

Fidelity Bank Ghana in partnership with MDF West Africa launched a trade road show focused on training Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The various subject matters covered included international trade payment methods and their associated risks; opportunities available in the international trade business; and understanding the Integrated Customs Management System (ICUMS) new clearing process. This forms part of the Bank's SME-focused measures to enable businesses to adapt swiftly and navigate the global challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative also ties in with the MasterCard Foundation's sponsored MSMEs COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency Program (MCRRP), which aims to support MSMEs to sustainably diversify their business lines and/or enter new markets. The MCRRP has Pyxera Global as the implementing partner for coordination and quality control with MDF West Africa providing digitization, online and virtual resources and other Business Development Services (BDS) support. Other partners of the MCRRP include Scale up Africa, Global Mamas and J. A. Venture Capital Investments. The first session of the roadshow under the theme, **How to Navigate the International Trade Business Landscape in the Midst of COVID-19** was held at the Golden Bean Hotel in Kumasi, Ghana on 26 May 2021.

Opening the training session, Gustav Nii Ayi Mokobi Aryee, Head, Commercial Banking of Fidelity Bank Ghana, said, *“Commercial businesses and MSMEs are a critical segment of our economy, and the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the global supply chain system and by extension, affected international trade where MSMEs mostly operate. However, we are confident that by equipping our partner MSMEs with the relevant know-how and expertise regarding critical developments in the international trade arena, they will be sufficiently armed to strategize effectively and continue to grow their businesses in spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic.”*

Julia W. Anyanewaa Appiah, Project Manager, MDF West Africa Ltd further elaborated on the objectives of the training roadshow. She stated, *“This training session is geared towards increasing the operational capacity of MSMEs, empowering them to continue operating at or even above pre-COVID-19 levels and ensuring that MSMEs maintain or expand employment levels in spite of the pandemic. Ultimately, the goal is to build capacity among participant MSMEs to enable them to become more resilient to current and future shocks or stressors.”* She also informed participants that they will be enrolled on the MCRRP platform so that their companies can enjoy all the benefits of the program

in addition to further training and digitization of their services. A follow up visit will therefore be made to all the MSMEs for further training and support.

In his presentation, Aaron Ameyaw, Head, Corporate and Transactional Banking Operations of Fidelity Bank Ghana, advised MSMEs to close the trade gap by adopting e-channels like the Fidelity Mobile App, Cheque Scanner and Fidelity's Corporate Internet Banking platform. Additionally, he advised MSMEs who are already feeling the pinch of the pandemic to take advantage of interventions such as Fidelity's trade loans to help mitigate the impact of the pandemic on their operations and to assist in expediting their return to buoyancy.

Raymond Amaglo, and Lipton S. Baffour representatives from Ghana Link Network Services Limited, also trained participants on the Integrated Customs Management System (ICUMS) Project. The ICUMS Project is a Government-sponsored initiative where a single service provider has been commissioned to develop and implement an end-to-end automated trade facilitation and customs management system.

Mr. Amaglo briefed participants on the various components and processes of ICUMS and encouraged them to take advantage of the system as it reduces the time and cost of doing business for importers and exporters.

Over 70 MSMEs participated in the maiden training session. Representatives of selected MSMEs who were interviewed after the programme, expressed satisfaction with the session.

Fidelity Bank and MDF West Africa will hold two more training sessions in the ensuing months with a focus on training more MSMEs on international trade and the various digital platforms available to enable them to address the challenges presented by the pandemic.

**-ENDS-**

### **About Fidelity Bank Ghana**

In a little over a decade, Fidelity Bank Ghana has grown from a discount house to a Tier-1 Bank and is now the largest privately-owned Ghanaian Bank in Ghana. The bank currently serves approximately 2 million customers in 75 branches across Ghana and is a leader in the digital banking revolution. The bank has two subsidiaries, Fidelity Asia Bank Limited, which is a wholly owned subsidiary in Malaysia and Fidelity Securities Limited, an asset management firm. In a short period of time, Fidelity Bank has become a household name in Ghana by adopting a customer-centric culture and delivering consistently on the promise of making a difference in the lives of all stakeholders.

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### **About MDF**

MDF West Africa is a Ghanaian registered West African training and consultancy since 2009 and part of the MDF Global Family a global organizations with over 35 years in existence with 6 offices in Africa; supporting entrepreneurs, organizations and networks in (West-)Africa since 2014. We also manage the Ghana Innovation Hub and it's (ongoing) programs since 2018.

**Training:** Our specific goals include improving one's capability, capacity, productivity and performance. With our different approaches to learning, we are committed to bringing out the best in you.

**Consultancy:** We offer the full package of consultancy services: advisory, coaching, facilitation & process consultation, evaluation, project management, interim management and tailor-made training courses. Our experts are highly professional, operating with high integrity and cultural sensitivity. Taking your context and experiences as starting point for further learning and improvement, we are known for our great flexibility and understanding.

At MDF, our world is about people, we believe in ***Empowering people, creating impact.***

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