



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# COMPENDIUM OF AFRICAN TRADE-RELATED SUCCESS STORIES AND CASE STUDIES





a journey to savor...

## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

*This compendium includes success stories and case studies produced by implementers of USAID's Africa Global Competitiveness Initiative and complements the compendia published by AGCI in 2008, 2009, and 2010. It highlights specific examples of successes that USAID programs have achieved in Africa, from reducing red tape and costs associated with trade, to forging partnerships with farmer organizations, facilitating access to finance, and attaining new visibility in the global marketplace. Many of these success stories have been generated by the four African Global Competitiveness Hubs—located in Accra, Dakar, Nairobi, and Gaborone and managed by USAID's regional missions in West, East, and Southern Africa.*

### **Photos above**

*Left:* Taste of Africa - a journey to savor supported by USAID's West Africa and Southern Africa Trade Hubs

*Right:* AfricaNow! is an innovative collaboration of modern home decor and accessories celebrating the fusion of African art and life. Inspired by authentic African cultures with a contemporary influence, products include contemporary and traditional jewelry, accessories, home textiles and furnishings, whimsical holiday ornaments, baskets, wood, ceramics, and more. *Photo:* West Africa Trade Hub

### **Cover page photo**

Markets work best when timely information about supply and demand conditions is readily available. Wholesalers exchange information at the Xai-Xai City market. *Photo:* Michael Weber, USAID Mozambique

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## SHEA CONSUMER DEMAND AND REGIONAL IMPACT

*THE SHEA INDUSTRY IS EXPANDING, CREATING JOBS AND IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS*



Millions of women in West Africa collect shea nuts for export.  
Photo: USAID West Africa Trade Hub

***“Buyers like our approach. We have our own improved method of processing for the butter. We’ve seen things getting better and a lot of repeat customers,” Senyo Kpelly, Sekaf Ghana***

Just a year after Sekaf Ghana inaugurated its first shea butter village near Tamale in northern Ghana, creating 40 jobs for women, the facility now employs

250 women. In addition, Sekaf is building two others like it in collaboration with international buyers.

“Buyers like our approach,” Senyo Kpelly of Sekaf Ghana said. “We have our own improved method of processing for the butter. We’ve seen things getting better and a lot of repeat customers.”

Kpelly’s experience is just one reflection of how well the shea industry is doing. Trade Hub Shea Expert Dr. Peter Lovett, a biochemist intimately familiar with the product’s valuable properties, has helped dozens of companies and producer groups across West Africa improve the quality of their shea butter and link to international buyers.

“We are waking the industry across the region,” Lovett said. Indeed, major international buyers of shea nuts and makers of specialty fats are looking closely at opportunities in Nigeria. In 2009, a new exporter from Benin attended her first trade show, and shea stakeholders in Mali established an association.

Kpelly’s company employs women who make shea butter much as it has been made for generations. Elsewhere, several high-tech processing facilities are producing tons of shea butter for the international specialty fats industry. 3Fs, an international specialty fats manufacturer, which opened its facility in 2009 in Ghana, now employs several hundred people.



Shea trees across northern Ghana in flower, just in time for Shea 2011!  
Photo: USAID West Africa Trade Hub

The Trade Hub’s value chain approach has improved the quality of shea butter made by women’s groups in villages and of shea nuts traded in international markets, while expanding markets for producers through participation in international trade shows. Following the successful 2010 annual international conference in Benin in March 2010, the Trade Hub is organizing the key industry 2011 event on April 6 and 7 in Accra, Ghana, under the theme: *Sustainable Solutions*.

The Trade Hub’s Access to Finance program has opened banks’ doors to the shea industry. And the Trade Hub is developing branding to bring the industry together and increase consumer demand in end markets.

SOURCE: West Africa Trade Hub  
<http://www.watradehub.com/sites/default/files/resourcefiles/jun10/sheasekaf-success-story.pdf>

## VILLAGES COMMERCIALIZE FOR MARKET GAIN

### *EAST AFRICAN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS DOUBLE GAIN BY SELLING AS A VILLAGE*



Community leader Juliana Kaburia Jasper poses in front of the sign for Mwegiki's Kiethangene Commercial Producers' Group  
*Photo: USAID COMPETE*

The town of Mwegiki is a verdant farming village on the eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya. It is in the heart of the Kenyan breadbasket, known for its fertile land and temperate climate—perfect conditions for growing agricultural products. Yet smallholder farmers in this area are not thriving, and most sell their limited surpluses well below market value. As individual farming households, they lack the resources, storage, and quantity of product necessary to be competitive players in the regional agricultural market.

SOURCE: East Africa Regional Mission  
<http://eastafrica.usaid.gov/en/Article.1326.aspx>

To help farmers move away from subsistence livelihoods and toward more profitable commercial production, USAID's Competitiveness and Trade Expansion (COMPETE) program is promoting the use of the Commercial Village Store.

Commercial Village Stores are community bulking centers that depend on smallholder farmers agreeing to pool their resources together. This creates larger stores of high-quality agricultural products that are directly marketed to buyers. The concept improves on the traditional practice of individual farmers selling small quantities of goods to middlemen who offer significantly lower prices.

Each village store consists of up to 500 households. USAID COMPETE is supporting 56 village stores across Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zambia (representing around 130,000 individuals), with plans to roll out to Malawi and Ethiopia. Of the participating village stores, 44 have demonstrated success by bulking as a community. The remaining 12 have embraced the concept and are awaiting the Tanzanian harvest season.

For commercial village stores to succeed, the town has to invest in the idea. For this, Juliana Kaburia Jasper, a retired schoolteacher turned full-time community leader, was indispensable. Together with USAID and Farm Concern International, Jasper introduced the goal of the village stores and

galvanized the community toward action.

One of her first converts was a former student, Mugambi K. Mutituuri, who saw the wisdom of Jasper's community plan and immediately deposited seven 90-kilogram bags of grain into the village store. To Mutituuri, the logic of a commercial village store was obvious: "When I sold to middlemen, I would get maybe 700 Kenyan Shillings per bag. Selling as a community, I can get twice that."

