

Issue 38

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# ACA Receives New Africa Trade Fund Grant for Processors in 8 Countries



The African Cashew Alliance (ACA) has received a new grant from the African Development Bank's Africa Trade Fund (AfTra) to implement an extensive technical assistance program for cashew processors in 8 countries in East and West Africa.

The grant supports ACA activities aimed at creating more than 2,000 new jobs (at least 70% of which will be for women) and generating USD 8 million in additional income for rural communities, by increasing efficiency, quality and quantity of African cashew processing. The project will further aim at developing best practices of environmentally sustainable processing, and promote the equitable and beneficial usage of a workforce which is predominantly female. The project will be implemented over 3 years in the countries of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Mozambique and Tanzania.

Cashew supports the livelihoods of about 10 million people in rural Africa. Almost half of the world's cashew is grown in Africa, but only around 10% of Africa's cashew harvest is processed in the continent. The young African cashew industry is constantly improving its expertise, and is increasingly discovering innovative ways to overcome challenges in providing buyers with nuts which meet international quality standards.

ACA Managing Director Roger Brou observes, "Cashew processing in Africa has grown significantly over the past decade, and the industry as a whole is steadily getting closer to achieving its full potential. We are delighted that the African Development Bank has recognised the importance of this industry, and its potential to provide secure and sustainable employment for millions of people."

The ACA, as Africa's leading provider of technical assistance to cashew processors and new investors, will help project participants to sustainably build their internal technical capacity, improve operational efficiencies, and implement food safety, quality, and labor standards. Further components of the project will help participants implement environmental standards, and, in collaboration with national and international NGOs experienced in gender-related topics, will promote the incorporation of a gender-based perspective to empower women in the workplace.

The Africa Trade Fund is hosted by the African Development Bank's Regional Integration & Trade Division. IT was set up in March 2012 with the aim of facilitating trade openings in low-income African economies.



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# ACA ACTIVITIES

## First Ivorian Processor Becomes ACA Seal-Approved

Founded in February 2013, Cajou des Savanes (CASA) is a cashew processor located in Bouake, Cote d'Ivoire that currently employs 720 workers, roughly 80 percent of whom are women. Over the course of one year, CASA worked with ACA's team of technical experts - Dorcas Amoah (ACA Seal Coordinator) and Sunil Dahiya (ACA Business Advisory Manager) - to implement efficient manufacturing processes, quality control measures, as well as safety and hygiene practices. In under one year, CASA achieved the ACA Quality and Sustainability Seal in February 2015, joining seven existing ACA Seal-certified African processors: Tolaro Global, Mim Cashew, Jungle Nuts, Anatrans, Cajou Espoir, Equatorial Nut Processors, and FoodPro. As the newest member of the ACA Seal family, CASA is also the first Ivorian processor to be granted certification.

ACA Seal Coordinator, Dorcas Amoah states "CASA is effectively managed by individuals who understand the importance of making a long-term investment in food safety and social responsibility. They took our recommendations very seriously and adhered to deadlines; as a result, they were able to secure the ACA Seal within a short period of time."

Earning the ACA Seal provides cashew processors the opportunity to engage in new markets and build relationships with international buyers. CASA's Operations Director, Ashak Sheriff, "believe[s] the ACA Seal certification will significantly increase [CASA's] negotiating power" with new local and foreign buyers; thereby expanding [its] clientele base. As the first ACA Seal-certified processor in Cote d'Ivoire, CASA has taken the initiative to produce the highest quality of cashews, and we hope others in the area will follow its lead.



The ACA Seal was created in 2012 and is awarded to processors who meet the highest global standards for food safety and social and labor laws. The ACA Seal ensures cashews are produced within facilities complying with the U.S. Food Safety Modernization Act. Additionally, processors who are granted the ACA Seal often acquire other internationally recognized food safety certifications such as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) and ISO 22000.

For further information about how you can improve your processing facility, please contact Dorcas Amoah (damoh@africancashewalliance.com).

## ACA Launches New Website

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The African Cashew Alliance is creating a globally competitive African cashew industry that benefits the value chain—from farmer to consumer.

News | [Pack Packaging Support](#) | [Mozambique to Sell 80,000 Tons of Cashews This Year](#) | [Kogi Upgrades Cashew Warehouses for Storage](#)

### ACA Receives New Africa Trade Fund Grant for Processor Assistance in 8 Countries

24 Feb, 2015

The African Cashew Alliance (ACA) has received a new grant from the African Development Bank's Africa Trade Fund (ATra) to implement an extensive technical assistance program for cashew processors in 8 countries in East and West Africa.

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In February 2015, ACA launched its new and improved website to better cater to the needs of its users and improve its navigability. In addition to an aesthetic face-lift and more user-friendly design, be sure to check out:

- An updated "Country Profiles" section
- A specialized "Members' Area" to streamline our members' activities
- Cutting-edge videos, photos, and news about the cashew industry

### CashewGam Becomes First Gambian Company to Export Processed Nuts to U.S.



CashewGam, a Gambian cashew processor and ACA member, has just become the first Gambian company ever to export processed cashew to the United States. The Gambian-owned company has signed its first contract to supply a container of processed cashew to a major US buyer, and the shipment is now making its way across the Atlantic.

