Economic Commission for Africa
Presentation of the Sub-regional Office for West Africa (ECA/SROWA)
The SROWA is one of the five sub-regional offices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. It is based in Niamey, capital of the Republic of Niger. The host country agreement was signed with Niger’s government on 20 November 1963. The office covers all 15 Member-States (M/S) of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte-d’Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Its mandate is to promote regional integration, social and economic development for the member States inclusive and sustainable growth.

The SROWA works in close partnership with the Regional Economic Commissions (RECs), namely, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the Mano River Union (MRU) as well as with the sectorial inter-governmental institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations.

The SROWA also forms part of the support team for the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS). SROWA has been played an active role in the preparation of the UN Support Plan formulated to build on progress already made while recalibrating the UNISS to align its objectives.
with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the “One United Nations” vision.

In the context of the new reform agenda, the key focus areas of the SROWA are (i) Maintenance of the Centre of excellence for Demographic Dynamics for Development; and (ii) Rendering support to the design and implementation of sub-regional initiatives.

**CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR DEMOGRAPHIC DYNAMICS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

The SROWA is now specialized in Demographic Dynamics for Development (DDD). It is working, among others, on providing policy analysis, strengthening the capacities of its clients, building consensus, and advocating for accelerating the efforts of member States to align demographic policies with national development plans.

**SUB REGIONAL INITIATIVES**

As part of the activities regarding sub regional initiatives, SROWA is the first port of call between ECA headquarters on the one hand and RECs and member States on the other hand. The Office also provides direct support to the RECs and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) based on established sub-regional priorities and initiatives. As such, among the key actions recently undertaken by SROWA is the support provided to the Sahel for the coordination of the activities of the United Nations System (See the brochure on the ECA’s work for the Sahel 2018) and to ECOWAS to accelerate the progress towards the Common Single Currency.

**KEY AREAS OF WORK**

The SROWA carries out its mandate through two main areas of activities: (i) the provision of technical assistance to the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and to Member States in response to country-specific needs; and (ii) the facilitation of regional integration by serving as the focal point for dialogue on policies and knowledge sharing between the Commission and key stakeholders in West Africa. The office contributes to the coordination and communication of the positions of the Member-States on various emerging issues.
The SROWA reports to the Inter-Governmental Committee of Experts (ICE) for West Africa, a subsidiary body of the ECA composed of high ranking civil servants of all member States of the sub-region. ICE holds an annual meeting to discuss the activities of the Office and gives directives regarding the elaboration of the SROWA's work plan.

The SROWA ensures the coordination and serves as the secretariat of the Sub-Regional Coordination Mechanism of the UN system-wide support to the AU/NEPAD Programme in West Africa (SRCM) whose specific mission is to reinforce the coherence and synergy of the activities of UN agencies and bodies, in order to reduce the fragmentation and transaction costs caused by the multiple partnerships implemented to support the RECs.

**PARTNERSHIPS**

The SRO-WA built relationships with several strategic partners to better generate knowledge products, engage in policy dialogue and capacity building in the sub region, including:

- Member states and national institutions (National Statistical Offices, Chambers of commerce…);
- Regional institutions, mainly the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank and Afristat;
- RECs namely ECOWAS and UEMOA all well as IGOs such as West African Development Bank(WADB), ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID), West African Monetary Institute (WAMI), West African Monetary Agency (WAMA), West African Institute for Financial and Economic Management (WAIFEM), Niger Basin Authority (NBA), IFORD, Mano River Union (MRU), Liptako-Gourma Authority (LGA), Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC);
- Sister UN agencies and institutions, such as the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) regional team, the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the Regional Office and headquarters of UNDP and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS);
- Universities, research institutions, media, civil society and the private sector;
- Multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, IMF and other international partners.
HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

At the national level, SROWA provided technical assistance to several countries in West Africa, mainly in areas related to the strengthening of the planning and statistics systems and the formulation and evaluation of development policies. This support is exemplified in the following:

a. Benin: Specialized technical support to the Ministry of Planning and Development in formulating Benin’s new Vision 2040 and rebasing of the national accounts.

b. Burkina Faso: Technical assistance on the implementation of the National Plan for Economic and Social Development (PNDES) 2016-2020.

c. Capo Verde: Production of a country profile in 2017 as a tool for decision making and research, including the including the country thematic on Regional Integration in ECOWAS Region.

d. Côte d’Ivoire: Technical assistance to strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Planning and Development for the preparation of a methodological guide for the monitoring and evaluation of projects.

e. The Gambia: Support in the utilization of mobile technologies to collect data, the monitoring of the SDGs, and the integration of agricultural statistics in the national statistical system.

