



DECEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER

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About the TFWA Program

The Trade Facilitation West Africa (TFWA) Program is an initiative driven by multiple development partners that aims to improve existing trade facilitation measures in West Africa. The program strives to reduce the time and cost of trade borne by the private sector, especially by improving the movement of goods along selected corridors, and supporting small-scale traders – including women and other key stakeholders – with trade facilitation reforms and programs.

The TFWA Program brings together key development partners, including European Union, USAID, Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and Government of the Federal Republic of

Germany to support countries in the region and regional bodies (the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions) in the implementation of a combination of targeted interventions and measures.

The TFWA Program is managed by the World Bank Group and the German Development Cooperation Agency (GIZ) – the program's implementing partners – with strategic oversight and guidance provided by a Steering Committee, chaired by the ECOWAS Commission and supported by the UEMOA Commission as deputy chair.

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ECOWAS and GIZ Host SIGMAT Mobile Prototype Workshop



The introduction of the ECOWAS Customs Transit Information System (SIGMAT) is a great leap forward for the West African trade community. Once adopted by ECOWAS Member States, the modernized mobile system is set to facilitate the seamless exchange of real-time, electronic/automated cross-border trade data between Customs administrations. Sharing data in real-time should minimize administrative costs to the business community and facilitate quicker and cheaper trade.

ECOWAS, in collaboration with GIZ recently hosted a three-day regional validation workshop in Abidjan to present the prototype of the mobile system to Member States for adoption. Participants included heads of IT and transit procedure experts from the Customs administrations of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, The Gambia, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and Togo, as well as representatives of ECOWAS and GIZ.

The event featured a technical session to evaluate the functionalities, features, and requirements of the prototype. With the aim of adoption across the region, the session also encouraged recommendations for improvement. In the end, the workshop validated the prototype system, which allows the project to move to the next phase with trained developers at ECOWAS. Integration, testing, validation, and presentation will commence in early 2022.

ECOWAS - UEMOA Committee Meet on the Management of the ECOWAS Customs Union



From November 8 to 10, the fourth meeting of the joint ECOWAS - UEMOA committee on the management of the ECOWAS Customs Union was held in Ghana with support from the TFWA Program. Experts from 13 Member States, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (based on the association agreement with ECOWAS), the ECOWAS Commission, and GIZ attended the meetings.

Mr. Benjamin Ayesu-Kwafo, representative of the Ghana Ministry of Finance; Mr. Tei Konzi, the ECOWAS Commissioner of Trade, Customs and Free Movement; and Mrs. Rosemond Ako Asante, representative of GIZ and focal point for the Trade Facilitation West Africa Program opened the meeting. During the two-day session, experts and other key stakeholders reviewed and discussed:

- The status of recommendations made during the third joint ECOWAS-UEMOA committee meeting on the management of the ECOWAS Customs Union; and
- The draft regulation on the Harmonized System (HS) to provide the legal basis for the migration of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) from the 2017 HS to the latest version of the nomenclature.

The HS is a multipurpose international product nomenclature developed and managed by the World Customs Organization under the International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System. In accordance with the five-year review cycle of the HS nomenclature, the next edition of the HS will enter into force on January 1, 2022.



This review process enables the nomenclature to integrate technological advancements, changes in trade patterns, environmental considerations, and other issues of global concern, thereby ensuring the continued relevance of the HS in a fast-changing world. It is also worth noting that an update will enable the Community to streamline its tariff offer under the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.

After careful deliberation of the draft regulation, its impacts, and its relevance to the seamless implementation of the CET in the Community, experts from ECOWAS Member States, and subsequently the Directors General of Customs, validated the regulation.

ECOWAS Directors General of Customs Discuss the ECOWAS Community Levy and ECOWAS Customs Union



On November 11, the sixth meeting of the Directors General (DGs) of Customs of ECOWAS Member States took place to discuss the ECOWAS Community Levy and the consolidation of the ECOWAS Customs Union. Hosted in Ghana, the representatives of the 13 Member States, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (based on the association agreement with ECOWAS), the ECOWAS Commission, the Office of the Auditor General of ECOWAS Institutions, the President of the Community Parliament, and GIZ attended the meeting.

