the ECOWAS Youth and Sports Development Centre (EYSDC)
- Supporting the contribution of the gender and youth focal points within the VCRM, through the preparation of relevant documentation on gender and youth inclusion for the target VC

OUTPUT 2.1 ENHANCED VALUE ADDITION AND DIVERSIFICATION

Numerous challenges remain for enterprises in West Africa, in particular SMEs, to thrive and access regional and international markets. Improving the export competitiveness of SMEs and their connection to regional and global VCs requires a favourable environment. The output 2.1 will aim to strengthen the VCs ecosystem in order to raise SMEs export potential in the high value-added segments of priority VCs and to help them penetrate new markets.

In this regard, the Program will promote:

- Services and tools to boost the export of SMEs
- Relevant institutions/technical centres promoting the development of priority VCs
- Digital production and innovation ecosystem along priority VCs
- The capacities of SMEs, particularly through collaborative initiatives/networks/clusters, upgrading and technological development and technology transfer in priority VCs
- Industrial skills for the sustainable development of priority VCs
- Low-carbon transformation throughout CVPs
- Access to innovative financing and investment solutions

To this end, the program's interventions within the framework of output 2.1 will be structured around seven mutually supportive outputs. An additional output will also cover a number of interventions at the country level through an ad-hoc facility.

Collectively, these concerted efforts are expected to allow manufacturing companies operating in the priority VCs of the ECOWAS region to be better equipped, supported and linked together to meet the standards and requirements of intra-regional (ECOWAS), inter-regional (Africa) and international (notably with the EU) markets, thus contributing to the economic growth of the region while enhancing social equity and improving environment sustainability with diversified and upgraded value chains and a strong future-proof business ecosystem.

Activity: 2.1.1 Capacity building for the development of green, circular, and climate-neutral value chain policies, strategies and institutions supported

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, Ministries of Energy and Industry, energy and environment Agencies, regional sustainable energy centers, national utilities and regional power pools, energy regulators.

The ECOWAS region stands at a pivotal juncture in its industrial development journey. It seeks to embrace a transformative agenda that prioritizes green, circular, and climate-neutral value chain policies and strategies. This ambition aligns with the global sustainable development goals and the

implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and is imperative for fostering long-term economic resilience, ensuring environmental sustainability, and generating inclusive economic growth.

The aspired economic growth and industrialization in the ECOWAS region is expected to result in a significant increase in the demand for energy. In order to be able to meet this demand, a circular and net zero motivated transformation of the industrial sector together with investments in relevant energy and environment infrastructure is required, with clean technologies at the forefront. An integrated industrial, climate and energy policy planning is aspired to increase economic growth with limited environmental impact and strengthen critical value chains through access to sustainable and affordable energy services. There is need to address the existing demand- and supply-side barriers for the adoption of clean technology products and services within the ECOWAS region.

Through strengthening inclusive regional policies, regulations, standards and approaches to address the barriers jointly, ensure equal progress and reach economies of scale. A low carbon and circular approach for critical local value chains is essential in view of limiting the environmental impact, while strengthening the competitiveness of products and services traded in the local and international markets. Moreover, a just energy transition requires approaches which empower local companies to participate in the emerging global value chains of clean energy product manufacturing and servicing. Clean technologies are instrumental for the energy transition to boost local industrial development through access to reliable and sustainable energy services in the ECOWAS region. At the same time, clean technology value chains are underdeveloped in the region and bear a high potential for improved local manufacturing of technologies and components together with the strengthening of the local servicing sector. The region is rich in raw materials and has large reserves of critical minerals which are important for increased local cleantech manufacturing. In this moment, clean technologies and services are largely imported, and the local added value in terms of jobs and revenues remains low. The development of these sectors furthermore holds a high potential for partnerships with European industry partners.

This activity aims to facilitate the establishment of an enhanced regional integrated industry-energy-climate policy framework which is conducive to strengthening the resilience and competitiveness of critical value chains, including the cleantech manufacturing and servicing sector, through circularity approaches and increased access to sustainable and affordable energy. In that context, this activity aims to support the development and adoption of green, circular, resilient and climate-neutral policies, strategies and actions within the ECOWAS region and its member states, while supporting relevant institutions in order to bring transformative impacts across various key value chains.

To achieve this ambitious objective, the action will deliver tailored capacity building on green, circular and resilient inclusive policies and strategies to regional and national value chains supporting actors and policymakers. Capacity building is vital to ensure that policies are grounded in the regional context and have the buy-in from all relevant stakeholders. Empowering policymakers with knowledge and tools will facilitate the effective design, adoption and enforcement of these policies within critical value chains in ECOWAS.

It aims to strengthen the quality infrastructure for clean technology for the energy transition focusing on renewable energy technologies and high performing energy efficiency technologies, and will leverage innovations in industrial processes for greenfield and brownfield investments to keep the region's carbon footprint low and increase the productivity of locally produced products. Particular focus will be given to sustainable energy solutions for industrial spaces (industrial parks, agro parks, special economic zones) which serve as a hub for industrial activities. Such Low carbon industrial spaces are important to the development of competitive and sustainable key value chains in the ECOWAS region. They are hubs of innovation and economic activity, and guiding their development with sustainability in mind can lead to substantial environmental and economic benefits.

Effective regional support will be provided to enhance net-zero motivated energy planning, with targets reflected in the countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).¹⁶ Support will be provided to establish a knowledge sharing platform through the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE), offering direct support to governments and private sector. It is expected that there will also be an increase in private sector investments in energy projects, which will boost energy access and will enable inclusive and sustainable industrialization.

This activity will also support the promotion of technology transfer to advance green development of ECOWAS priority value chains, by raising awareness of interested stakeholders with the support of UNIDO Investment and Technology Promotion Offices (ITPOs), and by fostering agreements and partnerships with continental and European actors as well as global institutions. Technology transfer is essential for leapfrogging to more sustainable production processes, reducing the environmental footprint, and increasing efficiency.

Finally, access to renewable energy, resource efficiency and clean production services will be improved, which is essential for enhancing sustainable industrial growth, reducing operational costs, and minimizing environmental impact of productive activities in key ECOWAS value chains.

The expected results of this activity are (i) an increased capacity of ECOWAS and Member States in developing, enhancing and implementing green, circular and climate neutral policies and strategies within selected value chains, (ii) the development and promotion of green and circular models/initiatives for selected VCs at ECOWAS and national levels, (iii) the development of models for Low carbon and Industrial Spaces to support inclusive and sustainable industrial development, and (iv) strengthened stakeholder engagement and partnerships for the transfer of green technologies driving sustainable and climate-neutral practices in the selected VCs.

Ultimately, the expected impact is a supporting environment where enterprises, especially SMEs, can innovate and adapt to new sustainable practices, fostering economic resilience and efficiency. This shift promises significant environmental benefits, including climate change mitigation, energy transition to renewables, clean production and enhanced ecosystem protection.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities:

2.1.1.1 Enhancing regional integrated industry-energy-climate policy framework and capacities conducive to strengthening the resilience and competitiveness of critical value chains

- Assess the policy and regulatory framework and provide recommendations for enhanced integrated policies to accelerate investments in low carbon and circular technologies and practices
- Support enhanced regionally harmonised standards and regulations for energy efficiency and circularity approaches building on existing regional and continental initiatives in collaboration with ECREEE.
- Strengthen the capacities of regional/national institutions on drafting and/or revising policies and strategies focused on mainstreaming green, circular, energy efficient and climate-neutral practices within each selected value chain in the ECOWAS region.
- Advocate for and assist in the development of policy frameworks that encourage inclusivity and support the empowerment of underrepresented groups in selected value chains and related industrial sub-sectors.

¹⁶ “[A]n NDC, or Nationally Determined Contribution, is a climate action plan to cut emissions and adapt to climate impacts. Each Party to the Paris Agreement is required to establish an NDC and update it every five years.” <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/all-about-ndcs>

- Collaborate with ECREEE and further regional institutions on capacity building to mainstream sustainable energy and resource efficient solutions as a mean to lower high energy costs and losses along critical value chains.

2.1.1.2 Technical support to regional and national stakeholders/policymakers on Sustainable Energy and Resource Efficient solutions for Positive Energy Industrial Spaces development

- Assess the current landscape and perspectives related to sustainable energy and resource efficient solutions for Industrial Spaces in the ECOWAS region, with clear focus on added-value for priority ECOWAS value chains. The assessment will also include an evaluation of the potential of “Positive Energy Industrial Spaces” where embedded Renewable Energy generation is promoted for own consumption and surplus electricity being provided to nearby communities (or selling it to the grid were available).
- Enhance the regional framework for sustainable energy and resource efficient solutions for Industrial Spaces in view of promoting the ECO Industrial park model with a focus on enhancing sustainable energy solutions for Industrial Spaces and their role in promoting green value chains in the ECOWAS region, including a roadmap with clear action plan and milestones.
- Promote public-private partnerships (PPPs) to develop effective models for Sustainable Energy resource efficient solutions in Industrial Spaces, leveraging both public oversight and private sector efficiency and innovation.
- Conduct technical workshops with key regional and national stakeholders aiming at disseminating guidelines for the development of eco-Eco-Industrial Spaces that prioritize low carbon, energy efficient and circularity principles along selected value chains (e.g.: integrate energy efficiency into production activities, encourage the development of industrial symbiosis among businesses, utilize waste as a resource, etc.).

2.1.1.3 Facilitating access to renewable energy, improving resource efficiency and clean production services and promoting technology transfer

- Strengthen the institutional capacities of the ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) to mainstream renewable energy, energy efficiency and resource efficient practices along priority value chains of ECOWAS, including those related to sustainable energy product manufacturing and servicing.
- Promote technology transfer to advance green development of ECOWAS priority value chains by providing information and advice to interested stakeholders in ECOWAS countries regarding opportunities for transfer of technology and knowhow related to sustainable/green industrial development with the support of UNIDO Investment and Technology Promotion Offices (ITPOs).
- Support ECREEE to establish the ECOWAS angle of BLOOM Regional Cleantech Cluster Program under the Global Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centres (GN-SEC) program, which provides advice and technical assistance for the creation of cluster hubs in Member States (providing a makerspace for businesses, corporates, applied science, public institutions to work on innovative cleantech solutions).
- Foster agreements and partnerships for the transfer of green technologies from the continent and Europe as well as global institutions to enterprises operating in the priority value chains of the ECOWAS region.

Activity: 2.1.2 Future-proof industrial ecosystem of ECOWAS region promoted

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, ECOWAS Member States, FEWACCI, private sector organizations and other relevant stakeholders.

This activity will focus on future-proofing the industrial ecosystem of the ECOWAS region through two main channels: the development of strategic plans/roadmaps for priority VCs at the regional level, and support for enhancing the digital production and innovation ecosystem along ECOWAS priority VCs.

On one hand, the action aims to prepare regional plans/strategies for the development of selected VCs. In particular, the regional plans and roadmaps will include clear and realistic action plans aiming to address the required enabling environment, the necessary support infrastructure, resources efficiency and green/circular industry requirements (considering the trade related sustainability requirements benchmarking tool developed by ITC), the likely industry leaders/captains championing priority value chains, possible funding sources and gender considerations. The strategies/plans will also consider critical requirements and initiatives to accelerate the digital transformation of priority VCs in ECOWAS with emphasis on capabilities and infrastructure aiming at boosting technology and innovation. The development of plans/roadmaps will be informed by critical inputs generated by the value chain analysis/mapping conducted under output 1.3 (Activities under this activity will transform the conclusions of the value chain analysis/mapping into concrete and realistic plans/roadmaps). During this exercise, the action will mobilize key ECOWAS VC actors (ECOWAS Commission, Member States, private sector, manufacturers, public sector, financial mechanisms, support institutions, etc.) through extensive consultations.

On the other hand, and taking into consideration the accelerating technological advancement pace at the global level, this activity will strengthen the digital production and innovation ecosystem along priority VCs, ultimately accelerating digital transformation and fostering the progression of Industry 4.0 and smart manufacturing in the ECOWAS region. A solid digital production and innovation ecosystem is crucial for enterprises to modernize, remain competitive in the context of the fourth industrial revolution, and meet the requirements of regional and international markets. The promotion of digital and innovative solutions/tools combined with the application of Industry 4.0 technologies (AI, robotics, IoT, blockchain, etc.) within manufacturing companies is highly needed in ECOWAS countries and can significantly enhance operational efficiency, improve processes, optimize supply chains, enable data-driven decision-making and reduce environmental impact in priority value chains. In that regard, digital/tech centres and innovation hubs can play a fundamental role in finding and providing technological solutions, thereby driving enterprise modernization and innovation across key ECOWAS sectors/value chains. In addition, universities and research centres are essential for advancing applied research and fostering innovation that can meet the direct needs of the value chains. Strengthening the linkage between academic research and industry needs is key to fostering innovation and the development of new, market-responsive products and technologies.

It is envisioned that proposed activities related to digital transformation will be implemented in partnership with the UNIDO-led think-tank “Alliance for Industry 4.0 and Smart Manufacturing in Africa” (AISMA) to build up on the existing experts’ network, expertise, resources and action plan/roadmap. Moreover, this activity could be supported by recognized European partners in the area of digital transformation and smart manufacturing, such as Deutsche Messe Technology Academy (DMTA) of the Deutsche Messe AG, Swiss Smart Factory of Switzerland Innovation Park Biel, Festo Didactic, the International Centre for Industrial Transformation (INCIT), MyliveZone AG, etc.

The expected results of this activity are (i) the development and endorsement of regional plans/roadmaps for each selected VC by ECOWAS and its Member States, focusing on aspects of competitiveness, sustainability, inclusiveness (emphasizing women and youth) and digital transformation, and (ii) an enhanced digital production ecosystem offering customized technology solutions to the enterprises across selected VCs, thus supporting modernization and innovation.

Ultimately, the expected impact is a clear and common direction for competitive, sustainable, inclusive and digitalised priority value chains for all relevant stakeholders in the ECOWAS region, including a more effective allocation of resources and clear/targeted interventions that will allow to catalyse systemic changes within priority VCs, leading to value addition and diversification. Moreover, trade competitiveness of enterprises within selected VCs is expected to be improved through an upgraded digital production and innovation ecosystem.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities:

2.1.2.1 Development of roadmaps for strategic value chains (linked to output 1.3)

- Organize regional workshops with key value chains stakeholders and policymakers to discuss the results of the value chain analysis/mapping conducted under output 1.3 and agree on the best approach for transforming the analysis of priority value chains into actionable and effective strategies and plans.
- Develop regional plans/roadmaps for each selected regional value chain considering competitiveness, sustainability, inclusiveness (including women and youth) and digitalization aspects.
- Organize validation workshops with key value chains stakeholders and policymakers and support advocacy efforts on the importance of the validated strategies/roadmaps among Member States and regional stakeholders.

2.1.2.2 Strengthening the digital production and innovation ecosystem along ECOWAS priority value chains, in coordination with ATMAP continental and regional components

- Conduct awareness raising/capacity building actions to disseminate information on Industry 4.0 concepts and real-world applications and connect ECOWAS stakeholders so that they can share and co-create solutions that contribute to the smart and sustainable industrialization of selected priority value chains in West Africa.
- Develop partnerships between innovation hubs, digital centres, and enterprises in ECOWAS priority value chains aiming at identifying and adopting efficient technological solutions.
- Implement/develop digital transformation initiatives, platforms and tools, such as a value chain transparency mechanism and tracking indicators related for sustainability and climate management across priority value chains to enhance operational efficiency and market integration.
- Launch innovation challenges and hackathons in collaboration with digital centres to stimulate creative solutions for industry/value chain-specific problems.
- Provide capacity building to relevant value chains stakeholders in the area of supply chain transparency and traceability for selected products (readiness assessment, stakeholders consultations, support to design data management systems and software, etc.).
- Foster collaborative research projects, joint R&D and technology transfer initiatives/processes between ECOWAS universities, research centres and industrial/production ecosystems that align with the demands of the selected value chains.

Activity: 2.1.3 Clusters and other collaborative initiatives (networks) at the ECOWAS countries' value chains promoted

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, Cluster representatives, Chambers of Commerce and private sector associations, national Ministries of Industry, Trade, Agriculture (depending on the selected value chains and national contexts).

This activity will focus on future-proofing the industrial ecosystem of the ECOWAS region through two main channels: the development of strategic plans/roadmaps for priority VCs at the regional level, and support for enhancing the digital production and innovation ecosystem along ECOWAS priority VCs.

This activity aims at promoting and strengthening collaborative initiatives (such as processing hubs), networks, and clusters for collective efficiency, skills development, knowledge exchange, reduced post-harvest losses, collective storage and production facilities and services, adoption of green technologies, access to finance, and, ultimately, competitiveness and improved market access.

Specific initiatives and actions will strengthen national capacities to support and promote cluster development as well as promote collaboration/partnership mechanisms and the exchange of best practices (at regional, continental and international level) to accelerate learning and the adoption of successful practices and models across the ECOWAS region.

In particular, the activity will strengthen the linkages between MSMEs and promote an enhanced collaborative environment between MSMEs in the value chains and their support institutions and wider institutional environment (including academia, governmental institutions, sectoral associations, quality infrastructure services, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and financial institutions), so that MSMEs can reduce post-harvest losses, increase their capacities to meet market requirements and to access innovative and greener technologies, and improve products and production processes. In addition, the activity will engage value chains/industry leaders to encourage the application of best practices across all relevant actors in addressing common challenges.

The expected results of this activity are (i) an enhanced knowledge of how to develop and support cluster initiatives across private and public stakeholders of the ECOWAS region, (ii) an enhanced efficiency and cooperation dynamics among VC actors with specific initiatives introduced and mobilized, (iii) SME networks and clusters strengthened and promoted to facilitate innovation, knowledge sharing and joint problem-solving, and (iv) the development of collective initiatives and improved storage and production facilities/systems to reduce post-harvest losses and improve market access.

Ultimately, the expected impact is a more interconnected and cooperative framework in ECOWAS selected priority VCs with well-established collaborative platforms and strong networks allowing actors in the value chains and support institutions and partners to harness collective strengths and resources. Moreover, this activity will lead to increased knowledge of best practices in cluster development in the region, thus contributing to the sustainability of positive impacts and possible duplication outside the programme scope.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities:

2.1.3.1 Training, knowledge sharing, exchanging and promoting of best practices

- Design and establish digital and offline tools and platforms for knowledge, technology and best practice sharing among selected value chain actors to promote cluster development and collective efficiency.
- Support the development of a regional clusters' strategy
- Provide trainings (e.g. workshops and seminars) to build/develop capacity of relevant value chains stakeholders on collaborative and cooperative approaches, emphasizing gender and inclusion.
- Organize study tours and Expert Group Meetings to showcase successful clusters and collaborative projects to ensure green growth, value-addition and collective efficiency from Europe and Africa, to promote best practices and fostering business partnerships and collaborations between enterprises from the two continents.
- Engage cluster leaders/champions within the selected value chains to encourage the application of best practices among all relevant actors in addressing common challenges (product development, preparation of bankable investment proposals, solutions to logistical/distribution barriers, etc.).
- Linked to activity 2.1.3.2, dissemination of clusters success stories and best practices to the other ECOWAS countries

2.1.3.2 Providing of technical assistance to SMEs clusters and networks

- Through a call for proposal, identification of clusters in priority value chains focusing on potential for value addition, diversification, competitive advantage, market access, availability of support institutions and sectorial associations to ensure project results sustainability, potential for duplication to other ECOWAS countries, women economic empowerment, etc.
- Selection of the pilot clusters for direct technical assistance and twinning and best practices exchange established whenever possible with similar clusters in the ECOWAS region.

Activity: 2.1.4 Regional Centres of Excellence and agro-industrial park development capacities strengthened to support priority value chains

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, Academic and Research Institutions, Member States, Regional and International Financial Institutional, private sector

In the ECOWAS region, the development and upgrading of strong and sustainable value chains is contingent upon the solid foundation provided by regional and national institutions and centres. These entities serve as the backbone for workforce upskilling, innovation, technology transfer and product development/diversification, that are essential to foster competitive local and regional value chains and facilitate access to markets. Equipping these entities with the necessary skills, tools, and frameworks, including focusing on green and circular approaches as well as inclusiveness, is critical for ensuring that the industrial growth is both inclusive and sustainable.

In that context, this activity aims to capacitate a number of regional and national centres and institutions to support the development of ECOWAS priority value chains through developing regional capacity for agro-park development and centres of excellence, including packaging.

Ultimately, the expected impact is a solid institutional framework at regional and national level conducive to the development and upgrading of competitive and sustainable priority value chains.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities:

2.1.4.1 Regional capacity enhancement for agro-park development and regulation

Technical interventions will support the ECOWAS Commission and regional entities take a leading role in the identifying and developing opportunities for agro-food park development and operations within the sub-region. The interventions complement the Common African Agro-Parks (CAAPs) initiative, a flagship programme of the African Union under its Agenda 2063, and its aim to boost private sector investments in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). As part of agro-park related activities, the following activities aim to build a regional reservoir of expertise to facilitate agro-industrial development, value chain upgrading and agro-food park development.

