



PAFO-COLEAD INNOVATIONS SERIES:
Innovations and successes of African farmer-led businesses and SMEs

SESSION N°16

Niche marketing strategies for SMEs and smallholder farmers

Tuesday 19 December 2023 – 12:00-14:00 UTC / 13:00-15:00 CET

Online ([Zoom](#))

English-French-Portuguese interpretation available

BIODATA OF THE SPEAKERS

YONAS ALEMU – FOUNDER AND CEO, LOVEGRASS ETHIOPIA, UNITED KINGDOM AND ETHIOPIA

Yonas Alemu is the founder and owner of Lovegrass Agro Processing plc, trading under Lovegrass Ethiopia.



Born in Ethiopia, Yonas spent his childhood in a smallholder farming household in Northern Ethiopia highlands. As the small village he grew up didn't have a high school, he travelled to the capital city Addis Ababa to complete school. As a school graduate he earned two scholarships that enabled him to study at Sofia University, Bulgaria, and in London, United Kingdom, where he finished his master's degree with distinction. Yonas started working in investment banking as a trading risk analyst for BNP Paribas followed by JP Morgan and then at Credit Suisse as Vice President of the Emerging Markets credits trading division.

In 2015 after nearly 2 decades in investment banking, he decided to go back to Ethiopia to start Lovegrass Ethiopia and work with the rural households.



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BOREL ATONFACK – EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, GR.IGPP, CAMEROUN

Borel is an agronomist, project manager and specialist in Protected Geographical Indications (PGI). He is currently Executive Secretary of the Groupement Indication Géographique Protégée Poivre de Penja (GR.IGPP). On a daily basis, he is responsible for promoting and protecting the Poivre de Penja LABEL and the interests of the Poivre de Penja producers who are members of the group. The GR.IGPP currently groups more than 338 producers in the Penja pepper sector in Cameroon. The geographical production area covers 3,000 km, with an estimated annual production capacity of over 600 tonnes of Penja pepper.

ISOLINA BOTO – HEAD OF NETWORKS AND ALLIANCES, COLEAD



Isolina Boto is the Head of Networks and Alliances at COLEAD, a non-profit Association of private sector operators in the agrifood sector active in the EU, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) regions. Isolina has more than 25 years of experience in agricultural development. She started her career with the European Commission and has also worked with various ACP embassies and NGOs in areas related to food security, rural development and trade. Before joining COLEAD, she was the Manager of the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) Brussels Office (2004-2020) implementing policy initiatives related to the ACP-EU cooperation in the field of agricultural and rural development. She has led agribusiness projects in support of capacity development of SMEs, entrepreneurs and farmers organisations across Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

ODILE GNONWIN – FOUNDER AND CEO, NORÉE, BENIN



Odile Kossiba, born in 1992 in Benin, is a passionate entrepreneur. A graduate in General and Territorial Administration, as well as Business Law, she founded the Société de Production et de Transformation des Noix Tigrées (SPTNT) in January 2015. Odile devotes her energy to promoting the "norée" brand, offering tiger nut-based products to promote well-being and fulfilment. Leading a predominantly female team, Odile has launched natural products such as tiger nut flour, cream, milk and oil on the African market. Odile aspires to have a positive impact on her generation and those to come. Her company has been hailed on several occasions as one of the best innovative agri-food businesses in Benin. Odile's ambition is to become Africa's number 1 producer and processor of Tiger Nuts by 2030.

GIDEON KALIMANZIRA – FOUNDER AND CEO, GIPA FOODS & GENERAL SUPPLIES LTD, TANZANIA

Gideon Kalimanzira (Tanzanian) is passionate in agricultural development, food sector, livelihood and agri-business. He is the Founder and CEO at GIPA FOODS & GENERAL SUPPLIES LIMITED situated in the Coastal region of Tanzania, Kibaha area. He has managed to start a viable business of processing and selling cassava starch and animal feeds. He has more than 8 years' experience in Cassava value addition through different projects.



Prior to this, Gideon has successfully worked for different livelihood, food security, economic development, business management, research and agro inputs supply projects with different companies and organisations like OXFAM both in development and humanitarian contexts. He has experience in managing investors and donor-funded projects and businesses.

Gideon holds a bachelor's degree in Economics.

