STDF/PPG/1083 “Safe Women Trade”

Women, coffee-cocoa and food crops: a regional partnership for safe maize and cassava trade

Cameroon and DRC, towards Gabon: partnership, spillover effects, gender and access to finance

STDF Working Group · Knowledge management session
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With CICC (Cameroon) and ONAPAC (DRC)



A partnership born from the coffee and cocoa sectors

Established relationships between Cameroon, DRC and Gabon on which the regional PPG builds

Cameroon

- CICC, cocoa-coffee interprofession, co-applicant and cofinancing of PPG
- MINADER
- **Plateforme de veille sanitaire;**
- LNAD laboratory
- ANOR local standards (compliancy);

DRC

- ONAPAC, Co-applicant; Lukula coffee basin (Kongo Central)
- Office Congolais the Control OCC: standards, inspection, laboratories
- UNIKIN: Field survey of 240 women actors (coops and SME's)

Gabon, net importer

- CAISTAB (Ministry of Trade): existing relationship on coffee and cocoa promotion with Cameroun and RDC
- AGASA: food safety import requirements
- Identified by the PPG as the regional demand hub

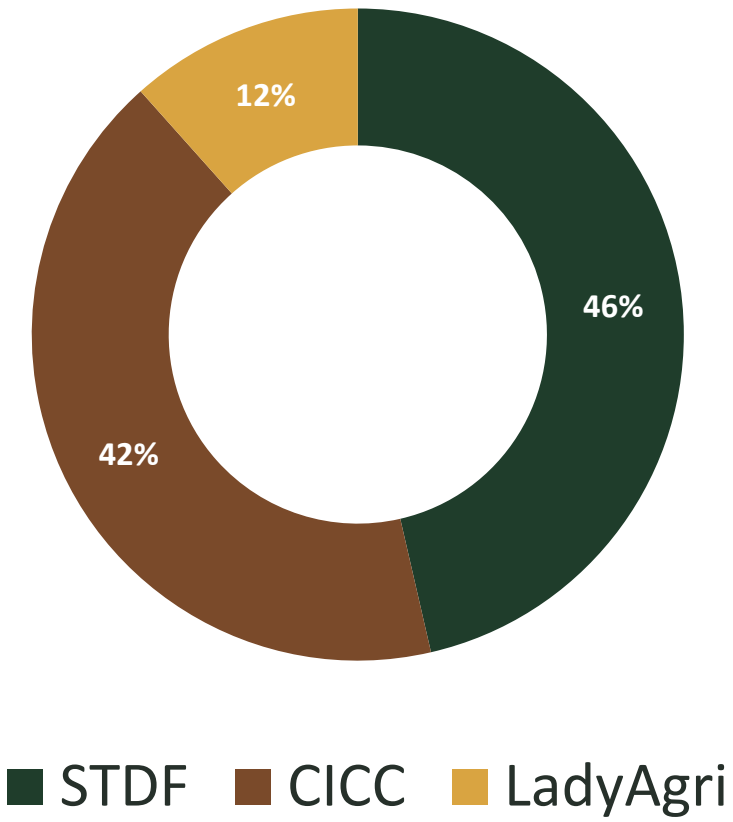
LadyAgri, the gender bridge between both countries

Gender adviser to the national coffee and cocoa programmes and to the CICC; leads women's economic empowerment and trade programmes with Belgian Development Cooperation (Enabel) in Kinshasa and, in Cameroon's Centre region, with international cocoa exporters; a large network of women-led SMEs and cooperatives.

Associated technical and financial partners: SSAFE/Cargill (cross-contamination guide), Equity BCDC (Kinshasa), MUPECI (Douala). Sources: STDF/PPG/1083 ToR; diagnostic report, November 2026

A committed partnership: 54% of the PPG budget co-financed

USD 107,750 in total: *the STDF funds 46%, partners provide the rest in cash and in kind*



CICC

USD 45,260

USD 35,230 in cash, USD 10,030 in kind; March 2026 workshops funded before the contract was even signed (USD 8,280)

LadyAgri

USD 12,500

Gender, investment and data analysis expertise; coordination across both countries

MINADER (Cameroon)

In kind

Plateforme de veille sanitaire, LNAD laboratory, phytosanitary border posts

ONAPAC (RDC Kinshasa)

In kind

DRC focal point, supervision of field surveys in Kinshasa and Lukula

Sources: ToR detailed budget; CICC co-financing letter No. 0101/CICC/CE/SE/026 of 20 April 2026; STDF contract INT/SUB/STDF/390

Diversification, a regional priority: RDC and Cameroun

Boosting coffee and cocoa while promoting associated food crops grown, processed and traded by women



Cash crops: coffee, cocoa
Foreign exchange and exports, notably to the EU; incomes exposed to world price fluctuations.

Associated food crops: maize, cassava
Staples of the regional diet; from subsistence crops to cross-border trade, driven by women.

