

TOWARD 2030

Annual *Report* 2025

COLEAD

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CROSS-PERSPECTIVES

Message from the President *and the CEO*

2025, the year we chose to move forward

The world is changing, fast. The climate is disrupting harvests. Public development funding is contracting. Markets demand ever more. And on the front line of all these shocks are women and men producers, and the businesses that keep the food chains running in the countries where the needs are greatest.

Faced with challenges of this scale, no single actor can respond alone. The sustainable transformation of food systems will only come about by building ambitious public–private partnerships wherever possible – between Europe and Africa in particular, in the wake of the Global Gateway and of the commitments made to more resilient, more inclusive and fairer value chains.

On 10 December 2025, in Brussels, our Consultative Committee endorsed the broad orientations of the COLEAD 2030 strategy. This strategy is the culmination of a participatory process spanning more than a year, informed by ten years of evaluations, a 128-question strategic survey that drew very broad support, and dozens of exchanges with our members, our team and our partners.

Three strategic directions and seven transformational priorities now shape our course. They express a simple conviction: you cannot sustainably transform a food system without making it economically viable.

By 2030, COLEAD is committed to becoming an international, multipolar and unifying movement – able to move from intention to impact, from projects to systems, where they are most needed.

This report marks the beginning of that journey. Together, we can go further.

Stephen MINTAH
President of COLEAD

Jeremy KNOPS
CEO of COLEAD

CROSS-PERSPECTIVES

Eunice Mwongera – Entrepreneur, Kenya *COLEAD member*

"What the community makes possible"

Eunice Mwongera, head of Hillside Green Growers & Exporters – fresh fruit and vegetables, Kenya. A long-standing COLEAD member.

At the helm of Hillside Green Growers for 25 years, I export fresh fruit and vegetables alongside hundreds of smallholders. I quickly understood that everything hinges on quality, standards and certification.

COLEAD has supported us since GLOBALG.A.P. first arrived. Its training helps us keep pace with ever stricter food safety requirements and help our producers access international markets. There I found a community that equips, connects and opens doors – and that sees women entrepreneurs as economic actors in their own right.

Today we support more than 2,500 smallholders, most of them women, in the avocado sector. When the 2030 strategy places women and young people at the heart of transformation, for me that is not a slogan: it is my daily reality.



Aline Coulibaly



Eunice Mwongera

Aline Coulibaly – Consulting expert, Côte d'Ivoire *COLEAD member*

"What we pass on to others"

Aline Coulibaly, consulting expert in sustainable agriculture, CSR and food safety, Côte d'Ivoire. A COLEAD member since 2015 – the start of a fine adventure.

On the ground, I support businesses and professional organisations that are transforming their value chains. My work is to pass on methods and standards – and sometimes the conviction that things can be done differently.

COLEAD's expert network is a community of peers drawn from and close to local contexts. It makes possible a transformation that does not come from elsewhere, while allowing each expert to keep building their own skills through the association.

The 2030 strategy asserts the ambition of a multipolar, locally rooted movement. We already carry that ambition in every mission, every assignment, support activity and transfer of knowledge.

CROSS-PERSPECTIVES

Message from the Vice-President: Giving women their full place – everywhere, *up to the highest levels*

By Leena Malde, Vice-President of COLEAD and Executive Chair of Wealmoor (United Kingdom) – a long-established, second-generation family business with a rich heritage, specialising in the local and global production, handling and sourcing of fresh fruit and vegetables for British retailers, with long-standing partnerships in several producing countries, including The Gambia.

"I have known The Gambia for a long time. Our company has employed a great many people there and worked with several hundred local farmers, mostly women, over many years. Throughout that time, I have watched women and men grow agricultural produce, run small businesses, and young people try to build their future through this sector. I know what it takes – and I also know what is still missing for the sector to fulfil its full potential.

That is why I would like to welcome the signing, at the end of 2025, of the SPRING programme between COLEAD and the European Union. Over the next five years, this ambitious programme will support the sustainable and inclusive transformation of The Gambia's horticultural sector. The economic inclusion of women and young people is not a secondary consideration: it is built into the very heart of its design, in line with the European Union's Gender Action Plan III.

This ambition speaks directly to COLEAD's Gender Strategy 2024–2027. Our conviction is clear: women make up the majority of the workforce in entry-level positions across many horticultural supply chains, yet they struggle to progress beyond these roles – essential as they are – to continually build their skills, opportunities and financial resilience. And still, too rarely, does their voice reach the bodies where decisions are made.

My experience as a business leader has taught me this: parity in food systems cannot be achieved at the base of the chain alone. It must also be built at the top – within leadership teams, boards and the bodies that set strategy. Giving women access to these positions is how we open up the future of the sector."



02

Why we act

Today's world: challenges and opportunities



TODAY'S WORLD: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The world of 2025 no longer resembles the world in which COLEAD developed. ***Food systems are under simultaneous strain – and that is precisely why acting now, where it is most needed, has never mattered more.***

THE CLIMATE NO LONGER GIVES WARNING.

2024 was the hottest year on record; 2025 confirms the trend. Prolonged droughts in the Horn of Africa, floods in East Africa, major climate anomalies in the Caribbean and South Asia: harvests are lost before they reach the market, yields become unpredictable, and the countries least responsible for the disruption bear the heaviest costs. Climate change is no longer a future risk: it is the baseline of all agricultural activity.

GEOPOLITICS IS BEING REDRAWN.

The very framework of development is changing. War continues in Ukraine, the Near and Middle East remains unstable, and Europe finds itself caught in the rivalry between American, Chinese and Russian powers. Trade is becoming a weapon – tariffs, critical raw materials, economic security – fragmenting an already weakened multilateral order. The shockwave is first economic: volatile markets, costlier inputs and energy, slower growth – and it is the least-equipped countries that absorb it most harshly. For the EU's partners, the risk is twofold: enduring an instability they do not control, and seeing a Europe absorbed by its own security turn away from Africa. Hence the value of actors able to maintain the connection: when balances shift, fair and lasting partnerships – in the spirit of the Global Gateway – are no longer optional; they are a prerequisite.



OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IS CONTRACTING.

Just as needs explode, traditional funding is retreating. The lasting contraction of ODA worldwide is reshuffling the development landscape, while private finance – foundations, impact investors, hybrid mechanisms – is scaling up without always reaching the actors who need it most. Food security, though the precondition for all the rest, is losing visibility on an international agenda now polarised by energy, digital, critical materials and health.

MARKETS ARE BECOMING MORE DEMANDING.

Strengthened sanitary and phytosanitary standards, heightened environmental and social requirements, traceability, due diligence, compliance with the European Green Deal: market-access standards are tightening – legitimately so from a societal and environmental standpoint, but without support to match for those who must comply. The result is a brutal scissor effect: the most vulnerable countries must absorb ever more complex rules with ever more constrained means.

TODAY'S WORLD: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

WOMEN AND MEN FARMERS AND PRODUCERS ARE ON THE FRONT LINE.

They are the ones who bear the brunt. Family farmers, cooperatives, agri-food MSMEs, young rural entrepreneurs: these are the actors who feed their regions, supply export value chains and keep the rural economy going. And they are the first exposed to climate shocks, post-harvest losses, price instability and exclusion from demanding markets – when they do not, for lack of an alternative, slip into informality.

It is precisely for these front-line actors that COLEAD has acted, for more than fifty years, as an organisation that helps build resilience – the capacity to withstand, adapt and keep investing in the face of political, economic and climate shocks. This resilience is not decreed: it is built project after project, through the transfer of skills, access to markets and finance, the improvement of sustainable practices, and the consolidation of the service ecosystems around agri-food businesses.

And yet.

And yet, in these same contexts, agri-food businesses invest, innovate and create jobs. Cooperatives organise themselves. Women take charge of processing units. Young people invent new models. Competent authorities grow stronger. Whole value chains professionalise.

And yet, windows are opening. In late 2025, the European Union launched its Invest Hub under the Global Gateway strategy – an unprecedented mechanism to mobilise and steer public and private investment towards essential transitions, including the sustainable transformation of agri-food systems. This is precisely the window COLEAD's partners have been calling for: a possible tipping point to connect technical assistance, project bankability and long-term investment where it is most lacking. The challenge is no longer only to finance development: it is to ensure that agri-food businesses in partner countries finally gain access to capital suited to their realities, commensurate with what they produce and the value and potential they represent.

> *"I founded my company to show that things could be done differently – without artificial ingredients, without giving up quality, and from the Caribbean. Today our sauces sit on international shelves. It is proof that, from our islands, we can build brands that matter."*
>
> **Hesma Tyson**, CEO and founder of **Caribbean Specialty Foods Company** · Trinidad & Tobago

And yet, technology is changing the game. The rapid maturing of digital – distance-learning platforms, artificial-intelligence tools, regulatory information and monitoring systems, online professional communities – now makes possible what was, only yesterday, out of reach: reaching tens of thousands of learners at once, multiplying

TODAY'S WORLD: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

the effect of rare expertise, putting critical information in everyone's hands the moment it is useful. At a time when we must do more, better and for more people with constrained resources, digital is no longer an option: it is the lever without which scaling up is simply no longer possible.

What we have seen in the field for fifty years, and more than ever in 2025, is that powerlessness is not a fate – it is a narrative. A narrative we refuse.

Because you cannot sustainably transform a food system without making it economically viable. Because no single actor can, alone, confront systemic crises. And because the solutions exist – tested, proven, waiting to be scaled.

It is this realisation – urgency on one side, proof that change is possible on the other – that calls for moving from programme to movement. A movement locally rooted, regionally connected, globally relevant. A movement that unites women and men producers, businesses, experts, professional organisations, public institutions and financial partners around a shared course.

