



STRENGTHENING SENEGAL'S MILLET VALUE CHAIN

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Beneficiary organisation

Free Work Services (Kumba) is a family-owned agricultural processing and commercialisation company based in Dakar. It was founded in 1994 with the aim of promoting the consumption of local food products and contributing to food self-sufficiency in Senegal. The company specialises in grain processing from millet and corn (notably Arraw, Thiacyr, Sankhal and couscous) by using semi-industrial production techniques and machinery. Its **products are marketed under the name of Kumba** through two commercial channels: the European "ethnic food" market, that it reaches through one large food distributor in Europe (80% of revenue) and two own stores in Dakar where it sells a variety of locally produced goods (20% of revenue).

The challenge

In Senegal, **grain value chains are largely informal, and farmers' groups are often dispersed and poorly organised**. As one of the few formal grain processors in the country, Kumba faces challenges in securing sufficient volumes of quality millet for its processing activities, **often relying on traders instead of sourcing directly** from smallholder farmers. To achieve its development objectives, Kumba aims to increase consistent, formal purchases from farmers cooperatives, ensuring higher-quality raw materials and more stable prices for millet smallholder farmers.

The proposed solutions

To support farmer cooperatives in **establishing a reliable and sustainable commercial framework that secures supply** while strengthening their market positioning with Kumba, a set of targeted capacity-building activities has been designed for farmers and cooperatives. These activities are structured around three core areas: agroecological cereal production techniques to **promote sustainable and climate-resilient farming**; commercial contracting for cereals to **better structure and secure transactions**; and improved storage practices to **preserve grain quality** over time. In parallel, Kumba's internal capacity can be strengthened through staff training and the acquisition and deployment of a management system (Odoo 18), improving administrative efficiency and procurement processes.

The expected outcomes of the project were:

- 1 Expansion of the supply base by sourcing from **an additional 500 smallholder farmers**.
- 2 **Enhanced capacity of 800 smallholder farmers** through training in climate-resilient agricultural techniques, agroecological practices, and water-harvesting methods.
- 3 Successful deployment of an **integrated management system**.



PRIORITY TOPICS

Environment and climate change 

Fair agrifood systems 

IMPACT INVESTOR



BENEFICIARY ORGANISATION

Free Work Services (Kumba)

Senegal

NUMBER OF FARMERS REACHED

1,000

AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN

Millet

START DATE

October 2024

END DATE

August 2025

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

€ 21,027

Including € 14,956 (71%)
financed by SSNUP



key results



279

smallholder farmers

Themselves counselors in the 8 supplying cooperatives
Trained on agroecological practices, storage techniques
and commercial contracting



transferring
the acquired knowledge
to an average
of 5 additional
farmers



4

cooperatives added to the supply base

Expanding sourcing from an additional

1,000 smallholder farmers



Commercial linkages established

with contract formalisation pending identified as the next critical step



Internal systems strengthened

✓ Odoo 18 installed

✓ Staff trained



Full adoption in progress



lessons learnt

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✓ Participatory approaches foster ownership

Actively involving cooperatives and smallholder farmers in the design, planning, and implementation of activities significantly strengthens local ownership of the interventions. When producers are engaged as partners, they are more likely to adopt and sustain new practices. This participatory approach also reinforces cohesion within cooperatives, encourages peer-to-peer learning, and positions farmers as knowledge multipliers within their communities.

✓ Timing of interventions matters

The success of capacity-building activities strongly depends on aligning them with the agricultural calendar. This includes both training sessions and the formalisation of commercial agreements. Scheduling interventions in sync with key production periods ensures higher attendance, more immediate application of skills and readiness to commit, which in turn strengthens learning outcomes and adoption. Proper timing also allows farmers to integrate new techniques into their seasonal workflows, maximising both short-term benefits and long-term resilience.

✓ Successful practices can inspire the chain

Successful implementation of new practices can generate interest beyond the initial beneficiaries. In this project, other local aggregators observed the approaches adopted and expressed interest in replicating them. Visible and practical successes pave the way for broader adoption, scaling, and systemic improvements across the value chain.

Outlook

Kumba has made significant progress in formalising its operations, including offering formal contracts to its employees and implementing structured processes across the company. Despite these advances, securing a consistent raw millet supply remains a challenge, partly due to producer reluctance to formalise contracts. As a result, the company cannot yet fully meet demand, and buyers experience delays in receiving deliveries.

Want to know more?

Check out OECD's case study on Kumba