Interventions will address capacity building at the regional level to upgrade expertise for policy analysis, evaluation, stakeholder engagement, and decision-making processes, to enhance uniformity across the sub-region.

- Industrial policy targets and policy performance criteria will be developed and defined; and examine means to support transparency and accountability in the policy review process by making relevant information, data, and findings publicly available, including mechanisms for publishing reports, conducting public consultations, and soliciting feedback from stakeholders and making the information available at the regional level.
- Agro-food park concept, experiences and lessons learned workshops to allow policy makers to critically analyze agro-industrial contexts to assess the suitability of parks to meet agreed development objectives.
- Identifying how agro-parks can reduce food waste, reduce GHG emissions, and incentivise climate-smart farming practices (adaptation and mitigation) within their supply chains.
- Training programs and workshops delivered for REC-level officials and lead ministries officials to support the preparation of feasibility studies at the country level and inter-State level.
- Pre-investment studies assess the viability of an agro-park.
- Training programs and workshops for public sector officials involved in private-public partnership (PPP) projects, covering aspects such as project appraisal, risk management, contract negotiation, and project monitoring; and establishing a regional level platform for sharing best practices, lessons learned, and case studies of successful PPP projects. Interventions can take place via conferences, workshops, and an online portal dedicated to PPP knowledge sharing and peer-to-peer learning exchanges.
- Market intelligence and research capabilities to identify investment opportunities, understand market trends, and assess the competitive landscape.
- Project monitoring and evaluation support for large-scale industrial development projects to enhance ownership, success, effectiveness, and contribution to sustainable economic growth at the country and regional levels.

2.1.4.2 Supporting the development of Regional Centres of Excellence for priority VCs

Building sustainable, inclusive and resilient food and non-food systems requires strengthening the competitiveness and competency across the food and agribusiness sector. Some of the key challenges faced by countries in the ECOWAS community that limit their productive and processing capacities include limited technological, infrastructural, vocational and research and development related expertise. Moreover, the potential for entering high end markets is challenging in absence of compliance

with international best practices and food safety standards, limited opportunities for value addition across supply chains, lack of access to finance and business development services. Strengthening regional institutional capacities to create an enabling environment with comprehensive support services for food sector operators is essential to agribusiness and agro-industrial development. Regional centres of excellence will be designated and operationalized to support selected value chains. Within the sub-activity, in terms of the establishing centre of excellence, the interventions will:

- Work with key stakeholders to develop a comprehensive selection criteria for selection of ECOWAS technical centre of excellence
- Identifying how the centres can facilitate transfer of innovation and improve R&D activities with other actors, e.g., researchers and multinationals, as well as support the adoption of sustainability- and climate-focused innovations.
- Launch a call for selection of technical centre of excellence to be supported in close collaboration and agreement with the project partners and based on pre-defined selection criteria.
- Conduct an assessment of the selected technical centre to identify needs or gaps to be addressed and explore avenues for improving the services/support aiming at promoting value addition and diversification of products/services in the selected value chains.
- Based on the results of the mapping and assessment exercise, develop a sustainable plan for supporting the selected technical centre.

When established, the centre of excellence will perform the following services for the value chains:

- Develop the institutional and governance system
- Design and implement upgrading programs tailored to the needs of the selected value chains.
- Design and implement service modules to support the selected value chains.
- Promotion/marketing of the services provided by the centre
- Promote knowledge sharing/exchange programmes and connectivity
- Establish mentorship and fellowship programs with industry leaders to provide practical, hands-on experience in new technologies and sustainable practices.
- Facilitate national, regional and international networking with relevant institutional ecosystem

2.1.4.3 Facilitating the operationalization of regional packaging centres of excellence

A packing centre of excellence aims to support industrial development, innovation, and sustainable growth in food production, process and trade in the ECOWAS community

- Launch a call for selection of packaging centres of excellence to be supported in close collaboration and agreement with the project partners and based on pre-defined selection criteria.
- Conduct an assessment of the selected packaging centres to identify needs or gaps to be addressed and explore avenues for improving the services/support aiming at promoting value addition and diversification of products/services in the selected value chains.
- Based on the results of the mapping and assessment exercise, define a sustainable plan for supporting the selected packaging centres.
- Based on the results of the mapping and assessment exercise, develop a sustainable plan for supporting the selected packaging centres.

- Mainstreaming circular economy approaches and emission reduction techniques into packaging to the extent possible, i.e., without compromising product quality.
- Develop and implement a resource mobilization plan to upgrade the technology and the infrastructure to support the selected value chains.

Activity: 2.1.5 Industrial skills for sustainable value chain development promoted

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, Academic and Research Institutions, ECOWAS Member States, private sector

To effectively drive value addition in the selected value chains sector, it is crucial to adopt a holistic perspective on skills development. This entails considering the complete value chain needs, encompassing both small, medium, large units of production and formal and informal, as well as the upstream and downstream opportunities associated with productive activities. By examining the specific skills and capacity development requirements within each segment of the value chains, the intervention will develop target tailored strategies that prioritize critical points, fill the gaps and lead to a thriving sector integrated to the national and regional economy and contributing to sustainable development.

Furthermore, an effective skills development approach builds upon the potential labor market needs and forecasts future demands for skilled labour. This involves analyzing the skills mismatch that exists in various trades and specific occupations within the selected value chains, identifying upstream and downstream value-added activities and opportunities, and associated support services.

In addition, the needs of the industry and emerging production units to build competitiveness in the value chain must be assessed as an essential step to tailor and prioritize skills development interventions that increase employability in the sector, improves value addition and reduces investment risks. On the other hand, it is necessary to consider the diverse and evolving skills development needs of various target groups to be covered by the wide Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and educational system to respond to social and labor market demands. These groups may include youth seeking quality jobs in the selected sectors, women who are underrepresented in small production units or overrepresented in large production facilities, or vice versa, professionals who are already employed but require upskilling or reskilling, individuals who are currently unemployed, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in the ecosystem as service providers. In this sense, the use of methodologies such as Market System Development (MSD) to analyze both the supply and demand sizes of skills development needs and root causes of skills mismatch can be valuable.

The need to transition towards more environmentally sustainable modes of production and consumption has become imperative for developing countries and countries in transition. The shift to a low-carbon, resource-efficient green economy can help tackle the climate crisis, protect the environment, and advance gender equality, all while stimulating sustainable socioeconomic development and job creation. However, this transition requires systemic changes that will result in new production processes and business models. In particular, the greening of the economy will inevitably change the skills required in many existing occupations. New business opportunities generated by the transition to a green economy will only be made available to MSMEs if they are equipped with the right sets of skills.

This activity will particularly be take into account the **ECOWAS TVET Strategy for Skills Improvement and Employability (ETSSIE)** and the **ECOWAS TVET Action Plan** by providing specific capacity building to address the immediate needs of the selected value chains in:

- **Education Quality** Enhancement, by focusing on curriculum development, quality assurance mechanisms, and infrastructure improvements. Develop capacity of TVET to regularly update

curricula to align with industry needs, ensuring graduates acquire relevant skills. Adopt robust quality assurance processes to monitor TVET institutions, and identification of investments in modern facilities to enhance practical training.

- **Adaptation to Labor Markets**, the intervention emphasizes **skills mapping**, identifying priority skills required by employers in the selected value chains. Industry partnerships will play a crucial role in aligning training programs with market needs. Work-based learning opportunities will be explored and expanded, such as internships and apprenticeships, will provide students with practical experience.
- **Entrepreneurship Promotion**, the intervention will encourage an **entrepreneurial mindset** among TVET students. Business incubators within institutions will support aspiring entrepreneurs, offering mentorship and resources. Training on business planning, financial management, and marketing will empower graduates to start their own ventures or contribute to existing businesses.

In line with UNIDO's approaches to skills development and employability, the proposed intervention aims to boost industrialization and a just transition in the sub-region by i) strengthening national and regional expertise on skills development and ii) supporting targeted skills development to increase productivity and competitiveness within selected value chains, and strengthen MSMEs' adaptation to the green transition.

To materialize this vision, the programme will aim to support a regional level entity (skills hub) able to strengthen the capacities of ECOWAS national and sectoral skills and lifelong learning systems (i.e. policies and regulations/ governance/financing/institutions and training providers) to design and deliver industry-relevant, climate responsive and inclusive training, reskilling and upskilling programmes that can boost ECOWAS's competitiveness in the selected value chains. In addition, the programme will identify existing institutions and entities with the potential to form part of a coherent network capable of providing expertise in the development and expansion of skills training to support ECOWAS export competitiveness of MSMEs and their connection to regional and global CVs including a just transition. Pilot entities of the network will be strengthened, and a sustainability plan developed to ensure continuity of the services provided.

UNIDO has identified the following indicative sub-activities:

- **2.1.5.1** Conducting a skills map of the critical professions and trades required to increase competitiveness, social entrepreneurship and ensure sustainability in the selected value chains.
- **2.1.5.2** Conducting and analysing of skills demand and supply for the priority skills. Assess the impact of the green transition on selected value chains and related skills and training needs,
- **2.1.5.3** Mapping existing national and regional centres/organizations providing advisory, policy and capacity building services on TVET related to the specific value chains;
- **2.1.5.4** Conducting a feasibility study for the establishment of an ECOWAS skills hub with the specific mandate of supporting skills development for sustainable value chain and the green transition;
- **2.1.5.5.** Developing a roadmap for the establishment of skills hubs
- **2.1.5.6** Supporting the establishment of the skills hub, including the development of terms of reference/guiding principles, a business plan, human development plan;
- **2.1.5.7** Supporting the operationalization of the skills hub through the implementation of needs-based capacity building programme.
- **2.1.5.8** Identifying a network of educational institutions with the potential to be supported and build capacity by the regional hub in areas of curricula development, training of trainers, quality assurance mechanisms, materials, innovative models of education and entrepreneurship and digital technology.

- **2.1.5.9** Introduction of robust training-of-trainers methodologies and national certifications that ensure teachers acquire the desired technical skills. Organize regional (online and onsite) trainings (and workshops) to the network of educational institutions and specific capacity building areas.
- **2.1.5.10** Assessing the feasibility of profession and curricula harmonization and recognition across the region for key critical trades required in the selected value chains.
- **2.1.5.11** Developing a training curriculum for the selected value chain/trades, in line with identified critical skills needs for sustainable a green transition;
- **2.1.5.12** In coordination with local/regional training providers, provide training to pilot trainees from MSMEs operating within the selected value chains.

Activity 2.1.6 Enterprise upgrading for higher added-value and market compliance delivered

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, regional bodies, upgrading offices, Chambers of Commerce, private sector representatives, financial institutions.

In the face of an exponential evolving global trade landscape, enterprises must upgrade responsively to meet stringent international standards, particularly those of the EU market.

This activity aims at supporting enterprises within ECOWAS selected value chains to meet regional, continental and EU-market requirements (e.g. Green Deal, Paris Agreement, etc.) through a market-responsive upgrading/modernization plan addressing technical capability, production processes, post-harvest management, circular economy, quality/certifications (in close collaboration with output 1.2 on quality compliance and standards) energy and resource efficiency, digitalization (including traceability), innovation, packaging and investment readiness, just to name a few.

To ensure buy-in and commitment, the programme will engage in its early stages with key regional and national stakeholders: ECOWAS Commission, Regional Bodies, Ministries, Chambers of Commerce, Upgrading Offices, BSOs, financial institutions, etc.

In the context of this activity, the selection of the beneficiary enterprises will be done in full coordination with the EU Delegation to Nigeria, the ECOWAS Commission, ITC and regional stakeholders. The selection process will be subject to transparent and objective set of selection and eligibility criteria to be defined and agreed with the relevant stakeholders. In addition, the upgrading approach will have a regional level and scope with regard to the areas of intervention, program description, mode of delivery, value chain linkages and outreach strategy. UNIDO will use its own upgrading and modernization tools and methodologies so that enterprises can benefit from innovative and effective instruments to support their development, such as for example the development of next-stage products in the value chain from raw materials, which provides the local value added product processing capacity, the mobile/web application “Enterprise Modernization and Innovation Programme (EMIP) app”, which provides adequate diagnosis, assessment, coaching, training and monitoring of enterprises through a simple online workflow, as well as established methodologies to make production more sustainable and circular, such as TEST (Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies) and RECP (Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production). Enterprises upgrading will be provided in close collaboration and partnership with regional/national support institutions, partners, centres, etc., in particular the ones supported by the programme.

A critical aspect to ensure the achievement of a broad impact at ECOWAS level will also be the need to develop a mechanism to identify, share and replicate/scale-up successful practices in ECOWAS Member States.

The expected results of this activity are (i) an increased awareness of enterprises about regional and EU markets standards and legal requirements as well as about other identified priority areas, such as productivity, good manufacturing practices (GMP), circular economy, quality, energy and resource efficiency, packaging, digitalization, innovation, etc, (ii) a better integration of enterprises along the selected VCs and increased capabilities and systems in place to implement digital and innovative approaches in production and operations for increased value addition and diversification of products/services, while complying with green and circular economy practices, as well as with EU and regional market requirements, and (iii) the creation of tools for monitoring enterprise performance progress with indicators for tracking and promoting successful examples, cases and practices with the aim of upscaling the intervention in terms of size and scope.

Ultimately, the expected impact is a group of ECOWAS enterprises within selected value chain that not only meet, but also shape market demands, embrace sustainability and innovation, with a clear focus on cross-border cooperation in the context of AfCFTA. By doing so, enterprises will secure a thriving position in the regional, continental and global market, contributing significantly to regional economic resilience and sustainability.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities:

2.1.6.1 Mobilization of ECOWAS stakeholders and development of enterprise upgrading approach for value addition and diversification

- Engage with key regional and national stakeholders (ECOWAS Commission, Regional Bodies, Ministries, Chambers of Commerce, Upgrading Offices, BSOs, financial institutions, etc.) to ensure buy-in and commitment.
- Define and validate a regional enterprise upgrading approach, including intervention areas, program description, mode of delivery, value chain linkages and outreach strategy.
- In collaboration with ITC, the ECOWAS Commission and relevant partners, define and validate relevant criteria for the selection of beneficiary enterprises in each selected value chain.
- Based on the agreed regional enterprise upgrading approach, develop operational tools for enterprise upgrading, including call for applications, enterprise diagnosis tools, ToRs for experts and service providers; and tailor these tools to the context and needs of each beneficiary country.
- In collaboration with the EU Delegation to Nigeria, the ECOWAS Commission, ITC and relevant partners, select enterprises in each beneficiary country through an open and transparent call for applications and based on agreed selection criteria.

2.1.6.2 Enterprises diagnosis and development of upgrading/modernization plans

- Conduct diagnosis/assessments to determine the current state of selected enterprises covering relevant areas such as technical capability, production processes, sustainability practices, circular economy, quality, energy and resource efficiency, digitalization, innovation, investment readiness, etc.
- Based on identified bottlenecks and priority areas of intervention, develop tailored upgrading plans with priority actions focusing on modernization, digitalization and innovation as well as

circular economy integration, ultimately leading to compliance with regional and international markets needs, requirements and standards.

2.1.6.3 Delivery of tailored capacity building programmes

- Conduct awareness raising/capacity building actions with enterprises to disseminate information on regional and EU markets standards and legal requirements and other identified priority areas.
- Provide technical assistance and training covering key areas identified in activity 2.1.6.2

2.1.6.4 Monitoring, evaluation, and scaling-up for replication of successful examples

- Implement a framework to monitor progress, evaluate impact, and identify scalable practices.
- Promote successful interventions and best practices that can be replicated and scaled-up in ECOWAS Member States.

Activity 2.1.7 Access to innovative financing and investment solutions for selected value chains facilitated and promoted

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID), Afreximbank, the African Development Bank, the African Trade Insurance Agency, Ecobank, the Enterprise Africa Network, local fund management institutions and other financial partners as well as business associations

The path to sustainable industrial development in the ECOWAS region is critically dependent on the availability and accessibility of financial resources. Key issues include bridging the financing gap for SMEs, enhancing their capacity to engage in diversification/innovation/technological upgrading, making green investments more attractive and feasible, and developing innovative, gender and youth-sensitive financial products that cater to the specific needs of selected value chains in the ECOWAS region.

In that context, this activity aims at supporting relevant financial institutions and potential investors to provide accessible, gender/youth sensitive, and green/innovative financial products for target value chains to promote technology upgrading and green technology investments. These investments should also specifically take gender and youth lenses. The action will also look at supporting identification of bankable projects for enterprise investments and will facilitate funds mobilization for physical collective infrastructure particularly special economic zones or corridors, which will require continued and focused investments, from public and private investors and from domestic, regional or foreign direct investors.

On the supply side, the proposed activities will include awareness-raising and capacity-building of ECOWAS financial and investment promotion institutions so that they better understand and address the specific needs of SMEs in selected value chains, including women and youth-led enterprises to ensure financial inclusion. Financial and investment institutions will also be capacitated to design relevant financial instruments and incentive schemes to attract investments into selected value chains and eco-industrial parks.

On the demand side, the action will support enterprises (in particular women and youth) in targeted value chains to access financial resources by developing bankable format (business plan/projects) of upgrading and transformation plans and related actions/activities defined under activity 2.1.6, which is crucial for enterprises to approach financial institutions in an efficient manner. Activities aiming at facilitating access to finance for selected SMEs will be designed and implemented in close collaboration and synergy with ITC's activities in that area to avoid duplication and improve efficiency. A variant of the current, digital "Invest in ACP" Platform, developed within the context of the EU and OACPS funded "ACP Business Friendly Programme", will be developed to become an "Invest in ECOWAS" Platform. It will enable investment promotion institutions, including regional ones (Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Réseau international des Agences francophones de promotion des investissements (RIAFPI) to effectively build up their SME investment project portfolios for more effective and broad-based investment mobilization and support. Supported SMEs will be able to manage the content on the Platform through initial capacity building and continuous support by UNIDO highlighting the importance of ESG dimensions in investment project pipeline development and feasibility studies. Accordingly, environmental and social safeguards will be included into capacity building activities, the development of training material, and course curricula across the activity with a particular focus on social safeguards. The component can also support structured B2B interventions or investment pitches during specialized investment forums or events.

Promotion of the investment opportunities to potential investors will also be mobilized through outreach activities within UNIDO's global network in particular its Investment and Technology Promotion Offices (ITPOs) as well as across targeted countries' diplomatic networks in important economies where potential investments can be sourced. A clear focus will be placed on impact investors and multinational corporations that have a credible track record of responsible business conduct, underpinned by e.g. membership in the UN Global Compact (UNGC).

The expected results of this activity are (i) an enhanced financial literacy and investment readiness among SMEs, (ii) financial and investment promotion institutions that are able to offer tailored financial products and enhanced facilitation services to support enterprises especially in green and circular transitions, innovation, and digitalization, (iii) women and youth-led SMEs within the selected VCs introduced to relevant customized financial products and services for improved access to finance, (iv) the development of a higher number of bankable projects with improved investment attraction.

Ultimately, the expected impact is an increased availability and accessibility of financial resources for the development of critical value chains in ECOWAS.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities:

2.1.7.1 Awareness-raising and capacity-building of ECOWAS financial and investment promotion institutions

- Advocate for regional policies that incentivize common and green financing and investments in selected value chains.
- Organize workshops for financial entities for a better understanding of the specific needs of SMEs in selected value chains, including women and youth-led enterprises to ensure financial inclusion.
- Provide capacity-building activities to financial entities/institutions to enhance their offering of green/innovative financial products such as green loans, sustainability-linked bonds, microfinance options, grants and tax breaks.
- Design financial instruments and incentive schemes to attract investments into selected value chains and industrial parks. (e.g.: work with financial institutions to create incentives for

investments in green technologies and sustainable practices within industrial sectors) linked, though not exclusively, to the EU's Global Gateway Initiative

- Encourage cross-border collaborations among financial institutions, investment promotion agencies, investors, enterprises, etc. to identify and implement ESG projects within selected value chains with a regional impact, emphasizing the interconnected nature of sustainability goals.
- Initiate targeted financial inclusion programs for women and youth entrepreneurs in selected value chains, ensuring they can have equal access to financial services through traditional and digital investment promotion channels.

