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THE CASTRAP NEWSLETTER

A biannual newsletter of the Liberia national component of the West Africa Competitiveness Programme
Second Edition - Issue No.01 (April 2022 - October 2022)




Implementing Organizations



Welcome to the Second edition (issue No. 01) of the biannual newsletter of the Liberia national component of the West Africa Competitiveness Programme - The Cassava Transformation Project. This newsletter presents updates on the activities and the progress of the project. For further information about CASTRAP, visit: <https://cerathdev.org/cassava-transformation-project>

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OVERVIEW OF WACOMP

The West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) is a partnership initiative between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union (EU). It is aligned to support the implementation of ECOWAS regional policies and programmes including the West Africa Quality System Programme (WAQSP).

WACOMP was adopted under the 11th European Union Development Fund (EDF) Regional Indicative Programme for a total amount of €120m, and highlight a commitment to the Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and West Africa.

WACOMP seeks to support several selected value chains at the national and regional level, so as to promote structural transformation and better access to regional and international markets while taking into account social and environmental concerns.

Some Selected Value Chains Of The WACOMP



The principal objectives of WACOMP are to strengthen the competitiveness of West African countries, and to enhance their integration into the regional and international trading system.

The programme will work to:

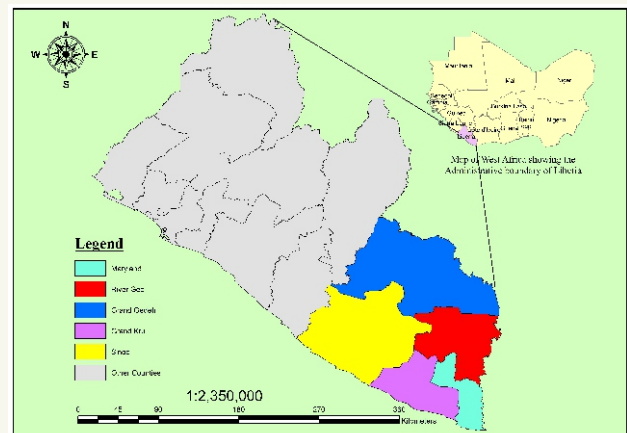
- improve performance, growth and contribution to the industry,
- improve regional trade and exports of selected value chains,
- and improve the business climate at national and regional levels.

The Programme has 16 National components and 1 regional component. While each country is individually responsible for the implementation of its component, the ECOWAS Commission, with the support of the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU/ UEMOA) Commission, is responsible for the implementation of the regional components and for the coordination of WACOMP.

WACOMP IN LIBERIA

WACOMP in Liberia seeks to improve the competitiveness and regional integration of Liberia's cassava sector through a value chain approach. Cassava is the second most consumed crop in Liberia, and estimated to be cultivated by 65% of Liberia's farmers. This notwithstanding, a myriad of factors along its value-chain impedes the competitiveness of Liberia's cassava sector. These factors include access to quality inputs, low technical skills of essential value chain actors, limited access to finance, low entrepreneurial skills, absence and weak organization of essential value chain actors and their linkages, limited infrastructure, unstructured markets, and weak public sector support.

In Liberia, WACOMP targets the South Eastern counties of Sinoe, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, River Gee and Maryland. The South East Region of the country is estimated to be the poorest and with also a comparatively smaller population.



Map of the Project Landscape in the South East of Liberia

Enhancing the cassava value chain in the South Eastern Region can lead to a significant revival of the food processing industry, among others, and provide socio-economic opportunities including job creation, food and nutrition security, and poverty reduction. It can also contribute to the empowerment of women and youth, who constitute the majority of small producers, carrying out 80% of activities in rural areas.

ABOUT CASTRAP

The Cassava Transformation Project (CASTRAP) is the Liberia component of WACOMP. The goal of CASTRAP is to enhance the competitiveness and the regional integration of Liberia's cassava sector through a value chain approach focused on sustained production, value addition, entrepreneurship, and sustainable markets.

CERATH Development Organization in partnership with Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment, Conservation Alliance Liberia, and Center for Enterprise Learning are implementing the project in Liberia's South Eastern counties of Sinoe, Maryland, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, and Grand Kru.

CASTRAP Objectives and Expected Outcomes

Objective 1

Strengthened efficiency of actors engaged in the cassava value chain to improve access to inputs, and markets



Expected Outcomes

- Strengthened and efficient farmer cooperatives and other value chain actors: One integrated production, processing, and commercialization system (IPPCS) established in each county.

Objective 2

Enhanced production, processing, and commercialization of the cassava value chain



Expected Outcomes

- Increased cassava value addition with commercialization in the project landscape.
- Reduction in post-harvest losses.
- Improved food and nutrition security.
- Increased awareness and adoption of climate-smart practices, quality standards, and gender equality and social inclusion principles.

