Ref. Ares(2026)8372993 - 02/09/2026

AfriFOODlinks

Summary Report on the MSME Knowledge Exchanges

2026 AfriFOODlinks

August 2026

Publisher:

Publisher:

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As at: August 2026

Cite this document as: AfriFOODlinks (2026): Summary Report on the MSME Knowledge exchanges

This publication is produced by Rikolto International under the framework of the AfriFOODlinks project. AfriFOODlinks is funded by the European Union (EU). Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Funded by the European Union

Coordinated by ICLEI Africa



AfriFOODlinks

Funded by the European Union

Coordinated by ICLEI Africa

Project partners

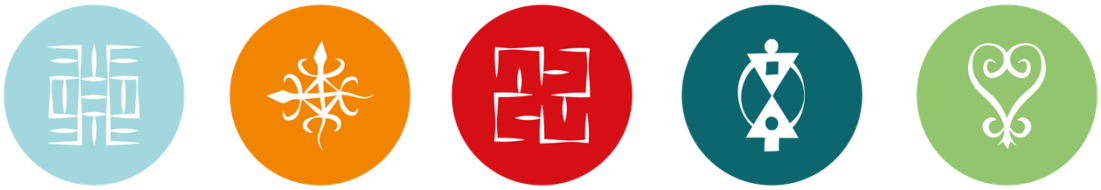
Deliverable Details

Del No.	Deliverable Title	Work Package	Version
D 3.7	Summary Report on MSME Knowledge exchanges	3.6	1

Contractual Delivery Date	Actual Delivery Date	Dissemination Level
August 2026	1st /September/2026	PU

Lead Partner	Contributing Partners	Reviewers
Rikolto International	Rikolto West Africa Oribi Hivos Wise Hub	Rabeb Ouni – HIVOS Lucas TSATSI- Oribi Woniala Peter – Rikolto Uganda Innocent Yaogo Rikolto West Africa

LINCS Value Framework



	Learning The project stresses the value of experiential learning and that multiple ways of knowing are welcomed, deemed of equal value, and can be connected to enhance understanding. *"NEA ONNIM NO SUA A, OHU" - "He who does not know can know from learning"*	**Inclusivity** and deliberate engagement and empowerment of communities will enhance their agency and participation in decision-making for a people-centred and informed research, policy and practice. *"FUNTUNFUNEFU-DENKYEMFUNEFU" - "Unity in diversity"*	**Novelty** represents the embracing of the new or unexpected, which necessarily requires diverse expertise, skills and perspectives. It includes the dismantling of inappropriate systems in favour of traditional or indigenous practices. *"UAC NKANEA" - "UAC lights" symbolises technological advancement.*	**Collaboration** To successfully ensure transdisciplinary work, societal actors must be continuously engaged to co-define the research objectives and questions, and to continuously contribute to meaning-making with the researcher as the research progresses. *"BOA ME NA ME MMOA WO" - "HELP ME AND LET ME HELP YOU".*	**Sustainability** is articulated both as the overarching global imperative to ensure economic, environmental and social wellbeing, and as the ethos that every project intervention must aim to become self-sustaining. *"SANKOFA"- The backwards turning bird symbolises returning while looking forward*
How does this deliverable contribute to each of the values?	The deliverable captures and disseminates practical knowledge and lessons from MSME exchanges across five African cities. It promotes experiential and peer-to-peer learning by documenting business experiences, technologies, circular practices, challenges and solutions that can be adapted by other MSMEs. The combination of virtual exchanges, expert presentations, peer discussions and field visits created multiple opportunities for participants to learn from each other.	The deliverable brings together MSMEs, entrepreneurs, incubators, researchers, city authorities, policymakers and ecosystem partners from five African cities and both English- and French-speaking contexts. It provides space for different experiences and perspectives, including women-led enterprises and actors operating in different food-system contexts. The exchanges also sought to widen MSME participation and strengthen access to knowledge and networks.	The deliverable showcases new and practical approaches to addressing food-system and enterprise challenges, including by-product valorisation, solar drying, shared production infrastructure, digital tools, resource recovery, biodegradable packaging and alternative market channels. It demonstrates how MSMEs can adapt existing resources and technologies to create new business opportunities and reduce waste.	The deliverable demonstrates collaboration across MSMEs, Rikolto, SHONA, Hivos, Oribi, ICLEI, incubators, coaching partners, city authorities and other ecosystem actors. The exchanges created opportunities for cross-city networking, peer learning, supplier relationships, potential market linkages and joint problem-solving. The emerging cross-city sourcing opportunities and interest in intra-African trade demonstrate the potential of the network to move beyond knowledge sharing towards practical business collaboration.	The deliverable contributes to sustainability by promoting circular, resource-efficient and economically viable food-business models. It documents approaches that reduce food loss and waste, reuse resources and create additional economic value from by-products. It also strengthens the capacities of MSMEs in financial management, record-keeping, market access, appropriate technology and business formalisation factors that support longer-term enterprise resilience and sustainability.
How did you practice this value in this deliverable?	We practiced Learning by using the exchange process itself as a mechanism for experiential and peer-to-peer learning. Participants shared enterprise experiences, challenges and practical solutions through webinars, technical discussions, case studies and field visits. The deliverable consolidates these lessons so they can be reused and disseminated beyond the individual exchange sessions. This included documenting practical examples from Darling Coffee, ByEffE Foods, Tundamax, Feed Me Enterprises, Naama and other MSMEs.	We practiced Inclusivity by involving participants from Kisumu, Mbale, Cape Town, Tunis and Ouagadougou and combining English- and French-language exchanges. The programme included MSMEs alongside city officials, researchers, incubators, development actors and ecosystem partners. We also captured participant expectations and feedback and deliberately created spaces for peer discussion and networking. The participation of women-led MSMEs from Tunis further brought diverse entrepreneurial experiences into the exchange process.	We practiced Novelty by deliberately identifying and sharing innovative approaches to food-system and enterprise challenges. These included solar drying, shared infrastructure, digital record-keeping, digital financial services, by-product valorisation, composting, wastewater reuse, biogas, biodegradable packaging and resource recovery. The exchanges also encouraged participants to see waste as a potential business resource rather than simply a disposal problem.	We practiced Collaboration through joint planning and implementation by Rikolto, SHONA, Hivos, Oribi, ICLEI and city-level partners, while engaging MSMEs and wider ecosystem actors. The exchange methodology relied on contributions from Hub cities, Task 3.2 incubators, Task 3.4 coaching partners and Sharing/Network focal points. The Mbale exchange further created opportunities for cross-city relationships, business ideas and potential sourcing and market linkages.	We practiced Sustainability by placing circularity, resource efficiency and enterprise resilience at the centre of the exchanges. Participants explored ways of reducing waste, reusing resources, recovering value and creating additional revenue streams. The deliverable also emphasised financial management, record-keeping, cash-flow discipline, market linkages, appropriate technologies and business formalisation as foundations for sustainable MSME growth.

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1. Executive Summary

Task 3.6 of AfriFOODlinks facilitates technical and knowledge exchanges among agri-food MSMEs across the five Hub cities—Kisumu, Cape Town, Mbale, Tunis and Ouagadougou to promote the sharing and scaling of innovative, circular and climate-smart business models. The programme combined English and French virtual exchanges with in-person learning activities, coordinated by Rikolto and SHONA with support from Task 3.2 incubators and Task 3.4 coaching partners.

Virtual exchanges led by Mbale, Kisumu, Cape Town and Ouagadougou addressed operational efficiency, appropriate technologies and equipment, zero-waste systems, circular economy approaches, value addition, finance and market linkages. The sessions showcased practical solutions including solar drying, shared infrastructure, by-product valorisation, resource recovery, digital tools and improved financial management.

The first combined in-person exchange was held in Mbale from 17th -21st August 2026, bringing together approximately 60 participants from all five Hub cities. The programme included a Technical Exchange Forum and field visits to Byeffe Foods and Atari Farms. Participant feedback was highly positive, with most participants rating the experience as "Very Good" or "Excellent."

Impact and Results: The exchanges strengthened peer learning, cross-city networking and practical knowledge sharing, while demonstrating how circular practices can reduce waste, improve efficiency and create additional business value. Common lessons included the importance of financial management, record-keeping, appropriate technology, market linkages, business formalisation and supportive partnerships. Circularity was demonstrated as both an environmental approach and a potential source of economic value.

Major Challenges: Major challenges included limited finance, high equipment and energy costs, inadequate maintenance and spare parts, technical capacity gaps, inconsistent supplies, food losses, packaging and logistics costs, weak market linkages and limited uptake of quality standards.

Conclusion and Recommendations: The programme provided an effective platform for MSME learning and collaboration. Future exchanges should maintain concurrent English/French scheduling, standardised exchange templates, pre-exchange expectation surveys and strong dissemination through Task 3.2/3.4 partners and Sharing/Network focal points. Continued emphasis should be placed on finance, appropriate technologies, circularity, market access, formalisation, certification and cross-city partnerships

2. Background and project context

AfriFOODlinks aims to address the systemic underpinnings of food insecurity and environmental impact, to lead to real transformation. It views urban food environments as the key arena for improving nutrition and reducing environmental impact in African cities, because food environments are where residents make food choices and where food security priorities of availability, access, agency, utilization and stability manifest. The project works to influence three key drivers of food environment form, function and dynamics: Infrastructure Investment, Social and Cultural Preference, and Business Innovation.

WP3 focused on incubating innovative circular businesses and guiding the development of enabling business environments, and is broken down into six tasks (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6). AfriFOODlinks is committed to fostering resilient, circular, inclusive and nutrition-sensitive agri-food systems across Africa and Europe, with Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) central to this transformation. MSMEs often face barriers to knowledge sharing, innovation scaling and peer learning.

Task 3.6 addresses this gap by facilitating technical and knowledge exchanges among agri-food MSMEs active in Hub, Sharing and Network cities. It disseminates innovative business models, ideas and innovations by mapping and selecting relevant MSMEs for exchange, organising at least 2 virtual exchanges per theme per year (1 French, 1 English) and 1 in-person exchange per language over the course of the project. Initial proposed themes include circular food business models,

distribution of local safe and nutritious food to local markets, and climate-smart and resilience-boosting business models.