2.1.7.2 Facilitation of enterprise bankable project development

- Organize systems and actions aimed at providing guidance and support in creating bankable project proposals focusing on sustainable and innovative ventures.
- Facilitate access to impact investors and carbon credits for sustainability innovations.
- Organize workshops aimed at assisting SMEs in targeted value chains in understanding the elements of a successful investment proposal and investment pitches highlighting financial, environmental and social returns of a given project.
- Offer capacity building to entrepreneurs (in particular women and youth) and SMEs in targeted value chains (i) to improve financial literacy, focusing on how to secure financing and manage investments, and (ii) on how to develop compelling business cases for innovation/digitalization/sustainability-oriented ventures.
- Leverage digital solutions such as the “Invest in ACP/ECOWAS” Platform to enhance global visibility of SMEs’ investment projects for the generation of new international investment leads.
- Deploy tools and methodologies including UNIDO’s Computer Model for Feasibility Analysis and Reporting (COMFAR). COMFAR complements investment-profiling efforts and offer feasibility analysis support of large infrastructure or Public-Private Partnership (PPP) projects through the blending finance mechanism to develop bankable projects.

Activity: 2.1.8 Rapid Response Facility for country interventions

Lead: UNIDO

Key Partners: ECOWAS Commission, ECOWAS Member States

Acknowledging that the above-mentioned activities will make the main contribution to the development of value addition and diversification, it is however likely that it would further strengthen national capacities if the programme could also address small ad-hoc needs of individual countries that would not be tackled through regional activities. The facility is designed to address one to two short term targeted interventions per country. The interventions should contribute to the overall objectives of the regional action and allow the country to better benefit from the regional programme.

UNIDO indicative sub-activities:

- 2.1.8.1 Call for project proposals to Member States in the area of value addition and diversification for priority value chains.
- 2.1.8.2 Establishment of technical committee to assess the proposals.
- 2.1.8.3 Prioritization and selection of national projects for implementation.

OUTPUT 2.2 ENHANCED SME CAPACITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS AND EXPORT

In order to foster the growth of small businesses, particularly those led by women and youth entrepreneurs, the relevant capacity building training and opportunities for skill enhancement is crucial. Key challenges faced by MSMEs in the region are often related to the lack of a thorough understanding of the fundamentals of profit and loss management, the management of cash flow analysis, and the acquisition of essential knowledge about running a business.

The objective of the action under this output is to improve the competitiveness of the offering in each selected VC and enhance the performance of selected MSMEs (with tailored activities for women-led and youth-led MSMEs, depending on the selected VC's distinctive characteristics) to manage trade-related transactions. Upon the agreement of a coordinated approach with the work to be conducted under **Output 2.1** (and in cooperation with local partners), MSMEs will then be selected according to the programme's ambitions and in alignment with the ECOWAS MSMEs Charter's definitions and methodology. Support will be focused on critical areas such as devising export strategies and plans, managing business operations and finances, handling procurement and sales contracts, as well as navigating legal and insurance matters, among other related subjects. A diagnostic will be rolled out to establish their key needs in terms of export competitiveness. The action will ensue with training programmes, coaching sessions, and the development of dedicated marketing materials (MSMEs individual logos, brochures, videos, etc.). Ultimately, the action will seek to organize and/or sponsor the participation of selected beneficiaries in regional B2B and B2C events.

The action will keep in careful consideration the following objectives:

- increase regional exports (incl. intra and extra regional trade, with a specific focus on the EU market)
- support the ECOWAS Commission ambition to bring a minimum of 20% of the current informal intra-ECOWAS trade to the formal space by 2031¹⁷
- the objective to further support partnership and transactions among companies the different stages of a same value chain or across different value chains selected by the programme

MSMEs will be selected according to 3 categories of registered/formal MSMEs:

- Frequent exporters and market leaders, with the objective of accessing new market in terms of countries and products and strengthening the VC at the national and regional level;
- Occasional exporters, with the objective of increasing their export operations;
- Non-exporters, with the objective of starting or formalizing export operations.

The capacity building programme delivered to selected MSMEs will be structured along a 3-tier approach:

- Introductory trainings on each of the key topics covered by the programme (incl. managerial skills, marketing, market linkages, access to finance, and investments attraction) and practical exercises (incl. preparation of assisted and self-diagnostics; preparation of export development plans), which will be delivered to all the selected MSMEs. Namely, the introductory training will be conducted as part of the MSME diagnostic exercise and will be functional to allow MSMEs to be able to complete their assessment and create/improve their export development plans. Aside from dedicated face to face trainings to selected MSMEs, online training modalities will also be deployed by ITC in order to be able to eventually extend the offer also

¹⁷ As indicated in the ECOWAS Trade Promotion and Investment Strategy (ECOTIPS) documentation shared by the ECOWAS Commission.

to additional MSME members of BSO partners (beyond the selected SMEs) with whom the action will be conducted, in order to increase the scale of the action.

- More in-depth coaching and advisory services on specific MSMEs needs identified through the action, which will be delivered to a narrower pool of MSMEs that have shown responsiveness to the training programme (e.g. successful finalization of the assessment) and clear objectives in relation to export activities (e.g. concrete export development plans). In particular selected MSMEs (in each country) will be divided into groups and trained in the subject areas on which they required support, as well as supported to achieve some of the specific objective set in their export development plans (for instance, improving their product pricing system or their marketing materials, preparing business proposals).
- Support in accessing into e-commerce platforms as well as participating to B2B and B2C events will be provided to MSMEs that already have export capacity or have sufficiently improved through the programme their skills and comply with the requirements needed to conduct export operations in the identified target destination markets and B2B and B2C events identified (starting from basic export licenses to specific conditions set by partner countries and trade events' organizers). An exception might be the participation to the flagship regional trade event that will be organized with the ECOWAS Commission, as in this case it could be agreed with partners that eligibility criteria could be less stringent than the ones set by other well established B2B and B2C events (for instance, limiting them to the preparation of complete online profiles), in order to allow for more inclusiveness.

Baseline: ECOWAS Trade Promotion and Investment Strategy (ECOTIPS); ECOWAS MSME Charter; development of the ECOWAS TPO Network; networking support to regional IPAS provided under the WACOMP; Studies on target markets conducted through the implementation of WACOMP regional and national components; Development of the West African Competitiveness Observatory B2B matchmaking platform; West Africa Connect event organization methodology, materials and contacts.

Support to regional coordination: Ensure the ECOWAS Commission capacity to lead the organization of the key regional B2B events through: institutional networking at the regional and national level; revision of technical inputs leading to the event; strategic decision making; communication efforts.

Activity 2.2.1: Regional and national BSOs for the implementation of capacity building programmes have been supported and equipped

Lead: ITC (grants will be allocated to regional and national selected BSOs to implement the action)

Key partners: Chambers of Commerce, National and regional BSO; ETPON

This activity aims at identifying and equipping the BSOs that will be involved in regional and national activities with MSMEs, including selection, trainings and follow up coaching. More specifically, the MSME selection and coaching methodology to be adopted by the action will be embedded into the selected BSOs portfolio of services through various activities, to ensure scalability and sustainability of the action.

For the implementation of such trainings, Chambers of Commerce of each ECOWAS Member States, with guidance and support from FEWACCI at the sub-regional level, are promising potential partners that could help to consolidate and strengthen previous interventions deployed under WACOMP and other national and regional programmes funded by the EU and other technical and financial partners. Chambers of Commerce have the capacity to mobilize, engage and get the trust of businesses including MSMEs, women and youth entrepreneurs. Based on previous ITC interventions in the region, other BSOs will also be considered for cooperation. Whenever the identification of local partner cannot be

based on previous ITC working experience in the region or agreed through consultation with regional and local programme focal points in the framework of the VCRM. Rapid scanning and due diligence to confirm the capacity of the Chambers of Commerce and BSOs to effectively carry out and implement the proposed capacity building package to be delivered to businesses at their country level.

The following sub-activities might be included:

- Assessment (expertise, equipment) of regional and national BSOs for the implementation of capacity building programmes by value chain and area of expertise (marketing, market linkages, access to finance, investments);
- Formalization of cooperation framework with selected BSOs;
- Customize the MSME selection and diagnostic model to the priority VC and country specificities to assess beneficiary enterprises' capabilities to add value to their products, increase market share, enter new markets, and improve their competitiveness;
- Capacity building and certification of proficiency for national and regional BSO representatives (providing certifications that are valid in national and regional certification framework).
- Development of materials for continuous learning (on selected content).

Expected deliverables of the activity: BSO that will support the delivery of capacity buildings for MSMEs under this output have been identified; BSO will be equipped with MSMEs diagnostic tools and methodologies to replicate the action.

Sustainability of the activity: BSO will be equipped with MSMEs diagnostic tools and methodologies to replicate the action.

Linkages with other Outputs: The identification of viable BSOs for the implementation of the action might be guided also by the identification of VC key stakeholders that will participate into the ECOWAS VCRM under **Output 1.3**. BSOs identified under this output might also be used as viable partners for the roll-out of trade reforms under **Output 1.1**.

Sub-activity 2.2.1.1: Scan selected regional and national BSOs expertise to deliver training for MSMEs on export development targeting intra-regional, continental and ECOWAS and international trade (particularly with the EU).

Based on previous interventions in the West Africa region, the selected Chambers of Commerce and other BSOs for this sub-activity will have the trust of MSMEs and show proven expertise in training the private sector on market access requirements. Specific criteria will be used to confirm the “eligibility” of the selected BSOs. Other national and regional BSOs might be considered when needed to achieve more efficiency in the delivery of the proposed training package.

Sub-activity 2.2.1.2: Preparation and signing of financial and non-financial MoU with selected BSOs

The confirmed entities will sign MOUs (or letters of Intent) with financial or non-financial implications with ITC for the delivery of specific training services to selected MSMEs. This is important to strengthen their operational and managerial capabilities and will also ensure the multiplying effect of the training package at both, national and regional levels.

Sub-activity 2.2.1.3: Develop customized MSMEs profile to access the training package.

In collaboration with the chambers or selected BSO partners, a dedicated VC questionnaire / tool will be developed to capture all the key information required to assess MSMEs performance (with a focus on export capacity), draft export development plans and cluster target MSMEs by specific need areas. The materials developed will be handed over to selected institutions to ensure the sustainability of the action.

Sub-activity 2.2.1.4: Roll out of capacity building and proficiency certification programme for selected national and regional BSO representatives.

This sub-activity will allow to roll-out the training package with selected chambers and BSO partners. The trainers will be certified through ITC's methodology. The certification process includes training on the use of dedicated MSMEs assessment approaches, preparation of export improvement plans and delivery of specific capacity building modules.

In order to reduce the cost of such trainings (and contribute to the carbon footprint), ITC will also encourage the use of ITC SME Trade Academy, an online tool open and accessible to all users.

Sub-activity 2.2.1.5: Ensure inclusiveness of women and youth in capacity building programme for value chains selected.

Based on existing SheTrades Hubs in West Africa (Nigeria, Ghana, and The Gambia) and ongoing collaborations with FEBWE and the ECOWAS Gender Center, this sub-activity will contribute to develop specific materials dedicated to women led businesses as well as to increase the capacity of MSMEs at large to provide gender responsive services within their supply chain and address gender-based constraints where feasible. Additionally, the sub-activity will provide an opportunity to mobilize women-led and youth-led businesses to assess their needs for export capacity building within selected value chains (VC), ensuring tailored support that fosters their growth and integration into broader markets.

Activity 2.2.2: MSMEs to be supported by the action have been selected, diagnosed for export and clustered by VC, target markets and key support area

Lead: ITC

Key partners: National and regional BSO

The activity aims to identifying the MSMEs that will be supported across all selected value chains. The action will be conducted in close coordination with UNIDO (namely, in relation to the selection of MSMEs under **Output 2.1**) and will be aligned with the definitions and classification set by the ECOWAS MSMEs Charter 2021-2030 (including its provisions on the formalization of informal enterprises, as well as its overall ambitions to building regional partnerships, fostering entrepreneurship, facilitating access to finance and supporting business promotion).¹⁸ Namely, the action aims to establish transparent approaches and effective criteria for identifying promising MSMEs to target within the program.

The work with MSMEs, that will be conducted in coordination with UNIDO, work with MSMEs will be structured along 3 consecutive steps:

- Identification of MSMEs, including call for application to collect MSMEs applications through VC tailored questionnaires
- Selection of MSMEs, including quantitative and qualitative analysis of the responses MSMEs that applied in order to select, through online verification of documentation provided and/or through field visits
- Development of business and export plans, including MSMEs in-depth assessment (**Sub-activity 2.2.3.4**). This 3rd step might be reached after some introductory trainings, delivered under **Activity 2.2.3** have allowed to assess the selected MSMEs responsiveness and commitment

¹⁸ ECOWAS MSME Charter, available at: <https://wacomp.projects.ecowas.int/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/ECOWAS-MSME-CHARTERENGLISH.pdf>

Expected deliverables of the activity: MSMEs to be supported by the action have been identified and segmented.

Sustainability of the activity: National and regional BSO will be involved in the design and implementation of the MSME selection, with a view to include the skills learnt in the portfolio of services.

Linkages with other Outputs: The selection of MSMEs will be conducted in close cooperation with UNIDO, thus creating strong linkages with **Output 2.1**; Guidance on invest action will rely on the development of strategies and roadmaps under **Output 2.1**.

Activity 2.2.3: Capacity building programme for MSMEs have been jointly delivered with regional and national BSOs

Lead: ITC

Key partners: National and regional BSO; ETPON (on export development, marketing skills and trade events preparation); Afreximbank, AfDB, BAD and EBID (on access to finance)

This activity aims at providing MSMEs with the knowledge, skills and know-how to position their products in target markets, access finance and benefit from B2B events. This will be achieved through in-depth trainings on marketing, market linkages, access to finance, and investments to group of MSMEs on the basis of the specific outcomes of the diagnostic conducted.

Expected deliverable of the activity: A specific training package is developed, promoted and disseminated; MSMEs are able to better market their products.

Sustainability of the activity: BSOs will be supported to integrate knowledge on access to finance, export development and marketing skills into their service structures.

Linkages with other Outputs: This activity will be informed by the financial solutions and institutional partnerships established under **Output 2.1**. At the same time the activity will ensure that target MSMEs have the required knowledge to apply to the above-mentioned financial solutions. Sub-activities related to capacity building on marketing activities and voluntary standards will only complement, where needed the work conducted under **Output 2.1**.

Sub-activity 2.2.3.1: Capacity building on Access to Finance (incl. loans, grants and investments) for MSMEs has been delivered.

This sub-activity will focus on providing MSMEs with the basic understanding of available financial sources requirement and capacity to comply with essential accountability practices. Through improving the MSMEs financial management capabilities, business operations, market access and access to finance, the MSME is able to realize their growth and export potential, consequently improving the sustainability of beneficiary MSMEs. The export improvement plans developed with selected MSMEs, will provide essential guidance on their financial maturity, investment readiness and financing needs. This activity will prioritize financing opportunities for women and youth led enterprises. The following tasks might be covered:

- Map financing opportunities, financial service providers, and main sources of funding and guarantee operations by VC that are suitable for the MSMEs supported (based on inputs received from **Output 2.1**)
- Strengthen financial literacy and investment readiness of selected MSMEs through financial education, coaching, handholding and pitching to investors and financiers
- Develop a financial tool box (incl. audio and video trainings; training deck), with a focus on target value chains, for the replication of the action by local BSOs particularly the chambers.

- Activate finance linkages for selected MSMEs through dedicated matchmaking sessions with regional and international sources of finance.

Sub-activity 2.2.3.2: Capacity building and advisory services on export development and marketing skills for MSMEs have been delivered.

The objective is to develop a tailored training program focused on export development and marketing skills tailored to specific value chains. The training will contribute to design and implement robust export / marketing plans, review product pricing strategies, which are critical for strengthening their competitiveness and increasing their likelihood of accessing financial resources. Additionally, individual marketing kits consisting of brochures, logos, and videos will be developed for selected MSMEs to enhance their promotional efforts. This sub-activity will complement efforts to be proposed under output 2.1.

Sub-activity 2.2.3.3: Capacity building on compliance with voluntary sustainability standards (VSS) has been delivered.

This sub-activity will focus on MSMEs exporting outside the ECOWAS region. The training will be on voluntary standards and will address the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) new policy related matters. This sub-activity will only complement the work on voluntary standards and certifications to be conducted under **Output 2.1** of the overall ATCMA ECOWAS Programme. The following tasks might be covered:

- Provide basic knowledge to regional organizations and MSMEs on Sustainability Standards and measures, and their role in market access.
- Deliver one-to-one coaching sessions for selected MSMEs to produce individual action plans (i.e., Sustainable Practices Implementation Strategy document) for implementing sustainable practices and achieving certification to meet the sustainability standards of target markets (e.g., EU Green Deal—with specific focus on deforestation-free supply chain regulation and corporate sustainability due diligence; CSR policy development).
- Support selected chambers and BSOs to integrate the voluntary sustainability standards methodology and coaching process into their services and results measurement system.

Sub-activity 2.2.3.4: Development of MSMEs individual export improvement plans.

Specific export improvement plans to be activated by selected MSMEs will be prepared with a view to improve their competitiveness and position them for further market transactions (refer to activity 2.2.4 below).

Sub-activity 2.2.3.5: Delivery of dedicated coaching and mentoring services.

This sub-activity aims at addressing the specific needs of a selected number of MSMEs, including among other actions the obtention of key export certifications and documentation needed to export (incl. export licenses). In some cases, specific agencies with whom the action is jointly implemented, might be well positioned to help MSMEs achieve these results particularly when these agencies (from both public and private sectors) are responsible of delivering export licenses.

Sub-activity 2.2.3.6: MSMEs are capacitated to benefit from improved market access conditions and use of existing preferential agreements.

This activity aims to foster MSMEs understanding and compliance with market access requirements and trade procedures under specific trade agreements such as the AfCFTA (and its new agreements on trade in goods and its subsequent protocols), ETLS, EPAs and other WTO related agreements. While improving market access conditions is largely premised on enhancing legal, regulatory, and administrative frameworks governing trade and investment activities, some of the challenges faced by the private sector also stem from insufficient understanding and ability to comply with requirements. Synergies with ongoing initiatives to promote regional and continental trade, as the AfCFTA Guided

Trade Initiative (GTI)¹⁹, will be sought in order to identify priority areas of interventions in line with MSMEs specific export ambitions.

The action will be structured along the 3 following steps:

- Introductory training for MSMEs on market access conditions and usage of available sources of information
- Technical workshops with MSMEs on trade and investment reforms achieved through Output 1.1
- Tailored one-on-one coaching sessions on the preparation of export documentation, as export contracts, bill of lading, and accurate customs declarations among others based on the ITC Export Management Coaching methodology

Expected deliverables of the activity: A better understanding and use of trade preferences as well as comprehensive guides and publications produced to support MSMEs in their market access related activities.

Sustainability of the activity: The proposed interventions will be embedded within the ECOWAS Commission or relevant trade ministries and chambers of commerce.

Key partners: ECOWAS Commission, WAEMU Commission, Border crossings and customs offices, ECOWAS RTFC, ERCA, ECOWAS Business Council, Regional Business Associations (FEWACCI, FWAEA, FEBWE, WACTAF), ETLs Task Force, ECOWAS TPO Network, IPAWAS

Linkages with other Outputs: The activity will focus on allowing MSMEs to benefit from the trade and investment reforms implemented under **Output 1.1**. The VC scan conducted under **Activity 1.3.1**, will provide essential information on the VC focus of the action; the SME selection process conducted under **Activity 2.2.2** will play a key role in establishing a list of MSME beneficiaries for the action.

Activity 2.2.4: Market linkages activities have been organized

Lead: ITC

Key partners: National and regional BSOs incl. ECOWAS TPO Network; Regional and international e-commerce platforms; Tech Start up, Tech Hubs, ICT SMEs previously supported by the WACOMP (on linkages with tech ecosystems)

This activity aims to develop relationships between buyers, even potential investors met at trade fairs, MSMEs, trade and business support services and to initiate long-lasting business relations. It will enable MSMEs to reach new markets and to strengthen their position in existing markets whilst also reached new market segments.

Expected deliverables of the activity: Business generation from B2B, B2C and long-term lucrative partnerships.

Sustainability of the activity: The activation of e-commerce channels and B2B matchmaking platforms (as the one provided by the WACOB) will allow MSMEs to enter new markets and boost international sales during and after the project.

Linkages with other Outputs: The success of this activity relies on outputs 1.1 (market access barriers are addressed) and 2.1 (promotion of local value addition).

¹⁹ The AfCFTA GTI now covers already the following 6 ECOWAS countries: Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. *Ghana AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative Update*, International Trade Administration, 17.04.2024. Available at: <https://www.trade.gov/market-intelligence/ghana-afcfta-guided-trade-initiative-update>

Sub-activity 2.2.4.1: e-Commerce support and onboarding services for most responsive MSMEs have been delivered.