Objective 3

Cassava value chain enhanced to be financially sustainable, and commercially viable



Expected Outcomes

- Increased cassava value chain connectivity in the project landscape.
- Increased inclusive employment and entrepreneurship within the cassava sector of Liberia's South Eastern Region.
- Increased access to financing for cassava enterprises.

Objective 4

Policies, programs, and incentives to stimulate the commercialization of the cassava sector advocated for and implemented



Expected Outcomes

- Increased collaboration between sector partners particularly bakeries and upstream value chain actors resulting from advocacy activities.
- Improved legal framework and capacity of the national standards laboratory (NSL) to offer conformity services (testing, inspection, certification, quality award, and metrology).

● CASTRAP IN FOCUS

Provision of Technical and Financial Support to Farmer Groups to Acquire Cooperative Certificate



The Chairman of the Green Life Farmers Group in Sanquin District Signing the Local Subsidy Contract that Provides Technical and Financial Support to Groups in the Acquisition of CDA Certificate

The project has signed local subsidy agreements with nine (9) farmer groups to subsidize the cost associated with the processes leading to the acquisition of certificate from the Cooperative Development Agency (CDA).

These nine associations collectively have 779 members, comprising 502 females and 277 males.

The local subsidy contract was designed to provide financial support to the groups based on each's specific financial needs and progress towards the acquisition of CDA certificate. Groups are entitled to funds ranging between **US\$1350 and US\$ 2035**.

As a result of this development, CDA has started to steadfastly implement all procedures leading to these groups' accreditation. For instance, the Gbawanken Tendeh Rural Women's Cooperative Society's management team has completed training in good governance and financial management, while management training will soon be provided for other groups.

Furthermore, six (6) of the associations have submitted their Letters of Intent (LOIs) to the CDA indicating their desire to become legally recognized cooperatives.

The project team is in constant engagement with the CDA County authorities as CASTRAP works to ensure the expedite completion of processes leading to the acquisition of accreditation.

This is essential as the tenure of the local subsidy contracts signed by these groups expires on August 31, 2023.

CASTRAP Supports Faith Temple Cooperative to Renew its CDA Certificate as the Project Seeks to Support Two (2) New Farmer Groups to Transition Into Licensed Cooperatives



Engagement with Some Members of Weli-Airnee Farmers' Association During the Cooperative Assessment in Maryland County

Faith Temple Cooperative in Zwedru has successfully re-activated its cooperative certificate with CDA. This was after a series of refresher trainings organized by CASTRAP for its new management and members in Year One.

Following a series of engagements with CDA on behalf of the group, the Agency finally issued the renewed certificate to the group. This exciting news coincided with the completion of renovation works of the group-managed processing centre.

Faith Temple Cooperative is now poised not only to process gari and super gari for the Zwedru market, but also to self-initiate activities and services to benefit its 50 members.

Meanwhile, two groups, Weli-Airnee Farmers' and Help Yourself Cooperative Societies have been selected to receive support towards the acquisition of CDA certificate.

Following recommendation made to CASTRAP by CDA to consider some four groups for support. The two were duly assessed and subsequently selected. They form part of the nine groups to receive financial support via the local subsidy contracts towards the acquisition of CDA certificate.



Needs Assessment of Help Yourself Farmers' Association in Maryland County

Presentation of Processing Equipment to Two Processing Entities



Members of the Processing Team of Faith Temple, in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh, Receiving Processing Equipment

Supporting processing centers with technical assistance or helping to create market linkages is not sufficient to enhance the commercialization of the cassava value chain. In view of this, CASTRAP has procured and handed over processing equipment to two processing centers in its project landscape.

Faith Temple and Agro Green located in Grand Gedeh and Maryland counties respectively were the beneficiaries of the support. This follows the renovation of the two centers as reported in first year of the project.

Some of the equipment delivered to the two processing centres included tricycles, water tanks, cassava graters, cassava dough compressors, sieves, kitchen scales and food processing gears.

CASTRAP is convinced that this support will boost the productivity of the processing centres and position them to be competitive.

Already, Faith Temple has been utilizing its tricycle to transport raw cassava to its processing centre and finished products to the market, thereby reducing the cost and drudgery of engaging commercial transport services.

Further, it is expected that these equipment and materials which replaces the old and mostly worn-out ones will positively improve the quality of processed products emanating from the centres.



Donation of Processing Equipment to Faith Temple Cooperative. In Zwedru, Grand Gedeh

CASTRAP Trains Processing Centers Workers on Improved Processing Techniques and Quality Management Systems



Members of the Processing team at Super Gari, in Fish Town, River Gee, at the QMS Practical Training

When assessing the quality of cassava product, two important factors must be taken into consideration. The first factor is the requirement to ensure food safety, and second is the need to safeguard the health of both the individual processor and the customer.

it is therefore essential to implement a system that ensures food safety in order to maintain the reputation and image of local processors and to enhance their participation in both the international and domestic markets.



