



West Africa Regional Economic Bulletin | March 2023

Dear Colleagues, Partners, and Friends,

We bring you tidings from West Africa and updates on our recent activities. This month, we share highlights of our work with our partners to promote food security and sustainability; protect and preserve wildlife; improve power and energy systems; and advance business sustainability. Our partnerships help support conservation efforts, increase business opportunities, and improve livelihoods.

You can view this month's edition on our website as well as stay abreast with [previous editions](#).

Enjoy, and continue to stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Matthew Anderson

Office Director

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

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THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS

The Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) Champions Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) Towards Mitigating Climate Change



Group photograph of participants at the workshop. Photo Credit: CILSS

Saly Portudal, Senegal February 21 to 24, 2023: The Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), with technical assistance from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and financial support from USAID, has organized a regional workshop as an initiative to strengthen the capacities of the Permanent Secretaries of the CILSS National Committees (SP CONACILSS) of the thirteen member countries on Nature-Based Solutions (NBS).

The workshop sought to equip CILSS member countries (via SP CONACILSS) with the capacity to design, implement, monitor and evaluate their own solutions using the IUCN global standard for nature-based solutions; which are leading the way in moving beyond saving nature to meeting people's needs related to challenges such as adapting to climate change, mitigating the effects of climate change, ensuring food security, water security, reducing disaster risk, and achieving good health. This process will also enable CILSS member-countries to make better progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework, and the Aichi Targets. This capacity building project aims to stimulate knowledge transfer and increase dialogue within and between countries by improving regional coordination and knowledge management.

The training focused on indicators that would lead to responses at both the national and global levels on the need for human well-being, address issues related to climate change, biodiversity, and fundamental rights, including development in the context of the United Nations on the rights of indigenous peoples. Learning exercises and group work allowed participants to identify project ideas to be developed further by CILSS and IUCN with a view to seeking funding.

USAID Supports Workshop on Seasonal Forecasting to Reduce the Risk of Reduced Food Production



Group photograph of the participants at the Workshop. Photo credit: CILSS

Lome, Togo, 20 to 24 February 2023: With the financial support of USAID, the European Union through the ClimSa project, and the West Africa Food Security Program (FSRP), the Regional Climate Center for West Africa and the Sahel (RCC-WSA), in collaboration with its partners has organized a workshop on seasonal forecasting of the agro-hydro-climatic characteristics of the main rainy season for the Gulf of Guinea countries, followed by a forum for sharing with the users of these products and information developed.

