

Cultivating Resilient Value Chains through the Master Training Program



Agriculture remains the backbone of livelihoods across the ECOWAS region, providing income opportunities and employment for much of the population, especially youth and women. Despite its potential, the sector continues to face major challenges including low productivity, limited value addition and weak market linkages.

These issues, compounded by climate change and rapid population growth, underscore the urgent need for large-scale capacity building as a catalyst for sustainable development and job creation.

The Master Training Programme (MTP) seeks to promote competitiveness, inclusion and resilience among the stakeholders of a selected value chain.

This program is being held in Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Tanzania as a high-impact, system-wide intervention, building a pool of experts - Master Trainers - who share the same language and cascade their knowledge to others. These Master Trainers are active all along the value chain and foster regional exchange and innovation.

Empowering Actors Across the Cashew Value Chain

Participants are trained across three dimensions

Technical
Knowledge

Practical Skills

Behavioural
Transformation

The MTP consists of three one-week classroom sessions. Between these, activities are scheduled to encourage participants to apply their new knowledge.

During the first session, participants learn about the dynamics and organization of the value chains and tools for better understanding, capacity building or planning and monitoring interventions. They learn, for example, how to develop training materials and reflect on their own role as a trainer.

The second session focuses on planting material development and good agricultural practices (GAP).

The final phase of the MTP covers processing, sectoral organization and cross-cutting issues, such as by-product processing.

1,345 Master Trainers from 20 countries trained

18 Editions of Cashew MTP since 2013

Each training brings together actors from every stage of the value chain, including farmers, processors, researchers, extension agents, traders, government representatives, investors and even service providers, buyers or industry.

The diversity of actors adds further value to the program. Moreover, it promotes stronger market linkages and inclusivity through the networking opportunities that are provided. Additionally, the direct exchange between practitioners and policy makers enables an informed approach to policy-making by stakeholders within the value chain.



Driving Gender-Inclusive Transformation

Recognizing that gender equity and inclusion are cornerstones of sustainable development, the MTP embeds gender-transformative approaches throughout its design and delivery. The program is committed to ensuring full participation for all, including women and persons with disabilities.



To ensure women with caregiving responsibilities can fully participate in training activities, tailored support is provided. The program recognizes their unique challenges by including childcare services, breastfeeding breaks, and the option to bring a nanny.

Furthermore, to overcome historical barriers, a quota system was implemented to increase women's participation from 15% in 2013 to 40% in 2025.

Some Testimonials

"There has been a notable improvement in communication, resulting in increased productivity within the team"

- Participant from A-SIMTINA ENTERPRISE

"Today, I work with over 200 women, providing training on good agricultural practices and supporting them with access to land and seedlings"

- Osman Zakaria, CEO of Z-Treebiz Ghana Ltd, graduate from MTP edition 7

"A significant application of this session is our enhanced capability to accurately assess and measure the quality of nuts sourced from our farmers"

- Participant from WINKER Investments Ltd

In a commitment to full inclusion, the program also offers dedicated support to Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and special needs. This includes assistance with transportation and logistics, such as arranging appropriate seating, a conference package tailored to their needs, providing assistive technology, customized training materials to support diverse learning styles and making special arrangements for field trips.

MTP also goes beyond including women and youth; it actively challenges and seeks to transform deep-rooted social norms, roles and barriers that foster gender inequality.

To do so the programme promotes equal opportunities for men, women, and youth at every level of the value chain. By fostering an inclusive learning environment that values diversity and mutual respect, it challenges traditional gender roles and stereotypes, paving the way for more equitable and sustainable development outcomes.

Through these integrated measures, MTP is not only building technical capacity but also advancing social inclusion, making the value chain more equitable and resilient.

A Scalable and Adaptable Model

The modular design of MTP, complemented with content specific to the value chain, makes it adaptable to other products.

In 2025, MTP was successfully launched in collaboration with AfricaRice for the rice value chain. The first edition alone welcomed 90 participants from seven countries, having received over 6,000 applications from 55 nations, a clear testament to the model's global appeal.

Also, MTP is being expanded to East Africa, demonstrating also relevance in different regions.