f. Ghana: Facilitation of high level political dialogue on Ghana’s socioeconomic development.

g. Guinea: Support to the development of “Vision Guinee 2040” and rebasing of the national accounts.

h. Guinea-Bissau: Strengthening the capacity of national officials in the monitoring and evaluation of development policies.

i. Liberia: Technical support in the area of strategic development planning, including the domestication of the SDGs.

j. Mali: Support to the National Institute of Statistics in using mobile technologies to collect data for effective policy and decision making.

k. Niger: Support to the formulation of the country strategy of sustainable development and inclusive growth vision 2035 (SDDCI) and its five-year implementation plan (PDES 2017-2021).


m. Senegal: Creation of project cycle management and capacity building platform using T21 and ASDI.

n. Sierra Leone: Production of a country profile in 2018 as a tool for decision making and thematic research on mining sector.
At sub regional level, the following recent achievements with ECOWAS can be highlighted:

- On the eve of the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the ECOWAS Commission, the SRO-WA of the ECA, in conjunction with the ECOWAS Commission, conducted a critical study on the state of regional integration, in a bid to help improve and speed up the process of regional integration in the sub-region. More specifically, this study made an inventory of the integration efforts made since the establishment of ECOWAS in 1975; promoted a better understanding of the regional integration process in the ECOWAS sub-region; identified problems and challenges which countries and stakeholders are facing in their march towards sub-regional integration; and proposed possible solutions to overcome identified problems so as to accelerate the sub-regional integration process.

- The production by SRO-WA of the first draft study on the evaluation of prerequisites, criteria/scenarios suggestions in the progress towards the adoption of a single currency by 2020 in the ECOWAS region informed the decisions taken in February 2018 by the Presidential Task Force on the monetary integration process, including the adoption of the revised Road Map for the ECOWAS Single Currency Programme.

- Ahead of the envisaged enlargement of the ECOWAS to Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania following the accession requests or intentions formulated by these countries, a SRO-WA’s study on the impact of Morocco’s candidature to ECOWAS guided the decisions of the Heads of State at the fifty-second (52nd) ordinary session of the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government in December 2017.

- SRO-WA gave its technical support for the formulation of the ECOWAS Community Development Program (CDP) as well as for the.
preparation of a Round Table and Regional High Level Conference on the financing of the CDP.

**RECENT PUBLICATIONS**

SROWA also produces a wide range of publications addressing the region’s priorities. Among the publications produced in the recent past are the followings:

- An Assessment of Gender Mainstreaming into Food Security Initiatives of West African Intergovernmental Organizations;
- 15 country profiles, one for each ECOWAS member State;
- Data consensus in West Africa;
- Economic profile of West Africa and prospects;
- ECOWAS at 40- An assessment of progress towards regional integration in West Africa;
- Emerging issues in West Africa, Development in regional integration;
- Green economy in West Africa;
- Harnessing agricultural potential for growth and development in West Africa;
- Implementing the ECOWAS common external tariff: challenges and opportunities;
- Innovative financing for the Structural Transformation of West African economies;
- Progress report on the Implementation of Regional including International Developments Agendas in West Africa;
- Prospectus on regional integration in West Africa: strengthening trade integration;
- Recent economic and social developments in West Africa;
- Regional infrastructures in West Africa: status, challenges and impact on free trade area;
- Regional integration in West Africa: inclusive green growth to accelerate socio-economic development in West Africa;
- Regional Integration: Agriculture Value Chains to integrate and transform agriculture in West Africa;
- Socio-economic impacts of Ebola on Africa;
- Towards an ECOWAS single currency: situation and outlook;
- Tracking progress in the implementation of regional and international agendas, including NEPAD and other special initiatives in the Sub region;
- Tracking Progress on Macroeconomic Policy and Institutional Convergence in West Africa.

Most of the above publications are available on the office website [https://www.uneca.org/sro-wa](https://www.uneca.org/sro-wa).