The pages that follow tell how, in 2025, COLEAD and those who are part of this movement began to respond.

LOOKING BACK AT THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF DECEMBER 2025

More than a year of listening. A direction endorsed.

On 10 December 2025, COLEAD's Consultative Committee endorsed the 2030 strategy after more than a year of dialogue with members, technical and financial partners, and teams. This moment marks the culmination of a rare participatory process – and the opening of a shared trajectory.

MORE THAN A YEAR OF LISTENING, A DIRECTION ENDORSED.

On 10 December 2025, in Brussels and online, COLEAD's Board of Directors, strategic partners and management team closed a sequence begun in late 2024: the collective construction of the strategy to 2030. For more than a year, dozens of contributions – members, European partners, cooperation agencies, financial institutions, professional organisations and experts – informed the thinking, through bilateral consultations, workshops and interim committees. Participants praised the quality of the process and the clarity of the vision presented.

A CENTRAL MESSAGE: EVOLVING COLEAD INTO A MOVEMENT.

Positioning COLEAD as a movement was seen as relevant and mobilising – faithful to the historic DNA of an association of economic operators united by common interests, and suited to the need to create collective momentum in the face of today's challenges.

LOOKING BACK AT THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF DECEMBER 2025

STRUCTURING EXPECTATIONS FOR WHAT COMES NEXT.

— Prioritise and sequence – a clear roadmap across short, medium and long term, to head off the risk of dispersion.

— Make finance a tipping point – access to investment, project bankability, the prospect of a dedicated financial vehicle within a Global Gateway approach.

— Preserve the DNA – consolidate technical assistance, SPS expertise, the expert networks and the anchoring in the private sector.

— Scale up without losing depth – combine in-depth support with scaling, notably through hub-and-spoke models and targeted partnerships.

INNOVATION AND GEOGRAPHIES.

Digital, AI, monitoring-evaluation-learning systems and marketing were identified as levers – provided they serve concrete objectives. The cross-cutting integration of gender and youth inclusion was recalled as essential. The anchoring of technical assistance in Africa and the Caribbean is confirmed, with an opening explored towards Central and Latin America.

The call to become a movement

"Beyond its connector function, COLEAD is expected to play the role of an accelerator of change. This means championing the transformation of agri-food systems at a time when food security is losing political visibility despite the lasting decline in official development assistance."

Directorate-General INTPA, European Commission represented by Leonard Mizzi

"COLEAD's strategic proximity to the European Union is a major asset for access to a differentiated market. The 'why now' is obvious: we need a partner able to support complex pathways to international finance – the Dominican Republic can be an institutional entry point for Central America."

Vice-Minister of Agriculture, Dominican Republic, Dario Vargas



LOOKING BACK AT THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE OF DECEMBER 2025

"For our 79 member states, food security remains a central priority. COLEAD's fine-grained knowledge of ACP agri-food businesses is a unique asset to support their scaling up – including through a role as an investment vehicle."

OACPS (Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States), represented by Anthony Brand

"Budgetary pressure weighs heavily on ODA. COLEAD's diversification of funding, its anchoring in the private sector, the link between finance and technical assistance, and the strategic value of SPS expertise – beneficial both for partner countries and for Europe – are all strengths that must now be consolidated."

French Development Agency (AFD), represented by Jean-René Cuzon.

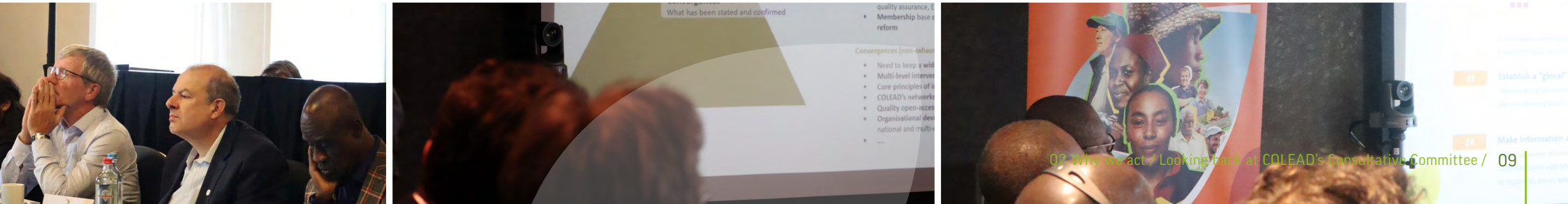
"The strategy is clear, and so is its alignment with African priorities. The challenge now is to hold depth while scaling – keeping the course on markets, standards and women's empowerment."

Gates Foundation, represented by Rafael Flor

"COLEAD is now expected to play the role of a leader in driving change, in a geopolitical context marked by the risk of a growing distance between the European Union and Africa. Access to finance is central to supporting the emergence of new agri-food businesses – without diluting our DNA."

COLEAD Board members





OUR ACTION IN THE WORLD

An international movement to transform food systems



A COMMUNITY

A KNOWLEDGE HUB

A PURPOSE

FULL LIST OF 2025 PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

In 2025, COLEAD's action and resources reached partners in more than 180 countries, through around fifteen multi-country and national programmes implemented from its five COLEAD hubs/offices. This presence rests on a network of experts mobilised as close as possible to field realities, and on online tools that multiply the reach of its interventions. These various programmes and projects mobilise budgets ranging from €50,000 to €30 million.

They have trusted us:

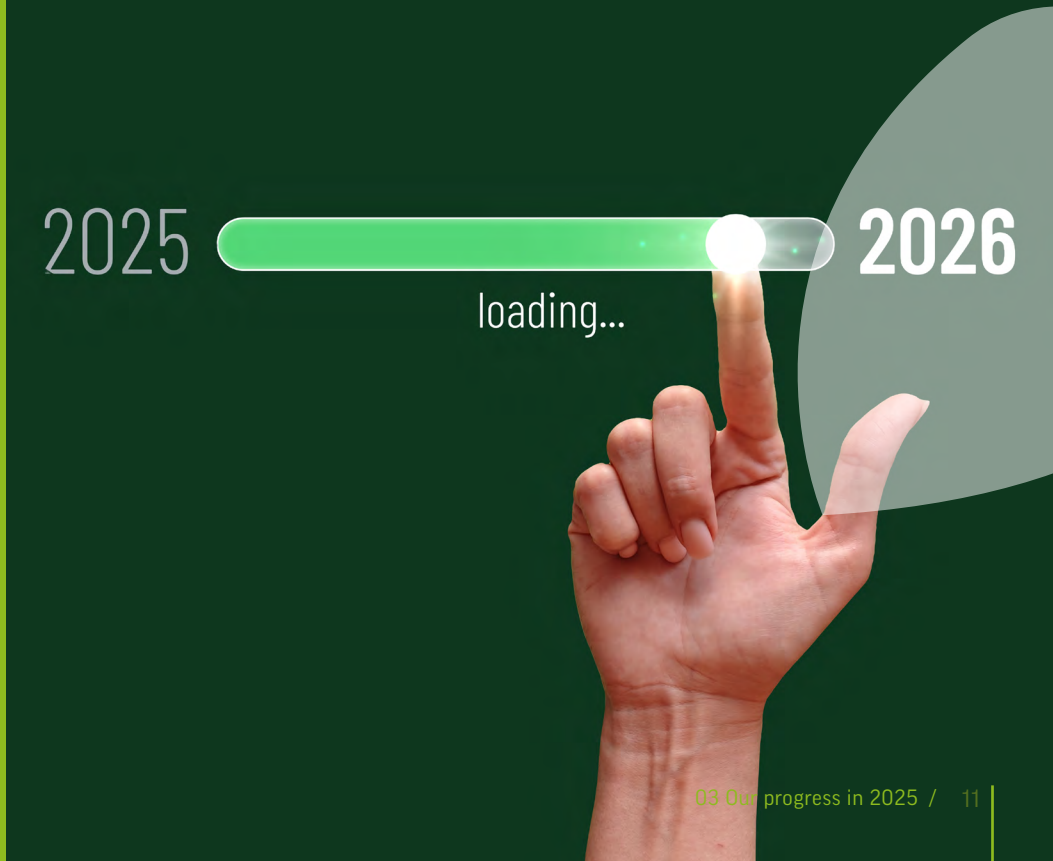
the European Union, the Inter-American Development Bank, the French Development Agency, ENABEL, STDF (Standards and Trade Development Facility), EDFI-AGRIFI, TradeMark Africa, FAO-IPPC – as well as European private-sector companies and associations.

The stories that follow in this report illustrate this action – at the scale of businesses (**micro**), value chains (**meso**) and systems (**macro**).

03

Our progress *in* 2025

What we achieved in 2025



PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS AND IMPACT 2025

Fit For Market Plus (FFM+) : *a mature portfolio and evolving demand*

2025 marked FFM+'s entry into its phase of full operational maturity. The programme continued to attract strong demand from horticultural operators in OACPS member countries – 111 new support requests received in 2025, bringing the cumulative total to 1,212 since 2022 across 54 countries – while the teams focused on turning these requests into concrete projects and on their implementation. 243 new development projects were signed during the year, exceeding the annual target of 200 and bringing the total portfolio to 863. The top five requesting countries remain Malawi, Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon and Senegal. The context is favourable: the market share of ACP horticultural products on the EU27+UK market (excluding bananas and South Africa) rose from 3.71% in 2021 to 3.86% in 2025 by volume, while ACP horticultural exports to outside Europe markets grew from 4.94 to 6.70 million tonnes between 2020 and 2024 – an average growth of 7.9% per year.

