



PRESS RELEASE
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INVESTISSEURS & PARTENAIRES AND USAID PARTNER TO ACCELERATE SMALL BUSINESSES IN THE SAHEL REGION

The impact investing group Investisseurs & Partenaires (I&P) announces a partnership with the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to launch an innovative acceleration program in Niger, Burkina Faso and Senegal. The alliance aims to bring high potential start-ups and Small Growing Businesses (SGBs) to an “investment ready status”, with the underlying objective of building a sustainable entrepreneurial support ecosystem in these financially underserved countries.

AN ACCELERATION MECHANISM FOR SMALL GROWING BUSINESSES IN THE SAHEL REGION

The Alliance between I&P and USAID is a response to one of the key obstacles facing start-ups and early-stage small and growing businesses (SGBs) in Sub-Saharan Africa: **access to seed finance and investment-readiness services**. In the Sahel region, seed financing mechanisms are non-existent. Most SGBs face high barriers in access to finance. The SGB support ecosystem is very sparse and currently not tooled to make SGBs investment-ready.

The alliance aims to **bridge the gap of investment readiness** for SGBs in the Sahel region with a focus in Niger, Senegal and Burkina Faso. Its main objective is to facilitate access to finance for **52 SGBs in the next three years**. The program will use a combination of seed funding, in the form of small no-interest no-collateral loans, and high-touch coaching by expert investment teams in order to maximize the chances of the SGBs to raise follow-on funding.

USAID’s support will generate a strong leverage effect on African private capital, with the objective to **unlock USD 5.6 million** in equity and debt investments from investors, banks and business angels into early-stage businesses requiring individual investments between 40 000 USD and 400 000 USD.

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN I&P AND USAID

The partnership is coordinated by Investisseurs & Partenaires (I&P), an impact investing group that has a strong footprint and experience in West Africa, and is **implemented by Sinergi Niger, Sinergi Burkina and Teranga Capital, three in-country impact funds sponsored by I&P**. “We have a sound knowledge of the financing challenges for SGBs in the Sahel region and we have a good investment track record. Throughout our investments we have proven that our investment model based on partnerships between international and local financial institutions, business angels as well as corporates has positive development impact.” said Jean-Michel Severino, President of Investisseurs & Partenaires (I&P). Sinergi Niger, [Sinergi Burkina](#) and [Teranga Capital](#) invest in start-ups, early-stage and small growing businesses with a strong growth and impact potential and that have financing needs between 40,000 and 400,000 USD. Together they have already financed 10 SGBs, and thanks to the program they plan to make 20+ new investments in the next 3 years.

The project will support USAID’s development objectives in the target countries by focusing on SGBs with high developmental impact, and in particular by investing in SGBs active in the value chains of agriculture, health, education and essential goods and services.

ABOUT INVESTISSEURS & PARTENAIRES

Investisseurs & Partenaires is an impact investment group dedicated to African Small and Medium Enterprises. Since its creation in 2002, I&P has completed close to 60 investments in 15 African countries and operating in various sectors of activity (health, transport, microfinance...). Its partner companies create local added value and long-term employment, and generate important social, environmental and governance impact.

I&P provides capital, technical and strategic support to meet the growth needs of its portfolio companies. The team develops long term partnerships with entrepreneurs, sharing management expertise and knowledge that is useful for improving business strategy, structuring, and success. I&P gathers three impact funds, IPDEV, IPDEV2 and IPAE, which represent a total of €75 million.

Created by Patrice Hoppenot and headed by Jean-Michel Severino since 2011, the I&P team comprises about thirty collaborators in Paris and in its six African offices in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Ghana, Burkina Faso and Madagascar.

► To learn more about our activities, please visit: www.ietp.com

ABOUT USAID'S PARTNERING TO ACCELERATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP (PACE) PROGRAM

The Partnering to Accelerate Entrepreneurship (PACE) Initiative aims to catalyze private-sector investment into early-stage enterprises and identify innovative models or approaches that help entrepreneurs bridge the pioneer gap – thus unlocking the potential of thousands of promising enterprises around the world.

Working in partnership with over 40 incubators, accelerators, and seed-stage impact investors, USAID's U.S. Global Development Lab has created seventeen public-private partnerships dedicated to testing ways to bridge this gap and foster entrepreneurship. These partnerships are expected to leverage \$100 million in combined public and private investments over their lifetimes. ► <https://www.usaid.gov/PACE>

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