Mwegiki now has a large village store in the center of town. It is a hub of activity where grain is dried, weighed, and properly stored. Community members carry 'Grain Savings Passbooks' to show how much they have contributed to the store and their projected earnings. As a commercial entity, the town of Mwegiki is negotiating with a buyer from one of Kenya's largest suppliers.

***In Jasper's words, USAID COMPETE and the commercial village store projects are "changing the mindset of a community for an improved standard of life."***

## A NEW REGIONAL CAMPAIGN, REPORT, AND PARTNERSHIP KNOCK BARRIERS

### *BORDERLESS IS MAKING THE CASE FOR REMOVING TRADE BARRIERS*

A trucking company in Togo wants to put the logo on billboards. Another in Ghana wants its trucks to display the message as the vehicles ply primary trade corridors. And government and bilateral donors have joined the partnership to push for the removal of trade barriers represented by Borderless—a campaign the Trade Hub launched with a broad coalition of stakeholders in March 2010.

Developed pro bono by Publicis Ghana, Borderless is compelling and highly visible. It serves as a platform for efforts aimed at removing trade barriers across the region.

“It’s time for everyone to push hard for regional rules to go into effect,” said Ghassan Husseini of Vehrad Transport & Hauling, which operates across West Africa. “We need it.”

*SOURCE:* West Africa Regional Mission  
<http://www.watradehub.com/sites/default/files/resourcefiles/jun10/borderless-transport-success-story.pdf>



At workshops and meetings across West Africa, Borderless is raising awareness and building on multiple efforts to remove trade barriers.  
 Photo: Ryan Yingling/USAID West Africa Trade Hub

Borderless presents the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) vision of free trade. “This is really what we mean by regional integration,” said Dr. M.O. Afolabi, ECOWAS Director of Community Computing Centers. “And this is the right time for it. Partners are working with ECOWAS to make this happen.”

The campaign debuted by introducing the first-ever regional picture of road harassment in West Africa—data on check-points, delays, and bribery jointly published by the World Bank-funded Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Organization, USAID’s Agribusiness and Trade Promotion Project and the Trade Hub. A new Web site presents information on regional integration efforts, too: <http://www.borderlesswa.com>.

“Borderless comes at the right time to fill a gap in communication,” said Dr. Justin Koffi, Abidjan-Lagos Transport Corridor (ALCO) director. “This joint action is a strong signal for battle against the impediments of free movement in order to preserve the economic prosperity of our sub region.”

The Trade Hub-facilitated Borderless launches across West Africa, with stakeholders in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo. The message is spreading far and wide, building commitment, and inspiring action to remove trade barriers.

***“This is really what we mean by regional integration. And this is the right time for it,” claims Dr. M.O. Afolabi, ECOWAS, Director of Community Computing.***

## AFRICAN ENTREPRENEUR TAKES ON U.S. MARKET

*FLOTEA MASSAWE FINDS  
INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS  
THROUGH HER ‘MARVELOUS  
FLOTEA’ PRODUCT LINE.*



Flotea Massawe displays one of her clutch bags (above). Marvelous Flotea products are manufactured in her enlarged factory (below).  
Photos: USAID/East Africa



***Flotea credits the Trade Hub for giving her access to a global market, saying: “You are the ones who held my hand in entering the U.S. market. Thanks again for trusting my dreams.”***

East and Central African craft markets burst with color, materials, design, and function. Yet lacking links to trade systems, many products never leave the shelves. Flotea Massawe’s cloth designs are an exception—these handicrafts are thriving in the U.S. market, allowing her business to expand.

In 2002, Flotea possessed talent and a determination to succeed, but lacked links to structured markets. She was beholden to customers who happened upon her cloth designs on the streets of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

USAID’s East and Central Africa Trade Hub discovered Flotea in 2005 and provided her fledgling company with technical assistance in design and marketing. After refining her product, the Trade Hub sponsored Flotea to participate in four trade shows across the United States, most recently at the 2010 New York International Gift Fair.

While attending these events, Flotea spoke at workshops, networked with U.S. buyers, and developed a company Web site: <http://www.marvelous.co.tz>. To fill her growing orders, Flotea needed to expand. Through a U.S. African Development Foundation grant, she enlarged her factory and now employs nearly 200 women to create her popular pillows, bags, runners, and tablemats.

Today, Flotea is supplying her ‘Marvelous Flotea’ products to the high-profile New York designer Rachel Roy and U.S. department store, Macy’s. Flotea’s Kuba cloth clutch sporting fabric woven in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is now exported throughout the United States.

***“The clutch has created a chain of women in three different countries linked together to help alleviate poverty by providing employment opportunities for African women,” says Flotea.***

She has gone from making 200 pieces a month with an annual income of \$120 to producing 2,000 to 3,000 pieces a month with an annual income of \$100,000. Nearly 50 percent of her sales come from exports to the United States, India, and Japan.

SOURCE: East Africa Regional Mission  
<http://eastafrika.usaid.gov/en/Article.1339.aspx>, and  
<http://www.marvelous.co.tz/>

## HANGER PRODUCER OPENS AFRICAN FACTORIES TO MEET DEMAND

*BRAIFORM INVESTED \$400,000 IN OPENING FACTORIES IN KENYA, LESOTHO, MAURITIUS, AND SOUTH AFRICA TO SUPPLY LOCAL APPAREL PRODUCERS MORE COST-EFFECTIVELY.*

Compared to sourcing hangers from Asian producers, African apparel manufacturers now receive hangers four times faster—and without the added transport costs of sea shipment.

Sub-Saharan African apparel manufacturers have traditionally sourced their garment hangers from the Far East, although both the lead time and massive cargo space needed to ship to Africa are excessive.

The international company Braiform had been considering the possibility of investing in Africa. Through attendance at the annual Textiles & Apparel B2B Event, sponsored by the Southern Africa Trade Hub, Braiform held meetings with several African garment manufacturers. These pre-matched meetings convinced them that the volumes demanded warranted the establishment of a hanger manufacturing facility in several African countries.