This sub-activity aims to enhance the capacities of MSMEs to harness e-commerce for more inclusive development, economic growth, and decent job creation. All implemented activities will be aligned with the ECOWAS e-commerce Strategy and build on the recommendations of the eTrade Readiness Assessment and e-commerce strategies available for the region. The work will also take into account the AfCFTA protocol on digital trade. The following tasks might be covered:

- Provide a mapping of viable e-commerce platforms for selected MSMEs based on their capacity and needs.
- Identify and establish partnerships with regional and international e-commerce service providers, including e-commerce platforms, and mobile and online payment, logistics, and delivery providers, to offer key support to MSMEs, enable them to share costs, and provide access to services essential to e-commerce.
- Establish partnerships with related digital capacity-building programs (such as those building digital literacy and entrepreneurship skills or promoting digital connectivity) and ensure linkages toward small business success in digital trade.
- Build capacity within selected regional and national BSOs to become e-commerce support centers / centers of competence to foster the adoption and use of e-commerce and ensure sustainability after the project ends.
- Enhance usage and awareness raising about the WACOB B2B matchmaking platform
- Deliver a dedicated training and coaching program on e-commerce for MSMEs. The program will develop their digital capabilities and support them in building their e-commerce strategy and creating and activating their sales channels, including social e-shops, listings on regional and international marketplaces such as Etsy, eBay, Novica, and Jumia, and transactional websites.

Sub-activity 2.2.4.2: Business matchmaking opportunities to access transactions, investments and sources of finance have been organized.

This sub-activity aims to identify and organize concrete market opportunities and aligning them with relevant export capacities. This could involve reinforcement in a target market already accessed, or diversification into a new target market or market segment. This action will involve the participation of national trade and investment promotion agencies to ensure product visibility extends beyond the selected MSMEs and includes the development and adoption of viable cost-sharing schemes for MSME participation. The following tasks might be covered:

- Capacity building on trade fairs preparation and pitching for sales, investments, and access to finance.
- Support for the organization of a biennial West Africa Connect event (or another flagship regional trade event organized by the ECOWAS Commission).
- Explore the possibility to use the WACOB B2B matchmaking platform as a supporting tool of the biennial West Africa Connect event.
- Support for the participation of selected MSME delegations in regional and international trade fairs, B2B events, investment forums, and study tours (for MSMEs that have not yet benefited from trade events).
- Support for the participation of women- and youth-led MSMEs in focused networking events, leveraging existing ITC initiatives (including SheTrades Global; Youth Ecopreneur Awards; etc.).
- Conduct follow-ups with selected MSMEs on the results of market linkages activities in terms of business potential and business achieved.

Sub-activity 2.2.4.3: Support to the ECOWAS Commission for the organization of the West Africa Connect event.

West Africa Connect events will be organized to allow MSMEs, women and youth entrepreneurs show case their products, identify potential buyers and investors and conclude lucrative business transactions. The organization of such events will be closely prepared with the ECOWAS Commission and relevant institutions and networks such as the ECOWAS TPO Network. Lessons learned from previous events under WACOMP will be taken into consideration with a view to improve the outcomes of the trade fairs. In addition, the events to be organized will benefit from the new tools (WACOB B2B platform) developed at ECOWAS level as well as the info and dynamics to be generated through the establishment of the ECOWAS regional value chains revision mechanism (**Output 1.3**).

Sub-activity 2.2.4.4: Linkages with tech ecosystems actors have been established.

This sub-activity aims to support selected MSMEs in understanding the digital solutions available and how these can be adapted to meet the needs of their businesses in target value chains (VCs). This sub-activity will increase the use of digital solutions to boost the performance of selected agri-business value chains. The following tasks might be covered:

- Conduct a mapping of innovative solutions in agritech, fintech, and e-logistics that meet the demands of key actors in the selected value chains, through consultations with tech start-ups, MSMEs in the ICT sector, and tech hubs (already supported under WACOMP).
- Provide dedicated assistance to: a) fine-tune their available solutions to meet the needs of target MSMEs and BSOs identified by the program in selected value chains; b) scale-up their solutions in the local and regional markets through the development of business strategies; c) develop new products to expand their service/product portfolio through trainings on topics relevant to the program (including market information systems, trading platforms, solar cooling, sustainable agricultural practices); (d) assistance in building and developing a proof of concept, and project-sponsored market research.
- Provide technical assistance to MSMEs in the selected value chains to integrate technology into their operations through a Digital Transformation Toolkit.
- Establish partnerships with global value chain (GVC) actors to improve access to digitalized supply chains within selected value chains through secured networks to achieve a multiplier effect.
- Sponsor SMEs in the ICT sector and Tech hubs to participate in B2B events (in close coordination with **sub-activity 2.2.4.2**).
- Deliver presentations to key public and private sector institutions to present the results of the action and share best practices in formulating public policy to support MSME digitalization, innovation, and technology transfer (including “Technological Transformation Awards” for MSMEs that have successfully translated technologies into growth).

Activity 2.2.5: Investment opportunities have been supported

Lead: ITC

Key partners: AIPAWAS, IPAs from ECOWAS Member states, EBID

This activity will identify investment opportunities that should be addressed by the programme and support a coordinated communication and visibility approach on investment promotion activities. Identification of opportunities will be achieved by consulting market leaders (also among the companies selected) and IPAs on their portfolio of investment projects and leads, following actions and

consultations that have already been initiated during the WACOMP through the creation of Regional Investment Profiles. After having identified promising investment opportunities, the action will support the promotion of these opportunities by seeking a multi-country/multi-agency approach to strengthen the development of regional value chains in a coordinated and integrated manner.

Expected deliverables of the activity: Investor outreach and engagement strategies of ECOWAS IPAs have been enhanced, with a view to attracting sustainable investments required for value addition and product diversification along selected VCs.

Sustainability of the activity: Partners of the action have been involved in the design of investment promotion materials, that they will then be able to use to support target VCs.

Linkages with other Outputs: The activity will build on the findings of the VC scan and demand analysis conducted under Output 1.3 and information on technology, value added, diversification and sustainability provided by other components of the programme obtained by UNIDO in **Output 2.1**. Selling points of the target regional VC that will be promoted through the action will have to be updated based on the achievements made in relation to value addition and productive capacity under **Output 2.1**. The activity will also guide the other export promotion actions under Output 2.2 and it will be strongly aligned with the work on investment reforms to be carried under Output 1.1.

Sub-activity 2.2.5.1: Identify investment leads and investors profiles in consultation with MSMEs selected, market leaders and IPAs.

This sub-activity aims to developing a process to identify viable investment opportunity that can benefit regional value chain integration, as well as relevant investors profiles. The process could be triggered by call for applications for businesses and IPAs (with attention to the confidentiality clauses that might apply to specific investment leads), supported by bilateral consultation with foreign investors and regional development partners already approached during the WACOMP, as the European Business Council for Africa, the Indian Confederation of Industries, Shanghai Invest, Regional development partners and the USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub. The exercise conducted through this sub-activity will allow to screen the investment opportunities identified and establish on which one the project should focus for dedicated support.

Sub-activity 2.2.5.2: Facilitating coordination and effectiveness of IPAs investment promotion actions.

This sub-activity aims to facilitate the coordination of regional IPAs in order to identify common interests in relation to investments in selected VCs. This require discussing priority investment areas of individual IPAs and their agreed consolidation to promote the region as a whole or selected country groups in target VCs.

Sub-activity 2.2.5.3: Development of a portfolio of private sector investment opportunities and related investment promotion materials.

This sub-activity will aim at preparing a high value portfolio of private sector investment opportunities including early-stage high growth businesses, medium and large businesses from the ECOWAS region looking for regional or international investment. It will also support AIPAWAS and its member IPAs in the development of investment promotion materials to promote opportunities within each selected VC targeting specifically African and European investors but not exclusively.

Sub-activity 2.2.5.4: Sponsoring the participation of IPAs and regional market leaders to investment networking sessions and activate investment linkages.

This sub-activity aims to identify relevant investment networking events and investment operations (whenever possible) with a view to attract investments in selected segment of VCs production, processing, green transformation. It could be also an opportunity to promote the transfer of know-how from industries in Africa or Europe to the ECOWAS region and to develop joint ventures between enterprises from the ECOWAS region and those outside the region and / or from Europe notably.

G. TARGET GROUPS AND BENEFICIARIES

The success of any program requires the involvement of all the key players and their commitment to the actions implemented. To this end, UNIDO and ITC will involve the main stakeholders for the implementation of this Program including the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions, the governments of the 16 target countries and the private sector of the region. More specifically, the main targets are West African Member states, governments and national agencies; Professional associations as well as quality institutions and business and trade support organisations, Technical/Research Centres and training institutions; financial and investment institutions; enterprises and MSME clusters involved in the selected value chains and/or sectors of intervention. These stakeholders are distributed both nationally and regionally:

- At national level: chambers of commerce, trade and investment promotion organizations, consular chambers, employers' organizations, consumer associations, local authorities, national quality structures (standardization, technical regulations, conformity assessment, metrology, inspection and certification), technical/research centres, ministries in charge of trade, entrepreneurship and industry, ministries in charge of finance, companies, cooperatives.
- At regional level: the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions; the UEMOA consultative council of local authorities, the umbrella organizations of private sector organizations (FOPAO, FEWACCI, FEWAMA, CCR-UEMOA, FEBWE, AIPAWAS etc.), the ECOWAS TPO Network, the ECOWAS Business Council, consumer associations and the ECOWAS Agency for Quality.

During inception phase, the common criteria for the selection of enterprises, BSOs, enterprise clusters and industrial parks for both UNIDO and ITC interventions will be elaborated and a list about what type of companies are supported will be shared with the EU Delegation in Abuja prior to commence of activities.

UNIDO and ITC's strategy to mobilise key stakeholders will be based on a consultative approach to identify their real needs aligned with the program objectives, and their involvement in the governance of the program. UNIDO and ITC will also ensure that priority is given to the stakeholders concerned, and that they are kept informed of any changes, as well as of progress. To enable greater visibility on the status of the program and reduce any risk of misunderstanding with key stakeholders, good management practices will be applied as in previous programs.

In relation to the topics of the program, the needs of the various stakeholders are as follows:

- Promotion of policies to improve exports
- Improvement of business environment
- strengthening of national and regional quality infrastructure to support the competitiveness of value chains
- Capacity building of technical centres and BSOs to provide quality services
- Capacity building of regional integration organizations.

The table below provides a summary of the key needs of the main target groups:

Needs	Target group
Institutional capacity building (technical assistance, training, information technology (IT) equipment, studies, logistical support, sustainability measures or tools, etc.) (i) to elaborate, sensitise, implement and monitor competitiveness policy, strategy and regulations on priority value chains; (ii) to address coordination failures and create better regional linkages among selected products value chain actors; (iii) to promote new business models in production and processing; to support regional fora and networking as well as to coordinate and pilot the program.	ECOWAS/UEMOA Commissions Government Ministries.

Institutional capacity building to effectively (i) mainstream and implement competitiveness policy and reforms; (ii) promote an operational information system in favour of value chains actors; (iii) encourage the establishment of commercial infrastructure in major production areas and lead markets; (iv) facilitate access to finance and promoting investments to create jobs; (v) support Members States to promote research and innovation.	Government Ministries.
(i) Operationalisation of the ECOWAS Agency for quality, Capacity building to improve quality and standards by (ii) addressing the fragmentation in the current regional and national quality institutions set-up, and develop and implement national quality infrastructure strategies; (iii) improving product quality to meet export standards (notably in agriculture), including SQAM, upgrading of laboratories (quality infrastructure); (iv) enhancing the capacity of MSMEs to access services to improve production of goods and services that meet the quality requirements of local, regional and international markets at competitive prices.	Regional and national standardization, conformity assessment, accreditation and metrology (SQAM) bodies
(i) Expanding portfolio of services of BSOs to members in particular to address competitiveness and market access constraints for exports. (ii) Improving skills, advocacy capacity and quality and provision of Business Development Services at the level of Intermediary organizations, with a particular emphasis on finance, innovation and new technologies, women entrepreneurship, informal and micro-businesses, entrepreneurship education and training, cleaner technology and production. (iii) Strengthening and focusing the public-private policy dialogue on critical trade, regional integration and private sector development reforms.	Trade and Investment Promotion Offices (TIPOs), Business Support Organisations (BSOs) like: Intermediary organisations, chambers of commerce, business associations, women business associations, Vocational training Centres, research centres and Universities
(i) Improving competitiveness and export capacity at the level of firms. (ii) Promoting local value addition through the upgrading of the processing industry, quality and marketing channels. (iii) Increasing sustainable production, including resource efficiency, dissemination of appropriate technologies in processing industries, contracts between processors and producers, awareness and training for value chain actors to respect norms and standards.	Micro, Small and Medium Size Enterprises (MSME) Groups of MSMEs

Table 1 - Needs assessment of target groups

H. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS AND SUSTAINABILITY

H.1 Programme governance and management

H.1.1 Programme governance

In the framework of the program, ECOWAS Commission has a pivotal coordinating and monitoring role to play, in conjunction with private sector organizations and UEMOA Commission, which can better monitor its member states.

Furthermore, the ECOWAS Commission will benefit from this programme direct support to recruit key ECOWAS staff to ensure a well-coordinated and inclusive ownership approach. These human resources might include an ATCMA programme dedicated focal point, outreach expert and administrative assistant, whose functions, roles and responsibilities will be defined with the ECOWAS Commission, EU Delegation to Nigeria, UNIDO and ITC during the inception phase.

At the topmost level of the governance structure, a Programme Steering Committee (PSC) will be created to regularly monitor progress towards the established objectives and outputs, advise on future orientation and provide strategic guidance at critical junctures. Reflecting the shared governance model, the PSC will leverage the joint expertise of UNIDO and ITC in key decision-making and oversight processes, ensuring balanced input and collaborative leadership. The PSC will also gather lessons learned, identify possible bottlenecks and risks, propose mitigation actions, and approve work plans for the programme.

Furthermore, the PSC will liaise and interact closely with the other ATCMA governance structures including the Overall ATCMA Steering Committee (ASC) and the Continental Steering Committee to ensure linkages and complementarities of the overall ATCMA framework.

The PSC will be chaired by the ECOWAS Commission. The PSC is comprised of representatives from the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commission, Focal Points from Member States, the EU Delegation in Abuja, UNIDO and ITC management. The terms of reference and the exact composition of the PSC will be established during the programme inception phase. The PSC will convene officially each year. The ECOWAS Regional Coordinator, supported by the PMU, will ensure the functioning of the PSC Secretariat. An agenda shall be sent to all relevant stakeholders at least two (2) weeks prior to the PSC meeting together with relevant documentation.

The PSC's tasks shall include but are not limited to:

- Taking strategic decisions, which may include approval of the inception report as the basis for the programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Setting and assessing country programme milestones, which may include changes or amendments to the implementation timeline, objectives or key beneficiaries.
- Discussing relevant issues regarding the implementation of the regional programme.
- Approving the annual work plans for the regional programme and formulate recommendations.
- Approving the updates of the progress report and formulate recommendations.
- Review and follow-up on the communication & visibility plan.

The main programme counterpart – that is the ECOWAS Commission – is responsible for facilitating the implementation of the Programme activities and involvement of member States, in close relation with UNIDO and ITC. In the case that administrative and bureaucratic bottlenecks arise from government stakeholders at national or regional level that may affect the successful implementation of the programme, the ECOWAS Commission, in consultation with UNIDO and ITC, would agree on a mutually acceptable and a feasible solution in order to ensure smooth programme implementation and sustainability. In case of any dispute, a decision will be taken by the following core members: UNIDO, ITC, and the EU Delegation, in consultation with the main programme counterpart.

The PSC will act as a decision body to ensure a smooth implementation, including involvement and relationship among stakeholders. To this end, the PSC may invite experts as reference persons and/or observers as deemed appropriate.

The PSC will act as a forum to exchange problems during implementation, including involvement and relationship among stakeholders. To this end, the PSC may invite experts as reference persons and/or observers as deemed appropriate.

Further a Technical Steering Committee (TSC) will be established at the programme-level, as a sub-structure of the PSC, to serve as a platform for more technical discussions and preparations for PSC. The TSC shall be comprised of UNIDO, ITC, ECOWAS, UEMOA and EUD Abuja. It should meet virtually at least twice a year.

In addition, Technical Working Groups (TWGs) may be formed during the Inception Phase to assess thematic/output results, take adequate corrective actions and partake in the TSC.

H.1.2 Programme management

The ATCMA ECOWAS Programme is implemented by UNIDO and ITC under a Multi-Partner Contribution Agreement (MP-CA).

Under this MP-CA, UNIDO is designated as the Organization, leading the Programme. ITC is designated as the Partner.

Annex II.a²⁰ (*Provisions applicable to Multi-Partner Contribution Agreements*) defines their respective roles and responsibilities:

Article 1: Parties to Multi-Partner Contribution Agreements

Where the Organization implements the Action in association with Partners, the Partners become Parties to the Agreement together with the Organization. The provisions contained in Annex II apply to Partners *mutatis mutandis*, subject to the provisions of this Annex, and Annex IIb as regards non-pillar-assessed Partners.

Article 2: Additional obligations of the Organization

In addition to the obligations set out in Annex II the Organization shall:

- a. perform the activities as described and assigned to it in Annex I;
- b. ensure coordination with all Partners in the implementation of the Action;
- c. be the intermediary for all communications between the Partners and the Contracting Authority;
- d. be responsible for supplying without delay all documents and information to the Contracting Authority which may be required under this Agreement, in particular in relation to the narrative reports, the requests for payment and the relevant management declarations and audit opinions - where applicable - from all Partners. Where information from the Partners is required, the Organisation shall be responsible for obtaining and consolidating this information before passing it on to the Contracting Authority. Any information given, as well as any request made by the Organisation to the Contracting Authority, shall be deemed to have been given in agreement with all Partners;
- e. inform the Contracting Authority of any event likely to affect or delay the implementation of the Action;
- f. inform the Contracting Authority as soon as the information is available, of any change in the legal, financial, technical, organisational or ownership situation of any of the Partners, as well as of any change in the name, address or legal representative of any of the Partners;
- g. be responsible in the event of monitoring and evaluations, as described in Article 9 of Annex II, for collecting and providing all the necessary documents;
- h. establish the payment requests in accordance with the Agreement;

²⁰ https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-07/contribution-agreement-annex-iiia_en.pdf

- i. be the sole recipient, on behalf of all the Partners, of the payments of the Contracting Authority. The Organisation shall ensure that the appropriate payments are then made to the Partners without unjustified delay;
- j. where relevant, repay funds to the Contracting Authority in line with Article 14 of Annex II without prejudice to Article 6;
- k. not delegate any, or part of, the tasks listed above to the Partners or other entities.

Article 3: Obligations of the Partners

The Partners shall:

- a. perform the activities as assigned to each Partner in Annex I, taking all necessary and reasonable measures to ensure that the Action is performed in accordance with the description of the Action in Annex I and the terms and conditions of this Agreement;
- b. ensure that the Organisation has or obtains the data needed to draw up the reports, financial statements and other information or documents required by this Agreement and the annexes thereto, including any information needed in the event of monitoring or evaluations, as described in Article 9 of Annex II, as well as the relevant management declarations and audit or control opinion referred to in Articles 3.10 to 3.12 of Annex II (this does not apply to those documents and Partners that fall within an arrangement with the European Commission to provide either of them globally, on an annual basis);
- c. ensure that all information to be provided and requests made to the Contracting Authority are sent via the Organisation;
- d. agree with the Organisation upon appropriate internal arrangements for the internal coordination and representation of the Partners vis-a-vis the Contracting Authority for any matter concerning this Agreement, consistent with the provisions of this Agreement and in compliance with the applicable legislation(s);
- e. be responsible - in the event of audits, checks and investigations, as described in Article 15 of Annex II - for full cooperation in the protection of the Union's financial interests and, in particular, for providing all the necessary access, information and documents in accordance with Article 15.5 of Annex II, without prejudice to Article 5.

With regards to the respective technical interventions under the assigned outputs, both agencies will have the possibility liaise and interact directly with the EU Delegation in Nigeria and the ECOWAS Commission, if and where required.

Responsibilities of UNIDO and ITC per Outputs

Output	Implementing Agency
1.1 Market access barriers are identified and reduced	ITC
1.2 Quality compliance and standards are strengthened	UNIDO
1.3 Facilitate a value-chain revision mechanism	ITC
2.1 Enhance value addition and diversification	UNIDO
2.2 SME capacities and opportunities for business and export are enhanced	ITC

Implementation arrangements by UNIDO and ITC at HQ

On behalf of UNIDO, the Division of MSME Competitiveness, Quality & Job Creation (TCS/SME), will lead the programme implementation, in close coordination with other technical Divisions of the Organization also based in UNIDO HQ.

On behalf of ITC, the Office for Africa section, within the Division for Country Programmes, will oversee the programme coordination and liaise with both ITC's technical divisions and UNIDO.