JEREMY KNOPS – DELEGUE GENERAL, COLEAD

Jeremy Knops holds a master's degree in business engineering from the Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management (SBS-EM). Prior to joining COLEAD in 2009, he was involved in Guatemala with the daily operations of a farmers' cooperative exporting loquats to the EU and the US. He started to work for COLEAD as an expert in charge of matters related to private standards and certification for ACP producers and exporters of fruit and vegetables. Jeremy is an accredited coach for leadership and professional development. He has been appointed as General Delegate of COLEAD in June 2019.



DR. BABAFEMI OYEWOLE – CEO, PAFO

Dr. Babafemi Oyewole, the CEO of Pan African Farmers Organization (PAFO), is a tri-sector executive and professional with experiences in the public, private and non-government sectors, and a veteran in the management of international institutions. Prior to his appointment at PAFO, he was the CEO of the African Agribusiness Alliance; former CEO of African Cashew Alliance; former Executive Director/CEO of African Energy Investment Corporation (AEICORP); Deputy Secretary General of the West African Bankers Association (WABA); General Manager, Banque Internationale du Benin, and Senior Economist with the Bank of Industry, Nigeria. He was a Regional Consultant on natural resources management policy in African countries with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). He is a



member of Africa Regional Experts on Policy Dialogue on Natural Resource-based Development at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Dr. Oyewole was a Chevening Scholar for his PhD in development economics at the university of Bradford, United Kingdom, and obtained an MBA in Technology, Marketing and Business

Strategy from Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria. He has attended several management and executive development programmes in top universities including Lagos Business School, Nigeria, and Harvard university, United States. He has published articles in international journals and made conference presentations on development policy, banking and finance, agriculture, agribusiness, and sustainable development issues.

NAZIM SHIVJI – MANAGING DIRECTOR, AMFRI FARMS LTD., UGANDA

Born and raised in Uganda until 1972, Nazimuddin J.A Shivji completed his education in United Kingdom and Canada. He holds a Degree in Commerce and Law from University of British in Colombia (Vancouver, B.C), Canada.

From 1980 to 2010, Nazim worked as a serial entrepreneur, funding fallen angels and or mismanaged entities. Since 2012, he has been Principal and Managing Director of Amfri Farms Limited, also trading as African Organic. The company was registered in 1998 and is specialised in the production, processing and export of fresh, dry and frozen organic fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices using ethical environmentally sustainable and chemical free regenerative agricultural methods.

Amfri farms is currently implementing a project (2022 – 2024) that aims at creating over 6,000 jobs for youths through organic production and export of pineapple, apple banana, passion fruit and gooseberry. The project is supported by Private Sector Fund Uganda and IFAD (United Nations Funded International Fund for Agricultural Development Project). It is expected that each producer operates on plantations as small as 0.5 hectares of fruits with an intercrop for a period of three years.

VIRGINIE TOURE DE BAGLION DE LA DUFFERIE – SOCIÉTÉ GUINÉENNE POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE

Khadiatou Virginie Touré, wife of Baglion de la Dufferie, is Franco-Guinean and, since 2019, the Managing Director of Société Guinéenne pour le Développement Durable (SGDD) with head office is based in Conakry, Guinea. She is also manager of the Dondolikhore Farm in Sanoyah, in the prefecture of Coyah, Guinea.



Virginie went to school in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and Conakry. She studied at the English language faculty in Conakry and did a communications training in Abidjan. A dynamic entrepreneur, she created in 1998 the events communications agency Cosmos Communication. From 2000 to 2003, she organised SIGUIDOMMA, the Music and Fashion Meeting to promote Guinean textiles and models. In 2005, she created another communications agency, DOMA Organisations, in Douala, Cameroon, and worked for four years with banks, insurance companies, hotels etc. In 2010, Virginie moved to Benin with her family, where she created a new Cosmos Communication company. In Cotonou, Benin, she has organised after-work parties, created the Cotonou After Guide, and worked for the Beninese authorities, as well as hotel and banking companies.

On her return to France in 2017, Virginie decided to study a Bachelor in organic farming. In 2019 she set up Société Guinéenne pour le Développement Durable, a company that produces, processes and markets fruit and vegetables on its own site in Guinea.

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