Follow-up visits with the companies that Braiform representatives met at the B2B event led to the finalization of a feasibility study and the initial investment, which has amounted to around \$400,000. Approximately 7 million hangers are produced each month by Braiform's 400 employees from factories in Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, and South Africa.

cost—and especially the reduction in lead time—has also allowed companies to fulfill orders more quickly and more reliably, which is a necessary requirement for American buyers. Without the opportunity to meet and interact with regional industry members at the B2B event, Braiform would not have realized that such a valuable opportunity existed.



Each year, Braiform supplies close to three billion garment hangers to retailers and apparel manufacturers globally. *Photos: Braiform*



Hangers are sold to garment manufacturers in these countries, as well as Swaziland. In addition, Braiform is an approved supplier to U.S. retailers K-Mart, Kohl's, Sears, Target, and Wal-Mart. As an approved supplier, the company has been nominated by the retailer to be a preferred or exclusive supplier of hangers to all garment manufacturers in the United States. These relationships promote higher quality standards, consistent product, and increased accountability.

Braiform's investments benefited all the companies involved by cutting transport costs by about \$4,000 per 40-foot container of 200,000 hangers, reducing lead times from approximately 30 days to around one week, and creating jobs locally. This reduction in

***Participation in the South African Trade Hub's annual Textiles & Apparel B2B event proved to Braiform that demand for locally produced garment hangers was significant.***

*SOURCE: Southern Africa Regional Mission, and also USAID Frontlines, November 2010*

## PORTAL PROVIDES INFORMATION ON TRANSPORTATION AND TRADE ISSUES IN EAST AFRICA

### CHALLENGE

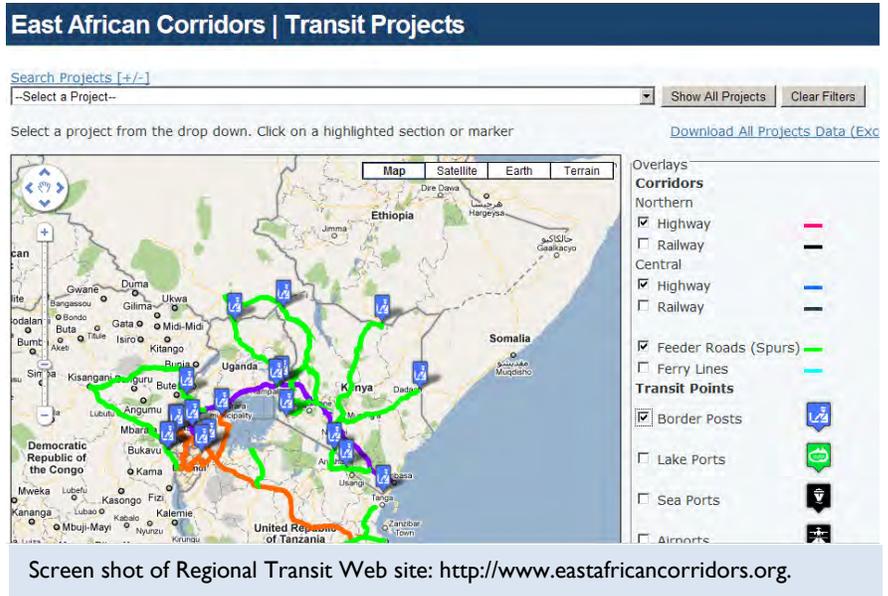
To find comprehensive information on East Africa's transportation and trade corridors, one would have to search through multiple agency Web sites for seven countries, at least three multilateral donors, many more bilateral donors, and three more regional economic entities dealing with transit in the region.

Assuming relevant documents are available online, the documents would need to be read, and the reader might still not have a solid picture of what the issues are or how difficult they can be to overcome. As a government worker trying to address these issues in your country, that would be a daunting task that requires days of your time. Now, the USAID East Africa Regional Mission has done the heavy lifting.

### INITIATIVE

On August 15, 2010, USAID in partnership with the Department for International Development (DFID) launched a new Web site [www.eastafricancorridors.org](http://www.eastafricancorridors.org) as a repository for all reports, documents, data, and media

SOURCE: East Africa Regional Mission <http://eastafrica.usaid.gov/en/Article.1373.aspx>



associated with the development of East Africa's Northern and Central Transit Corridors. These corridors serve communities as far east as Kisangani in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, provide goods and services to seven countries in the region, and incorporate road, railway, ports, and maritime traffic.

With the launch of the Web site, governments, regional economic communities, donors, researchers, and anyone with an interest in transport issues in the region can come to one central location to learn more.

The Web site consists of three major sections:

- A library with nearly three hundred tagged and searchable documents that also serves as a public 'drop-box' for any relevant documents added by the public
- Two GIS maps marking points where public and private sector

stores of food are kept throughout the region and points of interest for transportation and trade issues along the corridor, including up-to-date pictures and archived reports on those points

- A media page incorporating germane videos, slideshows, and blog entries. As they become available, the results from four pending major reports on corridor efficiency will be added to the site.

### RESULTS

This Web site marks a major achievement for the transportation development issues in the region and will continue to grow and incorporate new material.

User comments are fielded by the appropriate experts, and new ideas will be included in regular updates to this regional transit portal.

## MALIAN EXPORTER LEADS FEDERATION

*By Connecting Stakeholders, a Shea Federation Helps the Industry Develop*

When public and private sector stakeholders came together to form Mali's National Federation of Shea Professionals, they elected Kadijatou Lah as president. Lah is a dynamic force in Mali's shea industry, working with thousands of women pickers and processors, heading up two important shea groups, and running her own export company. The sector sustains the livelihoods of 80 percent of rural Malian women—more than five million people, according to the government.

“She has played a very big role because she knows the entire sector,” said Binta Konte of *Projet Karité*, a UNDP-funded shea project. “Thanks to her, the federation came together.”

This new federation is putting the country's shea industry on the right track, with a focus on improved quality to positively impact the millions of women involved.

“It includes all of the actors, from people working with the tree to export,” Lah said. “It was created to find solutions to problems in the sector. It's an alliance.”



Madame Lah's initiative of Mali's National Federation of Shea Exporters brings the industry together, helping to ensure quality products, market access, and higher value to the women who pick and process shea nuts.