Joint field level management by UNIDO and ITC

A joint regional Programme Management Unit (PMU) will be established in Abuja. The PMU will house a joint UNIDO and ITC team for the local implementation of the programme. The PMU will assume coordination and day-to-day management and operations, and will also extend technical support to programme implementation. The PMU will coordinate closely and on a daily basis with the programme's main counterpart, the ECOWAS Commission. Additionally, an important function of the PMUs will be the outreach, communication and development of working relations with programme stakeholders.

The PMU will be headed by a Regional Programme Manager (hired and managed by UNIDO as the Organization in the MP-CA). The PMU will host technical experts from both agencies who will manage day to day operations of their respective outputs' interventions.

Further, the PMU will include two experts, one Monitoring and Evaluation Expert and one Advocacy and Outreach Expert, who will serve the entire Programme and interventions of both agencies. UNIDO will recruit the Monitoring and Evaluation Expert and ITC the Advocacy and Outreach Expert.

UNIDO and ITC will explore possible in-kind contributions from the ECOWAS Commission.

For sustainability reasons, field-based staff will ensure that the skills, tools, systems and networks developed under the program are gradually and fully transferred to staff of strategic implementing partners in countries of the region, as well as at the level of the ECOWAS Commission before the closure of the programme.

Table 2 - UNIDO Management & Operations & Technical Experts

Title/Position	Function/Responsibility	Availability
HQ PROGRAMME COORDINATION UNIT VIENNA		
(1) Industrial Development Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensures the effective day to day implementation, provides technical expertise and coordinates UNIDO technical interventions and prepares work plans, terms of reference, technical specifications etc.Ensures coordination between ECOWAS component and the other programme components.Monitors and reports on programme progress and performanceEnsures proper oversight of expenditure flows vis-à-vis budget allocations	Full-time 100%
(1) Programme Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensures that administrative and financial processes for the project implementation are in line with UNIDO procedures. This includes budget revisions, obligation reviews, re-phasing, extension or completion of project, issuance of new project allotment documents/due sub-allotments, TC allocations and monitoring related exercises.Ensures coordination with other UNIDO Divisions for administrative related matters (HRS, Procurement, Travels, etc.).Supervises and coaches the administrative staff at the field level.	Full-time 100%

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE HQ		
<p>UNIDO Technical expertise through contributions of pro-rata invoiced UNIDO regular staff members and of Industrial Development Experts/Technical Advisor that will cover specific thematic/topics across different components.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for the overall strategic lead and managerial supervision of the programme implementation, including contract management with the European Commission and ITC, as well as project partners, including Government Institutions (TCS/SME) Ensure supervision of technical inputs and their alignment with international best practices and UNIDO standards, and clearance of technical reports. Provides technical expertise to support the successful implementation of the Programme in the following areas: Quality Infrastructure and services, industrial upgrading and value chain development, cluster development, energy efficiency, innovative finance etc. <p>Expertise will be sourced from the following Divisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TCS/SME – Division of MSME Competitiveness, Quality and Job Creation (Lead) TCS/DAI – Division of Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence IET/AGR – Division of Agribusiness and Infrastructure Development TCS/ECA – Division of Energy and Climate Action IET/PST – Division of Fair Production, Sustainability Standards and Trade 	<p>% of time depending on the contribution to the Action</p>
REGIONAL PROGRAMME COORDINATION ABUJA		
(1) Regional Programme Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads the Programme Management Unit (PMU), ensuring smooth operation, coordination and effective performance of the regional interventions. Monitors and reports on project progress, in collaboration with UNIDO and ITC HQ services, ensuring alignment with strategic goals and regional priorities. Coordinates with regional stakeholders including national Governments, the ECOWAS Commission and national Focal Points (from both public and private sectors) to ensure strong programme ownership, effective collaboration and the successful delivery of programme outcomes. Guides the PMU as the secretariat of the Programme Steering Committee and the Technical Steering Committee, including providing substantive backstopping to consultative and other meetings, conferences etc. Guides and supervises continuous results-oriented monitoring and evaluation of the programme, to ensure the expected outcomes and outputs, translated into the respective KPIs, are met. Guides and supervises overall Programme Advocacy and Outreach aspects. Guides the development and coordinates the implementation of annual work plans to ensure the achievement of log frame indicators as outlined in the programme's contractual documents. 	Full-time 100%
(1) International QI Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the guidance of the Regional Programme Manager, provides professional expertise on technical matters pertaining to Quality infrastructure activities. This includes assessment of, coordination with, and technical guidance of national and regional QI institutions and conformity assessment bodies Plans, monitors and reports on the execution of technical activities and results earmarked in the project work plan under component 1.2, including coordination and supervision of needed experts' missions. Ensures collaboration and partnership-building with counterparts, beneficiaries and Quality Infrastructure related institutions in the region. 	Full-time 100%
(1) International VC Development Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the guidance of the Regional Programme Manager, provides professional expertise on technical matters pertaining to value addition. This includes technical guidance, advisory support, and training for targeted value chain stakeholders, as well as, reporting on, execution and planning of technical areas earmarked in the project work plan. Plans, monitors and reports on the execution of technical activities and results earmarked in the project work plan under component 2.1, including coordination and supervision of needed experts' missions 	Full-time 100%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures collaboration and partnership-building with counterparts, beneficiaries and value-chains related institutions. 	
(1) Monitoring and Evaluation Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops and implements comprehensive monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess project performance and impact. Ensure programme activities are implemented effectively and maintain updated records of programme participants. Track progress and assess programme impact, including through data collection, analysis, and evaluation. 	Full-time 100%
(2) Programme Assistants (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist the PMU, in liaison with HQ, in the overall smooth functioning of the programme by proactive planning and ensuring timely follow up on assigned tasks and responsibilities. Provide administrative assistance in all matters related to office management at field office level, organization of regional events, local procurement of goods and services. Responsible for getting quotations, booking training venues, handling custom clearances and administrative documents on site. Draft routine and non-routine correspondence (both on administrative and/or TC-related matters). Maintain an up-to-date filing system (both paper and electronic) and databases related to work. Support monitoring aspects of the UNIDO-led interventions in liaison with the project team in Abuja and Vienna. 	Full-time 100%
Other Short-term to Long-term Consultants (Field /HQ if required): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International and National Technical Experts (assigned to respective thematic technical outputs). Administrative Support Services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experts will support in achieving the technical programme activities. Directly attributable administrative support services that are required for the implementation of the programme such as Finance, Human Resources, Procurement and Logistics. 	Part-time/ Full-time
National Focal Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with local stakeholders, including Government bodies, private sector entities, and relevant institutions, to ensure effective collaboration and programme execution. Provide guidance on the implementation of country specific interventions. Facilitate logistics for national events. 	Ad-hoc basis

Table 3 – ITC Management & Operations and Technical Experts

Title/Position	Function/Responsibility	Availability
HQ PROGRAMME COORDINATION UNIT GENEVA		
(1) Programme Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serves as the primary contact for oversight, governance, cohesion, quality control, and effective follow-up for the Programme. Reviews, refines, and validates the design and execution of technical activities to ensure alignment with Programme objectives and regional priorities. Ensures contact with the field offices for the smooth implementation of the ECOWAS ATCMA and its overall coherence with other components of the EU ATCMA Programme. 	Full-time 100%

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures alignment with existing and ongoing EU-funded programs at national and regional levels in the countries where this action is implemented. 	
(1) Administrative Programme Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists HQ with administrative and logistical matters, including managing schedules, handling correspondence, organizing meetings, and maintaining office records. 	Full-time 100 %
HQ TECHNICAL EXPERTISE GENEVA		
ITC Technical expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides technical expertise in their respective fields to support the successful implementation of the Programme. Ensures that Programme activities are aligned with international best practices and ITC standards <p>The 3 ITC Divisions that will provide this expertise are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DMD (Business-Driven Trade & Investment Facilitation; Trade & Market Intelligence; Strategies and Policy for Trade & Investment DECI (Sector Enterprise Competitiveness; Institutions & Ecosystems) DSIT (Green & Inclusive Value Chains; Women, Youth and Vulnerable Communities) 	Ad hoc basis
REGIONAL PROGRAMME COORDINATION ABUJA + NATIONAL		
(2) Technical experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides strategic guidance and technical advice to ensure the effective planning, execution, and evaluation of the Programme. Supports planning, implementation, and management of the project on the ground in connection with all stakeholders. Tailors market barriers and SMES competitiveness activities to VC and country context Provides technical inputs for the implementation of programme interventions under Output 1.3 Provides technical inputs for the implementation of programme interventions under Output 1.1 and Output 2.2 	Full-time 100%
(1) Administrative Programme Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists the Regional Office with administrative and logistical matters, including managing schedules, handling correspondence, organizing meetings, and maintaining office records. 	Full-time 100%
(1) Outreach and Advocacy Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinates logistics for programme activities, including organization of events, trainings and workshops. Enhances the visibility of programme outcomes to all stakeholders by preparing communication materials such as newsletters, success stories, photos, and videos. 	Full-time 100%
National Focal Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinates with local stakeholders, including government bodies, private sector entities, and relevant institutions, to ensure effective collaboration and Programme execution. Provides guidance on the implementation of country specific interventions Facilitates logistics for national events 	Ad hoc basis

H.1.3 Coordination between UNIDO and ITC

UNIDO HQ, as the Organization, and ITC HQ, the Partner, will join forces for the implementation of the Action. UNIDO and ITC shall work in close concert to address difficulties encountered during programme implementation and take measures, as necessary, to overcome challenges.

The contractual relationship between the Organization (UNIDO) and the Partner (ITC), in particular for the transfer of the funding will be laid out in a UN to UN Agreement.

H.2 Inception phase

The ATCMA ECOWAS will begin implementation with a dedicated inception phase of six (6) months following the receipt of funds into UNIDO, and subsequently to ITC, accounts.

H.2.1 Core activities

The inception phase will build from the programme document to consolidate linkages with the proposed counterparts and key regional and national, public and private stakeholders. During this phase, the proposed programme strategy and focus will be reviewed. Generally, the inception phase will see the validation of the overall programme work plan as well as the development of national work plans for individual ECOWAS Member States. Furthermore, the identification of the priority value chains will be conducted, jointly by ECOWAS Commission and its Member States and Mauritania, the EUD Abuja, UNIDO and ITC.

The inception phase activities are envisaged for implementation during the first six months of the project and can take place alongside the initiation of other core technical activities reflected in the ATCMA ECOWAS work plan.

Further activities during the inception phase may include:

- Recruitment of the requisite technical experts and setting up of the Programme Management Unit (PMU).
- Discussion and validation with the ECOWAS Commission and the EU Delegation to Nigeria on the type of human resources and overall support needed to guide the programme.
- Validation by UNIDO and ITC of the project's priority value chains, in agreement with the ECOWAS member states, the ECOWAS Commission and the EU delegations in the region.
- Identify specific needs at country level and define a clear implementation plan, including its integration into the overall LF with clear national indicators, baselines and targets at the national level based on the overall programme regional approach.
- Identifying specific country groups on which tailored work on value chains needs to be conducted.
- Setting up and equipping of the physical programme office in the ECOWAS Commission, including transportation means.
- Identification of direct project beneficiaries.
- Elaboration of the first annual detailed work plan.
- Conducting of any relevant in-depth assessments
- In-depth and up-to-date donor mapping and identification of relevant cooperation projects and national initiatives in ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania for creation of synergies.
- Development and dissemination of specific guidelines detailing the functioning of the national facility for ad-hoc requests.
- Establishment of baselines for the KPIs, inclusive of gender-specific indicators based on the collection of sex-disaggregated data.
- Validation of the budget, and processing adjustments to the same, as necessary (e.g. transfer of funds among outcomes/outputs).
- Establishment of the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and *modus operandi* (Terms of Reference (ToR)), including envisaged frequency of PSC meetings
- Validation of the approaches, concepts and logical framework (“logframe”) proposed in the programme document, taking into consideration the latest developments in the region and the information collected through the in-depth assessments.
- Updating the logframe baseline and targets

- Designing of tools for planning, implementation, coordination, progress and impact monitoring and evaluation of the project, including risk monitoring and review, and the drafting of a dedicated sustainability strategy.
- Drafting of programme communication guidelines and plans, including specific visibility materials.
- Commencing to build awareness and kick-off liaison with relevant regional and national public and private stakeholders and partners to secure their active involvement.
- Further alignment of the offerings of UNIDO and ITC under the five outputs, and on the coordination chapter of the agreement, based on discussions with ECOWAS Commission.
- Reviewing and harmonizing the approach to link the regional governance with the continental governance, in coordination with the other regional ATCMA components.

H.2.2 Value chain selection

Importantly, during the inception phase, national and regional stakeholders will be confirmed/identified, and target value chains for support be selected in close cooperation with the European Union Delegation in Nigeria, the ECOWAS Commission and other relevant key stakeholders, UNIDO and ITC will jointly review and put forward proposals for methodologies for value chain selection. Once agreement on the methodological approach is reached, the requisite analyses/assessments/diagnostics will be jointly conducted by the implementation partners' experts, and recommendations for value chains which are then deemed suitable for programme support (following the evaluation of clear diagnostic criteria, such as alignment with regional and AU priorities for economic development) be formulated and submitted for consideration by the ECOWAS Commission and the donor. Additional consideration on the value chains selection are available in the Complementary Annex document (*Annex V – ITC Work on ECOWAS Regional Value Chains*).

H.2.3 Inception phase results

The results of the inception phase will be documented in an inception report and will include the following key deliverables: i) PMUs and PSC set up; ii) action plans with detailed activities and an operational plan/roadmap; iii) baselines for the KPIs; iv) logframe and budget adjustments, as necessary; v) updated overview of key stakeholders, vi) approaches to specific project strategies (in aspects such as: visibility and communication, expansion of results and knowledge management as well as the sustainability of the results, including the exit strategy with a view to continuation beyond the programme's duration), relevant assessments (in-depth gender analysis in target VCs, etc.), and vii) list of selected value chains with clear justifications. The inception report will be presented and discussed at the first PSC meeting for approval and endorsement.

H.3 Monitoring & evaluation

H.3.1 Monitoring

The programme will establish a Result-Based Monitoring (RBM) mechanism to track progress, assess impact and ensure timely identification of implementation challenges and provide support in addressing them. Thus, monitoring will assess progress towards timely achievement of expected results, both in terms of quality and quantity, throughout the programme cycle. It will provide the main stakeholders with early indications of progress towards the achievement of programme outcomes and outputs and/or problem areas that need to be addressed. Continuous M&E is crucial for sustaining the achievements of the programme intervention and making necessary adjustments as required.

A logical framework (logframe) is included in **Section N “Programme Logical Framework”**. Baselines will be established during the inception phase, taking into consideration the information collected through in-depth assessments, and the logframe revised and validated. Programme activities shall be monitored on a continuous basis to ensure that activities are carried out as planned and remedial

steps are taken as deemed necessary. Based on logframe indicators, baselines, and targets established during the six-month inception phase, the Programme Management Unit (PMU) in Abuja in close consultation with the ECOWAS Commission shall convene on a quarterly basis and share unofficial updates in the form of quarterly progress reports (QPR) to ensure complementarity of and synergies between planned activities. The MPRs shall contain the following sections: activities/achievements; difficulties encountered; risks identified and measures taken/proposed; activities for the following month; and output monitoring.

H.3.2 Reporting

As specified by the Contribution Agreement and its relevant Annexes, a narrative progress report and a financial report for the reporting period in question and an updated workplan for the subsequent year shall be prepared and presented to the PSC. The narrative reports will be prepared in a standardized template designed by UNIDO, in consultation with ITC and the ECOWAS Commission. Sufficient focus will be put on the change that the programme is intended to bring, so as to include systematic quantitative information on the progress towards the achievement of outcomes and outputs, and adjust strategies accordingly. Reporting would feed into the EU OPSYS²¹ system. In accordance with Article 3.2 of the Contribution Agreement Manual, the annual financial report will be presented with the same level of detail as the sections/budgets established in Annex III (Action Budget).

H.3.3 Evaluation

A mid-term review is planned at the end of the second year of implementation; the main objective is to inform and guide the second half of the programme's implementation phase. A final evaluation is foreseen after programme closure. Both evaluations will be funded and managed directly by the Contracting Authority and will require the cooperation of the UNIDO and ITC PMUs, programme partners and stakeholders to support third-party evaluation missions and related activities.

H.4 Risks

Risks that could jeopardize the ATCMA – ECOWAS Regional Programme have been identified and are detailed in Table 4, listed by type and relevance, together with the proposed actions to mitigate them. Based on the assessment of those risks the global risk-level for the Programme is estimated at medium-low.

Further, the logical framework provides an overview of the main assumptions the programme formulation team has made during the design phase. These will have to be reviewed and updated during the inception phase. A more detailed risk register will be prepared and managed throughout the programme's implementation.

²¹ <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/opsys>

Table 4 - Risk Assessment

Risk type	Description	Level	Assumptions	How to mitigate
Operational – Counterparts and beneficiaries	Lack of commitment and/or interest of stakeholders (beneficiaries) regarding the importance of the intervention.	Medium-low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECOWAS Commission, its Member States and Mauritania are committed to enhance quality and providing the necessary resources, human and financial, for achieving objectives and sustainability of the programme interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a bridge of collaboration and trust with stakeholders from the programme's inception. Consider risk of lack of commitment when designing the work plan, in order to set realistic objectives. Analyze causes of lack of commitment and/or interest and identify viable solutions to address them.
	Limited absorption capacity of some stakeholders.	Medium-low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good absorption capacity, engagement and commitment of stakeholders and programme beneficiaries. Relevant institutions have the necessary capacity and human and financial resources to ensure proper implementation of the technical activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absorption capacity will be considered when preparing work plans, to set realistic objectives. Absorption capacity and performance will be monitored regularly and results will be shared with the PSC members in order to take corrective action.
	Low retention (or turn-over) of skilled and competent staff trained by the programme. Competent and skilled staff may leave the supported institution. Changes in key government agencies' staff and departments prevent stable focal points and disrupt implementation.	Medium-low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High retention (low turnover) of skilled and competent staff in the supported institutions. Government agencies and partner institutions will maintain consistent staffing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous trainings and skill upgrading of professionals (both senior and junior-level) in order to achieve a sustainable critical mass of resources. Training-of-trainers approach to ensure training opportunities are available to newcomers, if necessary. Alternative ways of retaining professionals will be discussed with counterpart institutions (e.g., national recognition, financial reward, etc.).
	Lack of an effective collaboration from key counterparts to reaching the programme objectives both at national/regional levels.	Medium-low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key counterparts are committed and willing to dedicate needed financial and human resources to reach the programme objectives both at the national/regional level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the technical nature of the collaboration other potential actors will be identified. UNIDO will establish a direct channel of communication with the management of each counterpart, both a national and regional levels. Where considered necessary, the working relationship will be formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding.