Opening speeches were delivered by Col. Kwadwo Damoah (Rtd), the Commissioner of Customs of the Republic of Ghana; Ms. Katja Lasseur, the Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Ghana; Ms. Alima AHMED, ECOWAS Commissioner of Finance; and Mr. Tei Kozi, the ECOWAS Commissioner of Trade, Customs and Free Movement. During the opening remarks, the ECOWAS Commission, represented by Mr. Kozi, emphasized the importance of the meeting and highlighted the pressing issues relating to the finances of the Community and its Customs union. He also thanked the European Union (EU), the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, and GIZ for their financial and technical support toward the consolidation of the ECOWAS Customs Union.

During the session, the DGs of Customs and other stakeholders reviewed and examined:

- The status of recommendations made during the fifth meeting of DGs;
- The report of the ECOWAS Community Levy;
- The report of the fourth meeting of the joint ECOWAS-UEMOA Committee for the management of the ECOWAS Customs Union;

- The status of implementation of the interconnected system for the management of goods in transit (SIGMAT); and
- The draft texts on the consolidation of the ECOWAS Customs Union.

Following deliberations on the various reports and draft texts, the DGs validated eight documents aimed at the consolidation of the ECOWAS Customs Union:

- Draft Supplementary Act on ECOWAS Community Levy;
- Draft regulation on the definition of the list of categories of goods contained in the ECOWAS Tariff and Statistical Nomenclature based on 2022 version of the Harmonized System nomenclature;
- Draft Supplementary Act on ECOWAS Community Transit;
- Draft regulation relating to the additional modalities for the application and management of decisions, including advance rulings, relating to the implementation of Community Customs regulations;
- Draft regulation relating to the determination of Community regime for Customs duty reliefs in the ECOWAS region;
- Draft regulation on the procedures for the recognition and certification of the origin of products from ECOWAS Member States;
- Draft Regulation on the determination of the components of ex-factory price and the value of non-originating materials; and
- Draft regulation relating to the modalities for the functioning of the ECOWAS community transit guarantee mechanism.

The validated texts and reports were annexed to the meeting report and submitted to the Ministers' of Finance for further validation.

ECOWAS Holds Workshop to Strengthen Customs Administrations through Mirror Data Exchange Across Regional Borders

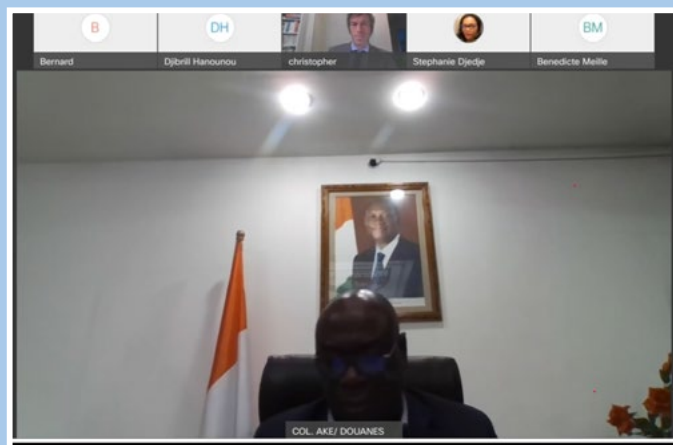
In 2018, ECOWAS Member States (Mss) adopted the Additional Act A/SA.6/12/18 of 22 December 2018, which focuses on mutual assistance and cooperation between the Customs administrations of MSs—covering the collaboration between MSs and the Commission related to Customs matters. To promote and accelerate the implementation of this Additional Act, a Manual of Procedures was reviewed and validated by experts from MSs. In the same vein—and with a firm determination to strengthen cooperation between Customs administrations—the ECOWAS Commission, with funding from the TFWA Program, commissioned a study to operationalize mutual administrative assistance and information exchange, as provided for in the Supplementary Act. The study aims to enable these administrations to combat Customs offenses and transnational organized crime in a concerted and efficient manner while also promoting the liberalization of intra-community trade with the free movement of goods and persons in the area.

To this end, the ECOWAS Commission, in partnership with the TFWA Program, has initiated a pilot experiment in four MSs (Burkina Faso, Côte D'Ivoire, Niger, and Nigeria). These countries were selected for the operationalization of the “cooperation and exchange of information between Customs administrations” component of the Supplementary Act, supported by its Manual of Procedures. This pilot is already taking place in a gradual manner, in different Customs cooperation environments, in order to draw the lessons needed to prepare for deployment at the regional level.

