SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISES AND ECONOMIES

MARKET SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

EXECUTIVE TRAINING PROGRAMME

21 – 24 SEPTEMBER 2026
MAKENI, SIERRA LEONE

Information Note

International Labour Organization

ITC
International Training Centre

INTRODUCTION

Market Systems Development (MSD) is gaining ground across Africa as a practical approach to inclusive private sector development, job creation and decent work. Government institutions, development partners and implementing agencies are looking for technical guidance and tools to design interventions that move beyond short-term support and tackle the systemic constraints holding back markets and value chains.

Doing this well requires more than individual expertise. Market systems cut across ministries, agencies, donors, financial institutions and private sector actors — and interventions reach scale and last when these actors share a common understanding of how systemic change works. Building that shared language, across institutions and across countries, is what this course sets out to do.

The course is delivered by the International Training Centre of the ILO, drawing on the ILO's global experience applying MSD across a range of country contexts. It is grounded in practice through the ILO's Opportunity Salone Project in Sierra Leone, where MSD approaches have been applied with national agencies, ministries, development partners and financial institutions — offering participants concrete material on what systemic approaches look like when they meet real institutional and market constraints.

The course is hosted in partnership with the Entrepreneurship Training Centre of Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology (EBKUST) in Makeni, Sierra Leone, which works with both university students and SMEs on enterprise development, value chain promotion, youth employment and inclusive business.

It brings together policymakers, practitioners and private sector actors from across Anglophone Africa, creating a cohort where participants learn as much from each other's contexts as from the course content itself.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective is to strengthen the capacity of policymakers, development practitioners and private sector support actors to design, implement and manage Market Systems Development interventions that promote decent work. The course will offer differentiated learning pathways, allowing participants to focus on:

- Policy and regulatory dimensions of MSD (for government actors)
- Operational design and implementation of MSD interventions (for practitioners)
- Specifically, the course aims to:
- Introduce MSD as a strategic approach to private sector development and job creation
- Strengthen understanding of systemic thinking, value chains and market systems
- Equip participants with tools to design, implement and monitor MSD interventions
- Strengthen capacity to develop and support MSD-enabling policies and regulatory frameworks
- Clarify the roles of government, donors, implementing agencies and market actors in MSD
- Explore the role of finance and financial instruments in supporting market systems
- Identify policy and regulatory constraints and opportunities for systemic change
- Promote sustainable and scalable business models in key value chains
- Integrate emerging priorities such as green value chains and climate-resilient business models

KEY FEATURES

LATEST TRENDS

- Learn, unlearn, re-learn: reinterpret pedagogical concepts for the 21st Century classroom

PARTICIPATION

- Take an active role: experience the training cycle through a competency-based approach

INNOVATION

- Do it differently: active learning methods, digital engagement tools, gamified approaches, creative thinking

PROJECT-BASED

- Take it to the next level: demonstrate knowledge and skills in applying core trainer's competencies

PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

The course is designed for senior and mid-career professionals working on private sector development, enterprise support and employment across Anglophone Africa, including:

- Officials from government agencies and ministries responsible for SME development, trade and industry, local content, and employment and labour
- Managers of incubators, business development service providers and enterprise support institutions
- Representatives of financial institutions, microfinance providers and investors
- Staff of development partners, UN agencies and donor-funded programmes
- Technical cooperation project staff and MSD practitioners

CONTENT AND METHODOLOGY

The course takes place over four intensive days at the Entrepreneurship Training Centre of EBK University in Makeni, Sierra Leone.

It is delivered using ITCILO's competency-based and participatory learning approach, which pairs theoretical grounding with immediate practical application. Rather than sitting through lectures, participants work — through case studies, group exercises, simulations and facilitated discussion — and are asked throughout to test what they are learning against the institutional realities they will return to.

The content covers the full MSD project cycle: market systems analysis, intervention design, stakeholder engagement, and strategies for achieving scale and sustainability. Particular attention goes to the distinct roles that government institutions, development partners, financial actors and private sector stakeholders play in facilitating systemic change. Real-life examples and case studies drawn from the region keep the concepts anchored in practical realities rather than abstract models.

Peer learning runs throughout. Participants bring experience from different institutions and different country contexts, and a substantial part of the value comes from working through shared problems alongside people facing them from a different position in the system.

By the end of the four days, each participant will have developed a concrete action plan — individual or institutional — setting out how they intend to apply MSD principles in their own work.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

The cost of participation is **EUR 1,775**, payable in advance by the participant or their sponsoring organization. This covers:

- Tuition fees (EUR 1,305), including use of training facilities and support services, training materials and books
- Accommodation and full board arranged by the Centre, plus emergency medical care and insurance (EUR 470)

International air travel is not included.

Applications should be submitted online at https://oarf2.itcilo.org/SHF/A1519931/en no later than **4 September 2026**.

The completed application form should be accompanied by a commitment letter from the sponsoring institution indicating how the participant will be financed.

After the deadline, the course and selected candidates will be confirmed, and instructions and payment references will be provided.

WITHDRAWAL, CANCELLATION POLICY, AND REFUNDS FOR OPEN COURSES

If an enrolled participant wishes or must withdraw from a course, they may choose to apply to a different course or be substituted by another candidate. The participant must notify the Centre, in writing, of their decision at least 14 days prior to the start date of the course. Cancellation of participation in regular courses will result in the following penalties:

- 14 days or more prior to the start date of the course: No penalty, 100% refund of amount paid less applicable bank charges
- 8 to 13 days prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 50% of course price, refund of residual amount paid (if any) less applicable bank charges
- 7 days or less prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 100% of course price.

INFO

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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COURSE CODE: A1519931