*Photo: Robert Booth, West Africa Trade Hub*

Alliances are a strategic thrust of the Trade Hub's work in nontraditional export sectors. When companies come together, they can advocate to government on problems that affect them all but that are too big for any one to resolve individually.

The federation worked closely with the Trade Hub and Mali's Ministry of Women to host

Global Shea 2010—the third annual international shea industry conference in Bamako in March, preceded by Mali Shea Day.

The events connected stakeholders in Mali to international buyers, experts, and service providers.

**“Our goals are to improve quality, attract market, and increase value to the women collecting shea nuts and making shea butter,” Lah explained. “Our vision is to be the best supplier of quality shea nuts and butter to the world. And I think we'll succeed.”**

### WHY IS SHEA IMPORTANT TO WEST AFRICA?

*The livelihood of millions of West African women is directly tied to shea nuts that come from trees, which grow in a zone south of the Sahel. The nuts have been used for generations to make shea butter and shea oil, which have a multitude of uses from lotions to soap to cooking oil. The export of shea nuts and shea butter has grown substantially in the last five years. Consumer demand for the natural cosmetics made with shea butter continues to grow as does demand in the specialty fats industry.*

*SOURCE: West Africa Regional Mission  
<http://www.watradehub.com/sites/default/files/resourcefiles/jun10/mali-shea-federation-success.pdf>*

## ETHIOPIA BUSINESS BREAKS INTO THE U.S. MARKET

*USAID's AGOA PLUS PROJECT HELPS EXPORTING OF HAND-WOVEN TEXTILES AND LEATHER GOODS*



Benefiting from the AGOA Plus Project, Sammy Handmade in Ethiopia provides income-generating opportunities for women.  
Photo: Sammy Handmade in Ethiopia

Ethiopia's unique culture and traditions are exhibited through the country's handicrafts population, and one of the country's largest exports is hides and skins. The handmade goods found in Ethiopia are very different from those found in other African countries, as the country specializes in silver, leather, and silk products and textiles. In the past, however, Ethiopian handicrafts have had limited exposure in international markets.

USAID's AGOA (African Growth and Opportunity Act) Plus project has helped Ethiopian artisans and companies merge into new markets by providing duty-free and quota-free privileges for Ethiopian products.

Sammy Handmade in Ethiopia, an Ethiopian business that specializes in Ethiopian clothing and homemade goods, has been receiving USAID support since 2007. The company aims to empower and employ marginalized groups through the production and export of hand-woven textiles and finished leather goods. Sammy Handmade in Ethiopia's unique products bridge the traditional and modern worlds with a unique approach to Ethiopian designs.

In the last four years, the company has grown from six to 43 permanent staff. During FY 2010, there were 236 weavers, embroiderers, and leather producers working in association with Sammy Handmade in Ethiopia. Many products are made in collaboration with cooperatives that support women affected by AIDS. Another group of 112 women skilled in embroidery, weaving and sewing in a small town outside of the capital also work with the company.

In 2007, Sammy Handmade-in-Ethiopia received support from USAID's AGOA Plus project to attend the Designers and Agents Show in New York, where it had the opportunity to meet potential buyers for the first time. USAID support allowed the company a second chance to participate in the New York show in 2010. Sammy Handmade in Ethiopia received \$100,300 in orders from 27 boutiques, specialty shops, and department stores for leather bags and hand-woven scarves in the United States. Its USAID-

supported participation in the trade shows in the United States, however, taught them one of the most important lessons: small investments can lead to significant gains.

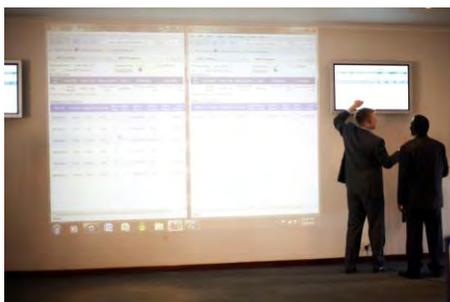
Production is currently under way to fill orders that will be delivered to stores in the United States at the beginning of January for the 2011 Spring Collection sales.

***Sammy Handmade in Ethiopia has learned many lessons as it has grown, including knowledge about the persistence required in developing and maintaining business relationships and the importance of cost sharing.***

*SOURCE: Reported by USAID Ethiopia Mission, December 2010*

## NEW TRADING PLATFORM HELPS SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

*SMALLHOLDER FARMERS GAIN ACCESS TO MARKETS THROUGH BID VOLUME ONLY PLATFORM*



ACE demonstrates the BVO platform to Malawi smallholder farmers. *Photo: World Food Programme (Charlie Bamwell)*

**“ACE has helped me to compete with larger traders and has increased my access to markets,” says Lawrence Chikhasu.**

Smallholder farmers need access to regional agricultural markets if we are to achieve reduced poverty and increased food security in East Africa. Unfortunately, these markets favor established farmers and traders who are able to fulfill large orders. As they are unable to access regional markets directly, smallholder farmers often resort to selling their product at reduced prices to middlemen. To solve this problem, USAID partnered with

the Agricultural Commodity Exchange for Africa Trust (ACE) of Malawi to create a **Bid Volume Only (BVO)** trading platform. This BVO platform is based on a World Food Programme Purchase for Progress (WFP P4P) model used in Zambia.

A BVO transaction resembles a reverse auction. The buyer (e.g., WFP P4P) states the volume and location of a desired product. ACE hosts a trading session that allows any supplier to bid on prices per stated volume and location. Bidding can be done in person or through mobile phone SMS or the Internet. Then, WFP P4P compares prices and selects the most competitive offer(s). The process is transparent and open.

ACE launched its BVO trade platform in May 2010. Within the first two months of operation, the ACE BVO hosted trades totaling nearly \$1.9 million. The sessions included eight contracts for WFP P4P and a contract for 2,000 metric tons of soya with the South African SENWES Group, worth \$683,000. Winners included the Grains and Legumes Association (GALA) representing 95,000 farmers, and GALA won a contract to provide 50 metric tons of maize to WFP.

Mr. Lawrence Chikhasu represents a group of 400 farmers in Mchinji, 60 kilometers from ACE in Lilongwe, Malawi. Mr. Chikhasu speaks highly of ACE and the BVO project, “ACE has helped me to compete with larger traders and has increased my

access to markets. [I’ve had] increased revenue through ACE contracts and the ability to build long links or relationships with suppliers.”

