

# WACOMP Call for Expression of Interest

FOR BSO'S IN THE ECOWAS REGION - MANAGING FUTURE  
NETWORKING EVENTS

Table of Contents

**INTRODUCTION .....3**

**1 WACOMP WEST AFRICA CONNECT EVENT .....4**

**2 YOUR OPPORTUNITY AND SUPPORT PACKAGE .....5**

**3 OPEN CALL PROCESS .....5**

**4 YOUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST .....6**

## Introduction

### About WACOMP

The West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) is a partnership initiative between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, with the support of the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU/UEMOA) Commission, and the European Union (EU). It has a bearing on regional economic integration and highlights a commitment to the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the EU and West Africa. The overall objective of the programme is to strengthen the competitiveness of West Africa and to enhance the countries' integration into the regional and international trading system, including the newly established African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The Programme is implemented through a national component in each ECOWAS Member State (implemented by selected agencies) and a regional component (implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, UNIDO, and the International Trade Centre, ITC).

One goal of WACOMP is to improve the performance, growth and contribution to industry, regional trade and exports of selected value chains. In line with this specific objective and following an extensive analytical review of a number of value chains, selected based on national and regional preferences, four value chains were selected for further action by the ECOWAS Commission. Three value chains are vertical (cassava and its derivatives, mango and textile and garments) and one is cross-cutting (information and communications technology).

### Two 'B2B' matchmaking events

One of the key expected outcomes under this programme include the organization of two major Business-to-Business (B2B) events, named West Africa Connect ([www.westafricaconnect.com](http://www.westafricaconnect.com)). The specific objective of these West Africa Connect events is to establish improved regional linkages amongst the key actors in selected value chains. The first event will focus on the textile and garments as well as ICT sectors and is scheduled for 16-17 November '21. In reason of COVID-19 restrictions, this first event will be held virtually. The second event will focus on Cassava and Mango ad well as ICT sectors and will take place in 2022.

### Opportunity for BSOs to manage future networking events

UNIDO and ITC will jointly organize both events. The capacities of BSOs will be improved on a learning by doing approach to organize similar B2B events (physically and virtually) in the future. Through this open call, UNIDO invites organizations that are interested in collaborating with the WACOMP Programme to apply. The selected BSO will be involved in the organization of the first event through training and coaching on the job to enable them to organise Networking events in the future.

### Chapter description

You will find more details on the West Africa Connect events in Chapter 1, followed by Chapter 2 which describes the support package that the selected BSO will be offered. Then, you will read in Chapter 3 which requirements apply. Finally, you can find in Chapter 4 how to compose your EOI.

## 1 WACOMP West Africa Connect event

Africa is the world's fastest-growing region according to weforum.org. This continent of inspiration has a young population and offers:

- Growing returning diaspora community.
- Untapped consumer spending potential.
- Duty-free benefits for the USA, EU and China.
- Key investment opportunity – return on investment right now in Africa is the greatest in the world and it is expected to continue being so until at least 2025.

The two West Africa Connect events organized in the context of WACOMP aim at facilitating linkages between sellers (normally SMEs) from the selected value chains across the ECOWAS region with major buyers from within the region and multinational companies.

As such, the project will increase regional integration amongst the 15 ECOWAS countries (plus Mauritania) by capitalizing on growth opportunities and strengthen product competitiveness in the following selected value chains:

- Textile and garments (including Fashion, Interior Design and Lifestyle Accessories)
- Mango and Cassava
- The Information and Communication Technology (IT or tech sector)

### The event

The West Africa Connect event will bring together the main players of the value chain in the selected sector.

The event will include:

- Participation of selected suppliers from 16 countries
- Participation of selected buyers from Africa, Europe and North America
- Exhibitors' digital profiles
- Insights in valuable information with buyer's profiles
- B2B meetings between selected suitable partners
- Conferences and e-learning sessions
- Regional and International guest speakers, offering masterclasses

To select the suppliers for the event, there will be a call for application to participate in the event. The call for application includes a number of questions such as legal status of the company, number of years in operation, number of employees, export experience, product range, certifications etc. Companies that want to apply must be headquartered and registered in one of the ECOWAS countries and must operate in the value chain of the selected sector. The applications will be assessed by the UNIDO team and will be selected through a fair and transparent scoring system.

Based on the results of the seller's applications, regional and international buyers will be approached and invited to participate in the event. In this phase regional and international guest

speakers will also be selected and invited to offer masterclasses, conferences, webinars and/or e-learning sessions.