Training Session in Grand Gedeh County

Based on this background, CASTRAP has supported four (4) processing centres with a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and Quality management systems (QMS) assessment.

These four (4) processing centres include, Faith Temple Farmers' Cooperative Society processing centre in Zwedru, Badio's Farmers and Processors Association in Pola Village, both in Grand Gedeh County; Super Gari Women Association, a Gari processing centre in Fish Town, River Gee County, and Agro Green Processing Centre in Boniken, Maryland County.

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Quality Assurance Training Session in Grand Gedeh County

The HACCP and QMS assessment of these entities led to the training of members of these centers who are involved in processing. The assessment noted and made recommendations on associated health hazards such as the inhalation of smoke, the exposure from intense heat, and the use of unapproved metal in the construction of grating and frying equipment.



Quality Management Service Consultant Explaining Sorting of Good Tubers for Processing at the Agro-Green, in Boneken Community, Maryland County

The following broad topics were covered during the training:

- a. **Description of quality gari and its production process**
- b. **Identifying hazard and quality defects for each processing operation step**
- c. **Implementing the HACCP/QM system**
- d. **Demonstration of Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) / Good hygiene practice GHP in gari processing using the HACCP system**
- e. **Documentation and record-keeping**

Eighty (80) processors were trained from the four (4) processing entities of which Thirty-five (35) were males, and Forty-five (45) were females.



Group Picture at Agro-Green, Boneken, Maryland, After the Quality Management Service (QMS) Training

Construction of Processing Centres for 5 New Enterprises Operating Along the Cassava Value Chain in the South East



Construction has Begun for Panama Women's Group in the Kpanyan District, Sinoe County.



Construction of the Mini Processing Center for Badio's group in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh Nears Roofing

The project in its first year commissioned a technology needs assessment of the various processing groups and enterprises operating along the cassava value chain within its intervention area.

The assessment recommended that CASTRAP directly intervenes to provide infrastructural, technical and financial support to specific processing enterprises. These enterprises should exhibit the potential to leverage on the support to upgrade the cassava value chain, create jobs and provide incomes to its members.

This activity culminated in the setup of a financing scheme aimed at establishing several integrated production processing and commercialization systems (IPPCS) operating along the cassava value chain.

IPPCS is significant because there are a few interconnected actors operating at different segments of the value chain in the South East of Liberia, where the project is based. An integrated system, thence, is expected to produce and uptake raw materials, process them and market finished products either by wholesale or retail.

Overall, seven (7) processing enterprises have been earmarked to benefit from the IPPCS scheme. Construction of mini processing centres have commenced for five (5) groups in the project area. These are:

- (i) **Green Life and Panama women in Sinoe county**
- (ii) **Setor Women and Nakplaikpo groups in Grand Kru county**
- (iii) **Badio's group in Grand Gedeh county**

Contractors are on site and have the support of the members of the groups to facilitate works. Construction is expected to be completed by the end of November 2022.



Front View of Architectural Design of the Cassava Mini Processing Centre

CASTRAP Kickstarts Establishment and Training for Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs)



A Group Member Offering Interpretation During a VSLA Training in Setor, Grand Kru County

During CASTRAP's baseline survey in the South East of Liberia, it was observed that most farmers have no access to cash to expand and sustain their enterprises or farm sizes. Due to this, they cannot plan their operations, production or predict their expected income.

From May, 2022 the project has supported the training and establishment of sixteen 16 new Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLA) in addition to the four 4 previous established summing up to twenty 20 Groups across the project target areas.

A total of six hundred and eighteen (618) persons (143 males and 475 females, which includes 234 youths and 9 persons with disabilities) have been trained in the management and running of Village Savings and Loans Associations VSLAs. The groups are now managing their individual weekly group's recordkeeping, savings, and loan activities.

At the end of every group training, each established VSLA received from CASTRAP a start-up kit and USD 200.00 injected into each groups saving pool. The intent of the cash injection was to serve as seed capital in building the groups loan portfolio in terms of minimizing high risks during first loan disbursement meetings.

The training instilled into individual members a culture of management and saving which is tantamount to managing their daily incomes thus improving their livelihoods.



CASTRAP County Field Officer in Kliken Community, River Gee County, Educating the Project Beneficiaries on the Concept and Benefits of VSLA



CASTRAP County Field Officer Explaining Ledger Record Keeping to VSLA Group in Kliken, River Gee County

CASTRAP continues to provide technical support in recordkeeping and basic management skills.

These support have resulted in the 20 established VSLA groups accumulating an overall savings of **LRD 4,647,280.00** (approximately US\$ 31,000.00). As of the amount saved, individual members have benefited from loans amounting to **LRD 2,315,550.00 (or US\$ 15,000.00)** with a 10% service charge rate.