While initially promoted by WFP, and now USAID’s COMPETE project, the BVO platform is being embraced by the public and private sectors. Sellers are grateful for market access, and buyers welcome purchasing a good product with the security and transparency that the exchange provides. Results of BVO so far indicate that prices are competitive as compared to prices achieved through closed tenders, and it attracts a range of suppliers. WFP P4P is using the BVO platform to procure food for humanitarian relief within Malawi and neighboring countries.

The BVO platform is accessible and can be rolled out through any agricultural exchange. For sustainability, the BVO needs a policy environment that supports open markets and infrastructure improvements like rural warehouses. The involvement of farmer groups like those represented by Mr. Chikhasu and GALA has shown that transparent trading platforms can attract a diversity of participants from smallholder farmers to commercial operators. The BVO is a stepping stone to empowering smallholder farmers to enter structured trade systems.

*SOURCE: East Africa Regional Mission <http://eastafrika.usaid.gov/en/Article.1370.aspx>*

## CIVIL SOCIETY TACKLES ROAD CORRUPTION

*TRADE HUB-SUPPORTED CIVIL SOCIETY CAMPAIGNS ARE MOBILIZING PEOPLE TO DEMAND AN END TO HARASSMENT ON INTERSTATE ROADS*

The video is shaky and the audio muffled, but the pictures still tell a story worth a thousand angry words: An unscrupulous agent of Ghana’s customs service openly celebrates as he extorts money from travelers crossing the Ghana-Togo border at Aflao, near Lomé, the capital of Togo.

The report aired on one of Ghana’s largest TV networks, reaching millions. It was inspired by Trade Hub-supported awareness-raising activities implemented by three civil society organizations in the country. Their efforts led to 16 newspaper articles, more than two hours of reporting on radio stations, and 30 minutes of national TV news coverage.

Given anonymity because they fear reprisals by officials, petty traders were scathing in their remarks deploring the harassment that they experience daily.

*SOURCE:* West Africa Regional Mission  
<http://www.watradehub.com/sites/default/files/resourcefiles/jun10/transport-success-story.pdf>



A police officer pockets a bribe from a driver at one of the numerous checkpoints along West African routes.  
 Photo: Lacina Pakoun, West Africa Trade Hub

“No matter what you do, they will not let you pass unless you pay them money,” one says to the reporter. “We can’t do business.”

“People are talking about the issue, and many people have called us to say they have been victims,” said Dzifa Gakpleazi of the Legal Resources Center, one of the Trade Hub’s civil society grantees. “They know that now they can report the issue and that somebody is serious about it. And they appreciate it.”

The media attention was equivalent to purchasing \$80,000 worth of advertising. More importantly, half of Ghana’s 25 million citizens were exposed to the information. In three other countries—Burkina Faso, Mali, and Togo—civil society organizations undertook activities that exposed millions to the anti-road harassment messages, too.

Awareness of the problem is spurring transport industry stakeholders, government officials, exporters and importers, and the general public to action. Ghana’s National Security has opened investigations into the allegations against customs and police officers.

***Reducing and eliminating road blocks where customs, police, and gendarmes harass drivers for bribes would reduce the costs of doing business in the region. Trade Hub-supported civil society organizations are pushing authorities to act.***

## COTTON TEXTILES IN THE TRADITION OF KINGS

### AN ARTISAN FROM BENIN INTRODUCES TRADITIONAL WEAVING TO THE WEST



Constant Adonon comes from a long family tradition of weaving for the court of the king. *Photo: USAID*



Adonon's pillows featured on the back of the Spring 2010 Sundance Catalog. *Photo: Sundance*

It is not easy for Africa's artisans to break ahead of the pack. Small quantities, irregular quality control, and stagnant designs stop them from reaching upscale markets. But when passion, talent, and enterprise come together, as they have for Constant Adonon, the creativity of African design makes a universal splash.

Constant Adonon grew up learning his father's trade— weaving—an art that has been passed down from the court of the Dahomey King Agonglo in the late 1700s in Benin. Committed to this art, Adonon created the Association for the Enhancement and Promotion of Traditional Weaving of Abomey (AVPTTA) to give new meaning to this noble work.

As part of its support to the cotton sector, the U.S. Government, through USAID's West Africa Cotton Improvement Program (WACIP) and the U.S.-based nongovernmental organization, Aid to Artisans, supports efforts to add value in locally produced cotton. In 2007, such support enabled export-ready artisans in West Africa to create innovative products, drawing on traditional forms and motifs to meet the preferences and requirements of international markets. Participating in the three-year program, Adonon received training in business management and marketing, including the organization of craft exhibitions and product design and development.

"Before the training, my product line was limited to the repertoire of the royal court because my ancestors wove the shrouds and traditional clothes for the King. I repeated the patterns on tablecloths and other decorative items for the home," said Adonon. "But the life of a well-woven cloth is 20 years! To attract clients, we need exciting new products. My business is built on creating demand through innovation and satisfying customers who are more and more demanding every day." Sundance Catalog was impressed by Adonon's creations, which were displayed at the 2008 and 2009 New York International Gift Fairs.

Sundance introduced this colorful line of hand-woven pillows in its 2009 summer catalog and Web site. That went so well that they ordered 100 more cushion and pillow covers with fresh designs. One of his Abomey-inspired cushions adorns a classic Adirondack chair on the back cover of its spring 2010 catalog.

Constant is ecstatic. He has earned more than \$57,000 dollars and expanded his market to France, Burkina, Ghana, and Mali as well as the United States. In the last three years, Aid to Artisans has trained an average of 1,100 C-4 artisans a year enabling them to create quality products through cleaner and healthier production processes, and achieve \$690,000 sales at regional and international trade fairs.