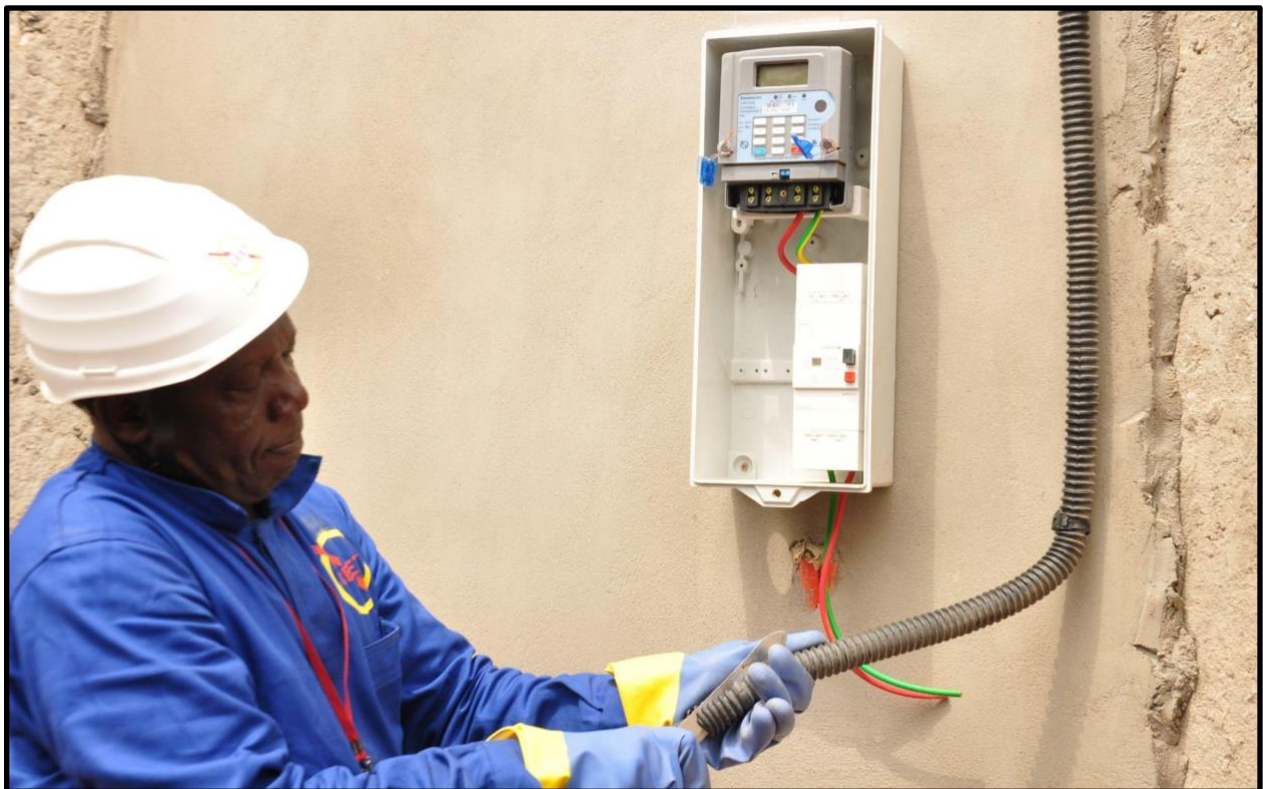
The workshop was attended by officials from meteorological and hydrological services, basin organizations and disaster risk reduction agencies from the countries of the Gulf of Guinea, notably Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo.

The forum presented an opportunity to present the results of seasonal agro-hydro-climatic forecasts for the main rainy season in the Gulf of Guinea countries and make recommendations, concluding that the 2023 rainy season will be average (not too high, leading to flooding, but not too low either, with the risk of drought). This rainy season will have a normal start with short dry spells at the beginning and a late end to the season in the western part of the Gulf of Guinea countries and normal in the eastern part.

Based on these forecasts, farmers are invited to diversify agricultural practices through the promotion of irrigation and market gardening to reduce the risk of reduced production, adopt soil and water conservation techniques, favor crop species and varieties that are more tolerant of the hybrid deficit, and to interact with the meteorological technical services.

Read the forum communique [here](#).

Power Africa Launches Fonds Tinga to Connect Millions to Electricity in Togo



A CEET Technician Connecting a Togolese Household to Electricity. Photo Credit: Power Africa

Power Africa, in collaboration with Togo's Ministry of Energy, has launched *Fonds Tinga*, a fund dedicated to assisting low-income households access electricity through a repayable loan extended over 10 years. The fund was to address the gap in household electricity access in Togo, where connecting a household to the power grid can cost twice as much as a family

earns in a month. More than half of Togo's population live and work without electricity. While there is a demand for electricity access, the initial set-up fees to connect to the grid can be prohibitively costly, keeping electricity out of reach for millions.

Through *Fonds Tinga*, Togolese households can connect to the grid for a modest upfront cost of 1,000 CFA (\$1.60), instead of the previous cost of 104,000 CFA (\$167.00). This 100-fold decrease in upfront connection costs is a significant step in increasing access and accelerating connections, and also provides Togo's national electricity utility, Compagnie Energie Electrique du Togo (CEET), with sustainable fee generation.

Power Africa also assisted with financial modeling and provided guidance on engaging other development partners and financial institutions. To further assist with scaling up access, the Power Africa team plans to provide technical assistance to CEET on geospatial information tools, as well as other applications to enable tracking of electrification projects.

Fonds Tinga, along with existing efforts to extend the electricity grid and deploy off-grid solutions, will position Togo towards achieving universal access to electricity by 2030.