2.2 Mt
of horticultural produce placed on the market by beneficiaries (towards the +15% target)

122,000
jobs supported or maintained, 50% of them held by women

242
sustainability self-assessments (SAS) shared with MSMEs in 25 countries – 2nd iteration under way

6.7 Mt
of ACP fruit & vegetables exported outside Europe in 2024

+7.9%/YEAR
average growth in ACP F&V exports to outside Europe markets by volume, 2020–2024

50%
of women on permanent contracts in supported MSMEs (41% in management)



PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS AND IMPACT 2025

Fit For Market Plus (FFM+) : *a mature portfolio and evolving demand*

A CHANGING BUSINESS PROFILE, SUPPORT THAT ADAPTS

The profile of the MSMEs and producer groups approaching FFM+ has shifted structurally compared with previous programmes (FFM, FFM SPS). The structures are smaller – 52% report turnover below €50,000 – more oriented towards local and regional markets, less formalised, and often entering into a relationship with COLEAD for the first time. This shift, anticipated in the intervention methodology, calls for more differentiated support: 36% of beneficiaries are supported through an independent learning project, 36% through a standard support project and 12% through a tailored project. The post-training support offer (PTS), formalised since 2023, scaled up significantly in 2025 – 119 PTS actions carried out during the year, bringing the cumulative total to 252 over four years – and was extended for the first time to competent authorities. 27 field missions were conducted in 2025 across some twenty countries.

SIX EXPECTED RESULTS, CONCRETE PROGRESS

On horticultural businesses, 39 group training sessions, 60 intra-organisation actions and 62 PTS reached 975 participants in 2025, and 57 sustainability self-assessments were finalised. On business skills and access to finance, the Investment Readiness Path was consolidated around 8 access-to-finance webinars (1,169 registrations / 422 participants), 22 group trainings and 30 individual technical-assistance missions, supported by a joint COLEAD–CSAF session bringing together 35 participants from 17 financial institutions – including several major impact investors in the sector – and a matchmaking exercise with Kampani that resulted in 10 shortlisted MSMEs. On fair links between producers and MSMEs, a formalised pathway on outgrower schemes was piloted, with fair price-setting mechanisms initiated with four companies (Grenada, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar) and one organisation in Zimbabwe.

On market intelligence and advocacy, COLEAD has made 13 formal contributions to European and international consultations since the launch of FFM+ including – in 2025 – a notable advance on the Organic Regulation (EU) 2018/848 (inclusion of ethylene in Annex VI for the floral induction of pineapple in third countries, conditional authorisation of micro-organisms and viruses), and the exclusive sub-Saharan piloting (Ghana, Kenya) of



Funded by the European Union

the new GLOBALG.A.P. ESS solution. On support to SPS authorities, 56 requests received from 35 countries led to 43 development projects; major support was provided to Mali in the face of Regulation (EU) 2025/2294 imposing strengthened conditions on mango exports, and the new public-private dialogue (PPD) methodology was piloted in Mali, Burkina Faso, the DRC and Ghana. On research and innovation, three new sustainable-production guides were finalised online (coconut, cassava, ginger), bringing the total to 9 published guides (17 being updated); 10 plant-protection product dossiers were submitted for approval, covering 10 critical active substances; a joint research project was signed with Kenyatta University on the False Codling Moth in sweet pepper; and an article was published in the peer-reviewed journal Crop Protection on integrated control of the fall armyworm.

IMPACT-ORIENTED LEVERS FALLING INTO PLACE

2025 also saw the consolidation of several structuring levers for implementation: the signing in February of a new complementary AFD/PRCC funding of €2M (seven African countries, three years); the operationalisation of the COLEAD approach – a multi-country programme alongside national programmes – with the simultaneous implementation of the national programmes MAHEBER (Ethiopia), PASA (Côte d'Ivoire) and SPRING (The Gambia), in addition to interventions in Senegal, Guinea, the Dominican Republic and Uganda; the renewal of ISO 21001 certification by TÜV Nord in November, with preparation for migration to ISO 21001:2025; and the completion, in the fourth quarter, of the migration of the internal ERP JAMBO to Zoho One – giving the organisation an infrastructure able to support the increase in load. With the financial envelope now fully committed, the support-request channel was converted on 1 January 2026 into an expression-of-interest mechanism that will feed future interventions, beginning with the FFM Africa programme.

AFD/PRCC: A NEW COMPLEMENT IN SYNERGY WITH FFM+

With AFD, extending the FFM momentum in seven countries.

Funded by the French Development Agency to complement the FFM+ programme, the PRCC extends the dynamic of the FFM programmes across seven African countries: MSME and professional-organisation capacities, sustainable practices, and public-private dialogue on barriers to export.

7	2025	4
COUNTRIES	LAUNCH	PILLARS
Benin, Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo	*AFD complement to the FFM, FFM SPS and FFM+ programmes*	*MSMEs · support services · sustainability · public-private dialogue*

PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS AND IMPACT 2025

AGRINFO : *a benchmark service that crosses a threshold in usage*

In its fourth year of implementation, 2025 was a breakthrough year for AGRINFO. The service – which provides information on European regulatory developments affecting the agri-food value chains of 142 partner countries – saw its audience almost double: 129,039 platform visits versus 69,995 in 2024 (+84%). Its editorial coverage expanded with 178 new analysis sheets and 109 substantial updates, bringing the number of fact sheets to 723 at the end of 2025, up from 511 at the start of the year. Portuguese joined French, English and Spanish as a publication language in June 2025, and Arabic is planned for 2026.

Beyond the platform, AGRINFO continued to move closer to its end users: 22 newsletters sent, 5 targeted alerts on priority topics, 26 national and regional webinars at the request of embassies, EU delegations and national associations, and 16 further webinars organised as part of a new quarterly thematic series (peaking at more than 1,500 registrants for the TRACES cycle). Four new practical guides were published (EUDR, aquaculture, reinforced controls under Regulation 2019/1793, organic production). The Ask AGRINFO service handled more than 120 individual requests during the year, and meetings were held with 24 embassies.

The Mid-term Stocktaking Exercise conducted in 2025 by an external evaluator confirmed that AGRINFO has become "a trusted, useful and time-saving tool" for its users, while also identifying room for improvement – in particular extending its reach to national authorities and professional organisations in partner countries, which will guide the work of the final two years.

142
partner countries in AGRINFO's target scope

129,039
visits to agrinfo.eu in 2025 (+84% vs 2024)

6,438
newsletter subscribers, +2,674 over the year

33
countries receiving a tailored quarterly regulatory digest



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PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS AND IMPACT 2025

ETHIOPIA · EUROPEAN UNION

MAHEBER: DEEP ROOTS IN THE ETHIOPIAN ECOSYSTEM

46	14	8
MAHEBER: deep roots in the Ethiopian ecosystem	*development projects signed (incl. 13 providers)*	*categories of partners reached*



A COLEAD programme, MAHEBER mobilises the entire Ethiopian horticultural ecosystem at once – private sector, authorities, training, research. 2025 saw, among other things, the launch of the study to identify the factors limiting the sector's development.

PROGRAMME PAGE

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UGANDA · EUROPEAN UNION

UGANDA SPS PROJECT: BUILDING EUROPEAN MARKET ACCESS, STEP BY STEP

125	25	11
participants in introductory webinars	*companies trained on GLOBALG.A.P. IFA V6 (Oct. 2025)*	*MSMEs receiving a €10,000 grant*



In collaboration with CABI – which leads a consortium in which COLEAD is partly involved – on the avocado, mango, okra, pepper and aubergine chains, COLEAD is rolling out a four-step support pathway towards GLOBALG.A.P. IFA V6 certification: webinars, self-training, in-person training in Kampala, and graduated post-training support.

PROGRAMME PAGE

CABI

CÔTE D'IVOIRE · EUROPEAN UNION

PASA: FROM HORTICULTURE TO FISHERIES, SECURING QUALITY

4 YEARS	2	3
programme started February 2025	*value chains: plant and animal*	*target audiences: operators, support services, authorities*



Launched in February 2025, PASA supports Côte d'Ivoire on two priority value chains – market gardening (okra, chilli, aubergine) and post-catch artisanal fishing – to strengthen the SPS capacities of operators, support services and competent authorities.

PROGRAMME PAGE

Funded by the European Union

PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS AND IMPACT 2025

GUINEA · ENABEL

AGRIÉCO: ROOTING THE AGROECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

5	14	550
priority clusters out of 13 identified dynamics	*relay experts trained in agroecology*	*hectares targeted for sustainable management*



Conducted with iCRA in the Kindia and Mamou regions on the pineapple, potato and market-gardening chains, the project deploys the "cluster" method – drawn from the DEFIA Benin experience – and builds local capacity in cascade.

PROGRAMME PAGE

SENEGAL · STDF – WTO / FAO / WORLD BANK

STDF SENEGAL: MODERNISING THE NATIONAL PHYTOSANITARY SYSTEM

4	28	1960 - 2025
priority chains covered by the new procedures	*PRAs under way on potato*	*phytosanitary decree being overhauled after 65 years*



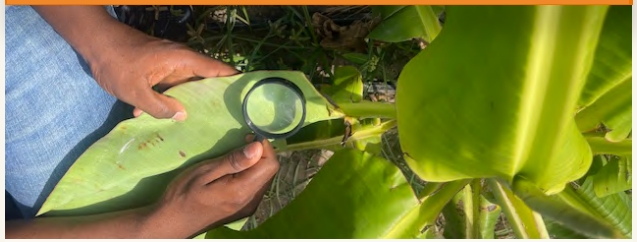
Conducted with the Plant Protection Directorate, the project overhauls Senegal's phytosanitary system – from the 1960 decree to certification procedures, including continuing training.