2.3 Objectives of the Knowledge Exchanges

1. Disseminate innovative business models, practices and ideas among MSMEs
2. Strengthen peer-to-peer learning across cities
3. Organise two in-person exchanges (1 in French and 1 in English)
4. Promote sustainable, circular, inclusive and climate-smart food systems
5. Highlight and amplify local solutions with regional and global relevance

2.4 Proposed dissemination channels

1. Virtual exchanges which were recorded and shared online
2. City-level in-person exchange: Mbale and Cape Town travel to Kisumu for the English exchange
3. City-level in-person exchange: Tunis and Ouagadougou hold one physical exchange between them for the French exchange

3. Governance, Coordination and Contacts

3.1 Task Lead / Methodology Coordination

Overall coordination and leadership was as below

- Rikolto: Wilber Kakaire (wilber.kakaire@rikolto.org)
- SHONA : Lucy Asiimwe (lasiimwe@shona.co)

3.2 Hub City ccoordinators and City Task Leads

Hub City ccoordinators and City Task Leads

City	Lead Partner	Hub Coordinator(s)
Kisumu	Wise Hub	Caroline Odera (carol@wisehubfoundation.org)
Cape Town	Oribi	Lucas TSATSI (lucas.tsatsi@groupe-sos.org)
Mbale	Rikolto and SHONA	Wilber Kakaire (wilber.kakaire@rikolto.org) Lucy Asiimwe (lasiimwe@shona.co)
Ouagadougou	Rikolto and Adeu	Harouna Maiga (harouna.maiga@rikolto.org) Kassamba Safoura (safourakass@yahoo.fr)
Tunis	Hivos	Emna Mornagui (emornagui@hivos.org)

3.3 Role of Hub, Sharing and Network Cities

1. Identify and propose innovative business models and MSMEs
2. Validate and prioritise knowledge-exchange themes

3. Mobilise local MSMEs to participate
4. Facilitate local language and cultural adaptation during exchanges

3.4 Language Groupings among the Hub cities

1. English-speaking Hub cities: Mbale, Cape Town, Kisumu
2. French-speaking Hub cities: Tunis, Ouagadougou

4. Methodology

4.1 Theme identification and prioritisation

Each Hub city identified 2–3 emerging themes or topics most relevant to their local MSMEs. Topics were based on real experiences or challenges in the city, easy to understand and relevant for other cities to learn from, and connected to circular food business models, distribution of local safe and nutritious food, and climate-smart and resilience-boosting business models.

Hub city	What are the emerging themes (2-3 themes) from the incubatees 3.2 & 3.4 in your city	What specific Topic would you suggest under this theme for the webinar	Which individuals / SMEs will lead on sharing under this topic during the webinar	Name of Focal Person	Email Contact of Focal Person
Mbale, Uganda	Operational Efficiencies for start up of circular Food business models	Leveraging external resources and technologies to improve operational efficiencies for startup of agrifood enterprises - Current experiences - Opportunities	Task 3.2. Coffee Businesses in Mbale together with Darling coffee - A guided presentation and conversation	Lucy Asiimwe	lasiimwe@shona.co
	Nutrition and value addition	The big picture on the Nutritional value of food while on the value addition journey.	Bubwene Nutri Porridge	Nabwire Samalie Dorothy	bubweneorganicnutririchfoods@gmail.com

After collecting suggestions from all Hub cities, the Task Lead aggregated and grouped similar topics into 5 core themes that represented what was most important across the five cities. The most prominent themes formed the basis for the in-person exchange.

4.2 MSME Mapping and Selection

The mapping exercise for MSMEs to participate in the technical and knowledge exchanges was led jointly by Task 3.2 incubators in each city, Task 3.4 coaching partners, and Sharing and Network city coordinators.

4.3 Implementation Methodology

4.3.1 Virtual Exchanges

3. Concept development: the city task participants drafted the concept note for each webinar using the standard webinar concept template (objectives, format, interpretation needs, target audience, and speakers)
4. Webinar participation criteria: the exchanges were open to all Task 3.2 and 3.4 businesses, including MSMEs from Network and Sharing cities; incubators and partners support dissemination together with lead coordinators
5. Call for participants: the calls were disseminated via Task Leads for 3.2 and 3.4, Sharing/Network city focal persons, AFL platforms and social media channels
6. Agenda preparation: a detailed agenda was developed for each exchange and shared once finalised
7. Exchange schedule: a schedule was developed for the virtual exchanges total (English & French), delivered simultaneously across the cities

4.3.2 In-Person Exchanges

1. Concept Development (Task 2.1): was shared concept for one in-person exchanges including goals and learning methodology was developed
2. Participation Criteria (Task 2.2): was based on circularity, innovation, inclusivity and local relevance
3. Call for Participants (Task 2.3): was disseminated via incubators, focal points and partners
4. Expectation Survey (Task 2.4): a short form to capture participant motivations and content needs was developed
5. Agenda and Methodology (Task 2.5): practical learning, reflection sessions, peer dialogue and site visits
6. Exchange Delivery (Task 2.6): was organised collaboratively in January 2026, with interim reports compiled into this Deliverable D3.7
7. one in-person exchanges: one exchange hosted in Mbale (Bringing together all cities), the exchange had professional interpretation services with gargets for simultaneous interpretation in both English and French and was hosted in Mbale between 17th and 21st August 2026

5. Exchange delivery plan and schedule

5.1 Virtual Exchange Schedule

Virtual exchanges are held on the last Thursday afternoon of every month (90 minutes; 14:00–15:30 EAT for months 1–6, 14:00–15:00 EAT from month 7 onward), either in English or French depedning on the city that was leading on the webinar.

5.2 In-Person exchange plan (January 2026)

Exchange	Language	Host City	Participating Delegations
In-person exchange 1	English and French	Mbale	Mbale, Cape Town, Kisumu, Tunis and Ouagadougou

The in-person exchange was delivered as a single combined gathering in Mbale (17th –21st August 2026), with delegations from Kisumu, Cape Town, Ouagadougou and Tunis joining Mbale rather than

as two separate language-track events. Full results are reported in Section 6.6. In-person exchange 2 (French track) remains to be scheduled.

6. City-by-City Summaries

Each Hub city led exchange delivery in its language group, drawing on its local incubation and coaching partners for MSME mapping. The table below sets out each city's role and language track; narrative results (MSME numbers, exchanges delivered, assets, outcomes) will be added as each city's reporting is completed.

Hub city's role and language track

City	Lead Partner	Language
Kisumu	Wise Hub	English
Cape Town	Oribi	English
Mbale	Rikolto and SHONA	English
Ouagadougou	Rikolto and Adeu	French
Tunis	Hivos	French

Participation Online webnar Sessions

Knowledge Exchange Session	Location	Registered/Approved Participants
Circular Innovations: Turning Waste into Opportunity	Cape Town	94
Operational Efficiencies for Start-up Circular Food Business Models	Mbale	85
Zero Waste in Food Systems: Fruit Juices and Drinks	Kisumu	78
Circular Economy Practices, Waste Management and Business Models	Tunis	27
• Access to Appropriate Materials and Equipment for Agri-food MSMEs; • Integrating Circularity into Agri-food Enterprises	Ouagadougou	61
Total	6 sessions	345

345 participants were recorded across the five sessions. Participation was geographically diverse, with attendees drawn from Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Rwanda Tunis and Ouagadougou. All participants recorded in the three available registers were approved, with no cancelled or denied registrations reported.

6.1 Kisumu

Kisumu led an English-track exchange on "Zero Waste in Agrifood Systems," spotlighting the fruit-juice and beverage value chain. The session was organised by WISE Hub Foundation under AfriFOODlinks Work Package 3.6, together with Rikolto and ICLEI Africa, and hosted on Zoom for delegations from the three English-speaking Hub cities: Kisumu, Mbale and Cape Town.

6.1.1 Target Audience and Participation

Expected participants comprised 2 agri-food SMEs currently receiving coaching support across the five Hub cities, alongside city officials, policymakers and implementation partners.

The lead organisers were WISE Hub Foundation, Rikolto and ICLEI Africa. The session was moderated by Ronald Okeyo, with Wilber Kakaire (Rikolto) opening, setting the scene and closing the session.

6.1.2 Exchange Session Overview

The webinar was organised to strengthen entrepreneurship and SMEs through capacity building, financing, market linkages and business development services for juice producers and vendors. It also aimed to support sustainability and the circular economy by turning by-products into animal feed, compost or biogas, while promoting climate-smart production practices.

Kisumu's juice ecosystem was presented as benefiting from a favourable tropical climate near Lake Victoria, supporting mango, passion fruit, orange, pineapple and banana production. The value chain connects smallholder farmers, aggregators/transporters, retailers and consumers.

6.1.3 Key Content Delivered

The session highlighted key challenges within Kisumu's juice ecosystem, including inconsistent fruit supply, limited cold storage, food-safety gaps, inadequate financing and low uptake of quality standards.

The discussion also focused on zero-waste and circular approaches to perishable produce. Particular attention was given to by-product valorisation, solar drying, local sourcing, preservation technologies, composting, animal feed and other ways of keeping materials in use rather than treating them as waste.

6.1.4 MSMEs Featured

Tundamax Enterprises Limited (Kisumu)

Presented by Reagan Abura Odongo, CEO and Managing Director, Tundamax Enterprises Limited was founded in 2020 and incorporated in 2023. The enterprise produces value-added nutritious fruit juices and valorised by-products, supporting 6 local fruit farmers and 4 open-air-market raw-material suppliers with a team of 6 youth.

The enterprise applies a "make–use–reuse–remake–recycle" circularity model built on designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems.

Its by-product valorisation portfolio includes ginger rhizome powder, essential oils, D-limonene recovery, pectin, animal feed from mango peel/kernel, biodegradable cups made from citrus peel and polylactic acid, and bioethanol, with 25–30 litres produced per 1,000kg of wet peels.