SOURCE: West Africa Regional Mission report, December 2010, and [http://www.ifdc.org/getdoc/64d8066d-357e-433a-8bb1-f62d9897595d/Cotton\\_Textiles\\_in\\_the\\_Tradition\\_of\\_Kings](http://www.ifdc.org/getdoc/64d8066d-357e-433a-8bb1-f62d9897595d/Cotton_Textiles_in_the_Tradition_of_Kings)

## INCOMES GROW THANKS TO BAOBAB SEEDS

*USING FRUIT GRAINS FOR COSMETICS, SENEGALESE FARMERS FIND NEW WAYS TO PROFIT*



With the help of USAID, baobab seed powder has become an important source of income generation for small-scale farmers.

Photo: Madior Fall, USAID

***“The processing of the baobab fruit into powder provides us with a lot of income. It is really interesting because we could not have earned so much with other activities,” claims Fatoumata Diallo, Member of Dhoukha Bourakha Association.***

In southeastern Senegal, baobab seeds were once believed to be a useless byproduct of a locally grown fruit. The fruit was eaten and the seeds merely tossed aside.

But now, in the village of Dindéfelo, women are reaping gains from baobab fruit processing for the first time, thanks to a USAID program. A facilitator for the Agency first put women in contact with a cosmetics firm that uses the seeds in its products. USAID is now expanding its efforts to assist other Senegalese villages to find markets for this growing commodity, empowering local women in the process.

“The USAID program facilitator came to inform us that they had a partner who was ready to buy the seeds, so we should not throw them away,” says Mrs. Aicha Bousso, Secretary General of Bourakha Federation from the nearby village of Salemata. “We thank USAID very much. It is our first partner.”

This partnership began in 2009 with Bio Essence, a cosmetics manufacturing firm. The baobab seed powder is a key ingredient in cosmetics, such as fragrant body oils. Once the producers and buyers for this commodity were connected, the Senegalese farmers were able to begin selling a previously unmarketable by-product. Since then, the selling price for their baobab seed powder has almost doubled, further improving the local economy and providing new

income-generating opportunities for many rural women.

“The processing of the baobab fruit into powder provides us with a lot of income. It is really interesting because we could not have earned so much with other activities,” says Mrs. Fatoumata Diallo, a member of Dhoukha Bourakha Association. “What’s more,” she adds, “this activity is not exhausting like other work in the fields.”

USAID is now assisting to expand this new processing activity throughout the Kédougou region of Senegal, thereby raising incomes and creating new opportunities for small-scale farmers to diversify their activities and connect to new markets.

“I am seriously calling on women to take on this activity,” Mrs. Diallo said. As she acknowledged, in an industry where women are the target consumers, it is gratifying to know that their money helps support other women who are the suppliers.

SOURCE: Senegal Mission  
[http://www.usaid.gov/stories/senegal/ss\\_sn\\_baobab.html](http://www.usaid.gov/stories/senegal/ss_sn_baobab.html)

## THANKS TO AGOA TRADE BENEFITS, CAMEROONIAN APPAREL FIRM GROWS

*AGOA TRADE BENEFITS GIVE AFRICAN EXPORTERS AN IMPORTANT COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE. THE TRADE HUB HELPS THEM REALIZE THE ACT'S POTENTIAL.*



AGOA's trade preferences give West African companies an important advantage, allowing them to expand production and create jobs.  
Photo: Abou Fall, Trade Hub

***“With targeted technical assistance, the Trade Hub helps businesses and government use AGOA to compete successfully.***

When an American buyer and customs officials told Cawer—an apparel maker in Cameroon—that its T-shirts did not qualify for duty exemption under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the company's manager was distressed.

“Competition is fierce in the U.S. market,” said the company's manager, Dalle Biack, recalling the situation recently. “The elimination of tariffs under AGOA contributes to a reduction in price compared to products coming from elsewhere. It's an important advantage.”

AGOA eliminates tariffs on more than 6,400 products from eligible African countries, but buyers, sellers, and government agencies need to know about it—and how to use it so that it has an impact. The Trade Hub helped each party understand that the T-shirts were indeed eligible for AGOA duty-free treatment.

Trade Hub Services Manager Abou Fall worked with the parties to sort out the problem.

“AGOA's benefits are obviously very meaningful, but actually taking advantage of them is sometimes difficult for companies, customs, and buyers,” Fall explained. “Providing practical information on AGOA helps ensure that everyone can benefit from the trade preferences it offers.”

Cawer sent one container of T-shirts in January 2010 and a second container in March. The orders are generating the revenue

that is helping Biack begin to realize his goal of expanding the company—creating hundreds of new jobs for young women.

***“We will soon be able to ramp up to a container per week,” he said. “We'll be very active, with two or three shifts. And that would mean adding more than 200 employees. We haven't done this kind of exporting here and it's only thanks to AGOA.”***

SOURCE: West Africa Trade Hub  
<http://www.watradehub.com/sites/default/files/resourcefiles/jun10/agoa-cawer-success-atory.pdf>

## PROTECTING WATER RESOURCES TO IMPROVE COFFEE RETURNS



Multi-stage horizontal-flow filter, where the liquid influent passes through a settling tank before passing through two chambers of coarse gravel and into a slow sand filter, augmented with lime to neutralize the acids. *Photo: USAID*

Coffee accounts for roughly 80 percent of Burundi's export earnings, and nearly 800,000 rural families make their living from the crop. Most of Burundi's coffee washing stations process cherry without the necessary environmental controls to receive specialty certifications like Utz, Starbuck's CAFÉ, and Rainforest Alliance. Implementing the environmental controls to attain this level of certification is key to good environmental stewardship and important to farmers because certification allows their coffee to access differentiated international niche markets and better prices.

USAID's Burundi Agribusiness Program (BAP) is working with nine pilot coffee washing stations to treat their wastewater effluents in order to ensure clean water

downstream. BAP worked with these same stations to construct latrine blocks to curb unsanitary conditions around coffee washing stations.

Burundian coffee washing stations are important economic hubs for the growing regions they service. A single station can serve an area of 9 to 100 square kilometers and 3,000 to 5,000 growers. As many as 1,000 to 2,000 farmers travel on foot to sell their coffee cherries at the washing stations approximately 10 times a year. Since most coffee washing stations do not have latrines, washing stations become hot spots for disease associated with poor hygienic conditions.

