EXPECT Initiative

The EXPECT Initiative was launched in 2010 with the objective of building a sustainable structure to support export competitiveness by promoting high export potential value chains and increasing exports through engaging the region’s private sector, donors, partners and other valuable stakeholders. It more specifically aims to support SMEs in these value chain sectors through capacity and skills building and empowering them through different ways. 6 lead potential value chains were carefully selected using ITC’s (International Trade Center) Market Analysis Tools.

The initiative is supported by CIDA funded PACT II programme and is carried by an export competitiveness support facility which is made up of the following three strands: the Trade and Enterprise Experts Network (TEN), the Export Actors’ Platform (EAP), and the Export Actors’ Forum (EAF).

- The TEN is the initiatives’ operational platform for service delivery which is carried out through a TEN Coordination Team. This coordination team works through focal points in Member States which make up a TEN resource Centre and on expert and knowledge clusters to achieve results. It was officially mandated by the ECOWAS Commission to implement, monitor and render technical support to EXPECT.
- The EAP is the mechanism for the initiatives’ policy advice and strategic orientation which is carried out by an EAP Consultative Group. This Consultative Group provides strategic direction to programmes to be supported by benefitting from lead partners’ contribution.
- Lastly the EAF is the initiatives’ policy and advocacy forum.

The ECOWAS Commission, through the EXPECT Advisory Committee, ensures that it inputs in priority discussions with Export Actors Platform, and oversees EXPECT Facilitation and partners’ contributions.

EXPECT liaises and forms strategic partnerships with lead partners in value chain and export development. These partners include:

- **ITC** in the Mango Chain Development and in the building of an export capacity,
- **USAID West Africa Trade Hub** for technical collaboration with the Africa Cashew Alliance and the Shea Alliance in value chain development activities of those 2 commodities,
- And is exploring partnership with the **SIFCA** Group for Palm oil value chain development.

Currently in 2011, EXPECT is concretizing its strategic partnerships and building firm structures. These structures are summed up below:

- **ECOWAS-TEN** implementing expertise and knowledge clusters to engineer SME competitiveness in EXPECT selected value chains,
- Mango regional Value Chain strategy to be validated at country level and translated into projects directly involving selected Value Chain actors, and processes to be replicated for other priority value chain in partnership with lead partners,
- Public/Private Export Actors Platform organized and empowered through ECOWAS TEN to oversee preparation of the first Export Actors Forum involving all Exports stakeholders, and providing space for business linkages facilitation sessions.
- 1st ECOWAS Export Actors Forum to hold, discuss priority thematics for export value chains development & competitiveness and orient ExPECT priorities, focusing on «ETLS impact on the competitive development of agro based value chains », the specific cases of Mango (fruits & vegetables) and palm oil.
- ECOWAS-TEN is improving its coordination capacity, analysis tools & expertise, support infrastructure to service ExPECT private sector actors and institutional clients, through agreements with ITC and the ECOWAS Commission.

Finally, the grounds are being set up for full-fledged implementation in 2012 along 5 main lines of results:

1. **Building Institutional capacity**, through establishment of the EXPECT Facility operational capacity and consolidating the TEN/EAP structure

2. **Building Technical capacity**, through organising knowledge clusters in mango, cashew, shea, palm oil and rice value chains & validating regional value chain development strategies

3. **Building SME competitiveness in value chains**, by identifying suitable projects and engaging a first batch of SMEs in the export incubator

4. **Mobilizing appropriate resources & partnerships for export competitiveness**, by formalizing partnerships with lead partners and concretizing public & private sponsorships to EXPECT

5. **Raising awareness & advocacy for EXPECT priority value chains**, through specific commercial information and trade analysis tools and focused communication on EXPECT value chain activities.

**Associated Sites**

- [http://www.aidfortrade.ecowas.int/programmes/expect-initiative](http://www.aidfortrade.ecowas.int/programmes/expect-initiative)