At the same time, members of these established groups have cumulatively contributed an amount of **LRD 90,000.00 (US\$ 600.00)**, as Social Fund that is separately kept and can only be disbursed to members based on terms and conditions stated in groups by-laws and constitutions.

Finally, apart from being for only saving purposes as perceived, VSLA has cultivated a culture of cohesiveness among members. As such, group members help to identify with one another in case of unforeseen situations, a serious sense of management of their incomes and the availability of finances at their disposal in their respective communities.

This has brought greater excitement and enthusiasm in CASTRAP intervened communities thus requesting for more support and inclusions into the VSLAs. Interestingly, VSLAs have been found to be very popular and (a good leverage for the project).

Based on the quest of demand of VSLAs in project communities, CASTRAP has therefore, called for the training and establishment of an additional five 5 VSLAs for most needed groups before the end of 2022.



Introduction of the VSL Concept to a Newly formed VSLA in Gbe-gbe, River Gee County

CASTRAP Collaborates with the Ministry of Agriculture to Host a Stakeholder Workshop on the National Agricultural Financing Framework (NAFF)



The Honorable Minister of Agriculture, Mrs Jeanine Milly Cooper, Making Remark at the National Agriculture Framework Stakeholder's Meeting Held at Corina Hotel in Monrovia, Liberia.

CASTRAP in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture is supporting the Government of Liberia to develop a comprehensive national agricultural and rural financing framework (NAFF), to stimulate and accelerate business growth in the agricultural sector in particular, and in the rural areas in general.

Following a review of existing policy documents and an initial field data collection, a first stakeholders' workshop towards the development of the NAFF came off on August 30, 2022 in Monrovia.

The event brought together stakeholders from the government, donor organizations and the private sector, including the Central Bank of Liberia, Ministry of Agriculture, Delegation of the European Union, Poultry Farmers' Association, Concern Liberia, Cassava Union of Liberia, Agrolink Limited.

The objectives of the first stakeholders' workshop were to:

- **Bring together the representative of all identified groups of stakeholders from both demand and supply sides, policymakers, and other ecosystem operatives and interest groups**
- **Facilitate a structured and broad-based discussion on agriculture financing in Liberia**



A Cross-section of Participants Seated at the Stakeholder Workshop

- **Scope ideas, galvanize and document understanding and consensus on challenges and solutions to agriculture financing in Liberia, as well as the strategies for new stakeholders and agriculture financing framework for Liberia.**
- **Secure buy-in from private sector stakeholders and generate a sense of ownership among stakeholders for recommended policy initiatives.**

The event was graced by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Madam Jeanne Cooper who urged participants to actively contribute ideas and suggestions to produce a holistic and implementable framework that reflects the Liberian rural and agricultural business context.

CASTRAP Pilots Mechanized Weeding to Support Small Scale Farmers



Trainee Practicing with the Mechanized Weeder During Training in River Gee County

During the project baseline study, farmers outlined weed devastation as the most difficult constraint affecting cassava farming and thus lowering their yields.

Considering that about 60 percent of farmers are women, and another 65 percent are above 65 years, it becomes even more difficult during the rainy season where farmers have to weed at least 3 times before harvest. Coupled with this, farmers have no access to weedicide, including those manufactured to control weeds in cassava production.

The project also recognises that cost of labour is significantly high in the project area where cassava farming has to compete for labour with oil palm concessionaries and in small-scale mining activities. The average cost of farm labour per day in the project area is **US\$6**. It costs between **US\$18** and **US\$20** to weed an acre of cassava farm.

The idea to introduce mechanized weeding as a service in the project area was borne out of the above considerations. The introduction of pilot mechanized weeding is to help the small-scale farmers manage the incidence of weed battling their farms.

This initiative will encourage medium to large scale production through mechanization to reduce the drudgery associated with our farming practices being practice in the country at the moment. It is also expected to serve as an avenue for job creation particularly amongst young people who reside in the rural areas but do not find farming attractive.

For this cause, the project has procured five (5) motorised weeders. The weeders will be utilised on the project nursery sites in the five (5) counties. So far, the project has trained twenty (20) selected members of the beneficiary farmer associations including three (3) females and six (6) youth, to operate and maintain the machines.