PROGRAMME PAGE

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC · IDB

SIA: COLEAD EXPERTISE SERVING MINISTRIES

18	41/46	BLOC 5
experts mobilised over 22 months	*deliverables (≈89% of the programme executed)*	*signed Dec. 2025, preparing a phase II*



COLEAD's first deployment in the Caribbean, the SIA project supports the Dominican Republic on five parallel workstreams: regulations, traceability, surveillance, good practices and digitalisation.

PROGRAMME PAGE

PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS AND IMPACT 2025

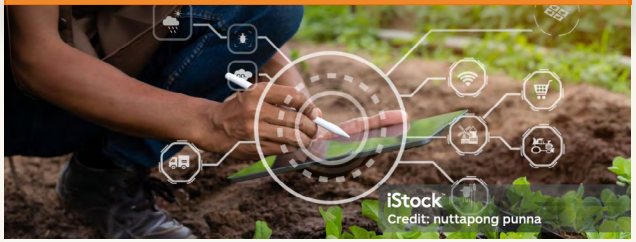
EU – AFRICA · CEA-FIRST CONSORTIUM

CEA-FIRST: PUTTING RESEARCH AT THE SERVICE OF VALUE CHAINS

2024–27
EU–Africa research-innovation programme

LIAISON
task led by COLEAD: research / private / civil-society link

2025
phase 2 launched · positive European Commission review



Within an EU–Africa consortium for food-systems transformation, COLEAD leads dissemination towards the private sector and civil society – a bridging role between funded research and value-chain operators.

PROGRAMME PAGE

CEA-FIRST Consortium Europe-Africa on Research and Innovation for Food Systems Transformation

Funded by the European Union

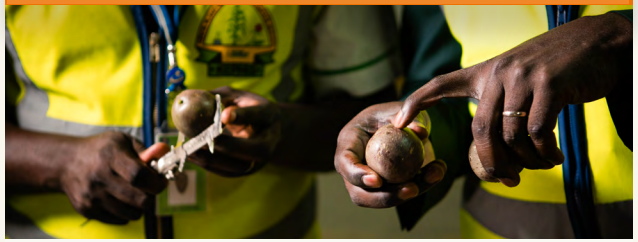
KENYA · TRADE MARK AFRICA

ANTICIPATING FUTURE ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS IN THE EUROPEAN MARKET

3
chains: avocado, mango, garden peas for export to the EU

6
Kenyan companies engaged in data collection

PEFCR
EU footprint method applied for the first time to ACP F&V



On the avocado, mango and garden-pea chains, COLEAD measures the environmental footprint of Kenyan value chains destined for the EU using the official European PEFCR method – a pioneering approach for ACP chains.

PROGRAMME PAGE

Funded by the European Union

VCA4D · EUROPEAN UNION (DG INTPA)

ENRICHING VALUE-CHAIN DIAGNOSTICS WITH GLOBAL MARKET ANALYSIS

15
"Market Analysis Notes" delivered · 4 continents · 11 partner countries

1
market note per VCA4D study · public data + COLEAD insights

INFOS
observed prices · market access · opportunities



As market-intelligence partner of the VCA4D methodology led by the European Commission, COLEAD brings its market monitoring – international, regional and domestic – to the value-chain studies conducted in partner countries.

PROGRAMME PAGE

VCA4D VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS FOR DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAMMES, PROJECTS AND IMPACT 2025

ACCESS TO FINANCE · EU / EDFI MC

AGRIFI FACILITY: PREPARING AGRICULTURAL BUSINESSES FOR INVESTMENT

4 YEARS
TA contract, signed June 2024

€0.5–5M
AgriFI investment ticket per company

3
countries · first missions realised in 2025 (Togo, Burkina, Ghana)



COLEAD is a technical-assistance partner of AgriFI, a European facility managed by EDFI MC that finances SMEs, financial institutions and impact funds in partner countries. Its role: to prepare businesses to receive impact investment.

PROGRAMME PAGE

Funded by the European Union

FAO · GLOBAL PUBLIC GOOD

FAO E-LEARNING: A GLOBAL TOOLKIT ON PHYTOSANITARY LEGISLATION

7
modules · 40-question certification · hosted on COLEAD Moodle

245
registered at launch · 148 connected live (60%)

30+
countries represented at launch (Belgium, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire leading)



Co-produced with the FAO Legal Office and the IPPC Secretariat, this 7-module online course equips countries – from beginner to decision-maker – to review and apply their phytosanitary legislation in line with international standards. Launched on 26 November 2025.

PROGRAMME PAGE

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

PRIVATE CLIENT · CSRD / ESG STRATEGY

SUPPORTING AN AGRI-FOOD GROUP ON CSRD COMPLIANCE AND ESG STRATEGY — EXAMPLE

15 MO
Dec 2024 – Mar 2026 · 6-step roadmap

15 IRO
identified in double materiality · 8 strategic ESG priorities

2
pilot chains: mango Côte d'Ivoire · avocado Peru



COLEAD's first complete mandate to lead a large private agri-food group towards CSRD compliance and the definition of its ESG strategy. A 6-step roadmap – governance, ESRS 2 gap analysis, double materiality, stakeholder engagement – anchored in the value chains COLEAD knows.

The programmes presented so far illustrate the diversity of contexts and partnerships in which COLEAD operates. The pages that follow offer another reading of this action: through a few representative examples, they show how change is built and reinforced through a holistic COLEAD approach – it is by connecting the micro, meso and macro levels that transformation becomes sustainable (see the theory of change developed in 2024).

MICRO

REINFORCING ENTERPRISES

FARMS AND BUSINESSES: *STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO PRODUCE AND UNDERTAKE*

ACCESS TO FINANCE · INVESTMENT READINESS PATH — FINANCE & BANKABILITY · FFM+

Pilot course "Introduction to financial planning" · 4 weeks (March–April 2025) · blended self-training + live sessions

To make agri-food MSMEs "bankable", COLEAD is deploying an Investment Readiness Path through FFM+. The first milestone in 2025: a self-paced pilot course combining online modules, live sessions and active support. The aim is to give managers, operators and finance officers the tools to validate their business model, build a business plan and financial plan, and engage with funders.

KEY TAKEAWAY | Before capital, capacity: a business only becomes bankable when it can itself demonstrate its viability.

TOWARD 2030 PRIORITY — FAIRER SHARING OF VALUE



WEST AFRICA · AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES — COFFEE · COCOA · MARKET GARDENING · COLEAD × SHARED INTEREST FOUNDATION (SIF)

8 cooperatives · 128 leaders trained (governance, finance, climate)

Between February 2024 and February 2025, COLEAD and SIF supported eight agricultural cooperatives across three countries. A four-stage pathway: organisational and financial diagnosis, training in cooperative governance (60+ participants), financial planning and management (45), and climate-change awareness (23). A harmonised methodology was deployed by local experts in East and West Africa, aligned with COLEAD's ISO 21001 standard.

KEY TAKEAWAY | The cooperative model grows more robust when governance, finance and climate resilience are strengthened together.

TOWARD 2030 PRIORITY — ECONOMIC INCLUSION & LEADERSHIP



CÔTE D'IVOIRE · SODIPEX SA HORTICULTURE EXPORT · FFM+ · POST-TRAINING SUPPORT

4 standards covered by the internal-audit team (GLOBALG.A.P., Rainforest Alliance, GRASP, BSCI)

Following the group session on the principles of internal auditing, COLEAD supported SODIPEX in a real-world setting: review of the audit plan, attendance at interviews with process owners, and the formulation of findings and recommendations in a continuous-improvement approach. The aim: to lay the foundations of an autonomous internal-audit system, ahead of the next certification campaign.

KEY TAKEAWAY | The autonomy of a quality system is built in the field, not in the classroom.

TOWARD 2030 PRIORITY — LOCAL OWNERSHIP, COHERENCE & SUSTAINABILITY



MICRO

REINFORCING ENTERPRISES



GHANA · COMPLETE FARMER AGRITECH · AGRIFI COUNTRY WINDOW GHANA (EU / EDFI MC) · SUPPORT TO THE OUTGROWER MODEL

12,500+ smallholders · 163 commercial farmers · USD 2.5M (€2.2M) invested by AgriFI in early 2025

An agritech platform founded in 2017, Complete Farmer connects producers and buyers through digital solutions. After a USD 2.5M investment from AgriFI in early 2025, COLEAD – selected by EDFI Management Company as technical assistant to the AgriFI facility – is supporting the company in consolidating its outgrower model and training systems, to secure sustainable and inclusive growth benefiting more than 12,500 Ghanaian smallholders.

KEY TAKEAWAY | Digital innovation only keeps its promise of scale if the technical link with smallholders is solid: capital opens the way, technical assistance consolidates it.

TOWARD 2030 PRIORITY — DIGITAL INNOVATION



SOLOMON ISLANDS · KOKONUT PACIFIC (KPSI) ORGANIC COCONUT & COCOA · FFM+ · NOP PRE-AUDIT & CERTIFICATION SUPPORT

1,200+ smallholders across 9 provinces · NOP pre-audit covering 405 producers, 12 processing units and 2 warehouses · 35 jobs, 50% held by women

A social enterprise connecting more than 1,200 coconut and cocoa smallholders to the Australian, American and New Zealand markets – guaranteed prices, decentralised village-level processing, central filtration in Honiara. To consolidate its access to organic markets, COLEAD conducted, through FFM+, a National Organic Program (NOP) pre-audit, building on an earlier sustainability self-assessment (SAS). The outcome: a costed corrective-action plan that paves the way for successful NOP certification.

KEY TAKEAWAY | Sustainable access to organic markets is won upstream, in a compliance system built step by step, from producer to warehouse.