Tundamax also distinguished food loss, referring to pre-consumer supply-chain losses, from food waste, referring to post-packaging and consumer-stage losses. The presentation noted that around 40% of fruit losses stem from poor market linkages and storage, while around 90% of citrus losses result from green mould.

Feed Me Enterprises Limited (Kisumu)

Presented by Cynthia Ondiek, Founder and Director, Feed Me Enterprises Limited adds value to African leafy vegetables and mixed spices/herbs through solar drying and shelf-stable processing. Cynthia also leads communications at Gracious Mission CBO on climate-smart agriculture and youth engagement.

The enterprise applies zero-waste practices through solar drying of surplus vegetables, while trimmings and rejects are diverted to compost or animal feed. It also provides farmer training on post-harvest handling and packaging and promotes local consumption to reduce transport and spoilage losses.

In Kisumu County, the enterprise reported that post-harvest losses were cut by over 60% through solar drying. Local women and youth were trained in preservation and spice processing, new income opportunities were created, and safer, more nutritious food was promoted for local markets.

6.1.5 Results and Lessons Learned

Both featured MSMEs demonstrated zero-waste, circular value-addition models for perishable produce, directly reinforcing Task 3.6's focus on circular food business models.

Common enablers identified during the exchange included solar drying and low-cost preservation technology, direct farmer sourcing to cut spoilage, and treating by-product valorisation as a revenue stream rather than a disposal cost.

The exchange demonstrated how value can be generated from perishable produce and by-products while reducing food losses and supporting local farmers, women and youth.

6.1.6 Challenges Noted

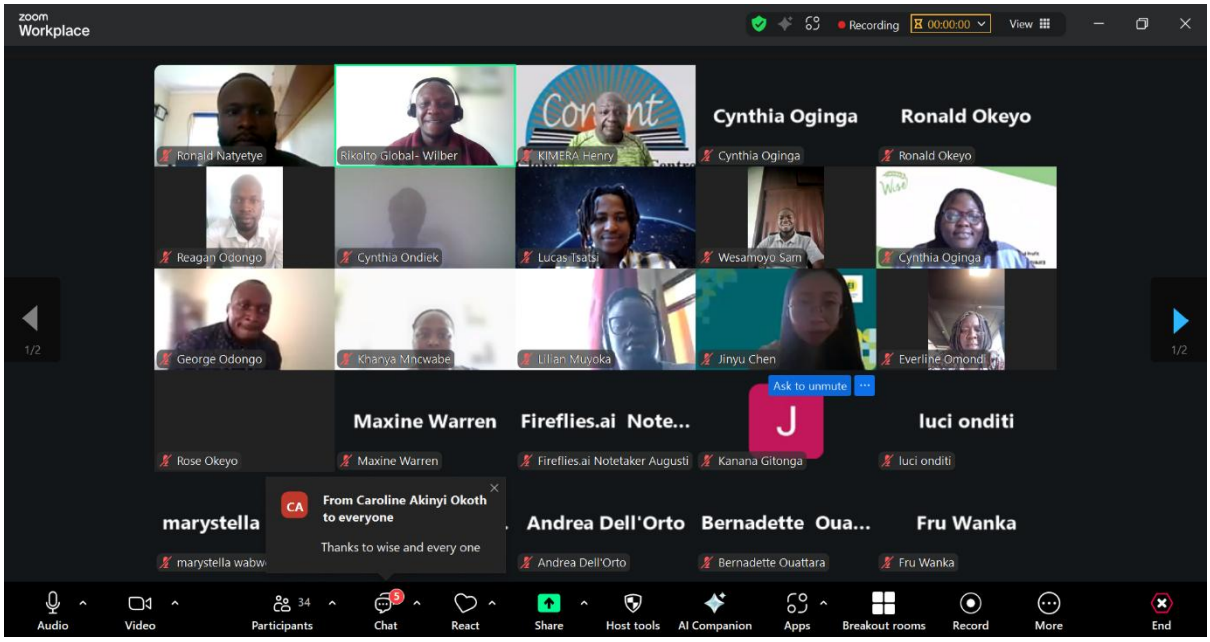
The Kisumu juice ecosystem faces inconsistent fruit supply, limited cold storage, food-safety gaps, inadequate financing and low uptake of quality standards.

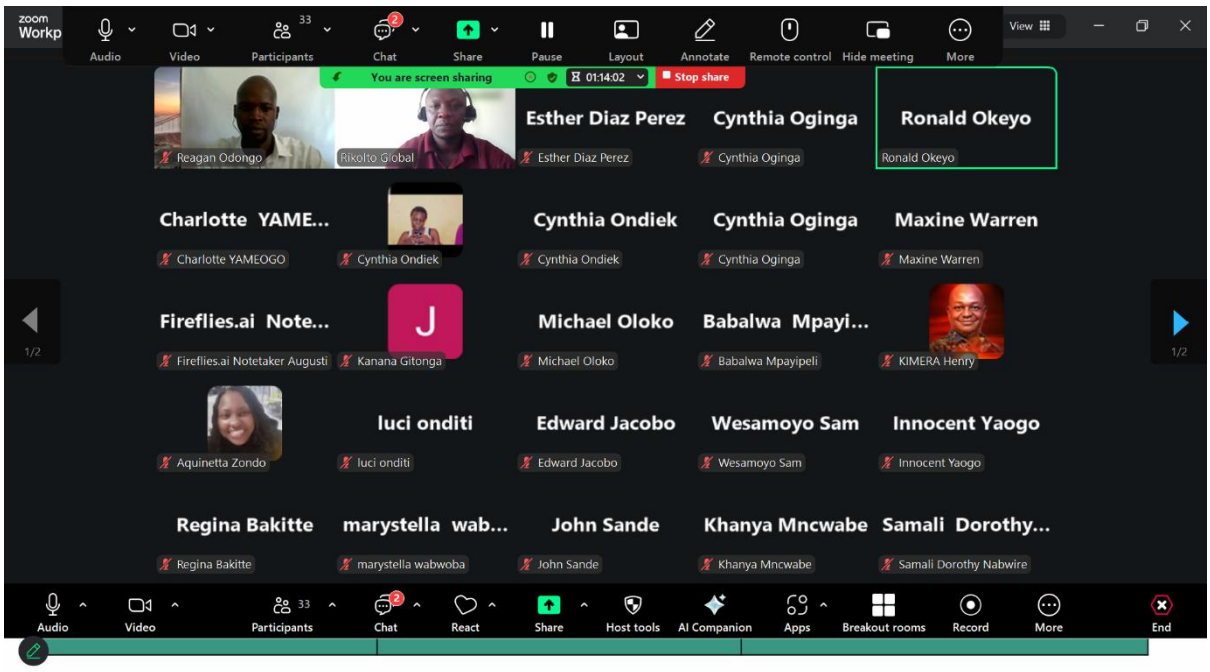
The session also highlighted losses associated with poor market linkages and storage, with around 40% of fruit losses attributed to these factors, while around 90% of citrus losses were linked to green mould.

6.1.7 Recommendations

Recommendations raised for Kisumu's ecosystem included capacity building for farmers and processors, investment in green technologies such as solar dryers and biodegradable packaging, policy support for small agro-processors, and stronger market linkages for value-added produce.

Participants during the webinar





6.2 Cape Town

Cape Town led an English-language technical and knowledge exchange titled **"**Turning Waste into Opportunity: Circular Innovations in Urban Food Systems**"** on 19 March 2026. The 90-minute virtual session was held via Zoom and coordinated by Oribi (University of Cape Town) in collaboration with

Rikolto. The exchange formed part of Cape Town's contribution to the AfriFOODlinks MSME knowledge-sharing activities and focused on practical circular-economy approaches that can help urban food businesses reduce waste, create new value streams and strengthen collaboration across food-system actors.

6.2.1 Target Audience and Participation

The exchange targeted agri-food MSMEs across AfriFOODlinks Hub, Sharing and Network cities, as well as food entrepreneurs, circular-economy practitioners, urban food-system actors and innovators, civil-society organisations, municipal stakeholders, food-policy actors, researchers and ecosystem partners. The open call attracted 94 registrants, including 23 South African participants, while 30 participants attended the live virtual session. Participants represented several countries across the AfriFOODlinks network, including Uganda, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Mozambique, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and Senegal.

A pre-session expectations survey captured participants' roles, home cities, main areas of interest and current challenges. This information was used to tailor the discussion and identify areas of interest for future peer-learning exchanges. The diversity of participants enabled discussion across MSMEs, practitioners, municipalities, civil-society organisations and researchers, creating a multi-stakeholder perspective on circular food systems.

6.2.2 Facilitation and Format

The session was facilitated by Lucas Tsatsi of Oribi, who provided the welcome, housekeeping and discussion facilitation, while Wilber Kakaire of Rikolto set the scene and provided an overview of AfriFOODlinks.

The 90-minute format combined two approximately 20-minute expert presentations, a facilitated discussion between the speakers, audience questions and peer exchange, and a closing session highlighting the main takeaways.

6.2.3 Exchange Session Overview

The webinar explored how circular-economy principles can be translated into practical business and community solutions for urban food systems. Particular attention was given to waste diversion, value addition, community participation and collaboration between entrepreneurs, communities and municipal actors.

Heidi Albert, Founder of A Longer Table, shared experience in food-waste activism, food rescue and community-level solutions. Her contribution highlighted the challenge of food waste in Cape Town and demonstrated how surplus food can be repurposed into community meals and other products. She also discussed community empowerment through cooking, food preservation, training and storytelling, showing how food waste can become both a social resource and a low-cost input for food enterprises.

Candice Mostert, Founder of Waste-ED and Circular Economy Specialist, presented systems-level approaches to circularity and practical experience in implementing waste-diversion initiatives. Her work included circular interventions involving community waste systems, zero-waste initiatives, informal trade hubs and partnerships with municipal and community structures.

6.2.4 Key Content Delivered

The exchange demonstrated practical approaches to waste diversion and value addition, including the repurposing of surplus food into community meals and other products.