CashewGam opened its new factory in April 2014, following extensive Business Advisory assistance from ACA, covering areas including facility upgrade, equipment provision and staff training. ACA also helped CashewGam find a new General Manager – Mr. Antonio Caramelo Raposo, formerly the General Manager of highly successful Mozambican cashew processor Condor.

“ACA’s consultancy was very important, particularly in the first year,” says Mr. Raposo. “We were initially faced with two main challenges: firstly, to increase the quantity of output, through improving the machinery; and secondly, to increase the productivity of the staff, through training.”

With its new, state of the art factory employing 175 people, CashewGam is now the main employer for the Gambian village of Brikama. This first international sale bodes very well for the future of the company, and for the Gambian cashew sector as a whole.

“This is very important for Gambia,” says Mr. Raposo. “Gambia consistently produces very good quality kernels, and now it is time for Gambia to begin adding value domestically, and to expand the industry.”

With the expectation of more buyers on the horizon, CashewGam, with a current processing capacity of 3,000 MT, is planning further upgrades to its machinery with a view to achieving year-round processing within 2 years.

Outside of machinery upgrades, Mr. Raposo sees the biggest challenge in CashewGam’s future to be securing sufficient working capital to finance the purchase of ever-increasing amounts of kernels. “Our continuing

success depends on financing the purchase of raw materials,” he says. “In Mozambique, the government helped our factory get a loan from the bank, but this is not so easy in Gambia.”

With the ACA’s Business Advisory team presently helping CashewGam to reshape its business plan with a view to securing more financing for this purpose, the future looks very bright indeed.

ACA Business Advisory Manager Sunil Dahiya, who has worked closely with CashewGam throughout its expansion, comments, “It is always wonderful to see a company making its first strides into the international market, especially when they are the first in the nation to do so. It is clear that this first international sale marks the beginning of a major new period in CashewGam’s history, and we are very proud to be a part of it. I am greatly looking forward to continuing to work with CashewGam as they continue to grow.”



# ACA ACTIVITIES

## Linking Small-Holder Farmers to International Markets

Since the beginning of 2014, ACA has been collaborating with USAID to implement a program to train small-scale farmers in three West African countries – Nigeria, Benin, and Côte d'Ivoire – on best practices, and subsequently linking them to local processors. This program complies with USAID's Toward Inclusive Markets Everywhere Annual Program Statement (TIME APS), which broadly focuses on improving quality and meeting international standards in the cashew sector.

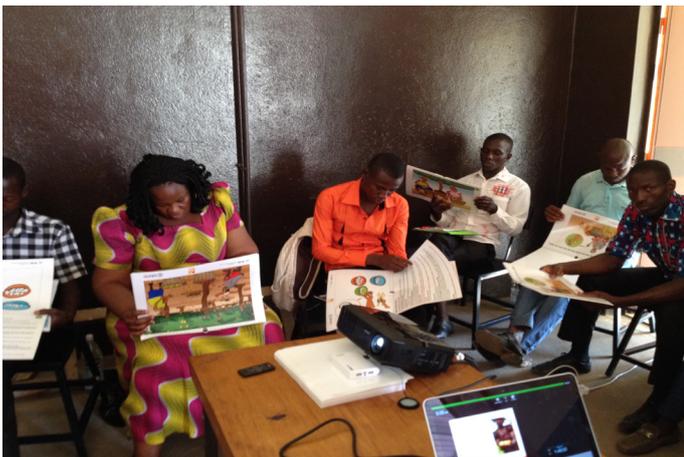
In December 2014, Cajou des Savanes (CASA), a medium-sized processor located in Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire, became the third processing factory to sign an MoU with ACA to participate in the USAID TIME project activities (the first being FoodPro in Nigeria and the second being Afokantan in Benin). As a partner in this project, CASA has committed to source raw cashew nuts from local farmer cooperatives, the target beneficiaries of the trainings.

From February 10-12, 2015, ACA's Agronomist, Mohamed Salifou traveled to Bouake to facilitate a training-of-trainers workshop. Ten extension officers were selected to participate in this workshop and are charged with providing the skills and knowledge learned to 500 farmers each. The trainings are in good agricultural practices and harvest/post-harvest handling techniques, including strategies for proper farm management and maintenance, cashew quality calculations, and more.



By the end of the training, the extension officers indicated that they felt prepared to replicate the trainings in their respective communities. They visited the CASA facility in order to better understand the importance of linking educated, high quality-producing cashew farmers to local factories.

Once the farmers have been given proper training, it is expected that the cashews they produce will be much higher quality than in previous seasons. Since these farmers also have the market linkage with CASA, they will gain access to a wider variety of markets and will earn greater bargaining power.



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