



International  
Trade  
Centre



# A Glimpse of 2025

# FOREWORD

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As we bid farewell to 2025 and look ahead to 2026, we reflect on a year defined by strong partnerships, ecosystem strengthening, evidence-based programming, and enhanced resilience for youth, women, and vulnerable communities across The Gambia. It has been a year of meaningful progress, marked by collective effort and shared commitment, and we are proud of what has been accomplished over the past twelve months. Even more importantly, we enter the new year with clear plans and renewed momentum to build on these achievements.

Working hand in hand with Gambia Government ministries and agencies, the United Nations system, development partners, civil society and business support organizations, and training service providers, we have contributed to tangible advances and inclusive trade in youth employability, livelihoods, and inclusive economic development. 2025 witnessed several milestone initiatives, including the launch of the €9.9 million EU–YEP Tourism and Creative Industries Programme, the roll-out of the Andandorr and SkYE initiatives, and the introduction of the Joint Programme on Localising the SDGs. These were complemented by high-level stakeholder dialogues on regulatory reforms in tourism and the creative industries, the development and validation of a Gender-Responsive Public Procurement Policy, and the formulation of two strategic roadmaps for the tourism and creative sectors.

Our support translated into direct opportunities for people and enterprises. Over 255 youth benefited from skills training scholarships, while 101 youth and women received targeted market access support. Key hospitality facilities were solarised, enhancing sustainability and operational resilience. At the same time, five new tourism products anchored in The Gambia's rich cultural heritage and the River Gambia were designed and ready to be rollout, alongside the planning and design of upgrades for nine tourism and heritage sites. Together, these interventions stand as a beacon of hope and a practical pathway toward inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economic growth.

We are equally mindful that this progress has unfolded against a backdrop of tightening development finance, evolving MSME needs, and increasing external and climate-related shocks. These challenges have only reinforced the relevance of ITC's work; from the smallest villages in the far east of the country to the coastal communities in the west and beyond. Through strategic partnerships, business environment advocacy, standardized tools and frameworks for MSME development, inclusive tourism product design, market-driven solutions, market intelligence, sustainable practices, and digital trade, MSMEs and private sector actors have been better equipped to withstand shocks, adapt, and grow. Our holistic approach uniquely positions us to support enterprises along their full journey—from start-up to growth, scale-up, and internationalization.

In line with the spirit of Delivering as One, we remain firmly committed to accelerating progress toward the SDGs, supporting the implementation of The Gambia's National Development Plan, and ensuring that no one is left behind. Partnerships remain central to this mission. Over the past year, we have further strengthened collaboration with FAO and the ROOTS Project to enhance market access for smallholder farmers, with UNFPA to extend skills scholarships to more vulnerable youth and women, private sector dialogue in partnership with UNFPA and UNICEF and with UNDP to modernise the Farafenni Lumo as a key cross-border trade hub. These partnerships are anchored in a shared vision of inclusive growth, resilience, and local economic transformation. We extend our sincere appreciation to our donors—particularly the European Union—for their steadfast support over the years, as well as to the Peacebuilding Fund, the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund, the Joint SDG Fund, and the Human Security Trust Fund. Their contributions have been instrumental in translating ideas into impact.

Looking ahead, we will continue working closely with our partners and donors to contribute meaningfully to The Gambia's development trajectory. Investments will intensify to enhance tourism products and visitor experiences, upgrade additional tourism and heritage sites, and further build the capacities of youth and women. MSME competitiveness will remain the heartbeat of our support, while new initiatives such as the forthcoming livelihoods and enterprise resilience programme

along the Kotu Stream will provide enterprise development and access to finance to 1,500 vulnerable youth and women. As we step into 2026, we do so with optimism and determination. We look forward to a year that brings renewed success to our collective efforts, accelerates The Gambia's development gains, and contributes to a future where all people—regardless of where they live—can enjoy peace, dignity opportunity, and shared prosperity.