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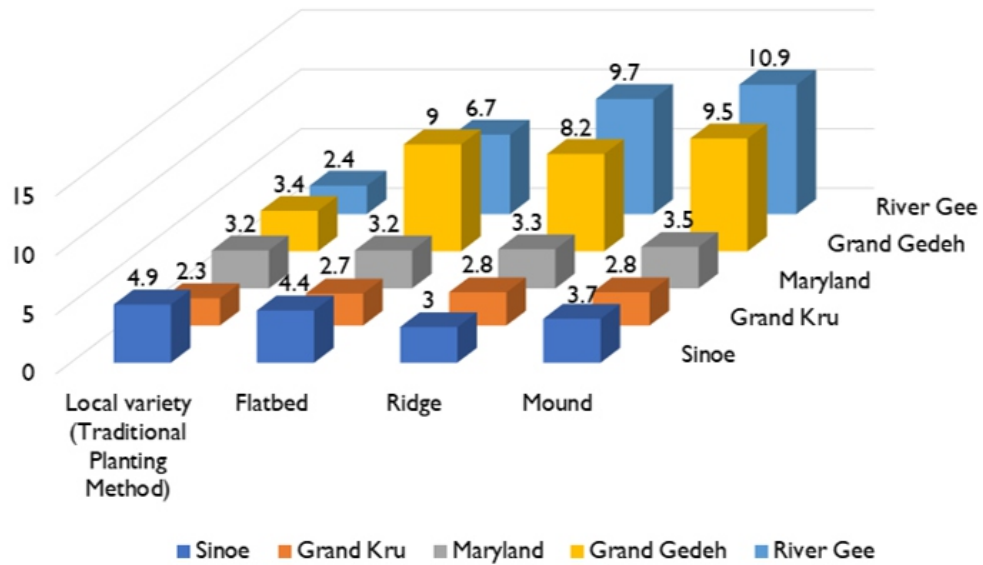
The project will use the pilot phase of the mechanized weeding (expected to run for 6 to 9 months) to collect and analyze data on gross margin, unit cost and break-even for the advanced system compared with existing systems under a simulated private ownership.

The first phase of this pilot (first-three months of operation) is mainly to test the effectiveness of the equipment to control weed as well as to test its durability.



Trainee Practicing with the Mechanized Weeder During Training in River Gee County.

Collection and Analysis of Yield Parameters Of Different Cassava Varieties in the South East



Graph comparing Yield per Plant of Different Varieties of Cassava Cultivated Across Project Counties at 6 months -1

CASTRAP in partnership with the Central Agriculture Research Institute (CARI) has supported the establishment of fifteen (15) farmer field school demonstration farms and eight (8) nurseries across the project counties. This activity is aimed at educating project beneficiaries on modern farming methods, techniques and tools.

Two improved cassava varieties were supplied by CARI; (a) CARICASS 01/0040 and (b) CARICASS 95/0289. The 01/0040 series was cultivated in Sinoe, Grand Kru and Maryland counties while the 95/0289 variety was cultivated in Grand Gedeh and River Gee counties.

To understand the production attributes of the two varieties, in order to better serve the needs of the project beneficiaries. CASTRAP collected yield parametric data from the field for analysis. This comprised of data on plant height, girth and yield (kg), and the number of tubers at 6 months.



A Group of Farmers Taking the Height of Cassava Crop During the Assessment Exercise in River Gee County.



CASTRAP Field County Officer of River Gee County Holding a Bunch of Harvested Cassava Tubers During the Yield Assessment Exercise

It was observed that CARICASS 95/0289 performed better as a high-yield and early maturing variety compared with CARICASS 01/0040 and traditional varieties. It is not to suggest that 01/0040 is not high-yielding. It could be high-yield but late-maturing.

The project expects to collect the data again in month-9 and subsequently in month-12 to further understand the growth and yield attributes of the varieties. The information will significantly support the choice of varieties as well as planning of production by farmers.

Up & Close with "God Will Provide VSLA Group in the Sanquin District, Sinoe County."

CASTRAP team had a "Question & Answer (Q&A)" chat with, the management team of "God will provide Village Savings and Loan Association (GWP-VSLA)", a group trained and established by the project.

BACKGROUND

The project organized business management and financial inclusion training for farmer cooperatives to facilitate the establishment of VSLAs. The project team through its Agribusiness and Enterprise Development Officer and the respective County Field Officers (CFOs) have trained and established 20 Village Savings and Loans Associations across the project landscape.

The GWP-VSLA group was trained and established in April, 2022, with a total membership of 30 (4 males and 26 females, comprising 8 youths and 1 PWD).

As a result of the training, the group is now managing its weekly group record-keeping, savings and loan activities, through an eight-member management team comprising: a chairperson, recordkeeper, box keeper, two money counters and three key keepers. The group is located in Shampy, a community in the Sanquin District, Sinoe County.

Snippets from the interview:

Q: Prior to the establishment of the VSLA, how were you members saving?

Before the training and establishment of the "God will provide" Village Saving and loan Association by CASTRAP in Shampy, we as community dwellers resorted to the traditional daily susu as a means of saving.

Q: Why was there a need to move away from the susu method to VSLA?

The traditional method of savings had brought several setbacks and misunderstandings among members. For instance, some members deny others from receiving their money because they do not pay after receiving their contribution. To avoid the reoccurrences of such situations, Susu was abolished in the group.