The implementation of the pilot project addresses relevant areas of the Supplementary Act, including:

- Cooperation and information exchange at the cross-border checkpoint, functional office, and Customs headquarters levels;
- Cross-border trade facilitation; and
- Concerted regional action against fraud and cross-border crime.

In October, the Directors General of the Customs administrations of the four selected MSs held a workshop to validate and confirm their commitment to the operationalization of the Additional Act. Subsequently, a priority action plan was drawn up and validated by each MS for the effective implementation of the strategic assistance activities to be implemented at the national or bilateral levels.



One of the proposed activities is the design, development, and operational implementation of a harmonized and standardized mechanism with its practical modalities for the exchange and reconciliation of transactional mirror statistical data at the local level between border offices. With mirror statistics, Customs administrations can address statistical discrepancies and improve their risk analysis and fraud detection. Ideally, the recorded export declarations, from Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, should reflect the recorded import declarations from Burkina Faso to Côte d'Ivoire, but may fail to match in principle.

To accomplish its objectives, a bilateral virtual workshop will be held with the two Customs administrations and TFWA technical teams to align the respective proposals and establish a joint and common specification of the mirror statistics mechanism to be developed and implemented as well as the commencement of the operational implementation between the border offices.

TFWA Program Hosts Panel at WTO Public Forum

On September 3, the TFWA Program hosted a high-level panel discussion at the WTO 2021 Public Forum to explore COVID-19's impact on small-scale traders in West Africa. The session also examined how cross-border trade facilitation and policy reform can foster economic empowerment in the region.

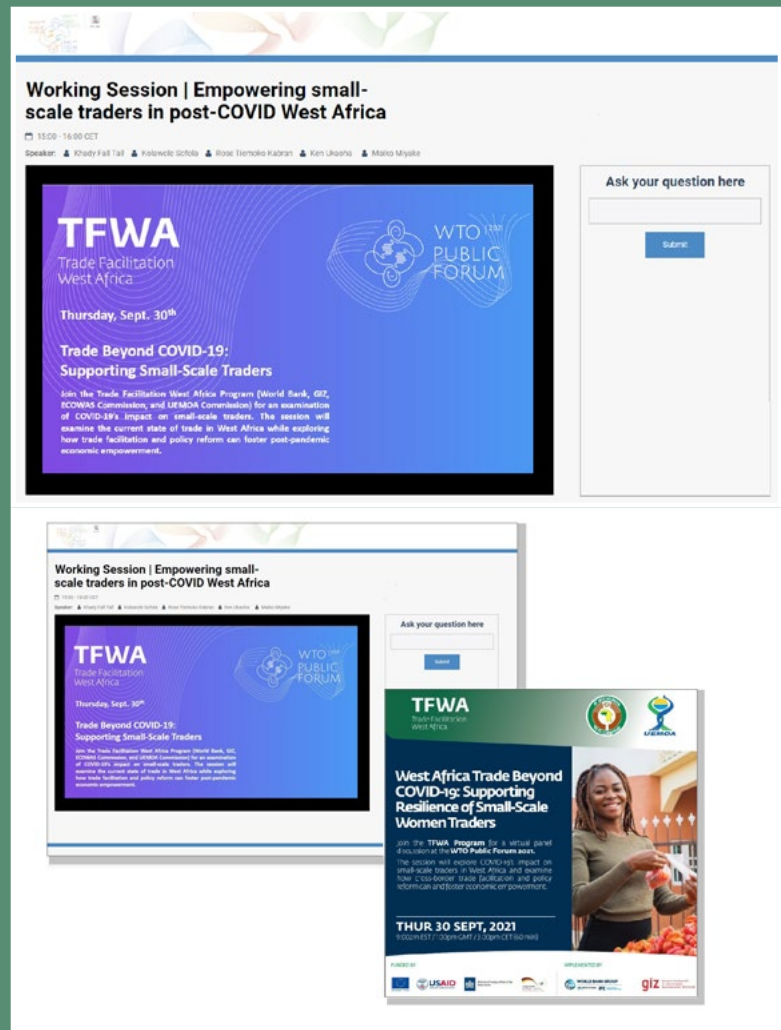
The session was chaired by Maiko Miyake, TFWA Program Manager, who welcomed distinguished panelists, including: Mr. Kola Sofola, Acting Trade Director of ECOWAS; Ms. Rose Tiemoko, Trade Director of UEMOA; Mr. Ken Ukaoha, President of the National Association of Nigerian Traders; and Ms. Khady Fall Tall, President of the West Africa Women's Association.

