

# Advancing Systems Enabling Markets Delivering Impact

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



## What Shaped Inclusive Growth This Month?

March at GENA Consulting was defined by a clear shift from strategy to systems in action. Across agriculture, fisheries, and trade ecosystems, our work focused on one central question:  
How do we make markets work better for everyone?

From digital platform integration in Makueni to export readiness dialogues in Nairobi, the month reflected a growing momentum toward connected systems, empowered enterprises, and inclusive participation.



## FROM STRATEGY TO SOIL: SHOWCASING IMPACT IN MAKUENI

Last month, GENA Consulting joined development partners and the County Government of Makueni for a field visit under the ESH intervention, providing an opportunity to assess progress and strengthen collaboration within the BEEEP programme. The visit brought together partners from the European Union (EU), the British High Commission (FCDO), and the Embassies of the Netherlands and Sweden, reinforcing a shared commitment to inclusive economic growth.

A key highlight was the visit to Iviani Farm, where young agripreneurs are demonstrating strong progress within the mango value chain. Their journey reflects the tangible outcomes of targeted interventions and the growing potential of youth-led agribusiness. The engagement reaffirmed the value of partnerships in translating strategy into visible, on-the-ground impact.



After a series of intensive information-gathering sessions, system requirement engagements, and co-creation workshops, GENA Consulting, as the implementing partner working alongside the Government of Makueni County and TradeMark Africa under the BEEEP programme, successfully achieved the integration of the Kilimo MIS with the iSOKO Africa platform.

## "A Milestone in Building Connected Agricultural Systems."

This milestone reflects a strong commitment to building smarter, more connected agricultural systems that enhance data visibility, streamline market linkages, and improve decision-making across the value chain. Beyond the technical achievement, the integration lays a critical foundation for expanding market access, strengthening farmer participation in global markets, and advancing a more efficient and digitally driven agricultural ecosystem.

# ADVANCING DIGITAL TRADE FOR EXPORT-READY ENTERPRISES

*“Digital platforms are no longer just tools they are the infrastructure through which modern trade happens. If SMEs are to compete globally, they must be fully integrated into these systems.” - Rachel Wangeci*

Last month in Nairobi, GENA Consulting engaged exporters, SMEs, digital platforms, and ecosystem partners in a practical dialogue on digital adoption and export readiness under the WYEEFIMA Programme, convened by the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The session brought together diverse actors across the trade ecosystem to explore how digital solutions are reshaping cross-border trade and enabling more efficient, transparent, and competitive export systems.



Discussions highlighted the growing importance of platforms such as iSOKO Africa in improving market visibility, facilitating structured aggregation, and connecting SMEs to verified buyers across regional and global markets. The engagement reinforced a shared understanding that digitalization is no longer a future consideration, but a present necessity for enterprises seeking to compete and scale in today's trade environment.

# Beyond Celebration: Rewriting the Reality for Women in Trade



“There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish.” – Michelle Obama

March provided a moment not only to celebrate women, but to confront the structural gaps that continue to limit their full participation in economic systems particularly within the fisheries value chain. Through ongoing engagements under the Women and Youth Economic Empowerment in Fisheries (WYEEFIMA) programme by TradeMark Africa, GENA Consulting contributed to critical conversations examining what truly needs to change. A consistent theme emerged: while women are highly active across the value chain, they remain underrepresented in high-value opportunities, particularly in export markets and decision-making spaces. Challenges such as limited access to digital trade systems, unequal pay, and restricted access to finance continue to constrain their potential.

However, the path forward is clear. Advancing women’s economic empowerment requires intentional, system-level interventions—from strengthening digital capabilities and enabling access to export markets, to ensuring fair compensation, expanding leadership opportunities, and building inclusive financial systems. As new opportunities emerge, including areas such as seaweed farming, there is a growing need to ensure women are not only participants, but leaders in these spaces. The conversation is no longer about inclusion in principle, but about designing systems that actively work for women.



## Designing the Future of Fisheries Trade Systems

In March, GENA Consulting contributed to a high-level co-design workshop in Kisumu, bringing together over 50 stakeholders from the Kenya Fisheries Service (KeFS), alongside implementing partner TradeMark Africa and with support from the Mastercard Foundation, to shape the future of fisheries inspection and certification in Kenya. The two-day engagement focused on mapping the current inspection and certification processes and collaboratively designing the requirements for a new digital SPS Inspection and Certification System (SICS)

The workshop highlighted critical systemic challenges including fragmented data systems, manual inspection processes, and certification delays that directly impact market access and competitiveness. Through structured co-design sessions, participants developed a shared vision for a digitised, end-to-end inspection and certification workflow incorporating real-time data capture, risk-based inspection models, QR-enabled traceability, and integrated certification systems. At its core, the initiative represents a significant step toward strengthening compliance, improving efficiency, and unlocking greater access to regional and global markets for Kenya's fisheries sector

*“Digitisation is not just about efficiency - it is about building trust, transparency, and access. When inspection and certification systems work seamlessly, they open the door for small-scale actors to participate meaningfully in regional and global markets. - Rachel Wangeci*