

A Bright Future: Abobo-Baoulé Community Members Transform A Vision Into A Sustainable Development Reality Plan



A view of the green spaces in the village of Abobo Baoule. Photo Credit: ANSI/Standards Alliance

In the heart of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, there is a village of 4,000 people surrounded by green open spaces, trimmed lush landscapes, a pharmacy, health center, and many other amenities that are not often found in a typical village. It is called Abobo-Baoulé and it's quickly growing to be known as a place where everyone wants to live.

Claude Amondji, the chief of the village, has a vision. He wishes to maintain the positive reputation of Abobo-Baoulé, but also ensure that the village advances on a development path that is sustainable for future generations.

In August 2019 Claude Amondji took part in a one-day awareness building activity in Abidjan. This event showcased best practices for sustainable city planning and urban development as outlined in the international standards (ISO 37101: Sustainable Development in Communities). The training was organized through a USAID initiative, the Standards Alliance, which is executed by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the U.S. Standard Body, with the support of the Ivorian government and experts.

Using the framework learned during the training, village representatives from Abobo-Baoulé started a local committee to develop a five-year sustainable city development plan. The goal was to establish the requirements for a management system focused on sustainable community development.

Men, women, youth, chiefdoms, economic operators, religious leaders, heads of administrative services and other stakeholders in the village were called upon during the planning process. All were invited to imagine the future of Abobo-Baoulé and to identify the paths to follow in efforts to reach planned outcomes.



Members of the chiefdom of Abobo-Baoulé. Photo Credit: ANSI/Standards Alliance

The strategic plan, outlined in accordance with international standards, focuses on sustainable, environmentally friendly, development strategies to improve responsible resource management, social cohesion, and improve the well-being of citizens while strengthening economic development.

Thanks to the initiative, residents of Abobo-Baoulé are now making decisions using a participatory method. This resulted in a strategic plan that reflects the vision of the community and will hopefully lead to greener and cleaner outdoor amusement spaces, road signaling, waste management, etc. Amondji emphasized:

“To govern without a plan is to operate in the dark, one must plan as you go. With this plan, issued from the aspirations of the inhabitants of the village and based on an international standard, the path is paved for harmonious development that takes into account future generations.”

The vision of Abobo-Baoulé elaborated in line with international best practices, will support community-lead and sustainable development in Abobo-Baoulé. It will also strengthen existing social, environmental, and economic pillars within the community.



A group photo of the members of the Abobo-Baoulé council. Photo Credit: ANSI/Standards Alliance

By using the development plan, Abobo-Baoulé serves as an example for Ivorian communities that seek to realize and implement community-led efforts toward self-improvement. This activity also supports the efforts of the Ivorian government to decentralize city planning and bring systematic change in those communities.

ABOUT THE STANDARDS ALLIANCE

The United States Agency for International Development, through the Standards Alliance, a public-private partnership with ANSI, supports the capacity of developing countries in the areas of legal and regulatory framework, standards development, conformity assessment, and private sector engagement. This specific partnership supports more effective and efficient city planning to generate sustainable, community-led initiatives for better living. The resulting infrastructure, health, and economic benefits of these efforts will set the stage to improve city development to meet the international standard (ISO 37101). This pilot exercise is part of the World Trade Organization Technical Barriers to Trade aimed at helping to improve the business environment at the community level, and when replicated country-wide, it will facilitate trade and investment between Cote d'Ivoire and its partners.