TOWARD 2030 PRIORITY — FAIRER SHARING OF VALUE



MADAGASCAR · JACARANDAS SPICES & ESSENTIAL OILS · FFM+ WASTE MANAGEMENT

97% of mapped waste is organic

COLEAD's technical support enabled Jacarandas to update its Waste Management Plan towards a "Zero Waste" policy. The mission was led by LONO (Côte d'Ivoire) and SOATY, a Malagasy expert trained by FFM+. Avenues opened: pelletising/methanisation of distillation spent grains to replace fuel-bamboo, composting, and partnerships for plastics, WEEE and hazardous waste.

KEY TAKEAWAY | When the diagnosis is precise, waste becomes a resource again: energy, fertility, value.

TOWARD 2030 PRIORITY — CLIMATE RESILIENCE & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

MICRO

REINFORCING ENTERPRISES

MALAWI · PRODUHORT INVESTMENTS HORTICULTURE · FFM+ · POST-TRAINING SUPPORT FOR A BANKABLE BUSINESS PLAN

Bankable business plan 2025–2030 · individualised post-training support · Lilongwe

A beneficiary of the FFM+ training "Developing a business plan for your agricultural enterprise", the horticultural company Produhort (Lilongwe) received tailored support to turn its project into a genuinely bankable tool. With the COLEAD expert, management reworked financial projections, performance indicators and development priorities – expanding cultivated areas and diversifying into high-value products. The 2025–2030 business plan now serves both to raise funds and to steer the company day to day.

KEY TAKEAWAY | A bankable business plan is not a document for funders: it is a living roadmap that the company owns and updates itself.

TOWARD 2030 PRIORITY — FAIRER SHARING OF VALUE



TANZANIA · GENDER TRAINING (ARUSHA) HORTICULTURE · FFM+ · COLEAD GENDER STRATEGY 2024–2027

COLEAD's first in-person training in Tanzania on managing gender dynamics in the workplace.

Management, HR, production, finance, marketing, HSE: a broad range of functions worked on simplified gender analyses within their own organisation, on gender-sensitive indicators, and on concrete action plans, drawing on case studies from their daily reality.

KEY TAKEAWAY | Gender equality becomes a management tool when it moves from statements into policies, indicators and dashboards.

TOWARD 2030 PRIORITY — ECONOMIC INCLUSION & LEADERSHIP OF WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE





MESO

STRUCTURING VALUE CHAINS

VALUE CHAINS AND ECOSYSTEM: *ORGANISATIONS, SUPPORT SERVICES, TRAINING, RESEARCH, PUBLIC-PRIVATE DIALOGUE*

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC · SIA PROJECT · NATIONAL SPS POLICY · "ONE HEALTH" APPROACH · IDB FUNDING

30+ participants at the SWOT workshop · 15 COLEAD experts · 40+ project activities

In April 2025, a major milestone for the Sanidad e Innovación Agropecuaria (SIA) project – implemented by COLEAD on behalf of the Dominican Ministry of Agriculture: the first strategic workshop to develop the national Policy and Guidelines on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS). A SWOT workshop bringing together ministries, the private sector and international organisations – the basis of the diagnosis that will shape the objectives, institutional targets and priority actions of the future national policy.

KEY TAKEAWAY | No market without sanitary trust, no trust without a solid national policy.

TOWARD 2030 PRIORITY — NUTRITION & SPS SAFETY



ETHIOPIA · AVOCADO CHAIN · MAHEBER PROGRAMME (EU) — IPM TRAINING × ROLL-OUT OF THE SAS SUSTAINABILITY TOOL

In an avocado chain expanding rapidly towards the domestic market and export, COLEAD activates two complementary levers. In Addis Ababa, training in integrated pest management (IPM) with a focus on the Persea mite (Oligonychus perseae), an emerging pest: orchard monitoring, economic thresholds, adapted strategies. In parallel, the roll-out to Ethiopian providers of the sustainability self-assessment (SAS) tool, the basis for tailored support plans for horticultural businesses, aligned with international labour standards.

KEY TAKEAWAY | A sustainable value chain is built at two levels: the agronomic act in the field and the structured self-assessment within the business.

TOWARD 2030 PRIORITY — LOCAL OWNERSHIP, COHERENCE & SUSTAINABILITY



NIGERIA · GINGER CHAIN · FFM+ × GINGER NIGERIA (CBI)

80% losses in 2023 · 16 MSMEs trained in 2025 · 6 companies engaged in trials

After the wilt epidemic that destroyed up to 80% of Kaduna's harvests in 2023, COLEAD has coordinated the value-chain response since 2024. In 2025: multi-site trials of good practices (planting densities, raised beds, organic-matter management, combined control), identification of the pathogen (Fusarium spp.) with IITA, NAQS and NRCRI, and mapping of plant-protection options. Training in Abuja with CBI, NEPC, NAFDAC, GIZ and Verstegen Spices, complemented by an international buyers' mission.

KEY TAKEAWAY | A value chain's resilience after a crisis is built in structured partnership between research, authorities, producers and markets.

TOWARD 2030 PRIORITY — CLIMATE RESILIENCE & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



MACRO

ACTING ON FOOD SYSTEMS

POLICIES AND FRAMEWORKS: *RULES, STANDARDS AND THE CONDITIONS FOR MARKET ACCESS AND INVESTMENT*

WORLD · DESIRA-LIFT AGRI-FOOD RESEARCH & INNOVATION · DG INTPA (EU) · GLOBAL R&I CONFERENCE

Global R&I conference · Brussels, 11–13 March 2025 · closing of DeSIRA-LIFT (2021–2025), with Agrinatura, EFARD and DG INTPA

As DeSIRA-LIFT drew to a close, COLEAD handled the reporting of the global conference "Boosting agrifood research and innovation cooperation for impact at scale" (Brussels, March 2025), funded by the European Commission. At the heart of the debates: how to make R&I genuinely transformative at scale – agroecology, nature-based solutions, nutrition-sensitive agriculture – through multi-stakeholder co-ownership (living labs), institutional ownership, inclusive financing and strengthened AU–EU coordination.

KEY TAKEAWAY | Innovation only scales when it is co-owned: researchers, producers, businesses and decision-makers share its design, its risk and its results.

TOWARD 2030 PRIORITY — CLIMATE RESILIENCE & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



PACIFIC & SOUTHEAST ASIA · AGRINFO FISHERIES & AQUACULTURE · EU MARKET ACCESS · EU-FUNDED PROGRAMME

1st EU-Pacific Business Forum (Nadi, Fiji, 4–5 September 2025) · 5 Vietnamese professional organisations mobilised beforehand · flagship session "Blue Pacific Continent"

Alongside policymakers, investors and development partners, COLEAD spoke at the session "Realising the Blue Pacific Continent – Investing in Ocean for Sustainable Growth", devoted to European market access for fisheries and aquaculture products and to the evolution of EU policies and regulations. Present also through a stand and several sessions, it strengthened its visibility and forged new partnerships with public and private Pacific actors. Beforehand, an AGRINFO mission to Vietnam enabled dialogue with the EU Delegation and five key organisations (NAFIQPM, VASEP, VICOFA, VPAS, VINAFRUITS), opening new avenues of cooperation.

KEY TAKEAWAY | Regulatory information builds concrete bridges between Europe, Southeast Asia and the Pacific for sustainable and inclusive growth.

TOWARD 2030 PRIORITY — FAIRER SHARING OF VALUE

AGRINFO

MACRO

ACTING ON FOOD SYSTEMS

EUROPEAN UNION / ACP · UNFAIR TRADING PRACTICES (UTP) REGULATORY ADVOCACY · FFM+ · COALITION FOR NON-EU SUPPLIERS

EU UTP Directive: 16 prohibited practices · 2025 win: the "cross-border" definition of the future regulation now includes non-EU suppliers · directive revision expected Q3 2026

Lacking bargaining power, smallholder suppliers in ACP countries often suffer unfair trading practices. As a member of a coalition to extend the protection of the EU UTP Directive to non-European suppliers, COLEAD (through FFM+) carried the voice of ACP value chains throughout the legislative process – position paper, contributions, amendments, joint declaration. A concrete win in 2025: the "cross-border" definition adopted by the European Parliament now includes suppliers located outside the EU.

KEY TAKEAWAY | Acting on the system also means shaping the rule: a definition rewritten in Brussels protects suppliers thousands of kilometres away.

TOWARD 2030 PRIORITY — FAIRER SHARING OF VALUE

WORLD · COLEAD E-LEARNING PLATFORM · DISTANCE LEARNING · FFM+ · OACPS–EU COOPERATION · GLOBAL GATEWAY STRATEGY

40,000-learner mark passed in 2025 (vs 30,000 at the start of the year) · ISO 21001-certified system · a community across every continent

In 2025, COLEAD's distance-learning platform passed the 40,000-learner mark, driven by an enriched user experience (interactive guided tour, personalised positioning test, LinkedIn certificate showcasing) and continually updated content on sector issues (Business Plan, climate change, market access). A pillar of the ISO 21001-certified training system and deployed notably through FFM+, this digital lever multiplies the impact of field technical assistance and fits squarely within the EU's Global Gateway strategy – sustainable and reliable connections in the service of people and the planet.

KEY TAKEAWAY | When digital is combined with certified pedagogical quality, training becomes a public good in the service of agri-food transitions.

TOWARD 2030 PRIORITY — DIGITAL INNOVATION

From a business made bankable in Malawi to a voice carried all the way to Brussels in support of the most vulnerable producers, these 2025 stories are not juxtaposed actions: from micro to macro, they already translate one and the same holistic approach into reality – the one that makes the articulation of the three levels the condition for sustainable transformation. Several of the convictions running through them were, likewise, already at work, project after project. What remained was to name them. That is precisely what 2025 accomplished by setting the course for the decade: the pages that follow show how this strategic process formalised, into seven transformational priorities, what fieldwork was already carrying.