- An economic buffer against price volatility in export cash crops
- Food security in the face of higher wheat and maize import prices since the Ukraine crisis
- AfCFTA-Strengthening regional trade. regional staples with strong growth potential

Gabon: cassava is the staple food of over 80% of the population; more than 90,000 t imported per year (expert estimate)

Sources: Ministries of Trade and Agriculture (Cameroon, DRC); diagnostic report, section 3.1 (Le Nouveau Gabon, 2021; Gabon census RGPL, 2026). Photo: maize market, Kinshasa

Intercropping is already common in the Coffee and Cocoa regions

Maize between the rows, cassava next to plantations, drying , processing and storage close by

37%

of Cameroonian women farmers and cooperatives work on cocoa or coffee plantations and grow staples (median distance: 100 m)

< 200 m

typical distance between cassava plots and cocoa farms; maize is also grown between cocoa rows

18 / 36

Lukula (DRC) entities working right next to a coffee farm; 16 of 38 responses describe intercropping

November

the second maize harvest coincides with cocoa harvesting, drying and storage (October to December)



Coffee support programmes encouraged intercropping maize with young coffee, for income before the first harvest, but without any SPS guidance.

Sources: ODK survey (Cameroon n = 43; DRC n = 108); CICC characterisation; diagnostic report, section 5.1. Photo: STDF survey in DRC



ACCESS TO SPS KNOWLEDGE AND INVESTMENT FOR WOMEN TO TRADE SAFE FOOD IN CENTRAL AFRICA

The SPS risk explored: cross-contamination

A hypothesis to test: the conditions are present, but transfer between crops is not yet measured

Pesticides

Few products registered for food crops (2 herbicides for cassava vs 72 insecticides for cocoa), so farmers improvise treatments. Banned chlorpyrifos-methyl observed on intercropped plots.

Drying and storage

Wet and dry lots stored together: risk of aflatoxins (maize, groundnut) and ochratoxin A (coffee, cocoa). Storage separate from cocoa or coffee: 47% in Cameroon, 6% in DRC.

Market signals

RASFF 2019–2026: 5 chlorpyrifos notifications on green coffee (4 border rejections) and 5 on food crops grown between cocoa rows; excess HCN in cassava flour. Aflatoxin

What is at stake: regional consumer health and the reputation of cocoa and coffee exports internationally.

Sources: Cameroon registered pesticides list (2024); field observations in Baditoum and Kouambang; RASFF, July 2019 – June 2026; diagnostic report, section 5

A PPG intentionally focused on women: Gender Smart

From production to processing and cross-border trade







Production

Women control most maize and cassava volumes;
Absent from SPS capacity building

Processing

Needs Access to Solar Dryers
Processing Equipment
Hygiene
Certification costs hold back compliance.

Cross-border trade

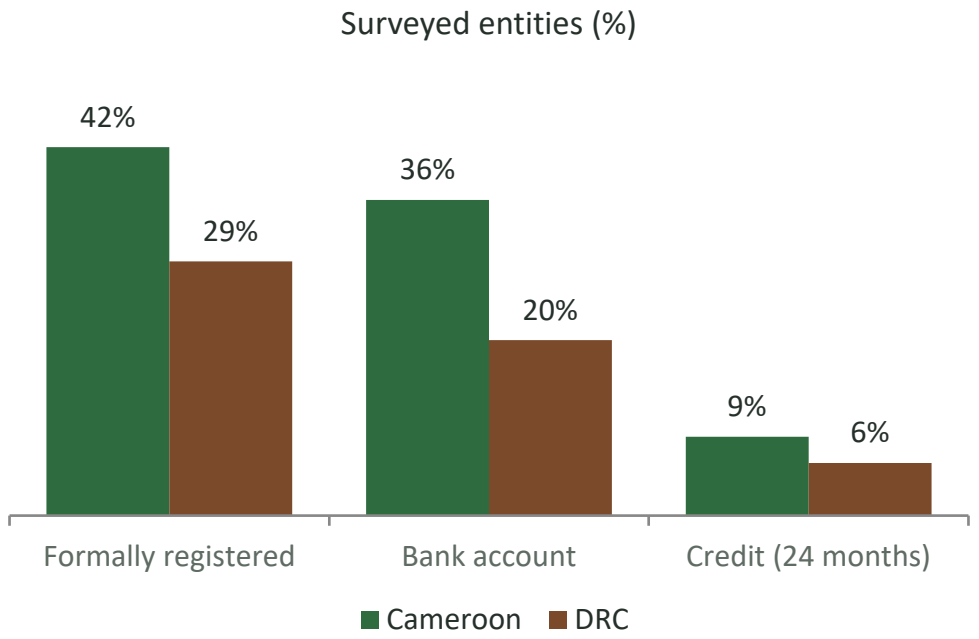
Women are the majority of border traders; 83% of traders in the tri-border area report payments without receipts.

Cross-cutting: lack of information is the top constraint (47% in Cameroon, 70% in DRC); no confirmed participation of women in SPS platforms. The PPG is producing sex-disaggregated data for both growing basins.