The West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED) Engages Communities in Ghana and Liberia on Wildlife Preservation



The WABiLED team interacting with some drivers on World Pangolin Day. Photo credit: WABiLED

Accra, Ghana, February 18, 2023: The West Africa Biodiversity and Low Emissions Development (WABiLED) celebrated World Pangolin Day to raise awareness about pangolin conservation and the threat these native wild animals face. All eight species of pangolins are

under threat due to poaching, trafficking, and habitat loss. WABiLED partnered with *A Rocha Ghana* to raise awareness on the plight of pangolins by engaging people along the Accra-Kumasi highway.

They stopped at several communities and eateries to engage people about the importance of pangolins in the ecosystem. After the interactions, many people promised to become pangolin ambassadors and report anyone hunting or selling pangolin meat or scales, and to educate their friends and households. The team discussed the importance of these threatened species to local ecosystems and the environment, highlighting the negative implications of their rapidly declining population.

Read [more](#).

Health Strategy and Delivery Foundation (HSDF) Concludes Data-Generation Exercise to Improve Financial Sustainability of Private Sector Associations (PSAs) in West Africa



Representatives from the Ghana National Registered Nurses and Midwives Association after an interview with the HSDF team. Photo Credit: HSDF

The USAID-funded Connect and Learn for Sustainable Associations (CLOSA) project is making significant progress towards helping private sector associations (PSAs) operating in West Africa attain commercial viability and financial sustainability.

To inform its co-creation approach to support customized solutions across Private Sector Associations, the Health Strategy and Delivery Foundation (HSDF) embarked on a data and evidence gathering exercise to understand the current state of these associations, to ensure fit-for-purpose solutions for each supported PSA.

The exercise collected more than 120 data points from PSAs in Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal, working in the health, entrepreneurship, and agriculture sectors. A comprehensive report based on this exercise is being developed, and the insights will inform and refine the implementation of cross-country learning activities, mentoring and coaching plans, as well as the development of toolkits to improve the financial performance and sustainability of PSAs in West Africa.

West Africa Trade and Investment Hub (WATIH) Grantee, Label d'Or, Launches Climate-Smart Shea Factory in Togo



Label d'Or's Founder and CEO, Gustav Bakoundah, holds out a handful of shea kernels for the Prime Minister Victoire Tomégah-Dogbé and Ambassador Elizabeth Fitzsimmons (far right). Photo credit: Label d'Or

Gbatopé, Togo, February 24, 2023: The USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub (WATIH) grantee, [Label d'Or](#), has launched a Climate-Smart Shea Factory in Gbatopé, Togo. The factory was inaugurated by Prime Minister Victoire Tomégah-Dogbé and the U.S. Ambassador to Togo, Her Excellency Elizabeth Fitzsimmons. The launch highlighted the importance of improving the efficiency and quality of shea kernel processing, with Togo being the 7th largest shea kernel producer in the world.

WATIH awarded Label d'Or a co-investment grant of \$513,888 to promote local processing of organic and fair-trade shea butter, contribute significantly to exports to the United States and European Union, and strengthen trade links in the shea value chain. To date, \$513,120 has been invested to complete the construction of the certified, climate-smart shea butter processing factory with an annual processing capacity of 4,320 metric tons (MT), which includes the installation of a solar system capable of producing 107,700 kilowatt-hours annually to directly power the processing equipment and reduce the factory's carbon footprint by saving 21MT of carbon dioxide emissions.

Label d'Or has also supported almost 5,000 women through training in best collection and storage practices, cooperative development and management, health, and safety. The training sessions were critical for Label d'Or's organic certifications for the U.S. and European markets. Label d'Or has created 1,243 new jobs so far, and also guarantees market access to all the trained collectors through the purchase of 529MT of organic shea kernels worth \$293,629.

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Our mailing address is:
REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH OFFICE (REGO), USAID/WA
No. 24 Fourth Circular Rd., Cantonments
P.O. Box 1630,
Accra, Ghana

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