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SUCCESS STORY

Senegalese Exporters Reel in Millions

The Hub's assistance leads to multiple orders for fish processing companies in Senegal



Photo: USAID West Africa Trade Hub

Trained processors at La Pirogue Bleue prepare orders for export. The company is expanding its factory and doubling its workforce to handle orders of value-added, sustainably harvested fish and seafood products

“Participation at trade shows, such as the ESE, is vital to our business. We were able to attract new clients who were drawn to the West Africa Trade Hub booth, which represented products from across the region.”

—Mohamed Abd Ali, general manager of La Pirogue Bleue, one of the five Senegalese exhibitors.

Eight months after attending the European Seafood Exposition (ESE) held in Brussels on April 24-26, 2007, Senegalese seafood exporters have reported more than \$6 million in sales from the show, which they attended with assistance from the West Africa Trade Hub. Exports of fresh and frozen, whole and filleted products have been shipped from Senegal to the U.S., Canada, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and the U.K. More shipments are scheduled in 2008.

The Hub paid \$25,000 for the booth space, enabling the exporters, who paid for their own travel and lodging, to attend. Promotional brochures designed and printed by the Hub featured all the Senegalese exhibitors, providing additional company and contact information for visitors. Since then, the Hub has registered producers with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, making it easier for them to export to the U.S.

Mohamed Abd Ali, general manager of La Pirogue Bleue, said the ESE and the resulting orders have galvanized new investment and a new direction at the company: “We have already begun to expand our factory and we plan to double our current number of employees – as well as increase the amount of processing so that we can offer a product that is ‘ready to eat’.”

The Hub encourages West African seafood companies to focus on exporting smaller quantities of value-added products in support of a more sustainable fishing sector in West Africa. At the ESE, the Hub launched the West Africa Sustainable Seafood Development Alliance, which seeks to increase cooperation among local and international organizations, public and private stakeholders to attain a sustainable seafood sector in the region

“We are ready for the American market,” Ali said. “This opportunity, facilitated by the Trade Hub, is a welcome diversification of our markets.”