Sources: ODK survey of 261 women-led entities; UNIKIN (240 women actors); UNECA (2026); diagnostic report, section 9. Photos: survey interviews in Cameroon

Access to finance: costing SPS compliance

Meeting ANOR (Cameroon), OCC (DRC) and AGASA (Gabon, importing country) requirements: equipment, hygiene, testing



64% / 76%

cannot self-finance compliance upgrades (Cameroon / DRC)

FCFA 500,000

median stated need in Cameroon for compliance costs with ANOR; CDF 1,500,000 in DRC

+15,000 USD CAPEX Investment needs

drying or separate storage equipment (median, Cameroon)

USD 50–300

per aflatoxin test (CREN-K, OCC); pesticide screening: FCFA 50,000 at LNAD

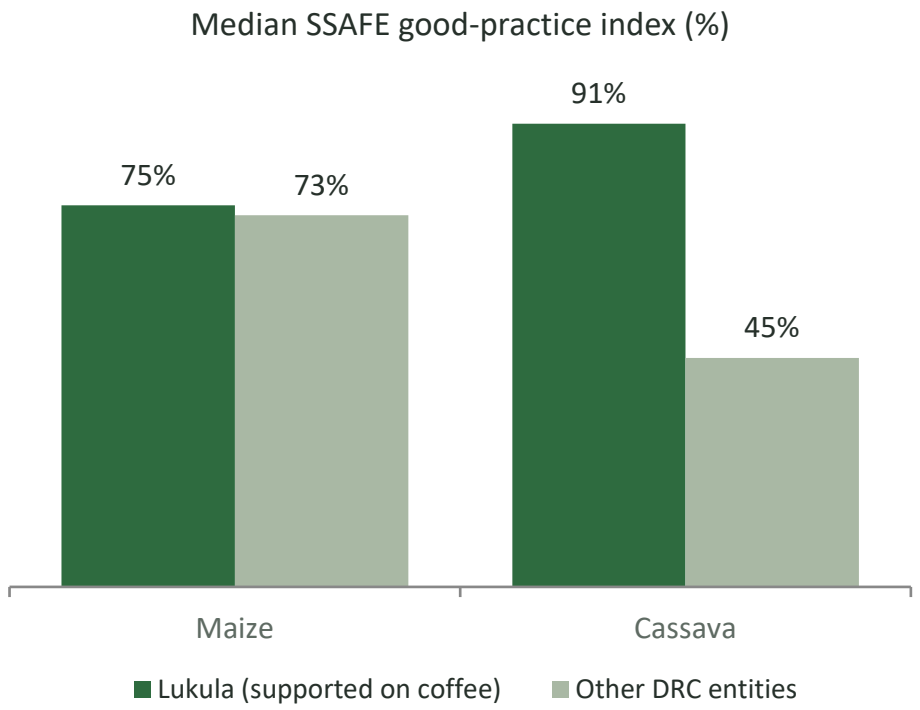
Finding: banks finance women as a "social" target, not as economic actors through their Agri-finance commercial departments.
Way forward: lead coffee-cocoa cooperatives, a bankability ladder and innovative financing mechanisms, partnerships including finance institutions

Self-reported, unverified amounts in original currency. Sources: ODK analysis, 24 October 2026; Equity BCDC and MUPECI questionnaires (September 2026); diagnostic report, section 10

Spillover effects already visible: Changing perspectives

PPG lifts cooperation between institutions (Private and Public) the financial sector

Coffee and Cocoa sectors structured value chains focused on international exports leverage for professionalizing food crops grown in same regions.



In Lukula, 19 of 22 entities dry cassava on raised racks, a technique learned from coffee.

Technical
Coffee and cocoa know-how transfers to associated food crops, provided storage is also addressed.

Institutional
CICC, MINADER, ONAPAC and OCC now work together; dialogue opened with Gabon (CAISTAB, AGASA).

Financial Sector
Open to collaborate, extend its grant-plus-credit mechanism to compliance; objective to stimulate cross-border trade. Facilitation Buyers-Suppliers (Compliant).

To manage
Food–cash crop intercropping is spreading without SPS guidance: a code of practice for mixed systems is needed.

Self-reported index, not verified compliance; the Lukula group is not representative of the basin. Sources: ODK analysis, 24 October 2026; diagnostic report, sections 5.3, 10.2 and 12.3

A regional corridor alliance for: Gender Smart Safe Food Trade

A basin-wide SPS system, with corridors Cameroon, RDC to Gabon



C1 **Assess and control risks**
analytical baseline, testing contamination pathways, SSAFE practices

C2 **Make compliance work in practice**
clear procedures, targeted standards, affordable testing

C3 **Link compliance, markets and finance**
identified buyers, bankability ladder, blended finance

C4 **Gender and regional coordination**
reserved seats in SPS bodies, producer countries–Gabon dialogue

Regional alliance supporting
Women led SME's and Cooperatives
public private sector, cocoa and coffee buyers, banks , civil society

Sources: diagnostic report, sections 13 and 14; STDF/PPG/1083 ToR, timeline. Major investments will depend on co-financier commitments. Photo: STDF survey in DRC

Supporting Women's Economic Empowerment in Cocoa communities

Women agri-entrepreneurship program boosting sustainable food systems and food security



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