

# How to support the acceleration phase of small businesses in the Sahel region

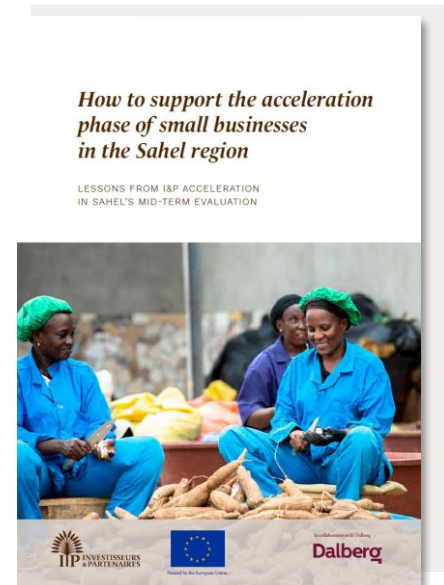
## Lessons from I&P Acceleration in Sahel's evaluation (April 2023)

In collaboration with Dalberg, I&P carried out a mid-term evaluation of I&P Acceleration in Sahel to measure the program's impact and identify its strengths and weaknesses in order to improve its implementation.

 [Download the full evaluation](#)



Funded by the European Union



## Three components of I&P Acceleration in Sahel

Since 2017, Investisseurs & Partenaires has developed I&P Acceleration, a range of activity aimed at financing and supporting small, high-potential companies (start-ups and SMEs) to accelerate their growth, strengthen their structuring, and prepare them for fundraising. To date, I&P Acceleration covers 5 financing and support programs : PACE USAID, I&P Acceleration in Sahel, I&P Acceleration Technologies, I&P Education to Employment and I&P Digital Energy.

Launched in 2019, I&P Acceleration in Sahel targets small businesses and Entrepreneurship Support Structures in the Sahel region to facilitate their development and foster the creation of decent jobs, through three components:



### 1 - Funding

Seed financing through a repayable advance for average amounts of €50 000



### 2 – Technical Assistance

Technical assistance, capacity building and strategic support for companies and investment funds partners



### 3 – Ecosystem Support

*Investment Readiness* training for Entrepreneurial Support Structures

## I&P Acceleration in Sahel: key figures\*

87 companies financed

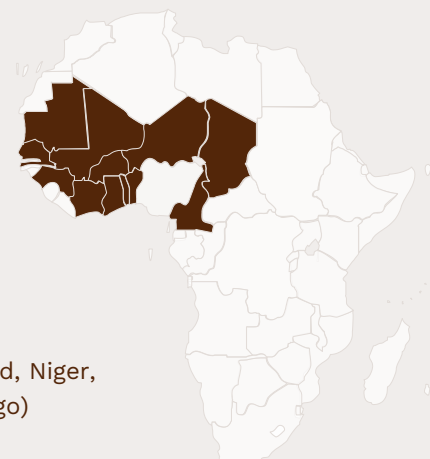
13 targeted countries

221 beneficiary companies

21 entrepreneurial support structures trained to *Investment Readiness*

4,393 jobs created and/or maintained

28 937 people indirectly impacted in Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Chad, Niger, Senegal) and neighbouring countries (Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Togo)



\* Data to December 31, 2022

# ■ Main impacts of support for SMEs in the acceleration phase and of Entrepreneurship Support Structures



## Increase in sales revenue (+59% per year)

On average, the companies financed have a +59% revenue growth rate per year.



## Fundraising support (+61 000€ per company)

54% of companies surveyed were able to raise an average of €61,000 per company, in addition to the €50,000 received through seed financing.



## Company formalization and structuration thanks to technical assistance

Technical assistance enables to implement several structuring tools: strategic committee, dashboard, information and management system, procedures manual, workplace health and safety policy, etc.



## Improving working conditions

60% of SMEs surveyed have improved health and safety conditions for their employees by setting up a management system, raising awareness of safety measures and reinforcing preventive equipment.



## Job creation for women (34% of jobs) and youth (39%)

Recruitments create jobs for women and young people, and strengthens the company's middle management, particularly in finance, sales and marketing, and/or quality management and workplace health and safety.



## Improving environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance

Companies have been able to improve their waste management and recycling systems, introduce procedure manuals, formalize employee contracts and regularize their tax situation.



## Validation of business model

75% of SMEs surveyed have validated or are in the process of validating their business model thanks to market research studies and the implementation of a marketing plan.



## Skills and business model development for entrepreneurship support structures (ESS)

*Investment Readiness* training enables ESS to develop new support tools, explore new ways of strengthening their business model (new sources of revenue) and improve their credibility with investors and funders.



[Download the full evaluation](#)

## About Investisseurs & Partenaires (I&P)

Investisseurs & Partenaires (I&P) is an impact investment group entirely dedicated to African SMEs. Since its creation in 2002, I&P has supported more than 250 SMEs in some 20 African countries, providing long-term financing as well as strategic, managerial and technical support. As a player in impact investment, I&P's mission is to maximize the societal impact of its partner companies, and contribute to dynamic and inclusive growth in Africa.

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