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West Africa: Support to the ECOWAS Commission on Organisational Development - Institutional Support to ECOWAS - Phase II

Strengthening institutional capacities to promote political and economic integration in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

The Challenges

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a political and economic set of Institutions and Specialised Agencies that aims to create a community of peoples across national borders in West Africa, as well as improving the standard of living through regional integration. Since its creation in 1975, ECOWAS has continuously expanded its mandate to cover all areas of economic, political, and social integration.

Its executive branch, the ECOWAS Commission plays a crucial role in managing political crisis and promoting peace and democracy in the region, especially during times of increasing instability. With many achievements, the ECOWAS primarily relies on the community levy paid by its Member States for funding its operations. To expand its reach and fulfil its mandate, the ECOWAS is looking at diversifying its sources of funding.

The ECOWAS Commission has made strides in institutional development, though still faces obstacles in optimizing organizational and management processes and effectively utilizing existing capacities. As a result, it has met some setbacks on implementing its projects and programmes, thereby, hindering the visibility of positive regional integration outcomes to a community demanding transparency and accountability.

To enhance its effectiveness, the “Support to the ECOWAS Commission on Organisational Development - Institutional Support to ECOWAS (ISE) Phase II” project supports the process of institutional reforms, including the adoption of a results-based management approach. By implementing these reforms, the Commission will be better equipped to address the challenges it faces and continue to drive economic development and democratic principles in member states.

The project aims to strengthen the ability of the Commission to fulfill its tasks for the benefit of the Member States and their population. It advises specialists and managers of the Commission on the design of essential change processes, using Vision 2050 and the 4x4 strategic objectives as central instruments to prioritize key objectives up to 2026.

Project Title	Support to the ECOWAS Commission on Organisational Development - Institutional Support to ECOWAS – Phase II
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the European Union (EU)
Implemented by	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Project Region	ECOWAS Region
Political Partner	ECOWAS Commission
Overall duration	05/2023 – 12/2026
Financial Volume	BMZ 8 million and EU 6 million

It also focuses on implementing an impact-oriented management model, improving the visibility and communication of the Commission and counteracting disinformation, promoting gender equality. The project is co-financed by the European Union (EU) to support the certification of the EU Pillars for the ECOWAS Commission and ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID)

Solution Approach

The project “Support to the ECOWAS Commission on Organisational Development - Institutional Support to ECOWAS (ISE) Phase II” is jointly funded by the BMZ and the EU. It is aimed at strengthening institutional capacities at the ECOWAS Commission and at the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID). The project seeks to improve internal processes and the general shared organisational culture in the system for effectiveness. The objective of the project is to strengthen the instruments used by the ECOWAS Commission, selected ECOWAS institutions, and specialised agencies to implement Vision 2050 in terms of their economic orientation and gender sensitivity.



Photo left: Conference Hall at the ECOWAS Commission Head Quarters, Abuja, Nigeria
Photo right: ECOWAS Team Building



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Photo left: Smarter

*Photo right: ECOWAS Directorate
Retreat*

The project focuses on four outputs:

- The conceptual and technical foundations for the application of the ECOWAS integrated impact-oriented result-based management model have been laid.
- The ECOWAS Commission's ability to effectively communicate the impacts achieved by ECOWAS projects and programmes in the region.
- The internal processes and structures of the ECOWAS Commission contribute to an increased impact orientation and gender sensitivity in the implementation of its Vision 2050.
- The internal processes and the structure of EBID contributing to an increased impact orientation and Gender sensitivity in the implementation of Vision 2025

The project supports amongst others, the Office of the Vice- President of the ECOWAS Commission, with a special focus on the Strategic Planning, the Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate. Furthermore, the project works closely with other ECOWAS directorates and departments with cross-cutting functions, like the Department of Internal Services, the Communication Directorate, and the Gender Development Center. Support also goes to EBID's Directorates of Internal Audit and Evaluation of Operations, Human Resources, Legal Affairs, and Finance.

Effects in Numbers

The project's internal target group are the approximately 100 managers and 650 staff members of the ECOWAS Commission and 150 staff members of EBID. The project will address experts and managers at all levels; from the President of the Commission to the President of EBID as well as the Commissioners, the Directors, and technical staff.

The external target of the project is to increase the visibility of the impact of ECOWAS' projects and programmes to its over 400 million people within the region.

Effects in Pictures

Building appropriate institutional and human capacities will be key to roll out the new ECOWAS Vision 2050: "A fully integrated community of people, living in a peaceful and prosperous region, with strong institutions respectful of fundamental rights and freedoms, striving towards inclusive and sustainable development", in line with the African Union Agenda 2063. The Vision 2050 document was developed with the support of the project as well as other partners.

The Community Strategic Framework (CSF), developed for the period 2023 - 2027, aims to translate the Vision 2050 into reality. The formulation of this new Framework is guided by the lessons learned from the implementation of the previous CSFs (2011-2015 and 2016-2020) and is based on contributions from several technical workshops and key consultations. To better achieve Vision 2050, the articulation of the CSF is based on the socio-economic, security, humanitarian, political and environmental challenges as well as the challenges of deepening integration that characterize the region and that must be addressed over the next five years. Sixteen (16) Strategic Orientations emerged from the five (5) Strategic Objectives linked to the Pillars of Vision 2050.

Aside from the community levy which is the primary source of funding for ECOWAS and EBIB, both institutions are aiming to indirectly manage EU fund. To achieve this, the institutions are required to meet the minimum requirement by becoming EU Pillar certified.

Among others, GIZ will support the ECOWAS Commission in the communication of these new strategic orientations and provide a platform to raise visibility and create awareness. The project will also include an additional component focusing on communication. This component will support the professionalisation of ECOWAS communication and will target combating disinformation especially in times of tense political crisis.

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