	Limited maturity of digital infrastructure across the region.	Medium-low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital infrastructure across ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania is sufficiently developed and robust to allow for/ be able to support digital transformation initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An assessment of gaps and needs will be conducted prior to the implementation of concrete digital transformation-related activities to identify the digital baseline for programme operations in order to design digital enhancement activities that are fit-for-purpose.
	Key implementation partners face resource limitations and knowledge gaps related to digital competences and technologies.	Medium-low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation partners have the requisite technological, human and financial resources as well as digital competences available/accessible to benefit from and engage in innovation and enhancement of digitalization initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation partners will be selected according to clearly defined criteria, which will set out a minimum level of what will be required in terms of resources and competences in order to fruitfully engage in programme activities, further considering potential implementation partners' potentials for contributing to systemic change.
	Reluctance of stakeholders/ disinterest in learning about and devising innovative financing solutions (e.g., climate-related, applying a gender lens, environmentally-oriented).	Medium-low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders are open to learning and demonstrate willingness to engage in capacity building on pertinent innovative financing topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted capacity building for policy makers on developing/strengthening skill sets and knowledge that will, in turn, eventually lead to adopting policies that incentivize financing and investments (including those that are green) for industries. Sensitization activities related to innovative financing solutions.
Operational – Business Process	Misinterpretation and/or lack in knowledge around scope of application of relevant new EU Regulations and Directives. Unavailability of related key expertise.	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experts/subcontractors commanding the required level of expertise will be identified and hired, and deliverables/contents (e.g., action plans; legal interpretations) be made available in an accessible, understandable format. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The requisite expertise will be recruited and/or subcontracted, as needed, and deliverables designed according to detailed Terms of Reference/Job Descriptions in order to guarantee full understanding of regulatory requirements.
Operational – Political	Presence of political instability affecting the implementation of programme activities at regional and national levels.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient political stability across ECOWAS region and Mauritania and within countries in receipt of programme support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain strong coordination with the respective Government entities at national and regional levels. Identify viable solutions to implement programme activities.
	Changes in the governmental administrations, policies and regulations affecting the National Quality Institutions across Member States and the selected VCs.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant changes in the governmental administrations, policies and regulations affecting the National Quality Institutions across Member States and the selected VCs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain strong coordination with the respective Government entities at national and regional levels. Ensure strong coordination through the steering and convening organs at the ECOWAS Commission.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider changes in the work plan to reduce the number of critical activities during electoral/government change periods, and implement the most critical ones during periods of stability.
	Politically motivated, vested interests Inability to create consensus among national representatives on relevant value chains specific actions that can support the region as a whole; changes in political priorities reduce availability of policy makers and hinder the mobilization of relevant government, trade support, and private sector representatives to create the platform-	Medium-low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania will actively pursue and support REC-oriented initiatives and not hinder decision-making and consensus finding due to national interests. Political priorities will align with programme priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ECOWAS Commission will be involved from the programme onset to build consensus among Member States' Governments regarding key programme activities (e.g., selection of Centres of Excellence; using relevant raw materials for cleantech manufacturing over short-term earnings to be gained from direct export of such raw materials). The ECOWAS Commission has the capacity to coordinate ECOWAS Member States actions towards adopting documented regional value chain action plans The programme throughout its lifetime will engage in continuous sensitization efforts aimed at promoting and spreading awareness on the benefits of intraregional cooperation, as necessary.
Operational – Prescribed rules	Major amendments in regulatory frameworks for the selected VCs.	Medium-low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No or inconsequential (to programme implementation and achievement of results) amendments in the applicable regulatory frameworks for target value chains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain strong coordination with the respective Government entities at national and regional levels.
Operational – Economic, Social and Environmental	Mismanagement of chemicals and waste derived from testing laboratories.	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CABs/laboratories have the requisite competence and capabilities to manage chemicals and waste in a safe way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manufacturing and testing activities will aim at implementing international standards and VSS, thus, ensuring best practices for the management of chemical and biohazard materials.
	Existing cultural and social norms may hinder women's participation in programme activities.	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender-related barriers to participation and enjoyment of benefits derived from programme activities will be recognized and adequately addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme activities will be designed in a gender-responsive and/or -sensitive manner.
	Contradiction of global economy, as a result of a global crisis, such as pandemics or political global,	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In case of pandemics, political unrest or global crisis, programme activities might need to be implemented in hybrid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close monitoring of global economic and political situation and analysis of national and regional impacts.

	regional, national unrest (e.g. Global recession severely affects targeted MSMEs and major target markets of selected value chains , COVID-19 or similar outbreak impacts MSMEs' ability to invest, travel restrictions prevent face-to-face activities)		form, if no travel is allowed or security situation would not allow.	
	Climate Change effects and/or natural disaster; climatic disturbances prevent the growth of high-quality supplies	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural disasters due to climate change impacts become more and more unpredictable. The programme will support to measure such impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Programme will conduct policy dialogue concerning the need for contingency plans and programme implementation will be discussed to respond to eventual external shocks and effects of climate change.
Strategic - Business Model/ Reputation	Programme activities will not achieve set targets.	Medium-low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme activities will be designed and monitored in an effective way to contribute to the achievement of targets as per the logframe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thorough baseline studies and detailed needs assessments will be carried out. Revise linkages between programme activities and objectives. Adjust programme activities as necessary during implementation. Detailed action plans with monitoring and evaluation system in place, including monitoring of KPIs. Careful selection of programme staff and consultants based on detailed Terms of Reference. Well-defined deliverables and conducting of regular performance evaluations.
Fiduciary and financial	Misuse / -management of financial resources (i.e., not used as foreseen, not properly accounted for, do not achieve value for money).	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sound management of programme financial resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funds channelled through the UNIDO and ITC systems UNIDO and ITC will keep the overall responsibility for their respective financial management – it follows their respective financial rules and regulations.
	Financial and in-kind contributions delayed.	Medium-low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely disbursement and receipt of financial contributions into UNIDO or ITC accounts. Timely receipt of in-kind contributions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear and timely identification of roles and (financial) responsibilities will be conducted during the inception phase (first 6 months) and revised at the Steering Committee meetings.

H.5 Programme sustainability

Sustainability is considered along the programme life cycle and built into these areas of intervention:

- **Responding to the demand and private sector needs:** The programme has been designed in close collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission and the ECOWAS Private Sector and is demand driven. During the inception phase, the programme will ensure close collaboration with private sector national stakeholders, subsequent to the identification of target value chains.
- **Ensuring regional and national leadership and ownership:** Close collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission and its related institutions, as well as the government-coordinating agencies at the national level will ensure that programme initiatives, lessons and best practices easily become focal areas for actors to build on in their plans and programmes, thus building institutional capacity at a systemic level and thereby ensure that institutions can manage, adapt and sustain programme outcomes independently.
- **Ensuring multi-stakeholder participation and consultation:** The programme will foster a high degree of participation and engaging stakeholders at different levels (regional and national) and both from the public and private sectors. This will ensure high-level support and a strong sense of ownership. Regular Steering Committee meetings will be conducted to assess progress, identify potential risks and determine the strategic direction of the programme.
- **Developing local expertise (through the Training-of-Trainer approach):** By following the Training of Trainers approach, adequate knowledge and experience sharing will be ensured, and the know-how and technical expertise be transferred to the regional and national institutions. Experts will have gained the requisite skills and knowledge to support trade development and support the Quality Infrastructure System in the region during and after the programme's end. Where possible, the approach will contribute to mitigating the impact of employee rotation, thus, contributing to the sustainability of outputs.
- **Business principles will be introduced:** When working with Government, regional and national institutions, MSMEs and cooperatives, training on business plans management, and operations will be pursued to support self-sufficiency.
- **Scaling-Up and replication of successful examples:** The programme will include strategies for scaling successful interventions and replicating them in more regions or sectors to maximize impact.
- **An appropriate sustainability strategy will be designed,** so that the assisted organizations will be able to maintain and to improve their performance when the programme will come to its end. This strategy will be designed during the inception phase of the programme and sustainability concerns will be considered in the agenda of the PSC meetings.

H.6 Outreach and Advocacy

Outreach and advocacy activities are an integral part of the programme activities and will be coordinated by UNIDO²² and ITC²³, which will also conduct communication and visibility actions pertaining to their areas of interventions. The programme will follow the [EU Guidance for External Actions on Communicating and Raising Visibility](#).

Communication guidelines and a communication plan will be completed during the inception phase and presented during the first Programme Steering Committee meeting, including: (i) visual guidelines (logo, graphical elements and key messages); (ii) relevant communication messages (lemmas); (iii)

²² Communication and visibility activities using the name, emblem and official seal of UNIDO will be in compliance with DGB/2018/03.

²³ https://insight.itc-cci.net/oed/ce/brand/PublishingImages/Pages/visual_guidelines/Download%20full%20in-house%20version.pdf

clear functions and responsibilities; (iv) communication objectives; (v) identification of relevant target audiences; (vi) identification of suitable channels to reach them.

Equal/balanced representation in visual materials and /or case studies and gender-sensitive language will be ensured. Furthermore, the programme will pay attention to not reproduce gender and other stereotypes in visual and descriptive materials.

All communication and visibility activities of the programme will be carried out in close cooperation with the Delegation of the European Union in Nigeria and the ECOWAS, other relevant EU Delegations in ECOWAS member countries and the ECOWAS Commission, as well as in line with the overall ATCMA Communication Strategy, to be developed in the respective ATCMA Inception Phases.

The programme will ensure to reflect use the EU logo according to the [EU Communication and Visibility guidelines](#) and reflect the European Union is a programme funder as per the logo image and text “*funded by the European Union*” below.

The visibility of donor, implementing partners, beneficiaries and programme logos will however have to be aligned with the UNIDO and ITC respective policies in regard to multi-party projects. ITC will not be able to use programme logos in its corporate communications but only donors and partners logos. The number of logos that can be used in each communication outlet will be based on standard communication practices.

I. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL MAINSTREAMING

I.1 UNIDO Environmental and Social Safeguards Policies and Procedures (ESSPP)

Considering that the intervention will provide technical assistance to institutions and MSMEs in a variety of value chains that are yet to be determined across ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania, the categorization may require updating following the programme’s inception phase, and requirements for specific environmental and social assessments might thus be triggered in the future.

Environmental and social aspects will be duly considered in all programme activities, and value chains under consideration for technical assistance will be assessed along a variety of aspects, including their respective sustainability potential. Specifically, the value chains will be assessed for their respective potential for making the value chain environmentally sustainable, in line with relevant EU directives, by fostering pertinent compliance capacities and exploring opportunities within the circular economy and energy efficiency potentials. Furthermore, the potential impact of climate change on the value chain (resilience vs. fragility) will be analysed. Additionally, the presence and role of structured sectorial associations (dedicated to sustainability) will be considered.

In its support to MSMEs and Conformity Assessment Bodies, UNIDO will put special emphasis on building relevant compliance capacities and technical competences related to testing, inspection, and certification for voluntary sustainability standards (VSS), which attest competence for a multitude of relevant social and environmental parameters, as well as for due diligence requirements contained in key EU directives.

In the overall context of long-term sustainable and environmentally-friendly economic development across ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania, and with a view to garnering export potential to the European Union market, the emerging clean energy and circular product manufacturing and servicing value chains are of particular interest. Therefore, environmental soundness and energy efficiency, clean

production and circular economy aspects, practices and approaches will be incorporated and mainstreamed throughout the proposed programme's technical assistance initiatives and interventions.

As per UNIDO Environmental and Social Safeguards Policies and Procedures (ESSPP), the Environmental and Social screening template has been completed this programme has been categorized as "Category C". Although no further specific environmental and/or social assessment is required for category C projects, environmental and social aspects will be duly considered in all the project activities. This will be achieved through the development of an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF). The ESMF will ensure that the programme avoids, minimizes, and/or mitigates potential adverse environmental and social (E&S) impacts arising from various interventions. To this end, the ESMF will guide the integration of E&S standards into: a) the upgrading of practices and technologies of Centers of Excellence (2.4.2 & 2.4.3), b) the development of financial instruments and investment schemes (2.7), and c) any undetermined ad-hoc activities the programme will undertake (1.9 & 2.8). The development of the ESMF will be guided by relevant national ESS regulatory requirements, applicable UNIDO ESSPP Operational Safeguard guidance, and industry best practices.

I.2 ITC support to Environmental Preservation and Sustainable Development

Environmental preservation and the promotion of sustainable development are integral to the priorities and programs of ITC²⁴.

ITC fosters the connection between trade and sustainability and supports the implementation of sustainability standards, including codes of conduct, audit protocols, norms of production and trade, that aim to protect the people and the environment during the production, manufacturing, trading and consumption of goods.

ITC hosts and actively maintains the world's first global database on sustainability standards, Standards Map²⁵, used by governments, small and medium-sized enterprises as well as large brands, as a guide for their actions towards sustainability.

In this regards, environmental and social sustainability principles will guide the ATCMA program's implementation, including initiatives such as green procurement, online or hybrid events, carbon offsetting, as well as virtual and digital training workshops.

Moreover, particular emphasis will be placed on the transfer of green technologies to support the sustainable development of key value chains, leveraging the expertise of the EU. Sustainability considerations will be central to the selection of priority value chains. The action will also ensure that beneficiary institutions (such as private sector support institutions, chambers of commerce, sector associations, etc.) develop their understanding of climate risks and promote best practices throughout the value chains. Additionally, sustainability and ecological aspects will be highlighted in the development of companies' productive and export capacities, notably through the adoption of environmentally friendly approaches.

J. GENDER AND YOUTH MAINSTREAMING

Overall, the project activities will seek to target and encourage participation of youth and women. By supporting the ECOWAS trade integration process, the programme will ultimately contribute to youth economic empowerment through the creation of jobs in export-oriented sectors. The action will also align with the objectives and implementation of the AfCFTA Women and Youth Protocol and

²⁴ ITC assists eco-entrepreneurs and MSMEs in setting up their businesses and supports the development of their green innovations and products. The agency also encourages the alignment of trade and environmental policies, notably through its Green2Compete and Trade for Sustainable Development initiatives, which aim to put an end to unsustainable practices.

²⁵ Standards Map is an online tool developed with the support of the EU, BMZ and SECO. Available at: www.standardsmap.org

contribute to the empowerment of women and youth owned and led businesses in priority export-oriented value chains.

J.1 UNIDO approach

UNIDO recognized gender equality and the empowerment of women have a significant positive impact on sustainable industrial development and are key drivers of poverty alleviation and social progress.

During the proposed programme's inception phase, an in-depth gender analysis in the target value chains and target geographical areas will be conducted. Findings collected during the gender analysis will inform the design and any necessary revision of indicative activities.

Certain suitable gender-specific indicators will be designed and baseline data be collected at the start of the programme, and the programme will collect sex-disaggregated data, and targets for women's participation will be set and monitored. Tentative targets will be set for suitable indicators and included in the logframe during the inception phase, including for UNIDO's Integrated Results and Performance Framework (IRPF) indicators.

The programme team will liaise with relevant regional and national industry and business organizations involved in furthering women's (economic) empowerment, such as the ECOWAS Federation on Business Women and Entrepreneurs (FEBWE) and the ECOWAS Gender Development Centre (EDGC), with the aim of supporting the identification of women beneficiaries, including women-led/-owned enterprises, and better integrating and responding to gender-specific concerns and needs through the programme. Initial unanticipated risks and/or negative gender impacts of the programme will also be discussed with the relevant groups and mitigating strategies developed.

UNIDO will closely coordinate with implementation partners to ensure that their respective gender related policies and guidelines are taken into consideration and implemented. In its support to building the competence of relevant institutions, gender-responsiveness in standardization will be pursued, inter alia, by raising awareness on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Declaration on Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development.

In this regard, technical collaborations between UNIDO and the Standardization and Francophonie Network (*Réseau Normalisation et Francophonie* - RNF) are foreseen under outputs related to outcome 1.2 "Strengthened quality compliance and standards". RNF is a public institution and its mission is to make standardization a pillar of the economic agendas of Francophone countries.

Under these outputs, contractual arrangements with RNF will be put in, during the programme Inception Phase, for the delivery of services such as promotion of women in SQAM-related activities, awareness sessions on the importance of gender for standards development and tailor-made capacity building activities for female QI experts in the region.

Under this scope, any sub-contract with RNF will be in accordance with applicable UNIDO rules and procedures and will pre-empt any competitive procurement procedure.

In its support targeted at MSMEs, the programme will seek to build MSMEs' capacity to successfully compete for public sourcing contracts. In parallel, the programme will aim to build Counterparts' capacities related to gender-responsive procurement, thus contributing to the development of a conducive business environment for women-led enterprises and women entrepreneurs across ECOWAS region and Mauritania.

All trainings and workshops will be designed and planned taking into consideration any known obstacles to women's involvement and meaningful participation in programme activities (e.g., related to transport; potential time conflicts (e.g. due to household chores and childcare responsibilities, relative time poverty); security and safety, cultural factors, etc.) as well as any barriers to the enjoyment of benefits derived from the programme.

As far as feasible, measures will be taken to maximize women's participation. Any events will be organized in line with the UNIDO policy on panel parity, while any visibility and training materials designed and distributed by the programme will employ gender-sensitive language and pursue balanced representation in images, further aiming not to portray women and men in a manner, which could reproduce gender and other stereotypes.

In the composition of the programme's governance body, the programme will also encourage the participation on women in decision-making roles. This objective will be reflected in the Terms of Reference.

The programme will aim to pursue gender-balanced recruitment for all available programme positions and women will especially be encouraged to apply. All programme staff will undergo basic gender-sensitization training by being asked to partake in the self-paced UN Women e-learning course "I know Gender 1-2-3" available on UN Women's e-learning campus" (<https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org>) as well as the UNIDO-designed Gender Lens Investing Training Programme. Module 15 of the UN Women training is highly recommended, as this focusses on inclusive and sustainable industrial development.

Considering the regional, thematic and budgetary scope of the proposed programme, further considering the overall framework programme, a Gender Specialist will be recruited to conduct the in-depth gender analysis, to review and design gender-specific indicators and provide recommendations for suitable activities, targets, and means of verification for measuring progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women objectives.

J.2 ITC approach

Women and youth owned and led small business are key beneficiaries of the ATCMA ECOWAS programme. It will seek to encourage participation from youth and women, including through supporting continental-level youth and women associations and hubs. By ensuring that marginalized groups have equal access to economic opportunities and are included in the green transition, the programme fosters not only economic growth but also equity and justice for all.

ITC recognizes that all women have the right to a decent income, employment, fair working conditions, and a choice and voice in shaping their economic futures. Through its SheTrades Initiative, established on 2015, ITC works across the trade and business ecosystem to provide women entrepreneurs and producers with access to key knowledge, resources, and networks. SheTrades assists beneficiaries at the multilateral, regional, and national levels to ensure that all women's needs and interests are considered, acted upon, and translated into results on the ground.

Youth is one of the five impact areas of ITC's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan, identified as being critical to delivering an inclusive, prosperous and sustainable future. ITC's Youth and Trade Programme contributes to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) on Quality Education, by ensuring that more young people are equipped with the skills needed in today's market, and to the SDG on Decent Work and Inclusive Growth. Through this initiative, ITC promotes youth entrepreneurship in developing countries by working with young people to develop their business and employability skills, which in turn improves their access to quality jobs with decent work conditions and increases their income.

During the project implementation, ITC will pay particular attention to the following elements:

- Every effort will be made by the project to register as many women as possible in its planned training activities, both at management and technical levels, and to encourage their participation in all relevant project activities and decision-making processes;
- Capacity building will consider the different needs of men and women in terms of skill levels, safety, timing, etc.;

- Throughout project implementation, sex-disaggregated data collection, including on women-owned or women-led businesses, will be conducted in accordance with the Agencies' Gender Policies and their Gender Strategy whenever possible. Sex-disaggregated data will also be used to monitor the project's performance. A strong participation of women in specific value chain segments will be encouraged. Concrete target indicators will be set after the project's preliminary phase to account for the actual presence and participation of women at various stages of the value chain;
- Value chain diagnostics and analysis will capture the roles of women and youth vis a vis men in the selected value chains and identify key interventions to support the empowerment of women and youth operating in these chains
- Whenever possible, links with government agencies, NGOs, community organizations, and women's associations or groups focused on gender will be established;
- Coordination and cooperation will be sought with regional gender and youth organizations and agencies as FEBWE, OWIT, the ECOWAS Gender Centre and the ECOWAS Youth and Sport Centre;
- The promotion of women's entrepreneurship will be considered a key intervention in the clusters where the project will be implemented, and dedicated sessions for women-led businesses will be organized to strengthen their quality knowledge and ensure their participation in trade;
- All events organized by the project will be planned in accordance with the Panel Parity Policy.

K. INPUTS

K.1 ECOWAS inputs

The contribution of the counterpart institutions will be in kind, covering the following specific items:

- Ensure that sufficient staff of an appropriate professional level and seniority within their organizations are made available for programme activities and consultation, as appropriate.
- Ensure continuity of personnel during the programme. Any change in the staff assigned to the programme should be promptly notified to UNIDO and ITC.
- Nominate participants to meetings, workshops and other events, as part of the normal functioning of their organizations.
- Provide local administrative support for organizing meetings, conferences and training activities, as necessary.
- Provide support and facilitate the processing of any legal documents or decrees to be produced under the programmes.
- Ensure that privileges and immunities of all persons performing services on behalf of UNIDO are the same privileges and immunities as those held/enjoyed by officials of the United Nations under Sections 18 of the Convention.
- Solve any institutional difficulties or obstacles that may hinder the implementation of programme-related activities and/or those that have a direct impact on programme objectives.
- Implementing agencies shall be able to claim an exemption from or reimbursement of indirect taxes, such as sales tax and VAT, in respect of purchases for programme implementation and programme beneficiaries.
- Provide office space to host the Programme Management Units at the ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, Nigeria.
- Other in-kind contributions as relevant.

K.2 UNIDO inputs

UNIDO will provide inputs in terms of UNIDO expertise, know-how, facilities, and staff time. In general terms, UNIDO will provide:

- Identification and recruitment of the Programme Management Unit.
- Identification and preparation of job descriptions and recruitment of all the international and/or national experts and consultants required for programme implementation.
- Identification of suppliers (national/international), preparation of Terms of Reference and technical specifications, and procurement of services and equipment (e.g., test equipment), as envisaged.
- Remuneration of programme staff, experts and consultants recruited by UNIDO, as well as payment of suppliers.
- Preparation and arrangement of programme activities and payment for them.
- Periodical programme monitoring and reporting.
- UNIDO methodologies, resource materials and platforms, as required.

Procurement and Grants

- The procurement and contracting of services and equipment under this programme will be done in accordance with UNIDO rules and procedures.
- Exceptions to competitive bidding are foreseen under cooperation with CEN-CENELEC (ref. p.29), EURAMET and its Members (ref. p.35) and RNF (ref. page 95) that will pre-empt any competitive procurement procedure.