The discussion highlighted community participation and empowerment through cooking, food preservation, training and storytelling. It also demonstrated the potential for entrepreneurs to build reliable supply partnerships around surplus food while addressing food insecurity and creating community value.

Systems-level approaches included community waste systems, zero-waste initiatives, informal trade hubs and partnerships with municipal and community structures. The importance of measuring and tracking waste streams and converting these into viable revenue opportunities was also highlighted, including composting, wood-chip processing and other value-added products.

6.2.5 Results and Lessons Learned

A key strength of the Cape Town exchange was the combination of systems-level circular-economy expertise with grassroots and community-facing practice. This enabled the session to address the interests of both MSMEs seeking practical business opportunities and municipal or ecosystem stakeholders interested in wider food-system solutions.

The discussions reinforced several key themes that also emerged in other AfriFOODlinks exchanges, including those in Mbale and Kisumu:
The importance of integrating informal-sector actors and communities into circular food and waste systems.

- The need for community-level behaviour change to support long-term waste reduction.
- The value of municipal and ecosystem partnerships in enabling circular business models.
- The importance of monitoring and tracking waste volumes, sales and other business data to demonstrate the viability and impact of circular enterprises.
- The role of structured financial management, cost tracking and record-keeping in supporting business growth and improving access to finance.
- The potential for entrepreneurs to use existing networks and partnerships to overcome limitations in capacity, skills and market access.

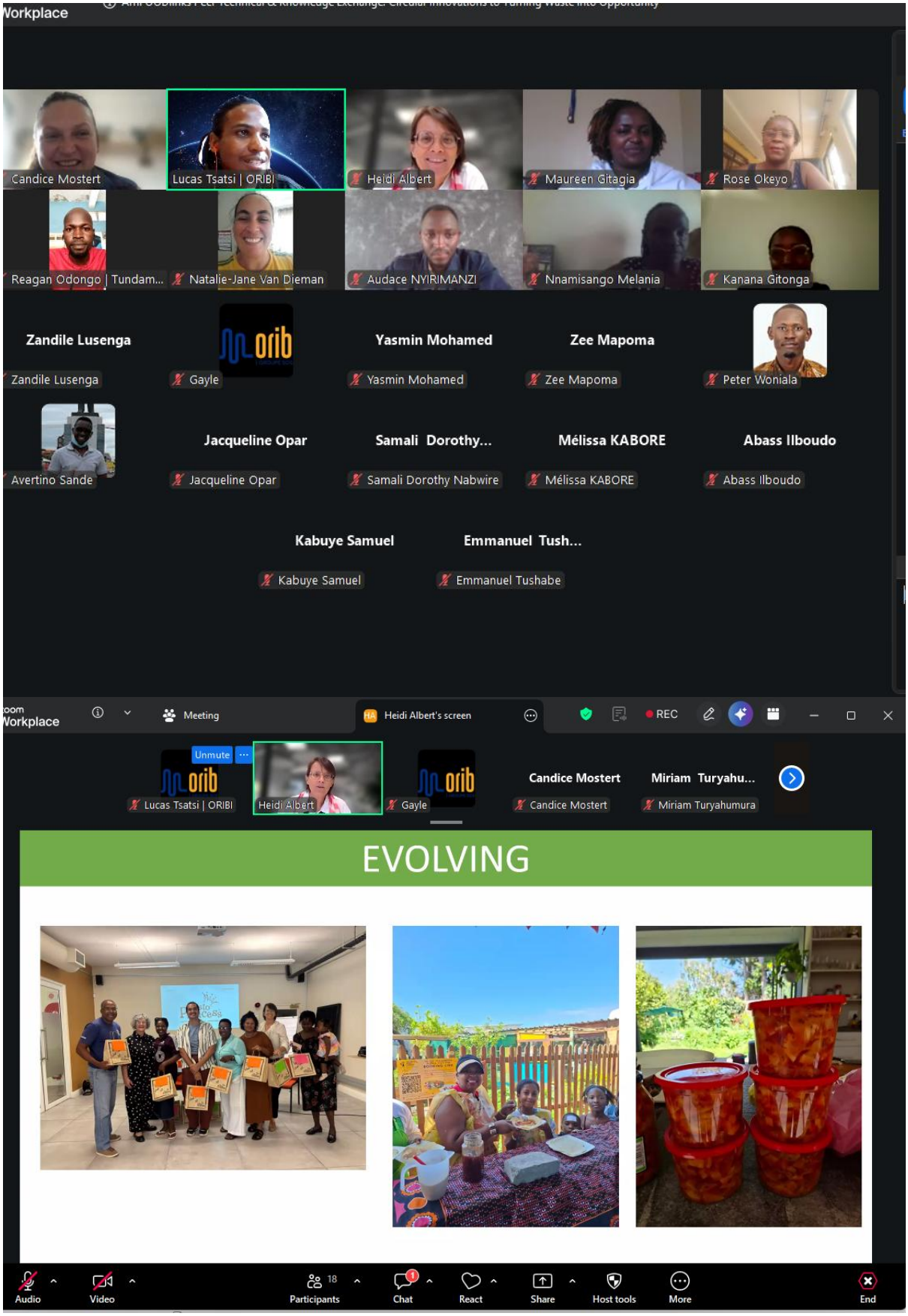
6.2.6 Challenges Noted

The exchange highlighted the challenge of food waste in Cape Town, alongside the need for community-level behaviour change to support long-term waste reduction.
Challenges also included limitations in capacity, skills and market access, highlighting the importance of existing networks and partnerships. The discussions further pointed to the need for monitoring and tracking waste volumes, sales and other business data, as well as structured financial management, cost tracking and record-keeping to support business growth and improve access to finance.

6.2.7 Recommendations

The exchange highlighted the importance of integrating informal-sector actors and communities into circular food and waste systems, strengthening community-level behaviour change, and building municipal and ecosystem partnerships to enable circular business models.
It also highlighted the need for monitoring and tracking waste volumes, sales and other business data, together with structured financial management, cost tracking and record-keeping to support business growth and improve access to finance.
Entrepreneurs were encouraged to use existing networks and partnerships to overcome limitations in capacity, skills and market access.

Participants during the webinar



6.3 Mbale

Mbale led the English-track exchange, delivering the Technical and Knowledge Exchange Webinar "Leveraging External Resources and Technologies to Improve Operational Efficiencies for Startup of Agrifood Enterprises" on 14 August 2025. The webinar was hosted online via Zoom by Rikolto and SHONA, with support from AfriFOODlinks and ICLEI Africa.

6.3.1 Exchange Session Overview

The webinar focused on "Leveraging External Resources & Technologies for Operational Efficiency in Agrifood Startups," covering the reality check for agrifood startups, practical tools and strategies, and growth opportunities. The session was facilitated by Wilber Kakaire (Rikolto), who provided the welcome and housekeeping; Lucy Asiimwe (SHONA), who set the scene; and Emmanuel Omongole, Finance & Investment Professional, who delivered the keynote presentation. Two MSME case studies were presented, followed by 25 minutes of interactive Q&A and a session wrap-up.

6.3.2 Key Content Delivered

The session highlighted the agrifood startup landscape, noting that 60% of agrifood startups fold within 3 years due to operational inefficiencies (FAO, 2023), while 70% of East African agribusinesses lack affordable technology (AGRA Survey). These challenges occur against a backdrop of fragmented systems, cash-based transactions and spoilage losses of up to 40% for perishables.

Practical solutions were grouped into three tracks: affordable technology, including mobile record-keeping, solar drying, USSD/WhatsApp platforms and digital financial services; process innovation, including shared cold storage, lean inventory, village aggregation centres and digital order tracking; and circular hacks, including by-product valorisation, composting, wastewater reuse and biogas.

Growth opportunities highlighted during the session included innovation platforms such as SHONA, AI and digital tools, co-investment in shared infrastructure, and access to knowledge and networks.

6.3.3 MSMEs Featured

Darling Coffee Limited (Mbale)

Darling Coffee Limited, presented by Tumukugize Stephen, Co-Founder and Team Leader, is a coffee roasting, grinding and packaging enterprise located on Plot 34, Bugwere Road, Mbale. The enterprise works with a 615-strong smallholder farmer network, including 2 women's groups and 3 youth groups. Its products include graded green coffee beans, roasted coffee, ground coffee and coffee pouches. The enterprise also provides contract roasting/grinding services for over 72 partner coffee brands at a capacity of 240kg/day. Its circular by-products include a coffee scrub and a coffee-based hair growth oil sold under the Maishayamuru/Maishasafi lines.

The enterprise received step-by-step guidance to UNBS quality certification, mentorship for 78 youth under the AVSI SAY project, and coffee academy training for 38+ youth covering agronomy, processing, quality management, roasting, brewing/barista and trade.

ByEffE Foods Company Limited (Mbale)

ByEffE Foods Company Limited, presented by Fatuma Namutosi, Founder and Managing Director, was incorporated in 2014 and has been operational since 2015. The company processes nutritious products from pumpkins, cereals and grains and supports 3,500+ farmers in pumpkin and soybean value chains. The company operates as a shared "production hub," giving hosted agrifood startups access to processing facilities, technology and operational expertise without needing capital for their own plant. Its circular and cost-saving practices include energy-efficient milling/mixing/packaging motors, with up to 25% lower operating costs; batch production scheduling across hosted startups; solar tunnel drying; rainwater harvesting and farm ponds; and centralised sourcing of biodegradable packaging.

Shared waste streams turn one startup's residues, such as cereal husks and fruit peels, into feed, compost or bio-fertiliser for others, supporting a "zero organic waste" model. Reported benefits for hosted startups include lower capital expenditure, lower operational costs, faster time to market, and stronger sustainable-branding stories. An innovation spotlight was the incubation of an eggshell-recycling startup that converts eggshells into high-calcium animal feed and soil enhancers.

6.3.4 Results and Lessons Learned

Both featured MSMEs illustrated circular, shared-infrastructure business models directly aligned with Task 3.6's focus on circular food business models and climate-smart, resilience-boosting practices.