# Key Activities

# Institutional Strengthening



## 1. Human Security Training for Local Authorities

A three-day training for Brikama Area Council Directors, VDC Chairs, and Councillors on the Human Security Model was held under the Joint SDG Fund project in partnership with WFP and GALGA. The programme equips local authorities to plan, budget, and implement inclusive, sustainable, and resilient development strategies at the community level.



## 2. TVET Institutions Strengthened through Training of Trainers

European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries, in collaboration with NAQAA, concluded a five-day Training of Trainers programme. The sessions focused on monitoring, planning, quality assurance, school administration and competency based training. The training improves operational capacity, teaching quality and institutional management in TVET institutions.



### 3. Four-Day Training for Six Cultural Groups

European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries delivered a four-day training programme for six cultural groups. The training focused on stage presence, performance skills, marketing and business formalization.



### 4. Pamela Visits Bakoteh Production and Innovation Center

Executive Director Pamela Coke-Hamilton visited Bakoteh Production and Innovation Center. The center received 10 handlooms for fabric production and more than 30 industrial sewing machines from the European Union through the Youth Empowerment project-Tourism and Creative industries. The center promotes skills development, job creation and supports entrepreneurship.



## 5. UN Deputy Secretary-General Visits Bakoteh Production and Innovation Centre

UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed visited the EU-funded Bakoteh Production and Innovation Centre. She saw firsthand how skills development and innovation are creating jobs and expanding opportunities for young people.



## 6. Farafenni Youth Center inaugurated

With funding from the European Union, ITC, ENABEL and the National Youth Council inaugurated the Farafenni Youth Center which has a multipurpose sports court, guest houses, computer lab, a multipurpose hall, and a GBV safe space.

The facility is meant to provide youth in Farafenni with life skills, recreation and opportunities for employment as well as a safe space to address GBV cases.

# Market Access



## 7. Connecting Local Producers with Hotels

European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries, in partnership with the ROOTS Project, FAO, and Gambia Hotel Association, hosted a B2B matchmaking event at Bakadaji Hotel. Local horticulture producers met hospitality buyers to explore partnerships, secure purchases and strengthen supply chains that promote sustainable sourcing and economic growth in the tourism sector.



## 8. 15 Women Entrepreneurs Exhibit Made-in-Gambia Products

Through ITC SheTrades Hub Gambia, 15 women entrepreneurs in fashion, handicrafts and agro-processed products exhibited at Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara International Conference Centre and Bakadaji Hotel for eight days. The initiative provided a platform to present products, expand networks and promote locally made goods.



## 9. Gambian Entrepreneurs Participate in Africa Food Systems Forum

European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries supported four agri-food processors and one vegetable producer to participate in the Africa Food Systems Forum in Dakar (31 Aug – 5 Sept). Entrepreneurs gained exposure, built networks, and explored international market opportunities to grow their businesses locally and abroad.



## 10. Support for Over 90 Small Businesses at GCCI Trade Fair 2025

European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries and Infrastructure for Peace provided support for more than 90 small businesses to exhibit at GCCI Trade Fair Gambia International 2025. The event enabled entrepreneurs to present products, engage with new customers and build networks that contribute to business growth and income generation.



## 11. The Gambia's Good Market Empowers Small Businesses

In partnership with Gambia Start Up Chamber of Commerce and the Gambia Women's Chamber of Commerce, European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries launched The Gambia's Good Market, a pop-up platform that supports small businesses. The market provides opportunities to sell products, increase visibility and grow networks, contributing to inclusive economic growth and entrepreneurship.



## 12. ITC Supports 30 Women Traders To Boost Trade And Enhance Market Access

As part of our efforts to improve market access for MSMEs, particularly cross-border traders along the Senegambia Bridge corridor, 30 women traders were supported to participate in a pop-up market at Arch 22 in Banjul, organized in partnership with Women Buzz Gambia. The event provided a platform for women in fashion, handicrafts, and textiles to showcase their products, generate significant sales, and establish valuable partnerships with fellow women entrepreneurs from the Greater Banjul Area.



