



project results

STRENGTHENING FARMING FAMILIES' CAPACITIES AND ACCESS TO ORGANIC MARKET IN BURKINA FASO



Market access



Capacity building



Beneficiary organisation

Founded in 2006, **gebana Burkina Faso (gebana)** operates a fairtrade and organic mango and cashew supply chain, engaging with **5,571 mango and cashew smallholder farming families** in the Hauts-Bassins, Cascades, and Sud-Ouest regions of the country. gebana provides training in organic and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), manages internal control systems, oversees certification processes, and covers certification costs. It employs 650 individuals, mainly women (about 80%), to process cashews and mangoes and sources from more than 60 small mango drying units. The company sells products to private customers and businesses mainly for export to Europe.

The challenge

Burkina Faso's economy depends heavily on agriculture, employing about 80% of the workforce. **Although the country has a strong tradition in organic farming, most small-scale farmers are not organised in cooperatives and lack the resources to obtain organic certification.** A significant regulatory shift by the European Union took effect in 1 January 2025 which required that organic certification be held directly by farmer cooperatives instead of processing or exporting companies such as gebana. While intended to empower producers, this shift poses serious challenges for smallholder farmers in Burkina Faso. Many risk losing access to organic markets due to their limited organisation and resources, which could lead to reduced incomes and a decline in sustainable farming practices.

The proposed solutions

To mitigate these challenges, gebana launched a **technical assistance project to support its supplying farmers and cooperatives in obtaining organic certification.** The project focused on **strengthening farmers' organisational structures and building their technical and managerial capacities**, with the goal of enabling them to meet certification requirements and cover related costs independently in the medium to long term. Continued market access and training is expected to help farmers improve their resilience, strengthen cooperatives, and fortify the mango and cashew supply chains.

The key expected outcomes of the project were:

- 1 **Improved production practices** of 3,000 smallholder farmers through GAP training.
- 2 **Continued access** of 4,500 smallholder farmers families to the organic market by supporting certification.
- 3 **Strengthened organisational capacities** of 5 farmers cooperatives and promotion of female leadership.

IMPACT INVESTOR



BENEFICIARY ORGANISATION

gebana Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso

NUMBER OF FARMERS REACHED

5,571

AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN

Cashew nuts, mangoes

START DATE

September 2024

END DATE

April 2025

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

€ 63,491

Including € 49,413 (78%)
financed by SSNUP



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c/o ADA asbl • 39, rue Glesener • L-1631 Luxembourg • +352 45 68 68 1 • ssnup@ada-microfinance.lu • www.ssnup.org



key results



Mango and Cashew Production

5,571 smallholder farmers & farming families producing mangoes and cashew nuts supported in internal control

3 cooperatives & networks successfully audited against the EU's Organic regulation

2,420 of them (subset of members from the cooperatives) received Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and organic management training

3,940 of them **maintained EU market access** Thanks to the certification of their 3 cooperatives



Mango Processing



3 mango drying units certified increasing control over the value chain and better market access

"Central to maintaining EU market access and reinforcing the foundations of sustainable local processing."



110 female smallholder farmers from 5 cooperatives received organisational development, leadership & gender training



SDGs supported by the project



1. No poverty

1.5 Building the resilience of vulnerable people

2. Zero hunger

2.3 Improving agricultural productivity and increasing smallholder farmers' income
2.4 Adoption of productive, sustainable and resilient agricultural practices

5. Gender equality

5.5 Adoption of productive, sustainable and resilient agricultural practices

8. Decent work and economic growth

8.3 Economic development, support to decent work creation and entrepreneurship



lessons learnt

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✓ Supporting organic certification ensures cooperatives' access to markets and improves market resilience

Helping cooperatives and mango-drying units obtain their own organic certification reduced their dependence on traders, enhanced their autonomy, and secured continued access to EU organic markets, particularly for women who represent a majority of the workforce in the processing units. The initiative sets a positive example in Burkina Faso's organic sector, which could inspire replication by others.

✓ Women's empowerment begins with targeted training but needs sustained support

The women-only leadership training sessions successfully created an enabling environment where participants enhanced their confidence, deepened self-awareness, and began to envision active leadership roles within their cooperatives. However, achieving substantive and enduring change necessitates continuous capacity-building efforts, ongoing mentorship, and strategic inclusion of male members to foster a supportive ecosystem for gender equality.

✓ Holistic value chain certification enhances cooperative empowerment

Supporting organic certification beyond farm-level practices to include cooperatives and processing units creates a comprehensive value chain advantage. This approach not only ensures compliance with evolving regulations throughout the value chain but also empowers cooperatives and processing units by reducing their dependency on external traders for certification. It strengthens their control over product quality and market access, fostering greater economic independence and resilience.

Outlook

gebana Burkina Faso plans to expand its operations by building a new factory for mango and cashew processing, sorting, and packaging. This growth, while increasing the number of smallholder farmers and processing units it collaborates with, adopts a comprehensive value chain approach that strengthens integration, sustainability, and efficiency from production through to market access.