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Members of the "God will provide" VSLA in Group Photo.

Q: With the experience from running the Susu group, what was done different to win the trust of members to form a VSLA?

At the initial phase of the VSLA activity in our community, the CASTRAP Project embarked on a background survey to learn how susu was previously managed in the community.

Following this, the Project embarked on an awareness creation exercise that allowed the community members to ask questions and make suggestions based on their previous experiences. Also, some community members who belonged to the Green Life farmer group had had engagements with the Project team to be part of the project beneficiaries and were thus confident the Project would build the capacity of the community to manage the savings club better.

Q: What was your understanding of VSLA from your engagement with the Project during the awareness creation exercise?

We learned that the VSLA is a low-cost financial service founded on the principle of fund pooling and designed to serve those whose incomes are irregular. We were also told that VSLAs have proven to reduce poverty and create assets for their members, especially for rural dwellers with limited access to finance due to high collateral requirements.

Q: What change has the establishment of a VSLA brought to your community?

The presence of the VSLA in our community has created a safer means for us members to save our incomes. It has created positive conditions that enables us to access loans for expansion of our individual businesses and support our household's expenses such as medical bills, school fees among other basic needs. For example, one of our members (Comfort Dugbeh) acquired a loan and has been able to invest in a palm oil business (buying and selling). She has scaled up her business and now buys oil barrels for sale distribution with a business capital of **LRD 150,000.00** or **US\$ 1000.00**. She attributes her success to being part of the In God we trust Village Saving and Loan Association. Several members have also benefitted from acquiring loans and are using these loans for different purposes.

Q: Where will you want to see your group "God will provide" in the next three years

We hope to become an independent and viable community-managed microfinance group within the next three years. We would also like to see each group member increase their financial assets and become financially independent.

Achievements of the Group so far

The group has so far conducted 26 saving meetings, 6 loan meetings and 5 repayment meetings with a total saving of **LRD 641,600.00 (US\$4,300.00)** plus a cash injection of **LRD 30,000.00 (US\$ 200.00)** from CASTRAP amounting to **LRD 671,600.00**. The group has disbursed to members a loan amount of **LRD 852,000.00 (US\$ 5,700.00)**, at a 10% service charged on a four weeks repayment basis.

The money loaned to members has resulted in an additional income (profit) of **LRD 85,200.00 (US\$ 570.00)** for the group. During each saving meeting, each member contributes an equal amount to their Social fund, totaling **LRD 39,000.00**. God will provide total funds from April to October 2022 is **LRD 795,800.00 (US\$ 5305.00)**.

Opportunity Scoping and Market Research for Cassava Products for Liberia

In order to determine the market available at the national, regional, and international levels, the project in April 2022, commissioned an opportunity scoping and market research on cassava products and derivatives within Liberia, and international markets.

The study was expected to define the national, regional, and international markets defined for cassava products and its derivatives in order to provide the project, stakeholders and value chain actors with the market information to needed to stimulate the value chain in a backward approach. Furthermore, the market survey was expected provide information on the current cassava products and derivatives of global demand, and the challenges faced in these supply chains.

In order to disaggregate the different market segments and reach, the report was conducted at three landscapes as follows:

Landscape one: local/national markets; to quantify the demand/consumption of the various cassava products and derivatives market in Liberia.

Landscape two: regional markets (cross border trade- Guinea, Cote D'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone)

Landscape three: global markets; Sahel, East and Southern Africa, Europe, North America, and Asia. This section is focused on all other regions in the world (except landscape one and two) that requires cassava products and derivatives.



Fortified Gari (Super Gari)

Results

The report established that Liberia's value-added cassava products have the potential to reach US\$8 million in value for domestic consumption alone.

The export market for cassava chips or pellets has the potential to contribute over US\$3.5 million to the Liberian economy annually.

The study also puts the annual demand for value-added cassava products in Liberia at an estimated 8,000 MT per annum at a value of over US\$4.4 million, with cassava gari leading the demand at more than 70%.