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1The Country profiles are tools for evidence-based policy engagement and dialogue, and as credible sources of comparative data for policy makers and analysts on key national, regional and international development initiatives agendas, including economic transformation.
• Collectively, the 15 countries of ECOWAS comprise an area of 5,114,240 km² (ECOWAS), accounting for nearly 17% of Africa’s surface area.
• The population of ECOWAS was estimated at 365.3 million inhabitants in 2017 (ECOWAS Commission), accounting for about 30% of Africa’s population.
• 40% of the population in the Sahel (which covers eight countries in West Africa) is in the 0-14 age bracket and 19% in the 15-24 age bracket (UNDESA).
• 80% of the migration in West Africa has a destination as a West African country (UN).
• Intra-community trade represents around 12% of the total ECOWAS trade (ECOWAS).
• Fuels coming from extractive industries represent three-quarters (75%) of exports (excluding re-exports) and are provided mainly by Nigeria (73%) (ECOWAS).
• Europe accounts for about 28% of ECOWAS exports with 23% for the European Union whereas the Americas account for 40% (ECOWAS).
• The degree of openness (expressed as the ratio of the sum of total imports and exports to GDP) increased from 37.5% in 2000 to 50.1% in 2017 in ECOWAS (ECOWAS).
• About 90% of the population uses wood and charcoal for domestic cooking in West Africa.
• In terms of reserves, West Africa has 3,345 million tons of oil, 3,447,300 million cubic meters of natural gas, 580 million tons of raw coal, 26,860 MW hydroelectric resources and 72,354 thousand ha of forest (ECA).
• After a steady decline from 6% in 2014 to 3.2% in 2015 and 0.3% in 2016, the real GDP growth rate of ECOWAS is estimated to recover to 2.3% in 2017 (ECOWAS).
• The objective of an average annual inflation rate of less than or equal to 10% until the end of 2018 has been achieved in the majority of ECOWAS countries over the period 2005-2016 (ECA).

**INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES**

**Benin**
- Area: 114,743 km²
- Population: 10 million of which 47.6% aged 14 years or below and 1.8% aged 65 years and more (RGPH, 2013).
- Ranked 5th in the ECOWAS on overall Africa Regional Integration Index with 0.548 score (ECA, 2016).
- Benin GDP is mainly fuelled by the tertiary sector representing almost 45.8% over the period 2010-16 (ECA, 2018). Cotton is the main product exported by the country. It shares in its total exports over 2010-16 is estimated at 34% (ECA, 2018). The production of cotton in 2015 was 281,853 tons.

**Burkina Faso**
- Area: 274,500 km²
- Population: 18.6 million of which 11.11% of men and 10.63%
of women between 15-19 years and 0.16% of men and 0.29% of women over 80 years (World Bank, 2016)
- Ranked 7th place in the ECOWAS African Regional Integration Index, i.e. 0.537 points (AU, ADB, CEA, 2016)
- Burkina Faso remains the largest cotton producer in Africa. In 2016, Burkina produced 38.1 tons of gold for 11 operating industrial mines. It exports mainly to Switzerland and South Africa.

**Côte d’Ivoire**
- Area: 322,463 km²
- Population: 22.67 million of which 41.8% aged 14 years old or below and 2.5% aged 65 years and more (RGPH, 2014).
- Ranked 1st in the ECOWAS on overall Africa Regional Integration Index, with 0.675 score (ECA, 2016)
- Côte d’Ivoire is the first producer of cocoa in the World and the 5th producer of coffee of the continent. Côte d’Ivoire is also the world’s largest cashew producer with 725,000 tons in 2016.

**Cabo Verde**
- Area: 4,033 km²
- Population: 0.52 million in 2015 with 27.4% aged 14 years or below and 7.5% aged 65 years and more.
- Ranked 12th in the ECOWAS on overall Africa Regional Integration Index with 0.439 score (ECA, 2016).
- Cabo Verde is among the rare countries of the continent which achieved many targets of MDGs in the fight against poverty and hunger, access to services health and education. Its main economic activities are tourism, trade, construction and transport. The tertiary sector amounts almost 62.0% of the GDP.

**The Gambia**
- Area: 11,295 km²
- Population: 1.9 million of which 45.7% aged 14 years or below and 2.3% aged 65 years and more (UNDESA, 2017).
- Ranked 11th in the ECOWAS on the overall Africa Regional Integration Index with 0.447 score (ECA, 2016)
- The main products exported by the country are groundnut, cashew nut and fish representing respectively 32.7%, 20.6% and 13.6% of its total exports (ECA, 2016).

**Ghana**
- Area: 238,540 km²
- Population: 27.6 million of which 38.8% aged 15 years and 54.4% are under 24 years (2014)
- Ranked 11th in SADC on overall Africa Regional Integration Index, with 0.418 score (ECA, 2016)
- Ghana is the world’s second largest exporter of cocoa, with an average production in the last five years at 668,000 tons, and the second largest producer of gold in Africa. It is ranked first in free movement of person in ECOWAS.

