

West African Businesswomen's Network Charter

Support to the Sahel and West Africa Regional Programs Project



NATHAN
ASSOCIATES INC.
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SUBMITTED TO
USAID, West Africa Regional
Program

UNDER CONTRACT NO.
PCE-I-09-98-00016-00

SUBMITTED BY
Nathan Associates Inc.
Arlington, Virginia

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WEST AFRICAN BUSINESSWOMEN'S NETWORK CHARTER

CHAPTER 1 – MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

Article 1

The West African Business Women's Network (WABNET) is an international association made up of women entrepreneurs from the formal private sector in West Africa.

Article 2

The mission of WABNET is, on the one hand, to develop trade, finance and investment in West African women owned enterprises, on the other hand, to promote the role of women and to improve the business climate in the sub region.

Article 3

The objectives of WABNET are the following:

1. To bring together West Africa business women and entrepreneurs in a non-political, non-profitable and non-religious organisation.
2. To develop among the members business and personal relationships which are based on the principle of solidarity;
3. To facilitate dialog and public education on private sector problems of concern to its members;
4. To improve, in its geographical area of activity, dialogue between private sector women and all players whose decisions have an impact on the development of business, trade and investment for women in the sub region;
5. To encourage capacity building of its members and the competitiveness of their enterprise.
6. To develop regional trade, by providing members the opportunity to present their commercial and investment projects to fellow network members, as well as potential national and foreign investors.

CHAPTER 2 – MEMBERS

Article 4

The members of the National Network are:

- Individual business women
 - Associations of women entrepreneurs.
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Article 5

Membership in the Regional Network shall be accorded to national networks that accept the obligations of the present Charter and which are deemed competent by the Regional Network to fulfil such obligations. They shall be entitled to represent the Regional Network in their home countries.

This authorisation shall be expressed by the use of the abbreviation “WABNET” followed by the name of the country concerned as well as the use of the WABNET logo in their correspondence and contacts.

Article 6

The decision to admit new members shall be taken by the General Assembly based on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

Article 7

To be accepted as a member of the Regional Network, each national network, after accepting the terms of the present Charter must, at all times.

1. Comprise of at least 10 members, business women of good repute;
 2. Develop and implement an annual strategic action plan;
 3. Put in place an operational budget, financed by membership fees and other contributions;
 4. Designate and publish a physical local contact address and postal address or P.O. Box;
 5. Render an account of its activities to the regional network;
 6. Attend the Coordinators Meetings;
 7. Have a Coordinator elected by the members of the national Network for a mandate of three years.
- The National networks shall have unfettered freedom in so far as they apply their work programme in line with the Strategic Action Plan of the Regional Network and mobilize resources to finance local projects.

Article 8

The members of a national network will pay annual dues fixed by the General Assembly. The General Assembly also determines the proportion of dues transmitted to the Regional Network.

Article 9

If a coordinator or a national network violates the principles of the present Charter, it shall be warned immediately by the Executive Committee. After such warning, should the Coordinator or a network continue to violate the principles of the present Charter, it may be suspended from exercising its rights and privileges by the Meeting of Coordinators. The exercise of those rights and privileges may be re-instituted on the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

Article 10

If a national network violates consistently the principles of the present Charter, it may be excluded from the organization by the Meeting of Coordinators, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee. The coordinator or members of the network shall subsequently be deprived of all the privileges and benefits of the WABNET.

CHAPTER 3 – ORGANISATION AND OPERATIONS

Article 11

The bodies of the Regional Network are:

- The General Assembly of the national networks;
- The Meeting of Coordinators
- The Executive Committee
- The External Auditors

CHAPTER 4 - THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE MEMBERS

Article 12

The General Assembly of the Regional Network shall meet and least once every year. It shall approve the status and financial report and shall be the sole body that can modify or amend the provisions of the present Charter. Each country has three votes.

Article 13

An Extraordinary General Assembly may be convened by email or conference if necessary, by a decision of a two-thirds majority of Coordinators, The National networks must accord with 51 percent for their coordinators to attend.

CHAPTER 5 - THE MEETING OF COORDINATORS

Article 14

The Meeting of Coordinators is made up of the coordinators of the national networks, and the Executive Committee

Article 15

The Meeting of Coordinators shall be held rotationally in member countries of WABNET. It may discuss any question relative to the present Charter or which deals with the powers and functions of any of the bodies of the Regional Network.

Article 16

The Meeting of Coordinators may review the management and organization of all national networks, including network membership criteria, strategic plans, and accounts in order to ensure harmonization among the various national networks. The Coordinators may make recommendations for modifications in these areas to the concerned national networks, and the Executive Committee.

Article 17

The Meeting of Coordinators, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, shall approve and vote the operational budget of the Regional Network and set the amount of the annual contribution of each national network. It shall also approve the strategic action plan for the regional network.