FIT FOR MARKET+

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL PRIORITIES THAT OUR 2025 ACTIONS ALREADY FORESHADOW

2025 will remain the year *COLEAD set its course for 2030.*

Built over more than a year with those who make its action happen – 350 respondents to a strategic survey, more than 20 consultations, more than 50 national member meetings – the 2030 strategy had its overall vision endorsed at the Consultative Committee of December 2025[1].

The 2030 strategy adopts seven transformational priorities. They are not additional lines of action: they form a common filter – for analysis, design and evaluation – that runs through all of COLEAD's interventions, at every level: micro, meso and macro.

These priorities are not new in practice. Under Fit For Market Plus, for example, several of them already structured our action cross-cuttingly – gender, climate, access to finance, fair trading relationships, youth. And the programme set to take over in Africa, FFM Africa – whose launch is planned for 2026 – is built on the same micro-meso-macro architecture and carries the same cross-cutting priorities. The continuity, from the field in 2025 to the decade now opening, is therefore both thematic and structural.

Many of these priorities were therefore already at work in 2025, even before being formalised: that is the whole point of the stories above. Each crosses several at once – supporting a business towards a bankable business plan combines inclusion, value-sharing and local ownership; structuring a regional value chain combines sustainability, quality and resilience.

What remains is to scale: on each of these priorities, it is through broadened public and private alliances that COLEAD intends to go further – that is the whole point of the unifying movement that the 2030 strategy also carries.

2025 is not year zero of the 2030 strategy – it is its foreshadowing.



THE 7 PRIORITIES

1 | INCLUSION & LEADERSHIP (WOMEN, YOUNG PEOPLE) · 2 | CLIMATE RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY · 3 | FAIR SHARING OF VALUE · 4 | DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION & INNOVATION · 5 | NUTRITION & SPS SAFETY · 6 | LOCAL OWNERSHIP & LONGEVITY · 7 | QUALITY, INTEGRITY & COHERENCE.

1 Strategy finalised in January 2026 and adopted by the Board of Directors in April 2026.

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL PRIORITIES THAT OUR 2025 ACTIONS ALREADY FORESHADOW

7 priorities applied *at each level*

Drawn from the theory of change developed in late 2024, the 2030 strategy built in 2025 rests on a holistic approach: it is by connecting the micro, meso and macro levels that transformation becomes sustainable. The seven transformational priorities that flow from it are not still to come – they are already at work, as the diagram traces: from 2025 action to scaling up in 2030.

OUR 2025 ACTION — THREE LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

MACRO — LEVEL 1
Enabling frameworks & policies

MESO — LEVEL 2
Structured value chains & ecosystems

MICRO — LEVEL 3
Strengthened enterprises & producers

7 PRIORITIES — CROSS-CUTTING FILTER

1. INCLUSION & LEADERSHIP (WOMEN, YOUNG PEOPLE)
2. CLIMATE RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY
3. FAIR SHARING OF VALUE
4. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION & INNOVATION
5. NUTRITION & SPS SAFETY
6. LOCAL OWNERSHIP & LONGEVITY
7. QUALITY, INTEGRITY & COHERENCE

SCALING UP — TWO ACCELERATION LEVERS

ALLIANCES glocal · public-private

DIGITAL & AI platforms · data · AI

HORIZON 2030

AT SCALE Impact multiplied across agricultural value chains

WHAT WE LEARNED — A CRITICAL LOOK

Continuous improvement is one of our five values.

Rather than a list of achievements, here is the great lesson 2025 taught us – and what it makes us change.

The transformation we aim for is not decreed: it is built. From an enabling framework towards the organisations that structure a value chain, then all the way to the business and the producer who, alone, can make it real. In 2025, our most visible progress concerned the frameworks for action and the organisations that support value-chain development. Our main lesson is that these advances only take on their full meaning when they translate into concrete changes for businesses and producers.

THE FRAMEWORK

Anticipating is not enough

Reading and explaining the regulatory framework upstream has become one of our strengths. In 2025, AGRINFO almost doubled its audience, and an external evaluation describes it as a reliable, time-saving tool: it translates complex European texts – deforestation (EUDR), maximum residue limits, mineral oils, organic – into clear, actionable information. But that same evaluation points to the limit: the information reaches institutional relays well, but far less so the authorities, professional organisations and businesses of partner countries. Yet a rule understood in Brussels changes nothing until it has reached, in time, the producer who must comply. Anticipating the signal is necessary; getting it to travel down is just as necessary.



THE ECOSYSTEM

Strengthening without substituting

Between the framework and the business, the decisive link is the intermediary organisation: professional organisation, cooperative, training centre, support service. It is what keeps a value chain standing over time – and that is where the shoe pinches. Genuinely strengthening its capacities requires long timeframes and dedicated human resources, often lacking on both sides. Our principle nonetheless remains clear: support local actors, never replace them; transferred know-how is worth more than a service rendered in their place. But the task exceeds what we can carry alone. Hence two levers that 2025 confirms as decisive: digital, to multiply training and information, and strategic alliances, to share the effort between partners rather than duplicate it.

WHAT WE LEARNED — A CRITICAL LOOK

THE BUSINESS & THE VALUE CHAIN

Structuring, not just supporting

At the end of the chain, supporting isolated businesses is not enough. What really changes performance is the structuring of complete value chains – from production to collection, processing and market – around strong private actors able to pull others along. The work conducted in 2025 confirms it: where producers, processors, service providers, funders and authorities move forward together, results are fast and measurable. What is still needed is to identify the economic operators to support: the profile of the businesses approaching us has changed – smaller, more local, often in first contact with us – which calls for differentiated support rather than a single offer. And access to finance, which remains obstacle no. 1, must be thought through at the scale of the whole value chain, not business by business.

WHAT THE 2030 STRATEGY MAKES US CHANGE

- Wire the three levels together: information, technical support and finance connected to one another.
- Scale through digital and strategic alliances.
- Strengthen professional organisations and local training centres – without substituting for them.
- Structure value chains end to end, around strong private actors.

A *movement* is measured not by what it **broadcasts**, but by what **reaches** the last actor in the chain and *changes something there*.



A community *that* commits

Those who make the movement



MEMBERS, TEAM & PARTNERS

An international community.

Women and men committed to transforming food systems.

COLEAD is not a single block but a system of complementary entities: from the individual to the international partner, each has a role to play. The COLEAD community brings together all the people and organisations that contribute to, learn from, collaborate with or benefit from its action in favour of more sustainable, inclusive and resilient agri-food systems. It forms a space for exchanging experience, sharing knowledge, networking and co-building solutions in the service of agri-food value-chain development.



100+ *staff · 5 regional offices*

Spread across Brussels, Paris, Santo Domingo, Lomé and Nairobi – a web combining field presence, sectoral expertise and implementation capacity, as close as possible to the contexts where we act.

> Discover the team

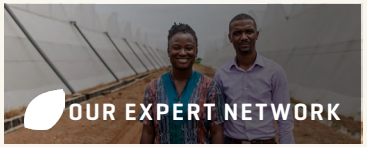


494 *members | 50 countries*

Companies, cooperatives, professional and support organisations active in food value chains – the living bedrock of the association, those for whom we exist and with whom we act.

CAP 2030 *1,000 members, 85% outside Europe*

> Become a member



1,200 *mobilisable experts*

A network of independent experts available for advice, audit, training and support – a resource that multiplies our capacity to act and guarantees technical relevance close to local contexts.

CAP 2030 *2,000 national experts + 250 certified trainers*

> Join the network



240+ *technical & institutional*

+ thousands via our programmes

Funders, international organisations, research institutes, NGOs, regional and umbrella professional organisations – the condition for leverage and large-scale impact.

CAP 2030 *20 global strategic alliances*

> Become a partner



50,000 *e-learning*

420+ active members | agrinnovators.org

On agrinnovators.org, a community that exchanges, shares good practices and co-builds solutions; and e-learning pathways that have already welcomed tens of thousands of learners worldwide.

CAP 2030 *250,000 platform users + thousands via our programmes*

> Join agrinnovators.org

"THOSE WHO CULTIVATE THE FUTURE"

The COLEAD community brings together *members, partners, experts, teams and learners around the world.*

Among them, agri-food entrepreneurs who refuse powerlessness and build, day after day, more sustainable, more inclusive and economically viable food systems. Nearly 200 portraits from this movement are gathered on the Agrinnovators.org platform. We have selected eight for this report – four women and four men, across eight countries of Africa and the Caribbean. Each, in their own way, feeds, sustains and regenerates the territories that carry them.

BENIN — ERIC MEDJI FOUNDER & CEO, OTHENTIKS — COLEAD MEMBER

After a career in information-systems and CRM consulting, Eric Medji turned to agri-food in 2013, convinced of the potential of African raw materials. With his family, he founded Othentiks, a Beninese company of natural local-terroir juices – baobab, soursop, mango-passion, ginger – with no added sugar, no preservatives and no artificial flavourings. The company employs 11 people, mostly women, and funds schools and water points in its communities. HACCP-certified and on the way to FSSC 22000, it is preparing an organic range and aims to recover 99% of its waste (biogas, natural fertilisers). Eric's participation in the PAFO-COLEAD Innovations Series (Session no. 7) and in FFM+ training has strengthened his ambitions: consolidating West Africa and reaching into the Americas.