### Online Platform / Event Website

Besides the organization of the event, UNIDO and ITC created an online platform for the promotion of the events. The platform will also act as an online matchmaking platform, where buyers will be connected to relevant suppliers. The platform will include:

- Supplier and buyer databases with valuable profiles
- B2B matchmaking tool
- Downloadable manual on how to prepare for the event
- Seminar/Webinar schedule
- Online stage where webinars, masterclasses, round table talks will be held

## 2 Your opportunity and support package

### Managing the West Africa Connect event yourselves

You are offered the opportunity to learn how to organize B2B events in the future. It gives you great opportunities for networking, visibility, and financial sustainability. Please note that UNIDO may identify more than one BSO to participate in the organisation of future events, since the sectors for the events in '21 and '22 differ significantly. This EOI concerns the first event, covering the textile and garments sector.

### Support package

UNIDO is happy to hand-over all developed tools and know-how to you. Also, you are offered the opportunity to join UNIDO, ITC and the contracted external organizer of the event, Globally Cool in the Netherlands, to co-organize the first event. Your BSO will be coached on the job in preparing and organizing the West Africa Connect event. In short this is what you will get:

- Lead organizer of networking events
- Handover of management, selection procedures, knowledge, website, databases etc.
- Access to all digital channels and promotion tools
- Manual / Guide how to sustainably organize the event
- Hands on coaching and training on the job

## 3 Open call process

### Requirements and BSO profile

To respond to this Expression of Interest, you must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Your organization is headquartered and registered in one of the ECOWAS countries.
2. Your organization has a mandate to support companies and can demonstrate a good level of experience of working with and supporting exporters.
3. The organization of events is part of the services that you offer.

Ideally the candidate complies to the following additional criteria:

1. Your organization has at least 3 professionals available with experience in marketing and promotion, organizing events, matchmaking and IT services and who have the ability to work in English and French (Portuguese would be a plus) with a network of organisations and experts in member ECOWAS countries and international markets
2. You can demonstrate a clear plan for successful and sustainable management of such event and that this project strategically fits within the line of services that your organization offers
3. Your organization has access to sufficient financial resources to pre-finance event management costs if required and subscription to the online matching platform

Organizations that provide incorrect information in the call for applications might be excluded from the selection process.

### Assessment and selection process

The selection process will be fair and transparent. In the first selection round, the BSO should meet the above-mentioned eligibility criteria.

In the next step of the selection procedure the eligible EOI's will be assessed by the WACOMP team and experts and can receive a maximum of 100 points (see proposed structure and scoring method in the next chapter). EOI's from BSO's with 70+ points will be invited for the third step in the selection process.

The third step in the selection procedure will be an interview. This interview involves the BSO being interviewed by the WACOMP team and experts to assess how well suited the organization is for this interesting project. In this interview the BSO can elaborate on their application.

After the BSO has successfully passed the interview, the WACOMP team and experts will confirm their selection to the project.

In the final stage of the selection procedure, you will be requested to sign a declaration of commitment.

### 4 Your Expression of Interest

The format and content of the Expression of Interest shall align with the structure and content provided below. Your Expression of interest should include the following information:

- Introduction and company details
- Experience, including relevant events carried out
- Proposed plan (approach) and methodology for future events
- Motivation and commitment
- The proposed team, including CV's

Proposed structure of the Expression of Interest and scoring method:

Content	Details	Weighting points	Max. no. of pages
Introduction and organisation details	Short introduction and full organisation details (e.g. contact details and official registration)	-	1
Experience	Experience managing or implementing relevant assignments in a similar context	22	3
Proposed plan (approach) and methodology	Quality of the proposed approach and methodology for future events	22	3
Motivation and commitment	Quality of demonstration of commitment and motivation for the project the strategic fit within the organisation	34	3
Proposed team and CV's	Quality and relevance of the proposed team members' skills and experience	22	1*
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>11</b>

\*excluding CV's

### Deadline

The deadline for the submission of the Expression of Interest is **2 June 2021 COB**. Please submit your Expression of Interest in either French or English by email to [apply@westafricaconnect.com](mailto:apply@westafricaconnect.com), with [b.chesnoy@unido.org](mailto:b.chesnoy@unido.org) in copy. If you any have questions or want to report a problem, please contact: [contact@westafricaconnect.com](mailto:contact@westafricaconnect.com)

In case you need more information please write to [contact@westafricaconnect.com](mailto:contact@westafricaconnect.com).