The project will cover the office equipment (supplies and computers/printers, as well as an electricity generator if necessary). The operating costs of the unit (visibility, cleaning, security, etc.) as well as the costs related to project personnel (UNDSS, UNCDF, etc.) up to the percentage of occupancy of the premises required for project activities might be covered by the project, subject to discussion with ECOWAS Commission, EU and ITC during the Inception Phase.

At the end of the project, the equipment will be transferred to the institutions supported during project implementation. All equipment will become the property of the supported institutions upon presentation of a sustainable maintenance plan prepared for the equipment.

K.3 ITC inputs

ITC will provide inputs in terms of ITC expertise, know-how, facilities, and staff time. In general terms, ITC will provide:

- Identification and recruitment of the Programme Management Unit.
- Identification and preparation of job descriptions and recruitment of all the international and/or national experts and consultants required for programme implementation.
- Identification of suppliers (national/international), preparation of Terms of Reference and technical specifications, and procurement of services and equipment (e.g., test equipment), as envisaged.
- Remuneration of programme staff, experts and consultants recruited by ITC, as well as payment of suppliers.
- Preparation and arrangement of programme activities and payment for them.
- Periodical programme monitoring and reporting.
- ITC methodologies, resource materials and platforms, as required.

ITC will process all procurement and contracting of services and equipment under this programme in accordance with its rules and procedures. Any grants issued by ITC will be subject to ITC internal due diligence and oversight processes.

At the end of the project, the equipment purchased will be transferred to the institutions supported during project implementation. All equipment will become the property of the supported institutions upon presentation of a sustainable maintenance plan prepared for the equipment.

L. PRIOR OBLIGATIONS AND PREREQUISITES

The ECOWAS Commission, Governments and main counterparts will commit to the provision of directive and technical staff availability and needed staff time to ensure full counterpart capacity for the programme.

National and regional counterparts will also provide information and coordination on other projects implemented in the countries and financed in the region either by other development organizations and donors, to ensure efficient use of resources.

M. UNIDO LEGAL CONTEXT

It is expected that each set of activities to be implemented in the target countries will be governed by the provisions of the Standard Basic Cooperation Agreement concluded between the Government of the recipient country concerned and UNIDO or – in the absence of such an agreement – by one of the following: (i) the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement concluded between the recipient country and UNDP, (ii) the Technical Assistance Agreements concluded between the recipient country and the United Nations and specialized agencies, or (iii) the Basic Terms and Conditions Governing UNIDO Projects.

N. PROGRAMME LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The programme logical framework (logframe) matrix will be calibrated during the inception phase²⁶, with the identification of baselines and targets, and evolve during the programme lifetime, including disaggregated indicators per selected value chain and country-level.

Table 5 - Programme Logical Framework

Results chain:	KPIs ²⁷	EU OPSYS	Baseline (values and referenc e years)	Target (values and referenc e years)	Sources of verification	Assumptions
Impact – Overall Objective (OO)						
To increase sustainable intra-African and EU-Africa trade	SDG.9.2.1 Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP and per capita	SDG.9.2.1 Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP and per capita	TBD	TBD	United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) UNSD from National Statistical Offices (NSOs)	
	Increase of ECOWAS intra-regional exports in the selected value chains (USD '000)	Customised indicator	TBD	TBD	Trade Help Desk https://globaltradehelpdesk.org/en ITC Trade Map www.trademap.org UNCTAD Statistics	

²⁶ By applying a phased approach towards the fine-tuning of the most relevant KPIs for the intervention, the list of EU/OPSYS, UNIDO/IRPF and ITC indicators will be revisited and fine-tuned within the inception phase of the programme as needed. This will happen in full consideration of the EU and Implementing Agencies' reporting requirements and possible complementarities of existing indicators.

²⁷ The KPIs that UNIDO will report on are color coded in grey, while the KPIs that ITC will report on in green.

Results chain:	KPIs ²⁷	EU OPSYS	Baseline (values and reference years)	Target (values and reference years)	Sources of verification	Assumptions
	Increase of ECOWAS exports to Africa in the selected value chains (USD '000)	Customised indicator	TBD	TBD	Trade Help Desk https://globaltradehelpdesk.org/en ITC Trade Map www.trademap.org UNCTAD Statistics	
	Increase of ECOWAS exports to the EU in the selected value chains (USD '000)	Customised indicator	TBD	TBD	Trade Help Desk https://globaltradehelpdesk.org/en ITC Trade Map www.trademap.org UNCTAD Statistics	
	Number of jobs supported/sustained MSMEs supported by the programme ITC D1 - Number of jobs maintained and created Optional	Number of jobs supported/sustained by the EU Optional	TBD	TBD	Project surveys and direct reports from the beneficiaries (emails or other formats) International Labour Organization (ILO) Statistics, Data Portals and Reports Global SDG Indicators Database https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/	

Results chain:	KPIs ²⁷	EU OPSYS	Baseline (values and reference years)	Target (values and reference years)	Sources of verification	Assumptions
					UNIDO Statistics Portal https://stat.unido.org/	
Specific Objective (SO) (Outcome) 1						
Enhanced market access for selected value chains	SOC.2 Number of MSMEs with increased inclusion in value chains (% of women-owned/led firms) (through strengthened QI services for selected VCs)	Number of supported Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that report entry in a new market	TBD	TBD	Official trade statistics National documents, laws, or regulations to improve business environment. Direct reports from beneficiaries (emails or other formats) Programme internal monitoring	

Results chain:	KPIs ²⁷	EU OPSYS	Baseline (values and reference years)	Target (values and reference years)	Sources of verification	Assumptions
	<p>Number of supported MSMEs that have accessed new markets, in terms of products and partners, calculated on a quarterly basis (<i>Disaggregated by youth and women led businesses</i>)</p> <p>(ITC C6 - # of MSMEs that have accessed new markets (including through e-commerce) as a result of ITC support)</p>	Number of supported Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that report entry in a new market	TBD	TBD	Responses to follow-up questions / survey for MSMEs: non-anonymous, post activity and/or post-project including via phone	
	<p>Number of policies, strategies, rules or regulations, procedures and support measures developed / improved for the benefit of MSMEs with business sector input.</p> <p>(ITC A3 - # of policies, strategies, rules or regulations developed/improved for the benefit of MSMEs with business sector input, and endorsed</p> <p>Or</p> <p>ITC A4 - # of policies, strategies, rules or regulations, developed/improved for the benefit of MSMEs with business sector input, and promulgated or implemented,</p> <p>TBC by ITC during inception phase)</p>	<p>Number of supported trade related policies, regulations or legislations developed/ revised/ implemented with the support of the EU-funded intervention</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Number of non-tariff measures eliminated with the support of the EU-funded intervention</p>	TBD	TBD	<p>National documents, laws, or regulations to improve business environment.</p> <p>Direct reports from beneficiaries (emails or other formats)</p> <p>ECOWAS TOAM obstacles reports resolved https://www.tradeobstacles.org/ecowas/Home.aspx</p>	

Results chain:	KPIs ²⁷	EU OPSYS	Baseline (values and reference years)	Target (values and reference years)	Sources of verification	Assumptions
	<p>Number of ECOWAS Members States with a decrease in border rejections in European markets.</p> <p>Optional</p>	Possible EU OPSYS match: Average number of days to complete all cross-border processes to import and export goods of supported border crossing			<p>EU RAFFS Database https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/rasff-window/screen/search</p> <p>Trade Compliance Analytics</p>	
Specific Objective (SO) (Outcome) 2						
Enhanced export competitiveness for SMEs in selected value chains	UNIDO ECO.3 Number of firms with an increase in exports (% of women-owned/led firms)	Number of supported Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that report an increase in their international trade flows	TBD	TBD	<p>Official trade statistics</p> <p>Programme internal monitoring</p> <p>Before/after surveys with direct and indirect MSME beneficiaries that made changes based on advice from advisory provided by project</p> <p>Responses to follow-up questions / survey for MSMEs: non-anonymous, post activity and/or post-project including via phone</p>	

Results chain:	KPIs ²⁷	EU OPSYS	Baseline (values and reference years)	Target (values and reference years)	Sources of verification	Assumptions
	<p>Number of supported MSMEs having transacted international business, including as part of regional or global value chains and calculated on a quarterly basis (Disaggregated by youth and women led businesses)</p> <p>(ITC C3 - # of MSMEs having transacted international business, including national business transactions that are part of international or global value chains as a result of ITC support)</p>	Number of supported Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that report an increase in their international trade flows	TBD	TBD	Responses to follow-up questions / survey for MSMEs: non-anonymous, post activity and/or post-project including via phone	
	<p>Number of supported MSMEs having made changes to their business operations for increased competitiveness through value addition, diversification and improved export skills, calculated on a quarterly basis (Disaggregated by youth and women led businesses)</p> <p>(ITC C1 - # of MSMEs having made changes to their business operations for increased competitiveness as a result of ITC support)</p>	Number of supported entities that adopt business innovative processes/products	TBD	TBD	Responses to follow-up questions / survey for MSMEs: non-anonymous, post activity and/or post-project including via phone	

Results chain:	KPIs ²⁷	EU OPSYS	Baseline (values and reference years)	Target (values and reference years)	Sources of verification	Assumptions
	<p>Value of international business transacted (Disaggregated by youth and women led businesses)</p> <p>(ITC C5 - USD value of international business transactions of ITC client MSMEs, including national business transactions that are part of international or global value chains as a result of ITC support)</p> <p>Optional</p>	Export Sales	TBD	TBD	Responses to follow-up questions / survey for MSMEs: non-anonymous, post activity and/or post-project including via phone	
	<p>Number of cases in which BSOs improved their performance and services in the area of export competitiveness, calculated on a quarterly basis</p> <p>(Tentatively ITC B1 - # of cases in which BSOs improved their performance and services for the benefit of their members/clients as a result of ITC support. To be decided during inception phase)</p>	Number of organizations/institutions with increased capacities	TBD	TBD	<p>Project surveys</p> <p>BSOs annual reports</p> <p>Direct reports from beneficiaries (emails or other formats)</p>	
	Increase of Export Competitiveness performance of West Africa in the Global, Continental or Regional markets in the selected value chains	Customised indicator	TBD	TBD	West Africa Competitiveness Observatory - Export competitiveness performance	

Results chain:	KPIs ²⁷	EU OPSYS	Baseline (values and reference years)	Target (values and reference years)	Sources of verification	Assumptions
	Optional (Specific to West Africa Competitiveness Observatory, to be confirmed during inception phase)				https://wacomp-observatory.org	
Output 1.1:						
Market access barriers identified and reduced	Number of clients gaining greater awareness of how to address market access requirements and related procedures (ITC A1 - # of clients gaining greater awareness of international trade from using ITC's business, trade and market intelligence)	Customised indicator	TBD	TBD	Project surveys BSOs annual reports Direct reports from beneficiaries (emails or other formats) ECOWAS TOAM obstacles reports	The ECOWAS Commission and Member states, including Mauritania, are willing to improve transparency in trade regulations and procedures The ECOWAS Commission has the capacity to coordinate ECOWAS members, including Mauritania, actions towards addressing documented intra and extra regional regulatory and procedural trade obstacles
	Number of cases in which governmental institutions and BSOs improved their performance and services in the area of addressing obstacles to trade (ITC B1 - # of cases in which BSOs improved their performance and services for the benefit of their members/clients as a result of ITC support)	Number of organizations/institutions with increased capacities	TBD	TBD	Project surveys BSOs annual reports Direct reports from beneficiaries (emails or other formats)	
	Number of trade obstacles reported that are recorded in the ECOWAS TOAM	Customised indicator	TBD	TBD	ECOWAS TOAM obstacles reports https://www.tradeobstacles.org/ecowas/Home.aspx	Stable social, political & business environment in beneficiary countries BSOs demonstrate their commitment to make

Results chain:	KPIs ²⁷	EU OPSYS	Baseline (values and reference years)	Target (values and reference years)	Sources of verification	Assumptions
						changes to their operations Internet connection is reliable across all partner countries
Output 1.2:						
Strengthened quality compliance and standards	GOV.1: Number of institutions established or strengthened	Number of organizations/institutions with increased capacities	TBD	TBD	Programme internal monitoring Official records of certified companies National standards records Rejection analysis data	ECOWAS Commission and Member States, including Mauritania, are committed to enhance quality and providing necessary resources, human and financial, for achieving objectives and sustainability of the programme interventions.
	GOV.2 Number of actors participating in enhanced collaboration settings	Customised indicator	TBD	TBD		
	POL.2: Cumulative number of new standards adopted or implemented	Number of regulations / legislation / strategies / policies / action plans / procedures adopted with EU support	TBD	TBD		
	REA.2: Number of actors engaged	Number of participants that attended capacity building events/measures	TBD	TBD		
	KASA.1: Number of actors gaining awareness or knowledge on UNIDO knowledge areas	Number of people trained by the EU-funded intervention who increased their knowledge and/or skills (disaggregated by sex and age)	TBD	TBD		
	KASA.2: Number of actors gaining skills on UNIDO knowledge areas		TBD	TBD		
Output 1.3						

Results chain:	KPIs ²⁷	EU OPSYS	Baseline (values and reference years)	Target (values and reference years)	Sources of verification	Assumptions
Value-chain revision mechanism facilitated	Number of platforms (i.e. ECOWAS Value Chain Revision Mechanism) established in consultation with the ECOWAS Commission and Member States, including Mauritania	Number of regulations / legislation / strategies / policies / action plans / procedures adopted with EU support	TBD	TBD	Terms of reference of the platform available and approved by the ECOWAS Commission Direct reports from beneficiaries (emails or other formats)	Internet connection is reliable across all partner countries The ECOWAS Commission has the capacity to coordinate ECOWAS members actions towards adopting documented regional value chain action plans
	Number of clients gaining greater awareness of value chain competitiveness factors (A1 - # of clients gaining greater awareness of international trade from using ITC's business, trade and market intelligence)	Customised indicator	TBD	TBD	Post-workshops evaluations and project survey data	
	Number of agreed value chain actions plans (elaborated through the ECOWAS Value Chain Revision Mechanism) (Tentatively ITC A3: Number of policies, strategies, rules or regulations developed/improved for the benefit of MSMEs with business sector input, and endorsed)	Customised indicator	TBD	TBD	Value chains action plans available	

Results chain:	KPIs ²⁷	EU OPSYS	Baseline (values and reference years)	Target (values and reference years)	Sources of verification	Assumptions
	Number of policy and strategy decisions based on information and services available through the West African Competitiveness Observatory and other market intelligence tools developed or supported by the action	Customised indicator	TBD	TBD	<p>Project surveys on the WACOB and other tools supported by the programme</p> <p>Policy documents or publications referring to the WACOB and other tools supported by the programme</p> <p>Direct reports from beneficiaries (emails or other formats)</p>	
Output 2.1						
Enhanced value addition and diversification	BUS.1: Number of firms with improved management practices (% of women-owned/led firms)	Number of supported entities that adopt business innovative processes/products	TBD	TBD		Key counterparts are committed and willing to dedicate needed financial and human resources to reach the programme objectives both at the national/regional level.

Results chain:	KPIs ²⁷	EU OPSYS	Baseline (values and reference years)	Target (values and reference years)	Sources of verification	Assumptions
	BUS.2: Cumulative/Annual Number of actors developing new products (% of women-owned/led firms)		TBD	TBD	Programme reporting	National investments in the targeted value chains Active participation of the private sector
	GOV.1: Number of institutions established or strengthened (agricultural and agribusiness-related)	Number of entities supported or trained	TBD	TBD		
	GOV.2: Number of actors participating in enhanced collaboration settings (clusters, networks) (% of women-owned/led firms)	Customised indicator	TBD	TBD		
	TEC.2.: Number of countries showing the adoption of new technology	Customised indicator	TBD	TBD		
	INV.1: Number of investment-ready proposals elaborated (% of gender lens projects)	Number of bankable business plans developed through investment support	TBD	TBD		
	REA.2: Number of actors engaged (% of women)	Number of participants that attended capacity building events/measures	TBD	TBD		

Results chain:	KPIs ²⁷	EU OPSYS	Baseline (values and reference years)	Target (values and reference years)	Sources of verification	Assumptions
Output 2.2						
Enhanced SME capacities and opportunities for business and export	Number of cases in which BSO added new export competitiveness services and tools developed by the programme in their portfolio of services to MSMEs	Number of additional business development services providers are offering with the support of the EU-funded intervention	TBD	TBD	Programme reporting Direct reports from beneficiaries (emails or other formats) Training reports	Regional organizations and/or Country's ownership and institutions' availability for the full duration of the project's implementation BSOs demonstrate their commitment to make changes to their operations
	Number of MSMEs served by BSOs that are directly supported by the programme (ITC B2 - # of MSMEs served by BSOs that are directly supported by ITC)	Number of businesses that utilise business development services	TBD	TBD	Project surveys BSOs annual reports Direct reports from beneficiaries (emails or other formats) Training reports	
	Number of ECOWAS regional B2B events organized or supported /	Number of capacity building measures (seminars, workshops, training events, exercises, peer reviews, needs assessments, technical assistance) implemented	TBD	TBD	Event reports	
	Number of MSMEs that participated in B2B and B2C events through programme support (<i>Disaggregated by youth and women led businesses</i>)	Customised indicator	TBD	TBD	Event reports	

Results chain:	KPIs ²⁷	EU OPSYS	Baseline (values and reference years)	Target (values and reference years)	Sources of verification	Assumptions
	Number of beneficiaries with access to financial services (<i>Disaggregated by youth and women led businesses</i>)	[GERF 2.17a / EURF 2.13a / IPA PF 2.20a/ IPA III RF 4.2.1.6a] Number of beneficiaries with access to financial services with EU support: (a) firms	TBD	TBD	Project surveys Direct reports from beneficiaries (emails or other formats) Financial services accessed	

ANNEXES

Annex I: Workplan

A tentative timeline, which will be revised during the programme inception phase, is presented in the table below (by year and quarter).

Table 4 – Programme Work plan

Year	1				2				3				4			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1: ENHANCED MARKET ACCESS FOR SELECTED VALUE CHAINS																
OUTPUT 1.1: MARKET ACCESS BARRIERS IDENTIFIED AND REDUCED																
Activity 1.1.1: Market access barriers to be addressed by the programme at the regional and national level and in selected value chains have been identified																
1.1.1.1 Conduct desk research and consultations with experts on key market access barriers on trade and investment																
1.1.1.2 Shortlisting of key market access barriers and formulation of dedicated recommendations for implementation																
Activity 1.1.2: Priority trade and investment reforms to ease market access conditions have been implemented																
1.1.2.1 Elaboration of tailored trade and investment trade reforms to address the market access barriers selected within agreed timeframes through focused public private dialogues																
1.1.2.2 Equipping selected regional and national agencies to jointly implement trade and investments reforms																
1.1.2.3 Piloting and rollout of trade and investments reforms																

Year	1				2				3				4			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1.1.2.4: Piloting and rollout of transversal reforms to ensure gender inclusion																
Activity 1.1.3: The implementation of an ECOWAS NTB resolution mechanism has been supported																
1.1.3.1 Equip the ECOWAS Regional Trade Facilitation Committee to effectively address market access barriers																
1.1.3.2 Support the ECOWAS Commission to establish a NTB reporting and resolution mechanism																
1.1.3.3 Tailor digital tools for the improvement of regional market barriers reporting, monitoring and resolution processes																
OUTPUT 1.2: STRENGTHENED QUALITY COMPLIANCE AND STANDARDS																
Activity 1.2.1: Regional harmonization and integration in QI governance, policy, and standards and technical regulations facilitated																
1.2.1 .1 Reviewing, updating and alignment of the Regional Quality Infrastructure regulatory framework and the regional quality policy (ECOQUAL) with Africa Quality Policy and AfCFTA agreement, in coordination with ATCMA continental component																
1.2.1.2 Updating and alignment of the National Quality Policies with the Africa Quality Policy, In coordination with ATMCA continental component																
1.2.1.3 Supporting the functioning of the Regional Quality Agency (ECOWAQ) and its 5 Technical Committees (ECORAS, ECOSHAM, ECOCONF, ECOMET and ECOREG) including a follow-up of national and continental work.																
1.2.1.4 Identifying and implementing opportunities for digitalization of processes related to QI governance.																
1.2.1.5 Raising awareness on standards harmonization through campaigns and awareness sessions and support pilot value chain actors to implement the adopted standards and technical regulations as well as needed quality processes and instruments to generate value addition.																
1.2.1.6 Enhancing capacity and capabilities for standards harmonization, in close coordination with ECOSHAM & ECOREG Committees, ARSO/AFSEC and NSBs.																