During the session, Mr. Kola Sofola highlighted the immediate, disruptive impact COVID-19 had on supply chains. Containment measures and border closures caused adverse effects on financial markets, production, consumption, and investor confidence. He stated: "Findings from a recent study conducted through the TFWA Program reveal that, as a result of border closures and mobility restrictions, trade revenues decreased significantly due to a collapse in demand." The study found that 42% of surveyed traders experienced decreased revenues by more than 50%. These decreases were most acutely felt by traders in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Niger.

Later in the discussion, the panelists highlighted the severe consequences of the pandemic on small-scale women traders. The speakers emphasized the need for governments to make concerted efforts to address the issues that affect their business operations—including corruption and harassment—by providing support services and guidance to ease movement across borders.

Dr. Ken Ukaoha added that the border closures slowed down production, increased the costs of goods and transport, and led to a surge in e-commerce. He mentioned that most traders struggled to adjust to this new way of working due to historic challenges, such as poor digital skills and costly broadband services. Despite the barriers, he acknowledged e-commerce's potential as a strategic part of post-COVID trade facilitation in West Africa. After highlighting the benefits of e-commerce to bolster trade, he called on governments to improve digital and trade infrastructure and to build digital capacity for women traders.

The discussion highlighted these and other potential tactics to improve trade and trade facilitation in the region. By highlighting challenges and possible solutions to the issues limiting West African trade, The TFWA Program hopes to create awareness and, ultimately, action. The TFWA Program will continue engaging global stakeholders and shining a light on these important issues.





TFWA Program Provides Customs with Equipment to Operationalize SIGMAT



In September, the TFWA Program provided computer equipment (PCAX8-2), software, and services to Malian Customs to support the operationalization of SIGMAT. A handover ceremony was held at the General Directorate of Customs in Bamako to mark the occasion. High-level stakeholders in attendance included representatives of Customs, the European Union, the World Bank Group, GIZ, and the Technical Unit for Business Climate Reforms.

Following speeches by representatives of GIZ and the Deputy Director General of Malian Customs, the equipment ownership documents were officially handed over to Customs. The equipment was appraised and accepted, starting an important new chapter for trade in and out of Mali.

SIGMAT is a Customs interconnection tool that uses information technology to facilitate trade, transport, and the free movement of goods across the region. The TFWA Program is supporting the SIGMAT rollout and will continue enhancing collaborations between stakeholders in the trade facilitation ecosystem. It also streamlines the movement of goods across various corridors in the region by providing digital, accurate information to Customs offices about cargo in transit from one state to another. The technology allows traders to exchange information with customs and other control agencies electronically. It uses risk-based assessments to limit physical inspections to only a small percentage of shipments, thus reducing customs clearance times.



TFWA Program Supports the Comprehensive Review of SYLVIE Procedures

On September 9, with technical support from the TFWA Program, a validation workshop of the comprehensive review of SYLVIE procedures took place in Ouagadougou. The meeting was chaired by the Managing Director of SOGESY and the Director of Customs Information Systems, representing the Managing Director of Customs. In total, 38 members of the Burkinabe National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC), mainly composed of representatives of the private sector and institutions involved in the issuance of administrative acts for import and export operations, attended the workshop.

The review aimed to conduct a diagnosis of the regulatory and institutional framework of trade. It also strived to identify the main reforms to be implemented for the simplification and dematerialization of external trade procedures in order to reduce the costs and duration of import-export processes.

Over the course of the meeting, participants recommended several key next steps:

- Government support to upgrade the SYLVIE platform into a trade single window;
- Support for the official launch of the SYLVIE-SYDONIA interconnection;
- Strengthened capacity of stakeholders;
- Establishment of e-payment in SYLVIE;
- Development of SYLVIE V2 (taking into consideration the recommendations for the creation of a single window).





Burkinabe Trade and Gender Sub-committee Meets to Promote Inclusive Trade

As part of efforts to improve the enabling trade environment for small-scale, cross-border traders (SSCBTs), including women, the TFWA Program supports National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs). This support aims to systematically apply a gender lens in NTFC operations and effectively implement trade facilitation reforms that reduce transaction costs and promote inclusive economic growth for SSCBTs.