**Guinea Bissau**
- Area: 36,125 km²
- Population: 1.5 million of which 43.5% aged 14 years or below and 63.5% are under 25 years.
– Ranked 20th in SADC on overall Africa Regional Integration Index, with 0.322 score (ECA, 2016)
– Guinea Bissau is the third largest African cashew producer after Côte d’Ivoire and Tanzania. Mangroves, which cover 338,652 ha or 9.4% of the national surface, make Guinea-Bissau the first country in the world in terms of the proportion of mangrove area and the second largest in terms of total area occupied by mangrove swamps in Africa, after Nigeria (IBAP, 2017).

**Guinea**
– Area: 245,857 km²
– Population: 10.5 million of which 42.1% aged 14 years or below and 54.8 % are in 15-64 years (2014)
– Ranked 16th in SADC on overall Africa Regional Integration Index, with 0.349 score (ECA, 2016)
– Guinea has the world’s largest reserves of bauxite. This country produced 26,917 tons of bauxite in 2016. Exports of bauxite account for almost 40% of total exports.

**Liberia**
– Area: 111,370 km²
– Population :4 million of which 44.6% aged 14 years or below and 52.7 % are in 15-64 years (2014)
– Ranked 22nd in SADC on overall Africa Regional Integration Index, with 0.271 score (ECA, 2016)
– Most of the export earnings are generated by two main commodities, iron ore and rubber, which together account for almost 75% of the total value of the earnings.

**Mali**
– Area: 1.24 million km²
– Population: 14.5 million with 48.0% aged 14 years or below and 2.9% aged 65 and more(Mali 2009 Population and Housing Census)
– Ranked 8th in the ECOWAS on the overall Africa Regional Integration Index with 0.525 score (ECA, 2016).
– Mali’s GDP is mainly fuelled by the primary sector (39.6% over the period 2010-16). Its main agricultural products are cereals (maize, millet, sorghum) and cotton (11% of total export in 2015). The country is the second big breeding country of the West Africa region after Niger and the second largest livestock country in the sub region, after Nigeria. Until 2017, Mali was the 3rd African country producer of gold, representing more than 65% of its total exports (ECA, 2018)

**Niger**
– Area: 1,267,000 km²
– Population: 20.67 million people in 2016 (World Bank) of which 49% under 15 years,58.4% under 18 years and 67%under 25 years.
– Regional integration index in Africa: Niger ranks fourth in ECOWAS with a score of 0.56 (ECA, 2018).
– Niger is the country where the proportion of young people is the highest in the world (ECA, 2015). It is the fourth largest uranium producer in the world.
Nigeria

- Area: 923,768 km²
- Population: 186 million in 2016 (World Bank) of which 70% is under 30 years and 41% under 15 years.
- Ranked 9th in ECOWAS on overall Africa Integration Index, with a score of 0.50 and 13th in CEN-SAD with a score of 0.39 (ECA, 2016).
- Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the eighth most populous country in the world (DESA, 2012). It is one of the largest oil producers in Africa (ECA, 2016). In early April 2014, Nigeria revised its GDP figures. Estimated at 42,397 billion naira before revaluing, the Nominal GDP was thus revalued to 81,009 billion naira in 2013 (484 billion US dollars), making Nigeria the leading economy in Africa in nominal terms.

Senegal

- Area: 196,712 km²
- Population: 15.41 million in 2016 (World Bank) of which 41.9% under 15 years and 3.7% is 65 years old and over.
- Ranked 3rd place in the ECOWAS with a score: 0.63 (ECA, 2015)
- Senegal is a producer of sulphuric acid. However, its subsoil remains under-exploited with real potentialities such as: Gold, Platinoids, Iron, Copper, Chromium, Nickel, Phosphates, Limestone ... etc.

Sierra Leone

- Area: 71,740 km²
- Population: 7.55 million of which 10.88% of men and 10.92% of women between 15-19 and 0.14% of men and 0.16% of women over 80 years.
- Ranked 13th rank of the ECOWAS African Regional Integration Index, with 0.404 points (AU, ADB, ECA, 2016).
- Although the agricultural sector remains the largest contributor to GDP at 45%, Sierra Leone is known worldwide as a major producer of mining products, with iron ore, diamonds, and rutile and gold.

Togo

- Area: 56,785 km²
- Population: 7.1 million of which 10.29% of men and 10.17% of women between 15-19 and 0.21% of men and 0.27% of women over 80 years (World Bank, 2015).
- Ranked 2nd rank of the African index of regional integration ECOWAS with 0.671 points (AU, ADB, CEA, 2016).
- The main export products are cement, phosphates and cotton. But Togo asserts itself mainly as a transit economy, based in particular on the autonomous port of Lomé, a real breakout pole on the West African coast. Because of its strategic position, it is the only port on the West African coast where you can reach several capitals in a single day’s drive.