The exchange demonstrated practical approaches to improving operational efficiency through affordable technology, process innovation, circular practices, shared infrastructure and access to knowledge and networks. The Darling Coffee and ByEffE Foods case studies also demonstrated the use of circular by-products, shared production facilities, energy-efficient equipment, solar drying, rainwater harvesting and waste reuse.
The session generated a completed technical/knowledge-exchange asset comprising a recorded webinar and slide deck, available for dissemination to Sharing and Network cities.

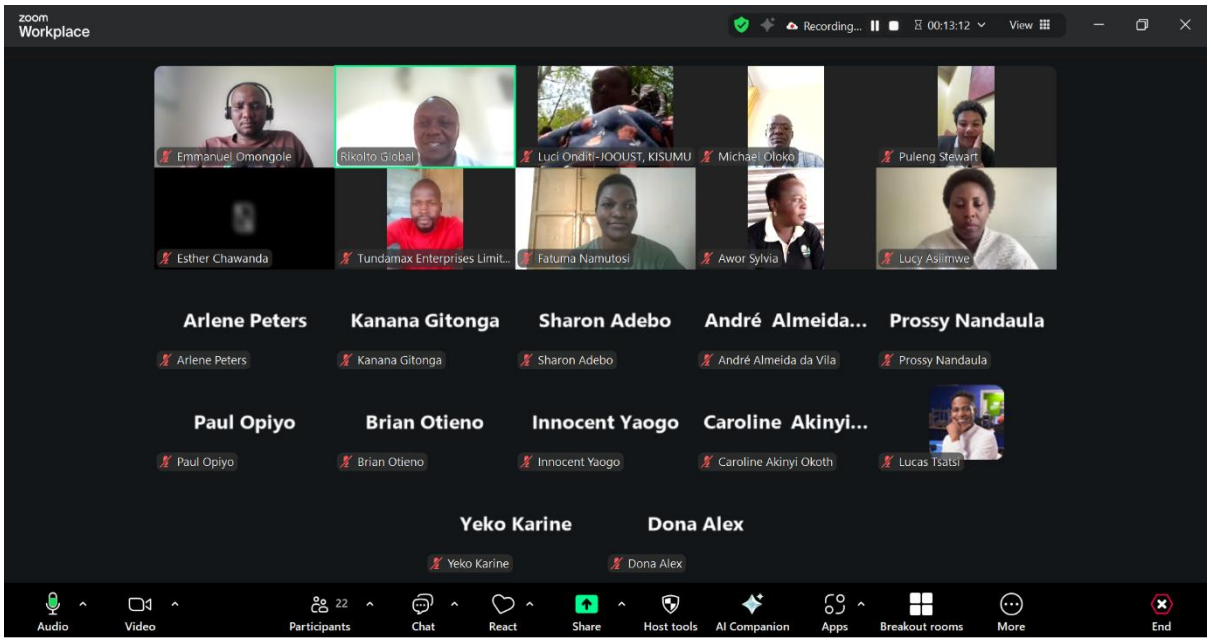
6.3.5 Challenges Noted

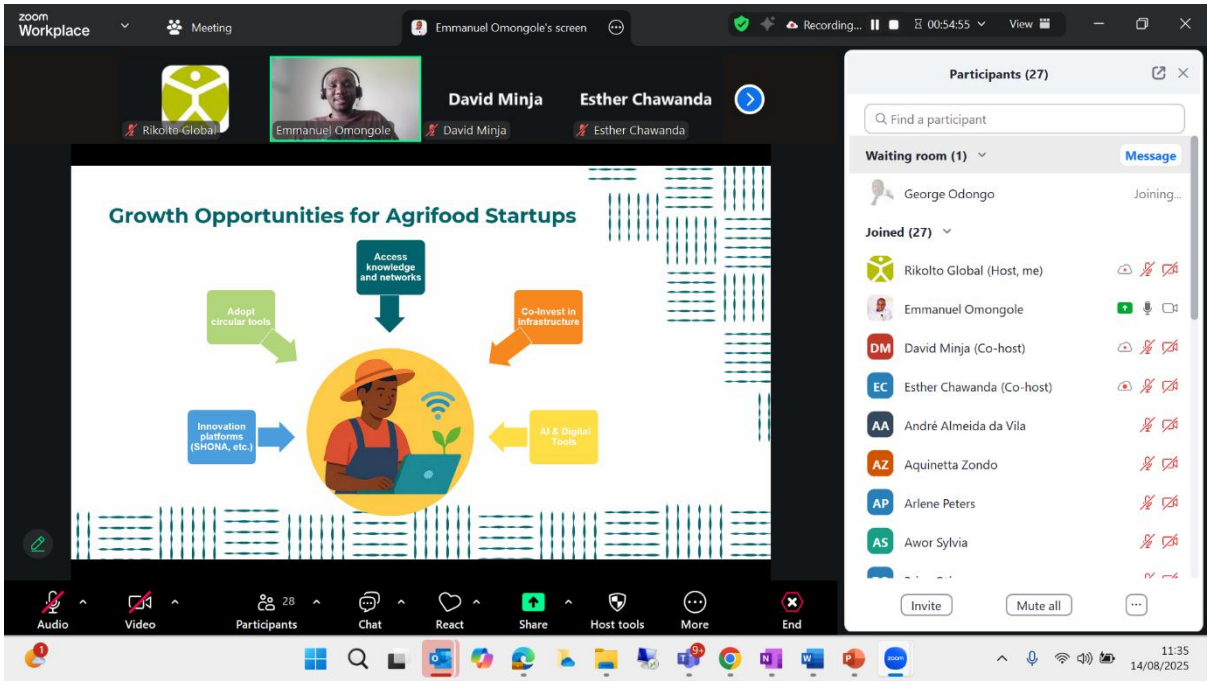
The case studies highlighted several operational challenges affecting agrifood MSMEs. Darling Coffee Limited raised low production equipment capacity, access to affordable finance, seasonality, and inconsistent pouch supply as key challenges.
Common barriers across both case studies also focused on access to affordable finance and production equipment, while seasonality and supply consistency were identified as recurring issues for Mbale MSMEs.
The broader agrifood startup landscape also highlighted operational inefficiencies, lack of affordable technology, fragmented systems, cash-based transactions and spoilage losses of up to 40% for perishables.

6.3.6 Recommendations

The exchange highlighted the need for co-investment in shared infrastructure and blended finance in response to recurring challenges related to access to affordable finance and production equipment.
The practical solutions presented during the session also pointed to the use of affordable technologies, process innovation and circular practices, including mobile record-keeping, solar drying, USSD/WhatsApp platforms, digital financial services, shared cold storage, lean inventory, village aggregation centres, digital order tracking, by-product valorisation, composting, wastewater reuse and biogas.
Growth opportunities highlighted for agrifood startups included innovation platforms such as SHONA, AI and digital tools, co-investment in shared infrastructure, and access to knowledge and networks.

Participants during the webinar





6.4 Tunis

Tunis participated in two AfriFOODlinks MSME exchange activities addressing the competitiveness, sustainability and circularity of agri-food enterprises. The first exchange, held virtually on 29 April 2026, brought together MSMEs from Tunis and Ouagadougou and focused on circular economy practices, waste management, business models, market access and competition. The second exchange was held in person in Mbale, Uganda, from 17–21 August 2026, bringing together MSMEs and project partners from the five AfriFOODlinks Hub Cities: Cape Town, Ouagadougou, Kisumu, Mbale and Tunis.

The exchanges provided opportunities for Tunisian MSMEs to share practical experiences, learn from businesses operating in other African cities, explore circular business models and identify potential market and business linkages.

6.5.1 Target Audience and Participation

The exchanges targeted MSMEs, food processors, entrepreneurs and other food-system actors working across food production, processing, distribution, waste valorisation and related services.

The virtual exchange brought together 27 MSME participants, including 6 participants from Tunis and 21 from Ouagadougou. The Mbale in-person exchange included 3 Tunisian MSMEs, alongside entrepreneurs and partners from the other AfriFOODlinks Hub Cities.

Tunisian MSMEs participating in the exchanges were predominantly women-led enterprises, with participating entrepreneurs generally ranging from 28 to 39 years of age. The exchanges provided a platform for women-led businesses to share experiences and perspectives on enterprise development, circularity, market access and food-system innovation.

6.5.2 Facilitation and Format

The virtual exchange was organised collaboratively by Hivos Tunis and Rikolto Ouagadougou and was conducted in French. The session combined thematic presentations, MSME experience-sharing, open discussion and questions and answers.

The Mbale exchange was coordinated through collaboration among Rikolto Mbale, Rikolto Ouagadougou, SHONA, Oribi and Hivos. It combined peer-to-peer discussions, expert sessions, informal networking, open problem-solving and field visits to innovative businesses in Mbale.

The combination of virtual and in-person formats enabled participants to exchange experiences while also gaining direct exposure to practical business models operating in different urban food-system contexts.

6.5.3 Exchange Session Overview

The virtual exchange focused on the practical application of circular economy principles within MSMEs, with discussions covering waste management, circular business models, market access and competition from multinational companies.

Participants shared experiences of transforming food and agricultural residues into compost, fertilisers and animal feed, as well as approaches involving reusable packaging and other resource-recovery practices. Discussions also addressed practical barriers such as waste collection and transportation, storage, hygiene, infrastructure, production costs and packaging.

A key example from Tunis was Naama, led by Tesnim Jaziri, which demonstrated how unsold bread collected from hotels and restaurants can be transformed into value-added products such as cakes and cookies. The business applies food-safety, hygiene and traceability requirements to ensure the safe use of recovered bread.

The Mbale exchange expanded the learning to circular food business models, nutritious food distribution and market access, business growth, financial management and enterprise development. Field visits exposed participants to local value-addition enterprises, including Mummy's Porridge and an avocado oil producer supporting farmers through coaching.

6.5.4 Key Content Delivered

The exchanges emphasised the potential for MSMEs to use circularity and resource recovery as pathways for reducing costs, minimising waste and creating additional economic value.

