



AFRICAN ECONOMIC RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

BRIEF ON THE REGIONAL POLICY ENGAGEMENT, WEST AFRICA

Radisson Blu Hotel Abidjan Airport, Côte d'Ivoire; 29 May 2025

Theme:

Retail Market Policies for Better Nutrition & Health

The AERC West Africa Regional Policy Engagement is scheduled for Abidjan, Cote de Ivoire on 29 May 2025 to leverage on the AfDB Annual Meetings scheduled for 26-30 May 2025. The policy engagement will bring together high-level policy delegates from the WAEMU countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo), as well as delegates from Nigeria, Cameroon, and Ghana. Participants at the policy engagement will consist of senior policymakers and practitioners from West African countries, researchers and academia including gender experts from AERC network universities, and national think tanks.

The AERC has been implementing the project '*Policy Analysis for Sustainable and Healthy Foods in African Retail Markets (PASHFARM)*' that aimed to rigorously research retail markets for nutritious foods to improve policy development, program design, and health in Africa. The project has been selected to generate policy dialogue around how urban and retail markets can be incentivized to offer affordable, nutritious foods to low-income consumers for better nutrition and health. The dialogue will also include gender productivity gaps in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and gender perspectives on seafood and fruit SMEs. The dialogue aims for a richer integration of retail markets for nutritious foodstuffs into national and west Africa's regional, trade, value chains, and markets including how to address gender issues in SMEs and MSMEs. Participants are expected to identify innovative policies, where disciplines intersect, and cross-sectoral policies and actions where single, linear, and siloed approaches have traditionally dominated. In summary, the forum will discuss and generate perspectives for more impactful policy actions on the convergence of smallholder agriculture, nutrition and health, as well as gender.

The event will feature presentation of six policy briefs, two roundtable policy panels and a "call-to-action" panel featuring a commitment by policy practitioners to formulating and implementing gendered market policies on nutritious foods for better nutrition and health.