

# West Africa: Support to the ECOWAS Commission on Organisational Development

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

## The Challenge

Today, West Africa has a number of political and economic organisations promoting the creation of a community of peoples across national borders. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is one of them and has a set of institutions and specialised agencies.

ECOWAS was set up in 1975. It is composed of 15 member states and aims to promote peace and security in the region as well as improving the standard of living of the population through regional integration. Since its creation, ECOWAS has continuously expanded its mandate to cover almost all areas of economic, political and social integration. Ultimately, the integration is expected to reach an economic and monetary union in West Africa and create the political framework for it.

After 45 years, ECOWAS can look back at several achievements, such as the successful promotion of peace, security and good governance, free movement of ECOWAS citizens, the adoption of the Common External Tariff (CET) for the importation of goods into the region.

As an intergovernmental community, ECOWAS operates with public funds provided by its member states and other public donors. To remain efficient and accountable towards the growing expectations of political stakeholders, it is of utmost importance that ECOWAS management processes comply with international standards. Several innovations and reforms have already affected ECOWAS' institutional setting, like the creation of a new organisational chart, the introduction of SAP for financial management or the creation of a training centre for ECOWAS staff.



Project name	Support to the ECOWAS Commission
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Implementing Organisation	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Project Area	ECOWAS Region including 15 Member States
Executing Body	ECOWAS Commission
Duration	01.03.2019-31.08.2022
Financial Volume	10.3 Mio. EUR, including 3.1 Mio. EUR Co-Funding by EU

Despite all the achievements in the institutional development of the ECOWAS Commission, organisational and management processes as well as the effective use of the existing capacities remain a challenge. As a result, the implementation rate of the ECOWAS Commission's projects and programmes remains rather low. The positive results of regional integration are not clearly visible or are not adequately communicated.

## Solution Approach

The Project "Support to the ECOWAS Commission on Organisational Development" is aiming at strengthening institutional capacities at the ECOWAS Commission and at the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID). Thus, the project seeks to improve internal processes and the general shared organisational culture by employees towards effectiveness.



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 focusses on:

- Development of the ECOWAS Vision 2050 and its strategic documents (funded by BMZ)
- Results-based management of the core processes of the ECOWAS Commission (funded by BMZ)
- Improve the training of ECOWAS staff on internal management processes (jointly funded by EU and BMZ)
- Strengthen public finance management compliant with international standards at ECOWAS and the EBID (jointly funded by EU and BMZ)

The project supports amongst others, the Office of the Vice-President of the ECOWAS Commission, with a special focus on the Strategic Planning Directorate and the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit. Furthermore, the project works closely with ECOWAS directorates and departments with cross-cutting functions, like the Department of Human Resources, the Finance Department of the ECOWAS Commission and the Directorate of Internal Audit and Evaluation of Operations at the EBID. In addition, the project cooperates with the newly created Office of the Auditor General.

### Effects in Numbers

The project supports the Human Resource Department to establish an internal ECOWAS training unit and an in-house training curriculum. Across hierarchies, 100 employees of the ECOWAS Commission will be trained annually on internal processes such as service oriented organisational culture, results-based management or gender mainstreaming. In addition, online trainings will be offered to allow altogether roughly 1000 employees of the ECOWAS community to have access to up to date know-how for the daily work.

Through retreats and workshops, ECOWAS organisational units are supported on a constant basis. Four high-level conferences have been organised for the 15 members of the ECOWAS top management to reflect on the effectiveness of the organisation

and the management styles. The newly introduced interactive methodology for retreats has improved the organisation's capacity to create a joint understanding for necessary organisational change to comply with international standards. Today, ECOWAS top management and all departments of the ECOWAS Commission use interactive methodologies in retreats, allowing not only top management but also ECOWAS employees on the professional level to take part actively in the institutional reform processes.

### Effects in Stories

The implementation of the ECOWAS Vision and its Community Strategic Framework (CSF) 2016 – 2020 will come to an end in December 2020. ECOWAS started the preparation of the successor vision named "Vision 2050" as well as its strategic framework and other associated documents. The new strategic orientation will consider the changed West African and global landscape, for example the importance of emerging markets, technological innovations, climate change and gender mainstreaming. Lesson learnt from the implementation of CSF 2016-2020 was that low level of publication led to low engagement of stakeholders. Among others, GIZ will support the ECOWAS Commission in the communication of its new strategic orientation and provide a platform to raise visibility and create awareness.

In order to improve evidence-based decision-making at ECOWAS, GIZ has accompanied the development of a monitoring and evaluation policy for submission to the Council of Heads of State and Government. The document sets the standards for uniform processes to monitor and evaluate regional integration programmes and defines the role of ECOWAS institutions and specialised agencies as well as the member states. The community is committed to results orientation, transparency and accountability. The aim is to control the use of resources by ECOWAS in an impact-oriented manner. Learning from evaluation results also helps improve community performance.

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