### 13. Mariama Cham Performs at Yaram Festival 2025

Through European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries, the Ministry of Tourism Arts and Culture and NCAC, Mariama Cham performed at the Yaram Festival in the UK. The festival celebrates Senegambian heritage, music, dance, masquerades and crafts. Mariama's participation provides international exposure, promotes Gambian culture and encourages destination marketing for tourism.



### 14. Supporting Women's Community Gardens

We supported six women's community gardens in Foni with infrastructural support. Four gardens received 5,000-litre solar-powered boreholes, while two received chain-link fencing. This support aims to economically empower communities, reduce vulnerabilities, and promote social cohesion.



## 15. President Barrow Tours EU YEP Stalls with EU Ambassador

ITC Gambia Country Representative Yusupha Keita accompanied President H.E. Adama Barrow and EU Ambassador Imma Roca I Cortés on a tour of European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries-funded stalls. More than 90 small businesses exhibited products, engaged with customers and expanded networks to strengthen income opportunities.



## 16. SheTrades Networking Session at GCCI Trade Fair

Together with GCCI and the Network of Women in Trade, SheTrades Gambia Hub hosted a networking session for women-led fashion and craft businesses from The Gambia, Ghana and Nigeria. The session facilitated knowledge sharing, experience exchange, collaboration opportunities and visibility across local and regional markets.

# Skills Development



## 17. 50 Youth Join Tailoring and Garment Apprenticeships

Fifty young people enrolled in tailoring and garment construction apprenticeships at Bakoteh Production and Innovation Centre, Malick Mendy Tailoring, and Ida's Idea through European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries. Through the partnership with MoTAC and MoTIE the programme equips youth with practical skills, mentorship and hands-on experience to improve employability and entrepreneurship prospects in the creative industries.



## 18. 50 Young People enrolled in apprenticeships programmes

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## 19. 85 Youth and Women Receive Hospitality Scholarships at GTHI

European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries in partnership with MoTAC, MoTIE, NAQAA and MoHERST provided 85 scholarships for youth and women at GTHI. Courses included diplomas and certificates in professional cookery, room operations and small-scale food vendor training. The programme improves hospitality skills, employability and service quality in The Gambia's tourism sector.



## 20. 120 Youth Benefit from SkYE Fund TVET Scholarships

Under European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries in partnership with MoTAC, MoTIE, NAQAA and MoHERST 120 youth received scholarships to study hairdressing, beauty, solar and electrical installation, arts and crafts and agricultural engineering. These technical skills improve employability and income opportunities. A total of 2,800 youth will benefit from the SkYE Fund in various skill areas over the project period.



## 21. Capacity Building for 30 Emerging Young Artistes

European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries and the National Center for Arts and Culture trained 30 emerging youth artistes in music production, lyrics writing, social media marketing and monetization. The four-day workshop equips young creatives with skills to earn livelihoods, grow audiences and strengthen the creative economy.



## 22. Training for 50 Women Vegetable Producers on Local Sourcing

European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries trained 50 women vegetable producers and market federation executives on market readiness. The training strengthens linkages with hotels and restaurants and promotes income generation through the production of key vegetables such as onions, tomatoes, honey melon, cauliflower, sweet pepper and courgette.



### 23. 100 Youth from Foni Receive TVET Scholarships

The Infrastructure for Peace project awarded TVET scholarships to 100 youth in Foni. Fifty participants trained in solar installation, 25 in hairdressing and beauty and 25 in plumbing and pipefitting. The initiative improves employability, promotes social cohesion and supports economic empowerment among young Gambians.

# Policy and Business Environment



## 24. Draft Gender-Responsive Public Procurement Policy Reviewed in Banjul

European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries, SheTrades Hub Gambia, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment, and GPPA held a two-day validation workshop to review the draft Gender-Responsive Public Procurement Policy. The policy aims to allocate 30% of government contracts to women-led enterprises



## 25. ITC's Trade and Investment Policy Unit hosts 3 workshops to strengthen The Gambia's tourism and creative industries

The Made in Gambia Initiative workshop seeks to refine strategies to boost local content and national branding. Through MoTIE and MoTAC the regulations workshop aims to tackle intellectual property and sustainable procurement, ensuring fair and green practices. The investment facilitation workshop intends to chart pathways for attracting and promoting investment.