The typical station using a McKinnon pulping machine requires 16 to 20 liters of water per kilogram of cherry. A station processing 1,000 metric tons of cherry in a season will require as much as 2,000 m<sup>3</sup> of water. Serious environmental harm is caused by the pollution from coffee washing station effluents. Coffee washing wastewater can produce huge amounts of pulp slurry with acidic pH levels, and very high levels of biochemical oxygen demand (BOD)—to the tune of 3,000 to 10,000 mg/L.

To mitigate this pollution and help ensure clean water, BAP used an innovative three-step process to screen, filter, and treat the effluent prior to joining downstream ground waters. Diverting and screening the majority of pulp slurry removes the primary source

of BOD early in the process to minimize contact between the wash water and the pulp. Afterwards, the pulp is composted and applied to horticulture crops and coffee plantations, increasing productivity.

Prior to the introduction of these effluent control systems, environmental impacts were felt as much as 5 kilometers downstream causing fish kills, crop burns, and foul odors—making these waters a hazard to people and livestock. The stations are also gradually introducing more water-efficient de-pulping machines. These actions process coffee cherry in an environmentally responsible manner and put these stations and the farmers on a path to an improved quality of life by improving their health as well as their incomes.

***Burundian coffee washing stations are important economic hubs for the growing regions they service. As many as 1,000 to 2,000 farmers travel on foot to sell their coffee cherries at the washing stations approximately 10 times a year.***

*SOURCE: East Africa Regional Mission  
<http://eastafrica.usaid.gov/en/Article.1363.aspx>*

## REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP YIELDS MANY BENEFITS

### USAID'S SOUTHERN AFRICA TRADE HUB LINKS BOTSWANA FURNITURE ENTREPRENEUR WITH CERTIFIED-WOOD SOURCE

USAID's Southern Africa Trade Hub first met Peter Mabeo at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF) in New York in 2006. He was there representing his company, Mabeo Furniture, which is based in Gaborone, Botswana, and produces high-end contemporary furniture with a strategic focus on craftsmanship and the use of sustainable raw materials.

Since then, the Trade Hub—which helps African entrepreneurs improve their competitiveness, gain greater access to global markets, create jobs, and generate economic development—has sponsored him in numerous shows and provided various forms of technical assistance in business management and operations.

When Mabeo wanted to find a consistent supplier of certified wood from responsibly managed forests, the Trade Hub was able to link him directly with a supplier of panga panga wood from Mozambique. This connection has not only helped his bottom line, but also fits in with his philosophy of obtaining the highest-quality



Mabeo Furniture workers unloading a shipment of panga panga wood as it arrives from the new supplier source in Mozambique. Photo: Southern Africa Trade Hub

raw input materials from local sources. By eliminating third-party sourcing agents, Mabeo estimates that this new relationship will reduce his wood input costs by an average of 50 percent.

Mabeo's unrelenting focus on creating long-term value is one of the key secrets to his current success. So much so that this past summer he won the ICFF Editor's Award for best furniture, which has come with the opportunity to showcase his product with top designers in the industry.

In keeping with his strategy of obtaining raw materials from sustainable sources, Mabeo envisions a mutually beneficial partnership with this supplier. By cutting out the middleman, and with Mozambique now performing more value-added functions such as processing and certification,

jobs will be boosted on that end of the supply chain as well.

***“At the end of the day, it is the quality of the Mabeo design, high standard for inputs, and our brand that determines how well we do in the marketplace. We need more than a competitive price to get us in the door,” said Peter Mabeo, owner of Mabeo Furniture.***

SOURCE: Southern Africa regional mission  
[http://www.usaid.gov/stories/southern-africa/ss\\_sa\\_regionalpartnerships.html](http://www.usaid.gov/stories/southern-africa/ss_sa_regionalpartnerships.html)

## COMMUNITY FISHERIES NET BIGGER CATCHES

*MODIFICATIONS TO FISHING TECHNIQUES IMPROVE LIVELIHOOD OF LOCALS*



As fishermen are no longer authorized to use fine-meshed nets, they now regularly reel in fish that are up to 12 inches long.  
Photo: Lécio Mungambe, WWF

***“It’s like magic has happened. We catch fish big enough for ourselves and to sell in big markets. This year, I managed to buy three new nets with money generated from the fish.”***

SOURCE: Mozambique mission  
[http://www.usaid.gov/stories/mozambique/fp\\_moz\\_fisheries.html](http://www.usaid.gov/stories/mozambique/fp_moz_fisheries.html)

António João Cecílio Mtambo is a fisherman from the community of Chuanga in Lake Niassa who used to depend on ineffective fine-meshed fishing nets that provided little sustenance for his family. Since 2006, USAID and the World Wildlife Fund have been working to establish the Lake Niassa Reserve and have helped create 11 community fishing councils. Mtambo belongs to a group of patrol officers who enforce the recommended fishing net sizes and prevent the lake’s resources from being depleted. With the councils in place, these communities have decided to ban all mosquito net fishing to preserve the fish in Lake Niassa.

As a result, communities around the lake are beginning to prosper, and the size and quality of catch have increased considerably. With fine-meshed nets, fishermen used to catch fish with an average size of three to five inches. Now, they regularly reel in fish that are up to 12 inches long.

Lake Niassa is the world’s ninth largest lake and is widely recognized as the most biologically important lake in the world. It is home to more than 1,000 fish species—95 percent of them endemic to the lake—including tilapia, lake salmon, and hundreds of species of cichlids. Yet, fishing communities live well below the official poverty line and the lake’s fisheries are under threat from overfishing.

One of the biggest problems facing Lake Niassa communities had been the use of donated mosquito nets, intended to protect against malaria but used for fishing instead. Mosquito net fishing was harmful because it removed all sizes of fish, fry, and even eggs from the lake. The nets were destroying the algae—a vital part of the lake’s food chain—and further damaging fish stocks.

Mtambo now provides enough for his family, and he brings in enough fish to sell in the nearby Lichinga market.