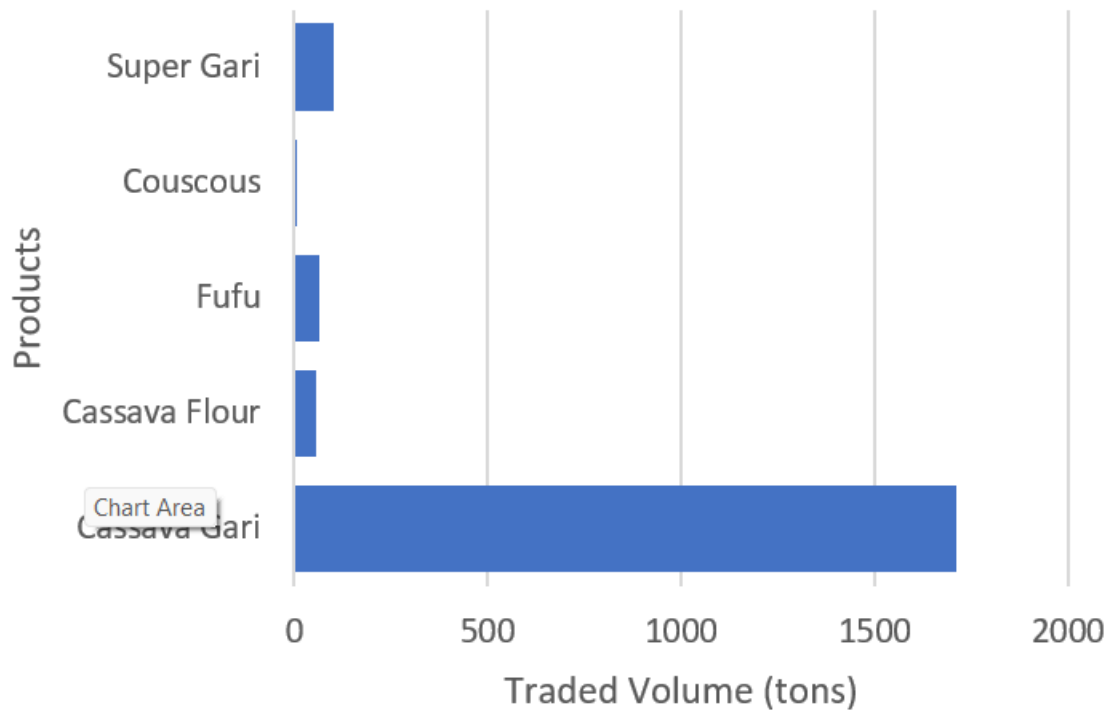
Domestically therefore, gari and its derivative super gari were found to be the most promising cassava-based processed product from amongst a range of locally consumed products that include dumboy, fufu, attieke, dry cassava powder (deepah), and fufu powder.

Liberia was also determined to be a net importer of cassava products in the west African sub-region. In 2021, the country imported a little over 4,000 MT of value-added cassava products from neighbouring Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Cote D'Ivoire worth over \$1.6 million.

The most promising cassava products on the international market are starch, high quality cassava flour and cassava chips. Liberia is currently not considered a major player in the trading of any of the products.

The report concluded that the country focuses first in meeting its local demand before contemplating exports of cassava. Liberia has the raw material volume to create its own value-added cassava products for the growing local market demand. The report identified deficit in processing capacity to meet local demand is as a result of the following factors:

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Most Exported Value-added Cassava Products from Sierra Leone to Liberia, 2021

- **Low data and information for processors in Liberia on the potential market demand for cassava gari and its fortified derivative, super gari.**
- **Very low human capacity development in the area of food processing and its quality support structures.**
- **Low technological uptake in the landscape of cassava processing.**
- **Low response by industrial players in setting up quality infrastructure for the growing demand of value-added cassava products.**

Way forward

The report recommended a three-prong approach at improving the competitiveness of Liberia's cassava sector.

At the policy level, the study recommended that wheat flour in bakery products should have at least 20% substitution with cassava flour to create additional market demand for cassava flour. This can be achieved with the engagement of Liberia's Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI).

The downstream processing level should see a massive improvement in capacity development in new processing techniques, quality management, branding, and visibility. The activities of the processing level should be integrated with equipment service providers and testing laboratories to build support structures in the processing landscape.

Lastly, the linkage of processors to traders and importers of value-added cassava products, as well as concessions; is much needed as Liberia's approach must shift to market-oriented value addition (MOVA) where traders and importers of the products are driving the value-addition effort.

To request for the full report please contact info@cerathdev.org

AT A GLANCE

Donor	European Union
Implementing Organizations	CERATH Development Organization (Lead) Rural Integrated Center for Community Empowerment Conservation Alliance Liberia Center for Enterprise Learning
Target Beneficiaries	Smallholder Farmers/Cooperatives; Agribusinesses and Agri Focused Entrepreneurs; Financial Institutions and Sector Regulatory Agencies (The Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry)
Duration	April 2021 – April 2025
Budget	€ 5,625,000

WACOMP'S COUNTRY INTERVENTION



Benin

Amount: €5m
Lead Ministry: Ministry of Finance
Implementing Partner: GIZ
Selected Value Chains: Soya, ICT



Burkina Faso

Amount: €7.5m
Lead Ministry: Ministry of Trade, Industry and Handcraft
Implementing Partner: Chamber of Commerce
Selected Value Chains: Honey, Cotton, Renewable energy



Cape Verde

Amount: €5m
Lead Ministry: Competitiveness Unit (Office of Prime Minister)
Implementing Partner: UNDP
Selected Value Chains: ICT; Renewable energy, Culture, Tourism & Leisure