# Events and Partnerships



## 26. Reviving Joking Relationships To Enhance Social Cohesion

Through the Strengthening the National Infrastructure for Peace to Enhance Social Cohesion Project, ITC in partnership with NCAC, NCCE and FARD screened some videos in all 5 districts of Foni on the theme: Reviving Joking Relationships to promote peace and social cohesion.

The screening is aimed at leveraging on the significance of joking relationships in promoting peace within Foni.



## 27. Perreh Bi Fest at Palma Rima Beach

European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries funded Perreh Bi Fest at Palma Rima Beach. The event featured music, sports, and small businesses. It provided opportunities for young entrepreneurs to present products, interact with the public and build networks that support economic activity and tourism.



## 28. Andandorr Programme and SkYE Fund Launched

European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries in partnership with MoTIE and MoTAC launched the Andandorr Programme and SkYE Fund to support youth and MSMEs. The Andandorr Programme benefits 1,500 MSMEs through training, coaching, finance and market support, while the SkYE Fund provides 2,800 youth with employable skills. UNFPA and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation support additional accredited training for 70 youth.



## 29. Strengthening Food Systems in Foni

In partnership with WFP and UNRCO, ITC launched a joint programme to strengthen food systems in Foni. The initiative connects smallholder farmers to the Home-Grown School Feeding programme, improves nutrition, promotes climate-smart agriculture, empowers women and youth and integrates digital tools for inclusive and efficient food supply chains. This initiative is supported by the UN joint SDG funds



### **30. Cultural Night at Trade Fair Gambia International 2025**

European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries hosted Cultural Night at Trade Fair Gambia International 2025. Six groups, Kankurang, Kumpo, Zimba, Fula Acrobatic Dance, Jesseh and Hunting masquerades, performed on one stage. The event promoted culture and supported small businesses.



### **31. Executive Meeting with EU Ambassador Highlights Successes**

Pamela Coke-Hamilton met with EU Ambassador Immaculada Roca i Cortes to discuss achievements under EU-funded ITC initiatives. Both parties reaffirmed commitment to fostering inclusive, competitive and sustainable tourism and creative industries in The Gambia.



## 32. EU Youth Empowerment Project Officially Launched

H.E. President Adama Barrow, Pamela Coke-Hamilton, and EU Ambassador Immaculada Roca i Cortes officially launched European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries. The project, funded by the EU and implemented by ITC, focuses on enhancing competitiveness, inclusiveness and sustainability in The Gambia's tourism and creative industries.



## 33. Janjanbureh Kankurang Festival Celebrates Culture

The three-day Janjanbureh Kankurang Festival, supported by European Union Youth Empowerment Project – Tourism and Creative Industries, featured cultural performances, traditional masquerades and community celebrations. The festival promotes cultural preservation, entertainment and tourism engagement.



### 34. Kora Festival: Celebrating Culture and Promoting Tourism

The Kora, with its 21 strings, is a symbol of history and storytelling. Through the EU Youth Empowerment Project (YEP) Tourism and Creative Industries, in partnership with National Centre for Arts and Culture (NCAC), this iconic instrument was celebrated in Bakau. The event promoted tourism while celebrating culture and creating economic opportunities for the community.



### 35. FARD Festival 4.0

Under the Infrastructure for Peace project, The International Trade Centre supported the Foni Agency for Rural Development to hold its 4th edition of the FARD Festival in Sibenor. The 2-day event brought together people from across Foni and beyond to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Foni while promoting diversity and social cohesion. ITC in partnership with stakeholders, is committed to the promotion of sustainable peace through arts and sports.



# 2025 IN PICTURES