"THOSE WHO CULTIVATE THE FUTURE"

BOTSWANA — BONOLO MONTHE CEO & CO-FOUNDER, MAUNGO CRAFT

Holder of an MBA from the David Eccles School of Business (University of Utah), Bonolo Monthe founded Maungo Craft to add value to morula (marula), an indigenous fruit long regarded as a nuisance. The company makes reduced-sugar, preservative-free jams, syrups and hot sauces – awarded 13 times on the local and international scene. Maungo Craft revives Botswana's "orphan" crops and builds an unprecedented value chain with marula cosmetic-oil producers: of the 300 tonnes of pulp needed for 12 tonnes of oil, the company saves most of the fruit. It works with two groups of farmers across 100 hectares – 90% women, average age 40. Recognised as a UN Food Systems Champion, Mandela Washington Fellow and GoGettaz Agripreneur Winner 2019, Bonolo pursues, with FFM+ support, her ambition: to make morula a pillar of Botswana's diet and beyond.

CAMEROON — NORBERT MONKAM FOUNDER, AGRO-PME FOUNDATION — COLEAD MEMBER

An agricultural economist, Norbert Monkam has worked for nearly 40 years as an architect of agri-food entrepreneurial ecosystems in Cameroon and Central Africa. In 1987 he created the AGRO-PME Foundation, a private non-profit development agency, driven by the conviction that private initiative is the ferment of sustainable development and that the entrepreneur is the true creator of nations' wealth. In 2002 he founded the AGRO-PME training institute (Yaoundé and Djombé centres), training qualified professionals and young people in socio-professional integration. In 2013 he launched the Graines de Talent association, dedicated to the technical and financial support of agri-food entrepreneurs at every stage of their journey. This commitment aligns with the EU- and OACPS-funded Fit For Market programmes, from which AGRO-PME has benefited. His contribution illustrates the key role of support structures in consolidating African agri-food ecosystems.

agro-pme.net | grainedetalent.org

GHANA — DR EVELYN MAUREEN ACQUAYE FOUNDER, BENYIMA FARMS

An anaesthetist turned agri-food entrepreneur, Dr Evelyn Acquaye founded Benyima Farms in 2013 in Ghana's Central Region. The 240-acre farm produces mangoes, pineapples, passion fruit, coconuts, beetroot and butternut squash. In 2018, the company launched Juice Up: 36 100%-natural fruit juices, free of preservatives and additives, certified by the FDA and GSA Ghana – a direct response to post-harvest losses. Beyond products, in 2021 Benyima launched the Student Vendor Entrepreneurship Programme, training students from five regions in marketing, e-commerce and sustainability, while turning them into ambassadors of a healthy lifestyle. A further innovation completes the offer: the first range of freeze-dried mangoes and pineapples on the Ghanaian market. COLEAD's FFM+ support translated into targeted training: coconut production, management of bacterial blackspot disease in mango, and strategic development.

"THOSE WHO CULTIVATE THE FUTURE"

NIGERIA — NNAEMEKA IKEGWUONU FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COLDHUBS LIMITED

To address the massive post-harvest losses suffered by African smallholders without electricity, Nnaemeka Ikegwuonu founded ColdHubs in 2015. These solar-powered walk-in cold rooms, accessible 24/7, extend the shelf life of fruit and vegetables from 2 to 21 days for a simple daily fee. Each unit is equipped with the CARMS monitoring system, tracking door openings, battery levels, temperatures and solar radiation in real time. This operational intelligence is now extended to customers via the Virtual Cold Chain Assistant, illustrating Nnaemeka's conviction: combining traditional knowledge and technology to strengthen farmers' climate resilience. ColdHubs operates today across 38 sites in 22 Nigerian states, with deployment soon to follow in South Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Benin and Kenya – the first steps of a pan-African expansion.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC — MARÍA ELSY ABREU CO-FOUNDER & DIRECTOR, CACAO MAE

Born into a family of cocoa, coffee and tobacco producers, María Elsy Abreu drew on her training in marketing and international trade to co-found Cacao Mae in 2015 with her brother José Alejandro. The company adds value to authentic Dominican cocoa – organic and additive-free – by directly connecting producers, processors and consumers. Inclusion is at the heart of the model: direct partnerships with smallholders – notably with Yluminada Ortega – and benefits shared with rural women. On the environmental side: solar energy, rainwater harvesting, recyclable packaging. The products are distributed in more than 50 outlets in the Dominican Republic, as well as in the United States, Switzerland, Uruguay and Europe. Winner of ProDominicana's 2024 Pro-Internationalisation Award, María Elsy presented Cacao Mae at the Caribbean Agrifood Business Session no. 9 organised by IICA and COLEAD.

SENEGAL — KHALIFA THIAM FOUNDER, JOULEU — COLEAD MEMBER

Created in 2018, JOULEU ("facilitator" in Wolof) was born of an observation: Senegalese horticultural producers struggle to sell their harvests on profitable markets. Khalifa Thiam responds by building a producer-to-market bridge, coupled with his own production – up to 300 tonnes of fruit and vegetables per season, dominated by onion and potato. With 17 staff (8 of them women) and around ten partner smallholders, JOULEU deploys agroecology daily: drip irrigation, greenhouses for year-round production, mechanisation. A future centre of excellence in organic market gardening (5,000 m²) will train young people in good agroecological practices. The company aims to become "the organic e-market of Africa" – sales already go through Instagram – and is extending its outlets to Mali and Guinea-Bissau, while training young people and women's groups in rural entrepreneurship.

"THOSE WHO CULTIVATE THE FUTURE"

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO — JEANETTE MARCELLE FOUNDER & CEO, HANDMADE BY JEANETTE — COLEAD MEMBER

A travelling chef turned entrepreneur, Jeanette Marcelle ("Chef Marcelle") founded Handmade by Jeanette in 2020 to reduce Trinidad & Tobago's dependence on food imports. Her brand offers cocoa-bean granolas, sauces and spice blends made from 75% local ingredients. The company embodies an exemplary circular economy: tamarind seeds and coconut shells entrusted to artisan jewellers, chilli seeds redistributed to producers for replanting, orange peel turned into wellness infusions. Jeanette is also preparing to create a food bank for disadvantaged families.

COLEAD's FFM+ training in hygiene, food safety and traceability has strengthened her export positioning – first shipments to Saint Lucia and the United States, presentation at SIAL Paris – with European-market certification firmly in her sights.



The Voices of the Earth

In 2025, COLEAD launched The Voices of the Earth (Les Voix de la Terre), an international poetry and song competition dedicated to women farmers, as a prelude to the International Year of Women Farmers 2026. Initiated by Olivier Herrera Marin and placed under the patronage of Cameroonian writer Djaïli Amadou Amal, the initiative highlights, through artistic expression, women's contribution to sustainable agriculture, food security and the development of their territories.

2025 winners:

- **Gold Quill: « Les semeuses d'avenir », Erica Aude Sibefeu Yappi**
- **Silver Quill: « Forjada en surcos antiguos », José Luis Labad**
- **Bronze Quill: « La femme et le riz », Kadidjatou Kane**



05

On the road *to* 2030

Our 2030 strategy



STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS

2030 strategy: built participatively, step by step

Why a new strategy, and why now? Because the world is moving fast. The Sustainable Development Goals reach their deadline in 2030, crises are multiplying and intertwining, development-financing models are changing – and COLEAD itself has grown a great deal in five years. To accelerate its impact, widen its reach and better support change, a clear course was needed.

This course COLEAD did not chart alone. For more than a year, it listened: to its members, its technical and financial partners, its partner-beneficiaries, its teams and its expert networks. The 2030 Strategy was born of this participatory approach.

THE KEY STAGES OF A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

SEPTEMBER 2024	2025	DECEMBER 2025	FEBRUARY 2026	APRIL 2026
It all begins with a theory of change: setting out the vision, the impact pathways and the roadmap. COLEAD's Theory of Change is completed at the end of 2024.	A major strategic survey, praised by 9 respondents out of 10, then a wave of workshops: more than 50 national member meetings, online workshops and more than 20 independent bilateral consultations.	Contributions are consolidated into strategic orientations and 24 operational recommendations, presented to the Board and the Consultative Committee, which confirm their relevance.	The drafting of the strategy is finalised (January–February), then presented to all stakeholders, including COLEAD members.	The strategy is approved by the statutory bodies (Board and General Assembly) and enters its deployment phase.

FROM LISTENING TO ACTION: THE 2030 STRATEGY IS A ROADMAP BUILT COLLECTIVELY AND READY TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN 2026.

> Consult the COLEAD 2030 Strategy

STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS

Three orientations to accelerate

The 2030 Strategy starts from a simple conviction: there is no social or environmental sustainability without the economic viability of value chains. To accelerate its impact, COLEAD is evolving its action along three orientations.

01 AN ECONOMIC POSITIONING

Embracing a "glocal" economic identity: rooted in local realities, recognised and influential internationally.

02 BUILD A RESOURCE PLATFORM

Build a resource platform that produces and disseminates knowledge and know-how – capitalising on and sharing tools and training at scale.

03 AN INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT

Moving from a project operator to a federated community of committed actors, with open and multipolar governance.

These three orientations are cut across by 7 transformational priorities – climate resilience · inclusion of women and young people · sharing of value · digital innovation · nutrition and SPS safety · local ownership · quality and integrity – which apply to all interventions. They take concrete form in 9 strategic workstreams.



PRIORITY WORKSTREAMS & ROADMAP 2026–2030

From 2026 to 2030: a three-phase trajectory

NINE WORKSTREAMS STRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION — ONE SENTENCE EACH:

1 | GIVES IDENTITY · 2 | SETS THE BACKBONE OF ACTION · 3 | TRIGGERS INVESTMENT · 4 | STRUCTURES ALLIANCES · 5 | ESTABLISHES THE MOVEMENT · 6 | EQUIPS THE ORGANISATION · 7 | INFLUENCES AND INSPIRES · 8 | INNOVATES AND DISSEMINATES · 9 | GUARANTEES ENDURANCE OVER TIME.