Article 18

The Meeting of Coordinators shall review the annual general report of the Executive Committee, which shall then be submitted to the General Assembly for discussion and approval.

Article 19

The quorum for the Meeting of Coordinators shall be half the number of members plus one. Decisions shall require a two-thirds majority of those present. Each national network shall cast one vote. If a national coordinator cannot attend the Coordinators meeting, she shall mandate in writing, another member of her network, to represent her or by proxy.

Article 20

The primary issues that would require a vote by the meeting of coordinators are:

1. Admission of new member countries;
2. Suspension of a member country;
3. Exclusion of a member country;
4. Adoption of the annual operational budget of the Regional Network;
5. Election of the members of the Executive Committee;
6. Approval of the accounts of the Regional Network.

Article 21

A national network that has not paid its contribution to the Regional Network shall be barred from voting during the Coordinators meetings. If the delay in payment exceeds one year, the national network shall no longer be entitled to attend coordinators meetings.

Article 22

The national networks shall agree to accept and implement the decisions of the Meeting of Coordinators.

Article 23

The Meeting of Coordinators shall be convened by the Executive Committee at least twice a year. Notification of meeting dates, location and agenda shall be provided to the members at the Coordinators meeting at least one month prior to the meeting.

CHAPTER 6 - THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Article 24

The Executive Committee shall be made up of 7 members of WABNET, who may not be national coordinators. One member for each post shall be from a francophone country and one member shall be from an anglophone country. The Members of the Executive Committee shall be elected for a mandate of two years renewable once only by the meeting of Coordinators.

To ensure the smooth operation of the Executive Committee, the reelection of its members, from 2004, shall be based on the following principle:

Within the newly 2002-elected Executive Committee there shall be three departures and three entrants in 2004. In 2006, there shall be four departures and four entrants and then again three departures and three entrants.

Article 25

The Executive Committee shall be made up of:

- A President
- A First Vice President
- A Second Vice President
- A Francophone Secretary
- An Anglophone Secretary
- A Francophone Treasurer
- An Anglophone Treasurer

Article 26

The Executive Committee shall perform the following key functions:

1. Draft the strategic action plan for the Regional Network;
2. Ensure the implementation of Regional Network activities;
3. Represent the Regional Network in external functions;
4. Mobilize and manage the necessary financial resources to carry out the activities of the Regional Network.
5. Prepare the annual report of the Network and any other report requested by the Meeting of Coordinators.
6. Organize the statutory meetings of WABNET;
7. Ensure the strict application of the present Charter;
8. Monitor the development of the national networks, particularly concerning the obligations defined under Article 7 of the present Charter.

The Committee shall meet whenever it deems necessary and at least twice a year.

Article 27

The Executive Committee shall be responsible for setting up the permanent secretariat of the Regional Network that shall be based in a virtual secretariat. The permanent secretariat shall assist the Executive Committee and shall include at least 2 permanent staff members:

- An administrative director; and,
- A documentalist.

The Executive Committee shall, according to its needs and resources, recruit either on a temporary or permanent basis, the personnel required for the performance of its functions. The Committee shall report to the General Assembly.

Article 28

The personnel of the Permanent Secretariat shall be recruited by the Executive Committee and be placed under its authority. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that the personnel thus recruited, is of high professional and personal qualifications.

The permanent staff of the Secretariat cannot be members of any national network or professional sub-network; and must be proficient in both English and French.

Article 29

The permanent secretariat shall report to the Executive Committee to which it is responsible. It shall draw the attention of the Executive Committee to any national network that is not fulfilling its obligations in relation to the Regional Network.

CHAPTER 7 - EXTERNAL AUDITORS

Article 30

The external audit is performed by an External Auditor appointed by the General Assembly for two years. The External Auditor is required to approve the annual accounts. She reports directly to the General Assembly to which she is responsible

Article 31

The present charter can be amended by an extra-ordinary meeting of the General Assembly on the proposal of the Executive Committee or 2/3 of the members of the General Assembly.

Decision to modify the charter is made after a 2/3 majority vote of the members present or represented.

Article 32

The dissolution of the Regional Network can only be pronounced by an extra-ordinary meeting of the General Assembly called to this effect. The dissolution becomes effective after a vote by a majority of at least 4/5 of its members present or represented.

Article 33

In case of dissolution the General Assembly decides on the management of the assets of the Regional Network; these could be given to other associations with identical objectives.

Article 34

The Internal Rules of Procedure proposed by the Executive Committee will be approved by the General Assembly. It determines the modalities for the execution of the present charter.

Article 35

The present charter takes effect from the date of its adoption.

Adopted this day January 25th, 2002

WABNET Benin _____

WABNET Burkina Faso _____

WABNET Ghana _____

WABNET Guinea _____

WABNET Niger _____

WABNET Nigeria _____

WABNET Senegal _____

WABNET Sierra Leone _____

WABNET Togo _____