Key areas discussed included:

- Food waste valorisation and resource recovery;
- Compost and fertiliser production from organic residues;
- Use of agricultural residues as animal feed;
- Reusable packaging and waste reduction;
- Food safety and hygiene in the recovery and reuse of food materials;
- Alternative market and distribution channels;
- Enterprise financial management and business growth;
- Access to finance and investment;
- Packaging, sourcing and production challenges; and
- Opportunities for cross-city business and supplier linkages.

The Tunis experience contributed particularly to discussions on food waste valorisation and alternative market access. Naama's bread-waste model provided a practical example of how a waste stream can become an input for a new value-added product.

The experience of Verde Pulse also highlighted the difficulties faced by MSMEs in accessing mainstream supermarkets and the potential of alternative channels such as specialised food shops and gyms.

6.5.5 Results and Lessons Learned

The exchanges demonstrated that MSME competitiveness and sustainability depend on access to knowledge, appropriate business strategies, finance, markets and supportive networks.

The discussions reinforced the understanding that circularity can provide both an environmental solution and a business opportunity. Food and agricultural waste can potentially be transformed into useful inputs, reducing waste while creating additional sources of income.

The exchanges also demonstrated the value of cross-city peer learning. Participants were able to compare business models, production methods, products, suppliers and approaches to common challenges across different African food-system contexts.

6.5.6 Challenges Noted

The key challenges identified across the Tunis MSME exchanges included:

- Difficulty identifying a common time for virtual participation due to entrepreneurs' business commitments.
- Language differences between English- and French-speaking participants, which occasionally slowed discussions.
- Limited participation from Tunis in the Mbale exchange due to travel constraints and personal responsibilities, including childcare responsibilities.
- Long travel times and a condensed programme, which reduced the time available for networking and informal business interaction.
- Challenges related to access to mainstream markets and supermarkets.

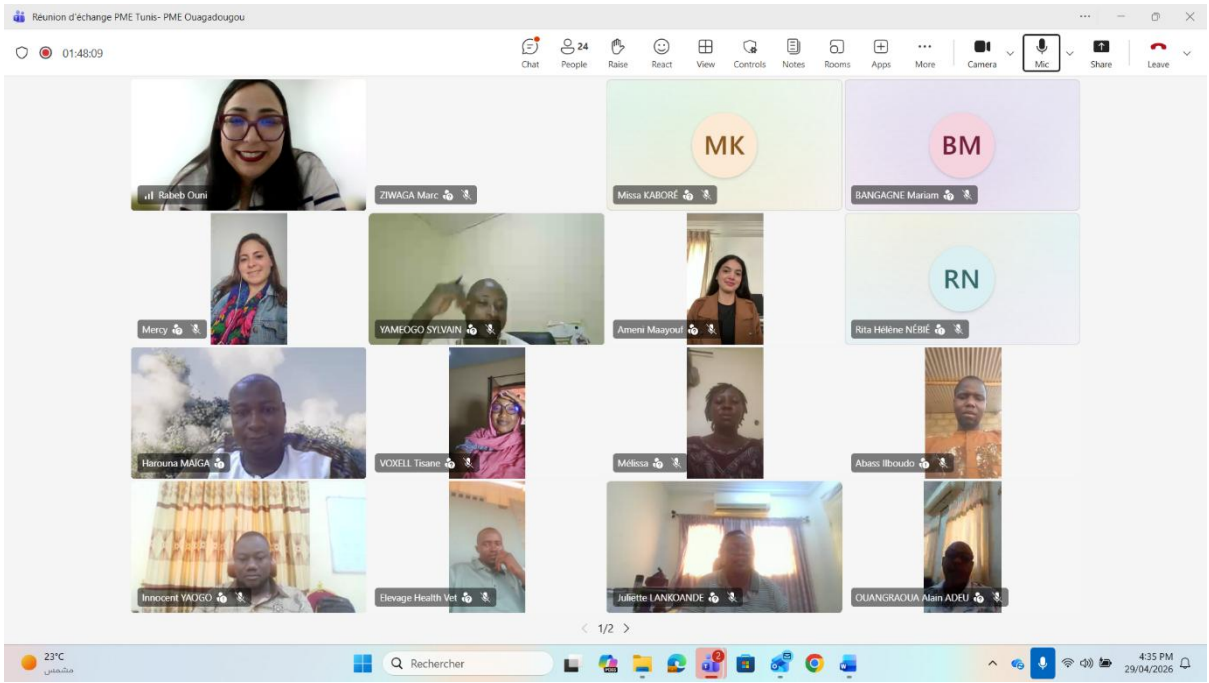
- High production and packaging costs.
- Challenges related to waste collection, transportation, storage and hygiene requirements.
- Limited time for follow-up after initial business connections were established.

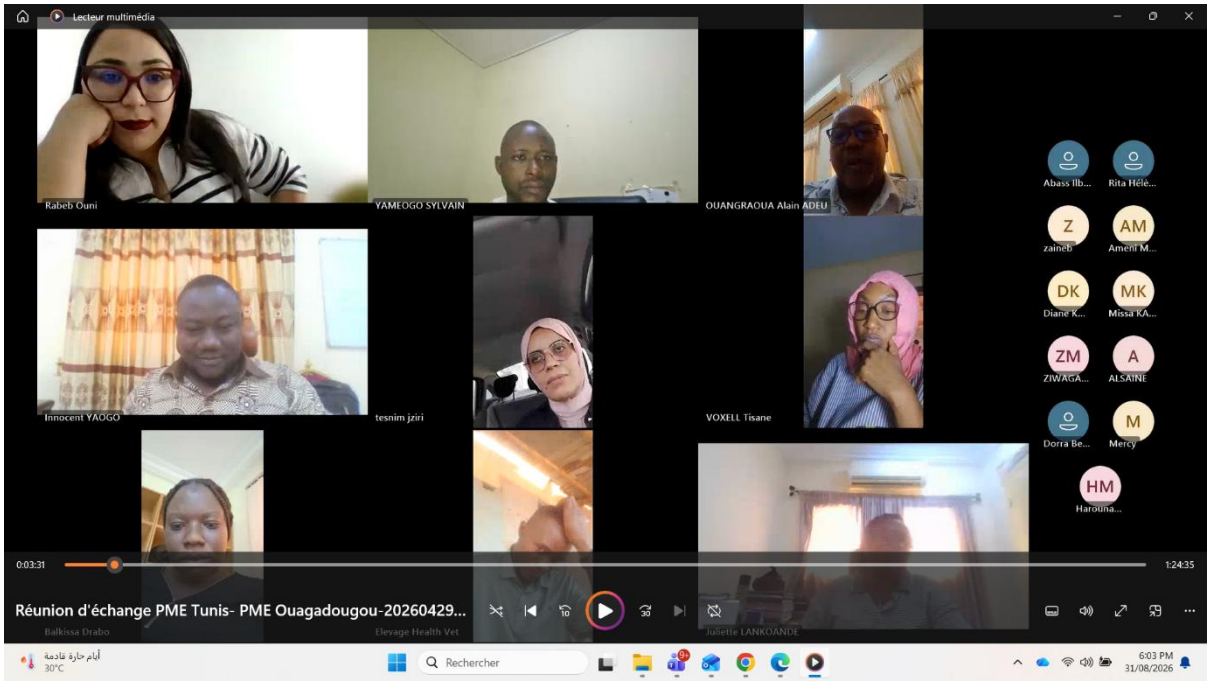
6.5.7 Recommendations

The exchanges recommended providing more time for in-person MSME exchanges, particularly for peer-to-peer interaction, informal networking and business-to-business matchmaking.
Future exchanges should also strengthen structured follow-up mechanisms to track potential collaborations, supplier relationships and market linkages identified during the events.
The exchanges further recommended:

- Promoting cross-city B2B matchmaking within the AfriFOODlinks network.
- Supporting MSMEs to identify and develop alternative market and distribution channels.
- Strengthening documentation and dissemination of successful circular business models.
- Facilitating access to finance and business development support.
- Continuing to combine expert sessions, peer learning and practical field visits.
- Providing flexible and hybrid participation options to accommodate entrepreneurs' business and family responsibilities.
- Creating stronger linkages between MSMEs, suppliers and potential buyers across AfriFOODlinks cities.
- Following up on identified opportunities for cross-city sourcing and market development, including potential sourcing of Tunisian products by MSMEs in other AfriFOODlinks cities.

Participants during the webinar





6.5 Ouagadougou

Ouagadougou conducted two AfriFOODlinks webinars addressing the competitiveness and sustainability of agri-food MSMEs. The first, held on 19 December 2025, focused on access to appropriate materials and equipment, while the second, held on 7 August 2026, focused on integrating circularity into agri-food enterprises.

6.4.1 Target Audience and Participation

The sessions targeted agri-food MSMEs, food processors and entrepreneurs, equipment manufacturers, researchers, development actors and other food-system stakeholders. The discussions addressed enterprise needs around processing equipment, food safety, technology, circularity, infrastructure and finance.

6.4.2 Facilitation and Format

The sessions were coordinated by Harouna MAIGA of Rikolto. The first webinar featured Aboubacar Sidiki DAO, an agri-food processing equipment expert, while the second featured Harouna MAIGA and Mariam BANGAGNE.

The sessions combined expert presentations, discussion, questions and practical reflection on MSME challenges and solutions.

6.4.3 Exchange Session Overview

The exchanges highlighted the importance of appropriate processing, storage, preservation and quality-control equipment for improving the competitiveness of agri-food MSMEs.

The first webinar focused on access to appropriate materials and equipment, while the second introduced approaches for integrating circularity into agri-food enterprises. The circularity session centred on reducing waste, reusing resources, recovering value and regenerating resources.

The exchanges also highlighted AfriFOODlinks support through coaching, circularity mapping, capacity building, business planning and financing.

6.4.4 Key Content Delivered

The sessions emphasised the role of appropriate technology and equipment in improving MSME competitiveness, particularly in processing, storage, preservation and quality control.