Year	1				2				3				4			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1.2.1.7 Supporting the development of standards on selected value chains based on the needs of the private sector																
1.2.1.8 Promoting good governance in standardization, in close coordination with ECOSHAM & ECOREG Committees and NSBs																
1.2.1.9 Strengthening ECOWAS' representation in ARSO and supporting participation of ECOWAS Member States at ARSO and ISO, in priority technical committees																
1.2.1.10 Identifying standards compliance challenges in the selected VCs.																
1.2.1.11 Supporting the monitoring, dissemination and implementation of relevant international/continental standards.																
1.2.1.12 Identifying and implementing standards that are relevant for sustainability management and climate change, in particular ISO 14020 series, ISO 14030 series, ISO 14040 series, ISO 14060 series, ISO 14090 series, ISO 59000 series, ISO 37120 series, ISO 20400 series, ISO 20121 and ISO 32210:2022.																
1.2.1.13 Developing a roadmap for strengthening the capacities and capabilities of the ECOREG for harmonization of technical regulations.																
1.2.1.14 Supporting ECOREG in implementation of the roadmap for strengthening their capacities and capabilities for harmonization of technical regulations. Support will include technical advice, strengthening the digitalization of the processes, and training to ECOREG members.																
1.2.1.15 Support to ECOWAS in the adoption of pending harmonized technical regulations and for their promotion in ECOWAS countries.																
1.2.1.16 Identifying needs for harmonization of technical regulations in priority value chains. Consider alignment with the EU Green deal, and in particular needs and opportunities related to green technologies, circular economy, energy efficiency, critical raw materials (CRMs), biodiversity, finance and other climate-neutral areas within each selected value chain.																
1.2.1.17 Identifying and harmonizing climate-related technical regulations linked to emissions, energy efficiency, renewable energy, fuel quality, carbon offsetting and trading, forestry and land use, waste management, monitoring and reporting of GHG emissions.																

Year	1				2				3				4			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1.2.1.18 Developing harmonized technical regulations for priority value chains, as per the identified needs, and guidelines as necessary.																
1.2.1.19 Supporting to ECOWAS for the adoption of developed technical regulations as well as the proposed guidelines. Include awareness sessions among value chains stakeholders and training of national inspection bodies (NIBs) staff as necessary.																
1.2.1.20 Supporting the implementation of Good Regulatory Practices																
Activity 1.2.2: Regional harmonization and integration in SPS-related functions and standards supported																
1.2.2.1 Strengthening the operational framework of the ECOWAS SPS Working Group																
1.2.2.2 Supporting the development of procedures to collaborate with the future Africa Food Safety Agency and participation in the Africa Food Regulatory Authorities Forum																
1.2.2.3 Supporting the convening function of ECOWAS on the harmonization of relevant food safety standards based on Codex Alimentarius.																
1.2.2.4 Exploring regional approaches for voluntary third-party assurance (vTPA), electronic certification and remote audit.																
1.2.2.5 Supporting the participation of ECOWAS in relevant continental and global activities in SPS, e.g., the Codex Alimentarius, World Organization on Animal Health (WOAH), International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), Continental SPS Coordination Forum, CCAfrica.																
Activity 1.2.3: VSS and sustainability driven legislation developed and promoted																
1.2.3.1 Conducting a Rapid Scan on the complex and newly emerging landscape of global supply chain legislation																
1.2.3.2 Mapping of context-specific (local, regional, value chain-specific) best practices and approaches (including VSS and sustainability driven legislation)																
1.2.3.3 Conducting a benchmarking study of feasible novel approaches to meeting emerging demands (e.g., specific VSS, cross-industry collaboration, ESG reporting mechanisms, etc.)																

Year	1				2				3				4			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1.2.3.4 Implementing a regional awareness-raising campaign, building on a series of information sessions, hosted by and with strong ownership of a consortia of business associations, and export and investment promotion agencies.																
1.2.3.5 Implementing solution-driven regional workshops bringing together relevant actors (including government actors, business associations, investment agencies, export promotion agencies, training providers such as Vocational Training Centres or Universities, quality infrastructure regional and national institutions, and companies) to identify actionable solutions and develop a regional strategy to meet and benefit from the sustainability drive.																
1.2.3.6 Piloting and demonstrating a (set of) solution(s), possibly including implementation plans for required VSS, ESG reporting mechanisms, targeted training programs, visibility and awarding of high-performing companies, or creation of a network of sustainability experts, among others																
Activity 1.2.4 Capacities of QI institutions (at national/regional level) strengthened by the provision of technical support																
1.2.4.1 Supporting ECOMET for the monitoring/participation of AFRIMETS & OIML work, for the organization of inter-comparison of metrology laboratories and for the management of the database of technical skills available in ECOWAS.																
1.2.4.2 Reviewing existing metrology services and identification of areas where they can be strengthened and capacitated in support to the alignment with the EU Green deal, notably related to green technologies, circular economy, energy efficiency, critical raw materials (CRMs), biodiversity, finance and other climate-neutral areas within each selected value chain.																
1.2.4.3 Supporting the development of technical guides in industrial and legal metrology domains.																
1.2.4.4 Supporting the development of harmonised technical regulations related to legal metrology activities in relation with metrology services needed to support the development of VCs.																
1.2.4.5 Strengthening of Regional Calibration Laboratories (RCLs) towards accreditation to enable VC MSMEs to have access to recognized metrology services																
1.2.4.6 Strengthening and equipping selected National Metrology Institutes with a regional vocation to provide needed services																

Year	1				2				3				4			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1.2.4.7 Strengthening of Regional Reference Calibration Laboratories (RRCLs) in collaboration with PTB regional interventions.																
1.2.4.8 Enhancing digitalization of metrology/calibration related services.																
1.2.4.9 Conducting a comprehensive assessment of the calibration requirements across various sectors and industries within the ECOWAS region.																
1.2.4.10 Identification of critical measurement instruments and equipment that require calibration to ensure accuracy and reliability in measurements (aligned to the needs of the target value chains).																
1.2.4.11 Strengthening a number of priority calibration laboratories (i.e., capability and capacity of established calibration labs through procurement of relevant instruments).																
1.2.4.12 Supporting the ISO IEC 17025 accreditation of a number of calibration laboratories (calibration scopes aligned to the needs of the target value chains).																
1.2.4.13 Providing training and capacity building programmes for technicians and engineers on proper calibration techniques and procedures.																
1.2.4.14 Procurement of equipment for reference laboratories in the ECOWAS region.																
1.2.4.15 Leveraging and expanding the use of tools and approaches for data analysis and modelling within the regional metrology infrastructure, from aspects such as air quality or ocean acidification monitoring or to other aspects of climate change.																
1.2.4.16 Supporting SOAC (UEMOA countries), GAS (Ghana) and NINAS (Nigeria) to develop VC accreditation programs, in particular in support to the alignment with the EU Green deal, notably related to green technologies, circular economy, energy efficiency, critical raw materials (CRMs), biodiversity, finance and other climate-neutral areas within each selected value chain.																
1.2.4.17 Supporting the ECORAS Technical Secretariat for monitoring ECORAS activities in liaison with the work of AFRAC, ILAC and IAF.																
1.2.4.18 Supporting ECORAS to set up and strengthen relevant committees in view to carry out activities relating to the delivering of ECOQMARK in VCs, including the mandate of CBs.																
1.2.4.19 Identification and provision of relevant support to each entity of ECORAS in support of VCs.																

Year	1				2				3				4			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1.2.4.20 Identification and implementation of opportunities for further digitalization of accreditation related services.																
1.2.4.21 Supporting mutual recognition of ECOWAS accreditation bodies and their recognition by AFRAC and ILAC.																
1.2.4.22 Upgrading of ECORAS accreditation bodies through peer evaluation.																
Activity 1.2.5: Institutional Capacity Building for food safety structures provided (at national/regional level)																
1.2.5.1 Supporting technical activities of ECOWAS Working Group and related entities through facilitation of Member States' participation																
1.2.5.2 Organizing food safety risk analysis training for regulators and executive training for food safety competent authority agency heads.																
1.2.5.3 Conducting risk assessment training to a number of regulators and approaches to integrate food safety standards within national frameworks.																
1.2.5.4 Enhancing competencies of food safety inspectors for the target value chains based on evidence-based risk principles in import/border and domestic control.																
1.2.5.5 Developing internal capacity building programmes for inspection and train the trainers from relevant food safety authorities on good regulatory practice (GRP), considering risk analysis principles.																
Activity 1.2.6: Institutional Capacity Building for Conformity Assessment Bodies delivered (national/regional level)																
1.2.6.1 Building capacity of ECOWAS Community Committee for conformity assessment (ECOCONF), including the extension of its scope to new area (proficiency testing, reference material producers, verification / validation).																
1.2.6.2 Promoting CABs among VC actors and updating of the ECOQUIB database to consider data relating to the identified value chains.																
1.2.6.3 Supporting the implementation and digitalization of the ECOWAS Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Inspection Certificates																

Year	1				2				3				4			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1.2.6.4 Promoting, upgrading and digitalizing the ECOWAS Certification Mark (ECOQMARK).																
1.2.6.5 Strengthening of a pool of qualified quality and technical auditors in ECOWAS in order to reach a critical mass serving the private sector's conformity assessment needs in the region.																
1.2.6.6 Supporting the setting-up of regional reference laboratories by identification of testing needs for the value chains as well as the laboratories likely to carry them out considering the achievement of previous programs.																
1.2.6.7 Building capacity of the identified laboratories and procuring needed equipment in view of international accreditation towards ISO/IEC 17025.																
1.2.6.8 Regional harmonization of identified conformity assessment practices considering the new needs from value chains (testing methods, proficiency testing methods, etc.).																
1.2.6.9 Identifying and strengthen regional reference proficiency testing providers and reference material producers towards ISO/IEC 17043 and ISO/IEC 17034 accreditation, in cooperation with PTB regional interventions.																
1.2.6.10 Identifying and strengthen regional reference validation/verification bodies towards ISO/IEC 17029 /ISO 14065 accreditation.																
1.2.6.11 Capacitating certification bodies (ISO/IEC 17021-1, ISO/IEC 17065) to obtain international recognition considering the new needs from value chains and supporting their accreditation.																
1.2.6.12 Identifying and capacitating CABs in new conformity assessment fields considering the new needs of value chains (notably in view of the alignment with the EU Green Deal) and supporting their accreditation (proficiency testing providers (ISO/IEC 17043), reference material producers (ISO 17034), validation /verification bodies (ISO/IEC 17029 /ISO 14065).																
Activity 1.2.7: Institutional capacity building for inspection and related services (national/regional level) provided																
1.2.7.1 Enhancing competencies of food safety inspectors for the target value chains based on evidence-based risk principles in import/border and domestic control.																
1.2.7.2 Supporting piloted inspection bodies toward Accreditation and provision of inspection kits to enhance their capacities.																

Year	1				2				3				4			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1.2.7.3 Supporting the development of a regional approach for the assessment and use of data generated by voluntary standards programmes (vTPA approach) and train regulators on the vTPA assessment toolkit.																
1.2.7.4 Developing internal capacity building programmes for inspection and train the trainers from relevant food safety authorities on GRP, HACCP and voluntary standards, considering risk analysis principles.																
1.2.7.5 Identifying the potential of upgrading from local to / developing regional certification schemes for targeted agri-value chains, covering food safety and ESG requirements.																
1.2.7.6 Identifying potential certification service providers and support them to become partners of certification schemes (linked to accreditation scope).																
Activity: 1.2.8 Quality Culture throughout the region promoted																
1.2.8.1 Assessment the maturity level of QI in ECOWAS member states' through the SDGs Quality Infrastructure for Sustainable Development (QI4SD) Index and identification or areas of improvement and mutual learning.																
1.2.8.2 Identification of additional culture for quality (C4Q) interventions in support to the awareness raising and promotion of the EU Green deal, notably those related to green technologies, circular economy, energy efficiency, critical raw materials (CRMs), biodiversity, finance and other climate-neutral areas within each selected value chain.																
1.2.8.3 Identification of key quality issues related to value chains and raise awareness of these issues among key players.																
1.2.8.4 Raising awareness among MSMES on the importance of the regional standards in view of their implementation in VC products.																
1.2.8.5 Identification and train of a network of journalists interested in specific topics of quality.																
1.2.8.6 Support Employer Organizations (EO) and Consular Organizations (CO) to offer Quality promotion services to VC MSMEs aimed at improving productivity and competitiveness.																

Year	1				2				3				4			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1.2.8.7 Supporting the updating of the regional quality and industry database (ECOQUIB) to consider data relating to the identified value chains.																
1.2.8.8 Supporting the administration of the regional data base in a view to updating the features, to better liaise with national focal points and to ensure its sustainability and promotion.																
1.2.8.9 Supporting to the organization of the ECOWAS Quality Award by involving VC actors, Consumer Unions/associations and employers' organizations.																
1.2.8.10 Supporting to ECOWAQ to develop and implement a sustainability process for Regional Quality Award.																
Activity 1.2.9 Rapid Response Facility for country interventions																
1.2.9.1 Call for project proposals to Member States in the area of QI for their priority value chains.																
1.2.9.2 Establishment of technical committee to assess the proposals																
1.2.9.3 Prioritization and selection of national projects for implementation																
OUTPUT 1.3: VALUE CHAIN REVISION MECHANISM FACILITATED																
Activity 1.3.1: Trade intelligence for the identification and monitoring of VC with intra and extra regional export potential has been scaled up																
1.3.1.1 VC Scan and identification of 2-3 VCs for programme selection																
1.3.1.2 Support the creation of a competitive intelligence unit and network to maintain and exploit the WACOB for trade and investment policy decision making.																
1.3.1.3 Support the consolidation of ECOWAS regional databases on trade intelligence.																
Activity 1.3.2: Demand analysis studies to inform key capacity building interventions have been developed																
Activity 1.3.3: A Regional VCRM has been established and operationalized																

Year	1				2				3				4			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1.3.3.1 VCRM TORs and methodologies have been developed and/or strengthened.																
1.3.3.2 A customized repository of information on existing regional and national strategies and initiatives on selected value chain has been developed.																
1.3.3.3 Yearly VCRM thematic meetings have been organized and work plans developed and monitored.																
1.3.3.4 Support and advocate for the participation of women and youth association in the VCRM.																
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2: ENHANCED EXPORT COMPETITIVENESS FOR SMEs IN SELECTED VALUE CHAINS																
OUTPUT 2.1: ENHANCED VALUE ADDITION AND DIVERSIFICATION																
Activity 2.1.1 Capacity building for the development of green, circular, and climate-neutral value chain policies, strategies and institutions delivered																
2.1.1.1 Enhancing regional integrated industry-energy-climate policy framework and capacities conducive to strengthening the resilience and competitiveness of critical value chains																
2.1.1.2 Technical support to regional and national stakeholders/policymakers on Sustainable Energy and Resource Efficient solutions for Positive Energy Industrial Spaces development																
2.1.1.3 Facilitating access to renewable energy, improving resource efficiency and clean production services and promoting technology transfer																
Activity 2.1.2: Future-proof industrial solutions for the ECOWAS region promoted																
2.1.2.1 Development of roadmaps for strategic value chains (linked to output 1.3)																
2.1.2.2 Strengthening the digital production and innovation ecosystem along ECOWAS priority value, in coordination with ATMAP continental and regional components																
Activity 2.1.3: Clusters and other collaborative initiatives (networks) at the ECOWAS countries' value chains promoted																
2.1.3.1 Training, knowledge sharing, exchanging and promoting of best practices																
2.1.3.2 Providing of technical assistance to SME clusters and networks																
Activity 2.1.4: Regional Centres of Excellence and agro-industrial park development capacities strengthened to support priority value chains																

Year	1				2				3				4			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
2.1.4.1 Regional capacity enhancement for agro-park development and regulation																
2.1.4.2 Supporting the development of Regional Centres of Excellence for priority VCs.																
2.1.4.3 Facilitating the operationalization of a regional packaging centre of excellence.																
Activity 2.1.5 Industrial skills for sustainable value chain development promoted																
2.1.5.1 Conducting a skills map of the critical professions and trades required to increase competitiveness, social entrepreneurship and ensure sustainability in the selected value chains.																
2.1.5.2 Conducting and analysing of skills demand and supply for the priority skills. Assess the impact of the green transition on selected value chains and related skills and training needs																
2.1.5.3 Mapping existing national and regional centres/organizations providing advisory, policy and capacity building services on TVET related to the specific value chains;																
2.1.5.4 Conducting a feasibility study for the establishment of an ECOWAS skills hub with the specific mandate of supporting skills development for sustainable value chain and the green transition;																
2.1.5.5 Developing a roadmap for the establishment of skills hubs																
2.1.5.5 Supporting the establishment of the skills hub, including the development of terms of reference/guiding principles, a business plan, human development plan;																
2.1.5.6 Supporting the operationalization of the skills hub through the implementation of needs-based capacity building programme.																
2.1.5.7 Identifying a network of educational institutions with the potential to be supported and build capacity by the regional hub in areas of curricula development, training of trainers, quality assurance mechanisms, materials, innovative models of education and entrepreneurship and digital technology.																
2.1.5.8 Introduction of robust training-of-trainers methodologies and national certifications that ensure teachers acquire the desired technical skills. Organize regional (online and onsite) trainings (and workshops) to the network of educational institutions and specific capacity building areas.																

Year	1				2				3				4			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
2.1.5.9 Assessing the feasibility of profession and curricula harmonization and recognition across the region for key critical trades required in the selected value chains.																
2.1.5.10 Developing a training curriculum for the selected value chain/trades, in line with identified critical skills needs for sustainable a green transition;																
2.1.5.11 In coordination with local/regional training providers, provide training to pilot trainees from MSMEs operating within the selected value chains.																
Activity 2.1.6: Enterprise upgrading for higher added-value and market compliance delivered																
2.1.6.1 Mobilization of ECOWAS stakeholders and development of enterprise upgrading approach for value addition and diversification																
2.1.6.2 Enterprises Diagnosis and Development of Upgrading/Modernization Plans prepared																
2.1.6.3 Delivery of Tailored Capacity Building Programmes delivered																
2.1.6.4 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Scaling-Up performed for replication of successful examples																
Activity 2.1.7: Access to Innovative Financing and Investment solutions for selected Value Chains facilitated and promoted																
2.1.7.1 Awareness-raising and capacity-building of ECOWAS financial and investment promotion institutions																
2.1.7.2 Facilitation of enterprise bankable project development																
Activity 2.1.8 Rapid Response Facility for country interventions																
2.1.8.1 Call for project proposals to Member States in the area of value addition and diversification for priority value chains.																
2.1.8.2 Establishment of technical committee to assess the proposals.																
2.1.8.3 Prioritization and selection of national projects for implementation.																

Year	1				2				3				4			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
OUTPUT 2.2: ENHANCED SME CAPACITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS AND EXPORT																
Activity 2.2.1: Regional and national BSOs for the implementation of capacity building programmes have been supported and equipped																
2.2.1.1 Scan selected regional and national BSOs expertise to deliver training for MSMEs on export development targeting ECOWAS and interregional trade (particularly with the EU).																
2.2.1.2 Preparation and signing of financial and non-financial MoU with selected BSOs																
2.2.1.3 Develop customized MSMEs profile to access the training package.																
2.2.1.4 Roll out of capacity building and proficiency certification programme for selected national and regional BSO representatives.																
2.2.1.5 Ensure inclusiveness of women and youth in capacity building programme for value chains selected.																
Activity 2.2.2: MSMEs to be supported by the action have been selected, diagnosed for export and clustered by VC, target markets and key support area																
Activity 2.2.3: Capacity building programme for MSMEs have been jointly delivered with regional and national BSOs																
2.2.3.1 Capacity building on Access to Finance (incl. loans, grants and investments) for MSMEs has been delivered.																
2.2.3.2 Capacity building and advisory services on export development and marketing skills for MSMEs have been delivered.																
2.2.3.3 Capacity building on compliance with voluntary sustainability standards (VSS) has been delivered.																
2.2.3.4 Development of MSMEs individual export improvement plans.																
2.2.3.5 Delivery of dedicated coaching and mentoring services.																

Year	1				2				3				4			
Quarter	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
2.2.3.6: MSMEs are capacitated to benefit from improved market access conditions and use of existing preferential agreements																
Activity 2.2.4: Market linkages activities have been organized																
2.2.4.1 e-Commerce support and onboarding services for most responsive MSMEs have been delivered.																
2.2.4.2 Business matchmaking opportunities to access transactions, investments and sources of finance have been organized.																
2.2.4.3 Support to the ECOWAS Commission for the organization of the West Africa Connect event.																
2.2.4.4: Linkages with tech ecosystems actors have been established.																
Activity 2.2.5: Investment opportunities have been supported																
2.2.5.1 Identify investment leads and investors profiles in consultation with MSMEs selected, market leaders and IPAs.																
2.2.5.2 Facilitating coordination and effectiveness of IPAs investment promotion actions.																
2.2.5.3 Development of a portfolio of private sector investment opportunities and related investment promotion materials.																
2.2.5.4 Sponsoring the participation of IPAs and regional market leaders to investment networking sessions and activate investment linkages.																