***“I used to struggle to provide for my family. The situation here was so bad that one could stand for hours in the lake and find nothing,” said Mtambo.***

## USAID IMPROVES MAIZE MARKET VALUE CHAIN IN MALAWI

### *STRENGTHENING SMALL PRODUCER MARKET ACCESS THROUGH IMPROVED STORAGE TECHNIQUES AND THE AVAILABILITY OF TIMELY MARKET INFORMATION*



Warehouse being refurbished for increased grain capacity.  
Photo: MLI

The Chitsosa Trading Company sells maize, groundnuts, and soya to major traders in Malawi and neighboring Tanzania, making it a vital link in the region's food security chain. Previously, the company was plagued by poor warehouse conditions leading to infestations and premature deterioration of products in storage. Recordkeeping and accounting systems were also disorganized.

SOURCE: East Africa Regional Mission  
<http://eastafrica.usaid.gov/en/Article.1366.aspx>

In 2010, Chitsosa became the first recipient of a cost-sharing grant from USAID's Market Linkages Initiative (MLI) to strengthen small producer market access through improved storage techniques and the availability of timely market information. Funding from MLI was supplemented by funding from Chitsosa to refurbish warehouses.

Renovations are under way to install windows and a high roof for stacking, as well as to seal walls to control moisture levels and deter pests. The improved facilities will allow stocks to remain in storage for longer periods while retaining their quality. This will allow Chitsosa to sell at the optimum market price at the best time, rather than selling prematurely or losing a portion of stocks through deterioration.

MLI also assisted with the design and implementation of commodity and financial tracking systems for Chitsosa's purchases. Individual village aggregation centers (VAC) are now equipped with a commodity management receipt book to record purchases by individual farmers, tally volumes of each commodity, and record qualitative information for each lot.

Farmers are also provided with this same information for their records. The company opened a designated bank account and will hire a full-time accountant.

Better financial management systems will put Chitsosa in prime position to take advantage of Malawi's upcoming market information system platform.

Since the grant began, Mr. Chitsosa has bought 2,480 tons of grain from 2,000 farmers linked to 30 VACs.

***Mr. Chitsosa recently told MLI and a delegation from USAID, the World Food Programme and U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Since I started using the receipt books, I have been able to clearly show exact volumes of commodities that have passed through my stores."***

## LEARNING HOW TO IMPROVE AFRICAN MARKETS

### MARKET ANALYSTS EXCHANGE INFORMATION WITH WHOLESALERS

#### CHALLENGE

Markets work best when timely information about supply and demand conditions is readily available. Putting into place systems to provide this kind of information is one of the most difficult building blocks for well-functioning food and agricultural markets in Africa. This is partly because there is no workable method for charging all recipients of the information for its use, and because public sector participation is critical to designing and developing a system for gathering and disseminating reliable market information to all who need it.

#### INITIATIVE

To study how such a system could be put in place, USAID launched a project in Mozambique to analyze food markets. The project identified methods for providing timely, accurate, and low-cost strategic information, including prices and transport costs, to farmers, traders, processors, and consumers.

SOURCE: Mozambique mission  
[http://www.usaid.gov/stories/mozambique/cs\\_mz\\_marketinfo.html](http://www.usaid.gov/stories/mozambique/cs_mz_marketinfo.html)



Wholesalers exchange information at the Xai-Xai City market.  
 Photo: USAID, Michael Weber

With the information in hand, they can operate more effectively in a free market, which creates incentives for new private investment and ensures that surpluses do not go to waste when there is demand elsewhere in the economy.

#### RESULTS

The project yielded important insights into how to build a sustainable market information system through partnerships among government, nongovernmental organizations, and private businesses. It also showed that through radio broadcasts, market information can be provided for as little as \$0.07 per year per rural household. In rural areas with strong radio signals where up to 66 percent of farms received price information, those farms generated, on average, 11 percent more

revenue than those without access to the information.

Based on observations from the project, USAID and its partners also developed a set of guidelines to be used in future efforts to build effective, lasting, and sustainable market information systems throughout Africa. Once they are in place, these information services will bring enormous benefits to ordinary Africans by making the region's food markets more efficient and competitive.

***“Market information is helpful but difficult to put into place and sustain,” says Pedro Arlindo, an agriculture market expert.***

## CHANGING THE MENTALITY IS THE FIRST STEP

### *CAMPAIGNS RAISE AWARENESS OF ROAD HARASSMENT—PUTTING PRESSURE ON AUTHORITIES TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM*

Raising awareness of road harassment is the first step to resolving the problem. People are increasingly seeing the problem for what it really is: A huge barrier to West Africa’s economic development.

Campaigns to raise awareness of road harassment—supported by USAID’s West Africa Trade Hub in four West African countries—are helping to change attitudes on the topic. And that is leading to real, even if modest, reductions in the number of checkpoints along primary trade corridors.

***“First you have to change the mentality,” said Francois Agbagli of Trans Alloman, a trucking company in Togo with more than 100 trucks operating regionally. When you can talk about something, then you have some hope of changing the behavior.”***



In Mali, civil society groups helped drivers and others voice their displeasure with the numerous checkpoints littering the nation’s roads—roadblocks to economic development. *Photo: Trade Hub*

In September, the Government of Mali eliminated a checkpoint along the road connecting its capital, Bamako, to Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. The campaigns, implemented by civil society groups in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, and Togo, were cited as a reason.

The groups held public debates, designed and put up posters, and spoke out on road harassment on newscasts and radio broadcasts, and in newspapers. They told the story of how, at numerous checkpoints along primary routes, customs, police, and gendarmes among others extort bribes from drivers and delay trucks for what adds up to hours on trips from coastal ports to landlocked capitals and vice versa.

The campaign was welcomed by transport industry stakeholders, from importers and exporters to trucking company managers. For Peace Adonsou’s membership

—she is the president of the Tomato Sellers Association of Togo—the campaigns spoke directly of a problem that effectively hurts their bottom line, as well as their ability to compete.

***“We’re selling a perishable food product,” she said during an hour-long TV show that reached millions of Togolese. “So, we can’t waste time at checkpoints. Sometimes, we lose three or four hours, and with the sun shining, the produce gets hot and starts to spoil. By the time we get to Lomé, it’s a big loss.”***

*SOURCE:* West Africa Trade Hub  
<http://www.watradehub.com/resources/resourcefiles/mar10/cso-road-harrassment-success-story.pdf>



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