

**Press release**  
**November 1, 2021**

## **Virtual matchmaking brings suppliers and buyers in textile, garments, and ICT together during West Africa Connect event**

**On November 16 and 17, 2021, West Africa Connect will bring industry representatives from the textile, garments, and ICT service sectors together virtually. With financial support from the European Union (EU), the event will connect more than 100 suppliers from 16 West African countries with buyers from Africa, Europe, and North America.**

West Africa Connect is digital and opens up to many international visitors. During the event, West African suppliers will showcase their unique textile and garments. Attendees will also learn more about the valuable solutions the West African ICT services sector offers.

A physical opening ceremony to the event is planned to take place in Ouagadougou during the morning of November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 with high-level representatives from the region.

Several hundred participants expressed their interest in the online matchmaking platform. All attendees can discover their personal “best matches” among the participants and talk one-on-one with new business contacts on [www.westafricaconnect.com](http://www.westafricaconnect.com).

Apart from business meetings, there will be live webinars and “fireside chats”. These are interactively structured using an integrated chat function. During these talks, experts from the industry such as Jacqueline Shaw and Mark Kwami, will share their knowledge and hold debates and discussions. Also, the world-renowned NellyRodi will share its latest insights. The webinars conducted by these international speakers cover topics such as:

- Exporting textile and garments from West Africa to the world
- The role of digital technologies in building a competitive and sustainable textile and garments value chain in West Africa
- Sustainability: opportunities, challenges, and initiatives in the West African textile and garments industry
- Inclusive development of textile and garments for small and medium-sized companies in West Africa
- Identifying investment opportunities in the textile, apparel, and ICT sectors in West Africa
- The road ahead, including forecasts and scenarios for the West African textile and garments industry

Interested companies can register for the event at [www.westafricaconnect.com](http://www.westafricaconnect.com).



### About the speakers

Jacqueline Shaw helps creative entrepreneurs start and build a sustainable fashion business in Africa. She started Africa Fashion Guide, a sourcing and production consultancy and platform which promotes the full supply chain of the African fashion and textile industry. She is speaking on West Africa Connect about the future of the African textile sector.

Mark Kwami is, among other things, an all-around design and business development consultant. He works as a crafts sector expert for numerous international development organisations such as the European Union, USAID, CBI, and several other organisations. At the event, he will give a talk about how to successfully export from Africa.

Forecasting specialist NellyRodi is a consulting agency for the creative industries. They conduct marketing studies, publish Trendbooks for discovering inspiration, understanding how consumer behaviour evolves, starting a collection or finding an idea for marketing activation, and help companies on topics concerning brands, product offers, and creative strategies. They will share the latest insights on international trends in textile and garments on West Africa Connect.

### About West Africa Connect

West Africa Connect is organised in the framework of the West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP), an European Union-funded initiative, which aims to strengthen the competitiveness of the West Africa region and enhance the integration of ECOWAS Member States and Mauritania into the regional and international trading system.

The WACOMP is led by the ECOWAS Commission, in collaboration with the UEMOA Commission and implemented with the support of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the International Trade Centre (ITC), which are the implementing agencies of the regional component of the WACOMP programme.

Read more about our donors and partners on [www.westafricaconnect.com/our-partners](http://www.westafricaconnect.com/our-partners).

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Note for editors:

For more information, please contact West Africa Connect via [contact@westafricaconnect.com](mailto:contact@westafricaconnect.com).

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