THEIR DEPLOYMENT FOLLOWS A PROGRESSIVE RAMP-UP:

2026 · FOUNDATIONS

Clarify positioning, structure the platform, mobilise the community. We are not yet seeking scale, but coherence.

2027–2029 · LEVERS

Demonstrate and activate: opening of workstreams, operational alliances, first investments triggered, first results.

2030 · SCALING UP

Dissemination, institutionalisation and consolidation of an international movement of impact.

WHAT 2025 PREPARED, 2026 PUTS INTO ACTION. THE PAST YEAR LAID THE FIRST MILESTONES — AND THE MOVEMENT IS ALREADY AT WORK:

ADVOCACY · CLIMATE-JUSTICE | FAIRMILES.ORG

An independent multi-stakeholder initiative facilitated by COLEAD — and hosted since 2025. Fairmiles brings together fresh-produce companies, academia and development actors to build fair, evidence-based sustainability trajectories: a transition that leaves no one behind and protects market access and the incomes of producers in low-income countries. More than 20 members — AAA Growers, Blue Skies, Flamingo, Kenya Flower Council, Lufthansa Cargo, ODI, the universities of Exeter and Aston, Union Fleurs…

ON SHOW · 2025 SEASON | OUR SERIES ARE PACKED

Co-led with PAFO, IICA, the OECD and UN Women, COLEAD's webinar series were a runaway success in 2025: 17 sessions, nearly 8,000 registrants — agri-food innovation, fruit and vegetables, Caribbean agribusiness, women's empowerment. The result: 100 company profiles published (52% women-led) and 9 portraits of inspiring entrepreneurs on COLEAD.link.

2030 OBJECTIVES (TARGETS): 2,000 MSMES SUPPORTED · €250M MOBILISED · 1,000 MEMBERS (85% OUTSIDE EUROPE) · 20 STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

Financial report 06

Management report currently being validated by the Statutory Auditors.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

COLEAD applies rigorous financial management founded on budgetary balance, sound programme management and transparency. The association's accounts are audited annually by the firm Caderas Martin, and are also subject to the verifications required by funders under the programmes they finance.

THE FINANCIAL YEAR IN CONTEXT

The 2025 financial year was marked by a strong expansion of COLEAD's activities. This momentum translated into higher grant revenue and the growth of service provision, strengthening the diversification of funding sources. The prospecting and project-development efforts undertaken in previous years materialised in the launch of new interventions, confirming COLEAD's capacity to manage a multi-programme, multi-funder portfolio.

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2025

The 2025 balance sheet reflects the ramp-up of activities and the expansion of COLEAD's project portfolio. Cash remained broadly stable thanks to the pre-financing received under the FFM Plus and PRCC programmes. The EUR 750k credit line remained available and was not drawn upon. The increase in short- and long-term liabilities corresponds mainly to advances received from financial partners for the implementation of multi-year projects. Equity remains solid at EUR 891,930 despite the deficit for the year, contributing to the organisation's financial stability.

ASSETS		
EUR	**2025**	**2024**
Fixed assets	94,969	41,547
Current assets	6,430,891	5,735,012
Total assets	**6,525,860**	**5,776,559**

LIABILITIES		
EUR	**2025**	**2024**
Equity	891,930	931,201
Provisions for liabilities and charges	33,280	22,232
Short- and long-term liabilities	5,602,201	4,823,126
Total liabilities	**6,525,860**	**5,776,559**

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Operating income reached EUR 11.5 million, up on 2024. This increase results from the acceleration of grant-funded programmes – notably FFM Plus and AGRINFO – and from the strong growth of service provision (EUR 1,173k against EUR 607k in 2024), driven mainly by the SIA project and several technical-assistance assignments.

Operating expenses rose in line with the increase in activity. Staff costs grew by 5.4%, while other external charges increased by 6.2%, reflecting the greater mobilisation of experts and the expansion of training and technical-support activities. They also include the costs related to institutional development, legal and tax compliance, and COLEAD's establishment in several countries.

The 27% withholding tax applied to the SIA project's services represents a tax charge of EUR 252k, against EUR 135k in 2024, reflecting the higher volume of services delivered.

The net result for the year is a deficit of EUR 40,821. This is explained mainly by the investments associated with the growth of the project portfolio, the diversification of funding and the strengthening of COLEAD's operational capacity. Despite this result, the organisation's overall financial equilibrium remains intact.

SUMMARY INCOME STATEMENT - EUR		
	2025	**2024**
Operating income (1)	11,510,173	10,819,227
Operating expenses (2)	(11,530,189)	(10,746,795)
Operating result (3) = (1) + (2)	(20,017)	72,432
Financial result (4)	(20,805)	(8,337)
Current result before tax (5) = (3) + (4)	(40,821)	64,095
Exceptional result (6)	–	(9,894)
Corporate income tax (7)	–	–

Thank you, Mr President

In recognition of more than thirteen years of dedicated and remarkable service as Chair of COLEAD.

As Stephen Mintah prepares to complete his mandate in June 2026, COLEAD's Director General and Board of Directors wish to express their deep gratitude.

An entrepreneur himself, he brought to the chairmanship the perspective of a man of the field – and the stable governance and strategic vision that guided the association through one of the most transformative periods in its history. Under his chairmanship, an organisation born in 1973 reinvented itself for a new era: from COLEACP, it became COLEAD, with a renewed mission, a broadened sectoral and geographical scope, and a clearer expression of its purpose – Growing People. He fully supported this transformation and accompanied it right into the association's governing bodies.

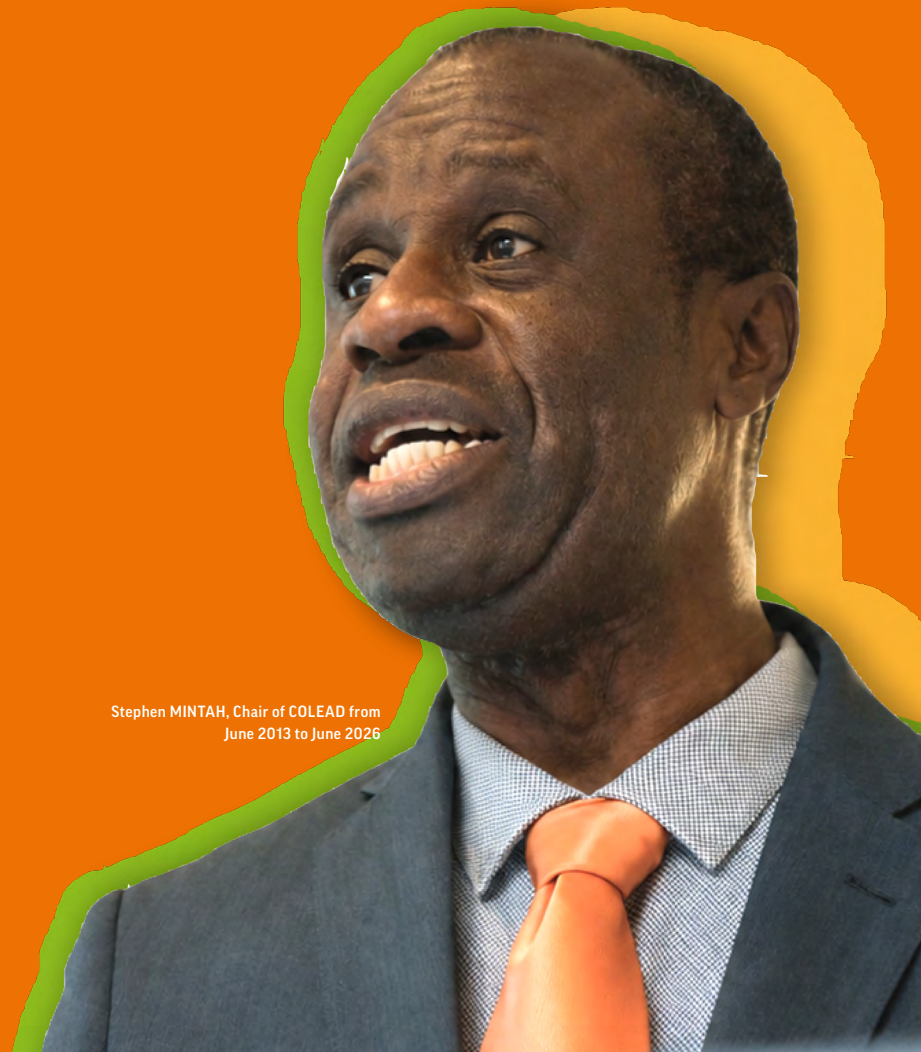
Over these years, he presided over the celebration of the association's fiftieth anniversary, surrounded by members from Africa, the Caribbean, the Pacific and Europe; supported the launch of landmark programmes – among them Fit For Market, NExT Kenya and Agrinfo – that reached women and men producers and businesses across the ACP regions; encouraged the association's growth in West and East Africa; and fostered the renewal of associative life through dynamic national member networks, bringing COLEAD closer to the communities it serves.

He supported the strengthening of the institution from within – notably the achievement of ISO 21001 certification, which distinguishes its work in education and training – and offered a steady course through the global challenges of the pandemic, a period of profound upheaval for the producers and value chains COLEAD exists to support.

True to the forward-looking leader he is, he will have prepared the association for what comes next: by guiding the adoption of the 2030 strategy, he laid the foundations that will enable COLEAD to become an international movement, accelerating the sustainable transformation of food systems where it matters most.

For all this – and for much more – thank you.

The Director General and the Board of Directors of COLEAD



Stephen MINTAH, Chair of COLEAD from June 2013 to June 2026

COLEAD

Cultivating a sustainable future.

colead.link