The circularity discussion introduced approaches based on reducing waste, reusing resources, recovering value and regenerating resources. These approaches were linked to enterprise support through coaching, circularity mapping, capacity building, business planning and financing.

6.4.5 Results and Lessons Learned

The exchanges demonstrated that MSME competitiveness requires appropriate technology, technical skills, finance and supportive partnerships.

Circularity was identified as both a challenge and an opportunity, with waste increasingly viewed as a potential resource for creating economic value.

The discussions also reinforced the importance of collaboration among MSMEs, researchers, equipment manufacturers, financial institutions and public authorities in addressing enterprise needs around technology, infrastructure, finance and circularity.

6.4.6 Challenges Noted

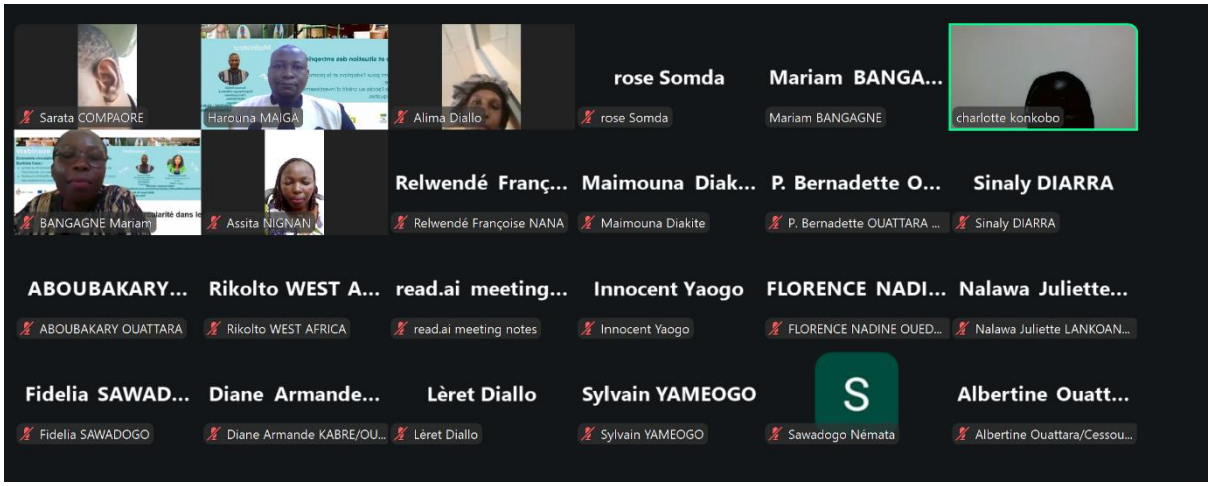
The key challenges identified across the exchanges included:

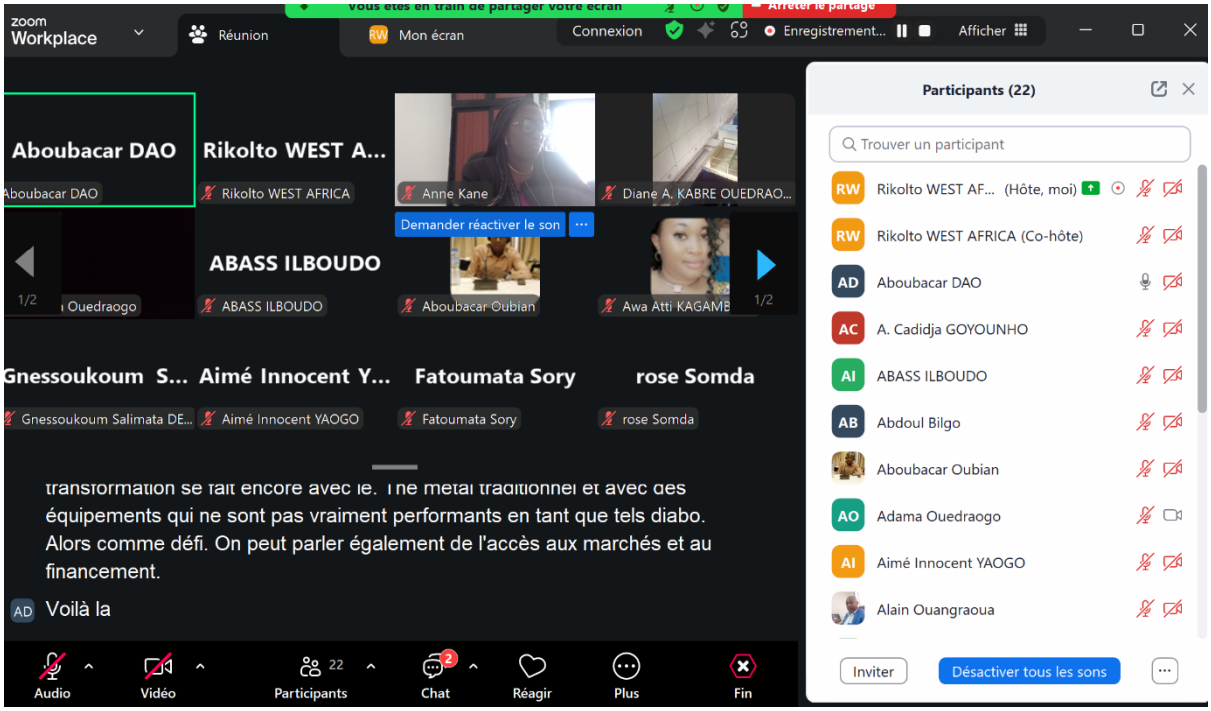
- High cost of imported equipment.
- High energy costs.
- Limited local maintenance capacity.
- Difficulty accessing spare parts.
- Inadequate technical documentation.
- Limited finance.
- Weak business formalization.
- Financial products that do not adequately match circular-business needs.

6.4.7 Recommendations

The sessions recommended strengthening local equipment manufacturing and maintenance, developing local spare parts, improving technical standards and skills, and expanding inclusive and green financing. They also recommended strengthening enterprise formalization and investment readiness, while promoting collaboration among MSMEs, researchers, equipment manufacturers, financial institutions and public authorities.

Participants during the webinar





6.6 In-Person Knowledge Exchange: Mbale, Uganda

Participants during the Mbale in person exchange



Rikolto and SHONA, in partnership with Mbale City Council, hosted the first in-person Technical and Knowledge Exchange among agri-food MSMEs in Mbale City from 3 to 7 August 2026. Unlike the two separate English/French in-person exchanges originally planned for January 2026 (Section 5.2), the event

brought delegations from all five Hub cities together in a single gathering, combining a Technical Exchange Forum, field visits to two host enterprises, reflection and a closing ceremony. Full delivery details are documented in the companion Mbale In-Person Exchange Activity Report; this section summarises the report's findings, including participant feedback, for the purposes of Deliverable D3.7.

6.6.1 Participation

Approximately 60 participants attended the exchange against a planned participation of 60, comprising MSMEs, incubators, city officials and ecosystem partners.
Delegations travelled from all five participating cities:

- Kisumu, Kenya
- Mbale, Uganda
- Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
- Cape Town, South Africa
- Tunis, Tunisia

The programme ran over five days and included delegation arrival and transfer to Mbale, a full-day Technical Exchange Forum, a day of field visits and reflection with a closing ceremony, followed by return travel.

6.6.2 Technical Exchange Forum

The Technical Exchange Forum focused on practical business growth, customer acquisition, market development and access to finance.

Sales Growth and Understanding the Client Base

Discussions focused on sales growth and understanding the client base, including the recurring "cash is king" principle of growing cash-paying customers relative to credit sales.

Customer Acquisition and Networking

Participants discussed customer acquisition through networking, referrals, adverts, local marketing and shared success stories as the major routes of customer acqusition.

Access to Finance

Access to finance discussions covered grants, debt and equity, mapped against different stages of business development. Several participants recognised that what they had initially assumed was a funding challenge was, in practice, a gap in record-keeping and financial management.

Common MSME Challenges discussed

Common challenges identified included:

- Price volatility.
- Transport and logistics costs.
- Weak consumer feedback mechanisms.
- Poor market positioning.
- Packaging constraints.
- Staff turnover following investment in training.

Pictures during inter group discussions







6.6.3 Field Visits

The field visits provided participants with practical exposure to two Mbale-based value-addition enterprises.

ByEffE Foods

ByEffE Foods, engaged in value addition to pumpkins and maize, was presented as a well-organised business built on a network of over 3,500 farmers, grading systems and large-scale processing. Product labelling and traceability were identified as areas for improvement.

Participants during field visit at Byeffe foods






Atari Farms

Atari Farms, engaged in value addition to avocado, operates with 7 staff and 6 products, of which 2 are undergoing certification. The enterprise is linked to roughly 1,500 farmers, although only about 95 currently supply.
The main challenges observed were raw-material quality and rejected-produce losses.

Participants during field visit at Atari Farms




6.6.4 Participant Feedback on the in person exchange

A post-event feedback questionnaire was administered in English and French, generating 31 responses, comprising 26 English and 5 French responses from MSMEs, incubators and delegation members across the participating cities.

Rating	Number of Responses	Share of Respondents
Excellent	20	65%
Very Good	11	35%
Total	**31**	**100%**

All 31 respondents rated their overall experience as **"Very Good" or "Excellent"**, with no rating below this range.

What Went Well

Participants highlighted:

- The quality and relevance of facilitation and technical content.
- Peer-group discussions and cross-city networking.
- The field visits, which were the single most frequently mentioned highlight.
- Overall organisation, venue and hospitality.

Key Takeaways

The main lessons identified by participants included:

- Prioritising cash-paying customers over credit customers, cited by multiple respondents as a leading lesson.
- Strengthening financial record-keeping and financial management as a precondition for accessing funding.
- Recognising the value of cross-city networking and partnerships.
- The importance of business formalisation and certification.

Suggestions for Participants' Home Cities

Participants suggested:

- Holding more regular MSME networking and exchange events locally.
- Improving communication on project implementation status.
- Strengthening institutional support and links to certification and financing structures, particularly noted by Ouagadougou participants.
- Widening participation to reach more SMEs.