Cote D'Ivoire

Amount: €9m
Lead Ministry: Ministry of Regional Integration
Implementing Partner: Chamber of Commerce
Selected Value Chains: Tropical fruits; cassava, cashew, textile & garment, rubber & plastics, ICT



The Gambia

Amount: €4m
Lead Ministry: Ministry of Trade, Industry and Employment (MOTIE)
Implementing Partner: UNIDO; United Purpose Selected
Value Chain: Onion



Ghana

Amount: €9m
Lead Ministry: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Trade
Implementing Partner: UNIDO
Selected Value Chains: Tropical Fruits; Cassava & Derivatives, Cosmetics and Personal Care products



Guinea

Amount: €5m
Lead Ministry: Ministère De L'industrie Et Des Pme
Implementing Partner: UNIDO
Selected Value Chain: Pineapple



Guinea Bissau

Amount: €4m
Lead Ministry: Ministère de l'Industrie et des PME, Cellule de Gestion du Fonds européen de Développement (CGFED)
Implementing Partner: UNIDO
Selected Value Chain: Mango



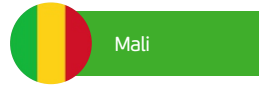
Liberia

Amount: €5m
Lead Ministry: Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
Implementing Partner: CERATH Development Organization
Selected Value Chains: Cassava



Mauritania

Amount: €4m
Lead Implementing Ministry: Ministère de l'Économie et de l'Industrie (MEI)
Selected Value Chains: Poultry; Skin, Hide & Leather; Gum Arabic



Mali

Amount: €5.5m
Lead Ministry: NAO, Ministry of Industrial Development and Investments Promotion, Ministère du Développement Industrie
Selected Value Chain: Tropical Fruits; Cereals



Niger

Amount: €5m
Lead Ministry: Ministère des Finances, Ministère du Commerce extérieur et de la Promotion du Secteur privé
Implementing Partner: Ministère du Commerce et de la Promotion du secteur privé (MCPSP)
Selected Value Chains: Skin, Hide & Leather



Nigeria

Amount: €10m
Lead Ministry: Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade & Investment
Implementing Partner: GIZ
Selected Value Chains: Ginger; Tomato/Pepper; Textiles & Garments; Skin, Hide & Leather



Senegal

Amount: €9m
Lead Ministry: Ministère de l'Économie, des Finances et du Plan, Ministère du Commerce, Ministère de l'économie et des Finance
Implementing Partner: ITC
Selected Value Chains: Mango; Onion; ICT



Sierra Leone

Amount: €5m
Lead Ministry: National Authorising Office, Ministry of Trade
Implementing Partner: UNIDO
Selected Value Chains: Cassava & Derivatives, Cocoa, Palm Oil



Togo

Amount: €5m
Lead Ministry: l'industrie Ministère du commerce de l'industrie du développement du secteur privé et de la promotion de la consommation locale
Implementing Partner: GIZ Selected
Value Chain: Pineapple

CASTRAP'S CONTRIBUTION TO SGDs



FUNDING ORGANIZATION & IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS



European Union

CASTRAP is financed by the 11th European Union Development Fund under the West African Competitiveness Programme.



CERATH Development Organization is a non-profit entity focused on catalyzing development within rural and urban poor communities in Africa.



RICCE is a not for profit right based organization working to empower rural communities in Liberia. RICCE emphasize participation in decision making and the sustainable use of natural resources.



CAL is an organization that serves as a catalyst for biodiversity conservation and improved socio-economic conditions of fringe communities. Its vision is to empower communities in Africa to lead in biodiversity conservation and create opportunities for economic growth and improved human well-being.



Center for Enterprise Learning

Ghana is focused on transforming ideas into impactful businesses, and supporting businesses to launch, scale and accelerate. CEL is focused on providing a cocktail of context-based solutions to businesses in Africa particularly within the agricultural and green space.

WACOMP

The West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) aims to support a number of selected value chains at national and regional level to promote structural transformation and better access to regional and international markets, while taking into account social and environmental concerns. The WACOMP consists of one regional and sixteen national components (15 ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania). The West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP) is financed under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF).

www.wacomp.ecowas.int

NATIONAL COMPONENT



WACOMP Liberia targets the cassava value chain in the South Eastern Region. The Cassava Transformation Project (CASTRAP) is the Liberia National component of the WACOMP. The CASTRAP seeks to enhance the competitiveness and regional integration of Liberia's cassava sector through a value chain approach focused on sustain production, value addition, entrepreneurship, and sustainable markets. The project is being implemented in the South Eastern counties of Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Grand Kru, Maryland, and Sinoe.

DISCLAIMER

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of CERATH Development Organization and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union neither ECOWAS.

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