Field visits were repeatedly identified as the most impactful element of the programme. Several participants requested a longer exchange and expressed interest in future in-person exchanges being hosted in other AfriFOODlinks cities, including South Africa and Burkina Faso. Overall sentiment was strongly positive, with numerous expressions of gratitude to Rikolto, SHONA and the organising team.

6.6.5 Results and Key Lessons

Approximately 65 MSMEs and ecosystem actors participated in structured knowledge-exchange activities across the five-day programme, gaining practical insights from two live field demonstrations of value-addition models.

The exchange also contributed to the development of new cross-city relationships and business ideas, including interest in intra-Africa cross-border trade and new product concepts such as mixed animal feed and nut-based milk.

Financial management, record-keeping and cash-flow discipline emerged as the most consistent lessons across both the Technical Exchange Forum and field visits. These themes also echoed issues raised in the Kisumu, Cape Town and Mbale virtual exchanges (Sections 6.1–6.3).

Packaging, market positioning and cross-city transport costs remained shared constraints for MSMEs across the participating cities.

6.6.6 Challenges Noted

The exchange highlighted several common constraints affecting MSMEs, including price volatility, transport and logistics costs, weak consumer feedback mechanisms, poor market positioning, packaging constraints and staff turnover after training investment.

The field visits further highlighted product labelling and traceability, raw-material quality and rejected-produce losses as areas requiring attention.

Participants also identified financial record-keeping and financial management as important gaps affecting access to finance. Operational challenges for future exchanges included reliable venue connectivity, sufficient exchange time and interpretation support for mixed Anglophone/Francophone delegations.

6.6.7 Recommendations

The exchange highlighted the importance of strengthening financial management, record-keeping and cash-flow discipline among MSMEs, alongside business formalisation and certification.

Participants also recommended more regular local MSME networking and exchange events, improved communication on project implementation status, and stronger institutional links to certification and financing structures.

For future in-person exchanges, participants expressed interest in longer exchange periods and in having future exchanges hosted in other AfriFOODlinks cities, including South Africa and Burkina Faso.

Continued attention to reliable venue connectivity, sufficient exchange time and interpretation support was also identified as important.

8. General Knowledge Exchange Results and Impact

- The knowledge-exchange programme under Task 3.6 provided a combination of virtual and in-person learning opportunities for agri-food MSMEs, city officials, policymakers, researchers, development actors and other food-system stakeholders across the five Hub cities. The exchanges in Mbale, Kisumu, Cape Town and Ouagadougou created opportunities for participants to share practical experiences, business models, technologies and approaches for improving enterprise competitiveness, sustainability and circularity.
- The exchanges generated opportunities for potential cross-city business collaboration and market linkages. One notable example involved a Cape Town entrepreneur who, with support from Tunisian participants, identified Tunisian products including dates, olive oil and essential oils that could potentially be sourced for her business. This demonstrated the potential of the AfriFOODlinks network to facilitate not only knowledge exchange but also supplier connections, product sourcing and market opportunities. During the Mbale in person exchange, participants also exchanged information on packaging suppliers, products and production methods, providing further opportunities for future collaboration.
- Across the exchanges, a strong focus emerged on circular food business models and practical approaches to reducing waste and creating value from resources. Mbale demonstrated shared
- infrastructure, by-product valorisation and resource-efficient production through Darling Coffee and ByEffE Foods. Kisumu showcased zero-waste approaches in fruit juice, vegetables and spices, including solar drying, preservation and by-product valorisation. Cape Town highlighted food rescue, community-based waste diversion, composting and other value-added applications of waste. Ouagadougou focused on integrating circularity into agri-food enterprises through reducing waste, reusing resources, recovering value and regenerating resources.
- A consistent result across the exchanges was increased recognition that waste can be treated as a potential economic resource rather than solely as a disposal cost. MSMEs demonstrated practical applications including conversion of agricultural and food by-products into animal feed, compost, bio-fertiliser, biodegradable products, bioethanol and other value-added products. The exchanges also highlighted the role of solar drying, energy-efficient equipment, shared production facilities and other appropriate technologies in reducing losses and improving operational efficiency.
- The exchanges further demonstrated that MSME competitiveness is closely linked to access to appropriate technology, technical skills, finance, markets, business development services and supportive partnerships. Participants identified financial management, record-keeping and cash-flow discipline as particularly important for accessing finance and supporting business growth. The Mbale in-person exchange reinforced these lessons through practical field visits, while the virtual exchanges provided opportunities for cross-city peer learning and sharing of enterprise experiences.
- The programme also strengthened cross-city networking and knowledge sharing. Participants from the participating cities exchanged experiences on customer acquisition, market positioning, financing, business formalisation, certification, technology, circularity and value addition. The Mbale in-person exchange generated new cross-city relationships and business ideas, including interest in intra-Africa cross-border trade and new product concepts. The virtual exchanges similarly created technical and knowledge-exchange assets, including recorded webinars and slide decks for further dissemination.
- The exchanges highlighted the importance of food safety, hygiene and traceability when applying circular approaches to food businesses. The Tunis Naama model demonstrated how unsold bread can be safely transformed into value-added products such as cakes and cookies.
- Participants explored alternative market channels, including specialised shops, gyms, direct sales and short supply chains, particularly for MSMEs facing barriers to mainstream supermarkets.
- The exchanges generated practical cross-city business linkages, including a potential sourcing opportunity between a Cape Town entrepreneur and Tunisian businesses for products such as dates, olive oil and essential oils.

- The participation of women-led MSMEs, particularly from Tunis, demonstrated the important role of women entrepreneurs in advancing circular and sustainable food-system solutions.

9. Challenges noted in the exchange programme

Despite the positive results, several common challenges emerged across the city exchanges.

9.1 Access to Finance

Limited access to affordable finance was a recurring challenge across the exchanges. MSMEs identified difficulties accessing appropriate financing, while the discussions also highlighted financial products that do not adequately match circular-business needs. In Mbale, participants recognised that some perceived funding challenges were linked to gaps in financial record-keeping and management.

9.2 Access to Appropriate Technology and Equipment

MSMEs faced challenges related to the cost and availability of appropriate processing equipment and technologies. Ouagadougou highlighted the high cost of imported equipment, high energy costs, limited local maintenance capacity, difficulty accessing spare parts and inadequate technical documentation. Mbale MSMEs also identified low production equipment capacity as a challenge.

9.3 Market and Supply-Chain Constraints

Market-related challenges included weak market linkages, poor market positioning, inconsistent supply, limited consumer feedback mechanisms and transport/logistics costs. Kisumu also highlighted inconsistent fruit supply and losses associated with poor market linkages and storage, while Mbale participants identified packaging constraints and cross-city transport costs as shared challenges.

9.4 Food Loss, Waste and Storage

Food loss and waste remained significant challenges, particularly for perishable produce. Kisumu highlighted losses resulting from poor storage and market linkages, as well as green mould affecting citrus. Limited cold storage was also identified as a challenge within the Kisumu juice ecosystem.

9.5 Business Capacity and Formalisation

The exchanges identified gaps in technical skills, financial management, record-keeping, business formalisation and certification. Staff turnover following training investment was also raised as a challenge in Mbale.

9.6 Coordination and Exchange Delivery

Operational lessons from the in-person exchange included the need for reliable venue connectivity, sufficient exchange time and continued interpretation support for mixed Anglophone/Francophone delegations. Participants also requested longer exchanges and more regular opportunities for MSME networking and peer learning.

9.7 Limited Participation and Reporting Information

The exchanges highlighted the importance of widening participation to reach more SMEs and strengthening dissemination. For the Kisumu webinar, detailed attendance, dissemination reach and quantified outcome figures were still pending completion of the reporting template.

10. Recommendations

Based on the combined lessons from the Mbale, Kisumu, Cape Town and Ouagadougou exchanges, the following practices are recommended to be maintained and reinforced across the remaining exchange cycles:

- Maintain concurrent EN/FR scheduling to maximise cross-city participation within the same time window.
- Use the standard webinar concept template for every exchange to keep objectives, interpretation needs and audience consistent across cities.
- Rely on Task 3.2/3.4 partners and Sharing/Network focal points as the core dissemination channel, supplemented by AfriFOODlinks platforms and social media.

- Use the pre-exchange expectation survey systematically to tailor agendas to participant needs and identify areas of interest for future peer-learning exchanges.
- Continue combining expert presentations with practical enterprise experiences, including case studies, peer discussion, questions and field visits where appropriate.
- Strengthen practical learning on financial management, record-keeping and cash-flow discipline, given their recurring importance for business growth and access to finance.
- Promote appropriate and affordable technologies, including solar drying, energy-efficient equipment, digital tools and shared infrastructure, while strengthening local equipment manufacturing, maintenance and access to spare parts.
- Continue promoting circular business models that reduce waste, reuse resources, recover value and regenerate resources, including the conversion of by-products into animal feed, compost, bio-fertiliser and other value-added products.
- Strengthen market linkages and cross-city networking to support customer acquisition, referrals, partnerships, value-added produce and potential intra-Africa cross-border trade.
- Strengthen institutional links to certification, financing and business-support structures, particularly for MSMEs requiring support with formalisation, quality standards and investment readiness.
- Maintain and strengthen collaboration among MSMEs, researchers, equipment manufacturers, financial institutions, public authorities and ecosystem partners to address shared technology, finance, skills, infrastructure and market challenges.
- For future in-person exchanges, allow sufficient time for knowledge exchange and field learning, while ensuring reliable connectivity and interpretation support for mixed-language delegations.
- Continue documenting participant feedback and exchange outcomes systematically, including attendance, dissemination reach, participant ratings, key takeaways and quantified outcomes, to strengthen evidence of the programme's results and impact.

11. Annexes

1. Annex A -Webinar methodology guide
2. Annex B-. Emerging themes Identification per hub city
3. Annex C - Webinar concept note (e.g. Mbale)
4. Annex D-City Summary recordings for webinars
5. Annex E-Photos for In person MSME exchange in Mbale