In September, the Burkinabe Trade and Gender sub-committee held its second meeting in Burkina Faso. The meeting was chaired by the Managing Director of Commerce and brought together representatives of the Ministry of Gender, the Association of Women Traders, the Gender Unit of the Ministry of Commerce, and the national police, among others.

The meeting gave participants an opportunity to discuss three key areas:

- The mission and role of the trade and gender sub-committee;
- The findings of the assessment of NTFC capacity needed to integrate a sensitive approach to gender issues in West African countries; and
- The adoption of a roadmap that outlines how the sub-committee will work.

Following this meeting, the TFWA Program will support the launch of training sessions and the development of terms of reference for the implementation of key activities.





SYLVIE - ASYCUDA Interconnection Launches in Burkina Faso

On October 21, after many months of preparation, the SYLVIE - ASYCUDA interconnection was officially launched at the National Customs Commission in Burkina Faso. The event attracted a number of key stakeholders, including: the Managing Director of Customs; the Managing Director of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry; the President of the National Trade Facilitation Committee; representative from IFC; Customs officers; freight forwarders; and importers representing the private sector.

Standing in for the Minister of Economy, Finance and Development, the event was chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry, who expressed appreciation to the TFWA Program and its donors. The Secretary General highlighted the government's continued support of the program and its interventions, which aim to improve existing trade facilitation measures in Burkina Faso.

Delivering the opening remarks, the Managing Director of Customs and the Managing Director of the Chamber of Commerce both acknowledged the launch of the interconnection as a major step toward simplifying import-export procedures for the private sector. In his remarks, the IFC Country Manager commended the TFWA Program's commitment and support in the establishment of an effective single window and encouraged other key actors to continue implementing trade facilitation reforms.

During the event, the Director of Information and Statistics highlighted data showing that the new interconnection provides many benefits, some of which include:

- Simplification of import-export/trade procedures;
- Less time and cost of operations – users no longer need to upload information to both SYLVIE and ASYCUDA platforms; and
- Reduced risks and fraud.

Following the launch, a consultant will be selected to lead the technical design of the SYLVIE upgrade and implement a series of awareness-raising workshops on the SYLVIE – ASYCUDA interconnection for users and other key actors.





Stakeholders in West and Central East Burkina Faso Sensitized on the OCOD to Simplify Customs Operations

On October 26, three workshops were held in Bobo-Dioulasso, Cinkanse, and Ouagadougou to sensitize stakeholders on the establishment of the observatory for the celerity of customs clearance operations (OCOD). Attendees from the three cities include freight forwarders, customs officers, traders and transporters.

The OCOD aims to monitor the speed of customs clearance operations with a view to contribute to the fluidity of traffic—particularly at borders, dry ports, and airports—and to ensure compliance with the commitments made by Customs and the private sector as part of the simplification and improvement of customs clearance operations. Additionally, the OCOD is set to function as a 'watchdog', applying effective monitoring mechanisms to address the challenges users face in customs clearance processes. These challenges include harassment and the cumbersome, delayed clearance of goods. The OCOD should thereby significantly reduce time and costs in clearance procedures.

In the coming weeks, the lead technical committee for the OCOD-BF is set to meet with key representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Mines and submit the draft decree of the establishment of the OCOD-BF to the Minister of Economy, Finance and Development.





TFWA Program Trains Burkinabe NTFC in Inclusive Project Management



On October 27 and 28, the TFWA Program conducted a workshop on Inclusive Project Management for the Burkinabe National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) and its gender sub-committee members. The two-day session took place in Ouagadougou and was facilitated by the TFWA Program's Burkina Faso team. In total, 36 participants—including representatives of the Ministry of Gender and the Permanent Secretariat of the National Council for Gender Promotion (SP-CONAP genre)—attended the training.

The TFWA Program Maturity Model identified the Inclusive Project Management workshop as a priority through an NTFC self-assessment. The TFWA Maturity Model offers an easy-to-use self-assessment tool, which then feeds into the development of fit-for-purpose and results-based NTFC action plans. Based on the results of the self-assessment, the TFWA Program training aimed to begin building the capacities required for the Burkinabe NTFC to efficiently fulfill its mandate.

During the session, participants were put into groups to work on practical exercises based on four modules:

- Introduction to project management in the context of trade facilitation;
- Key principles of inclusion and the trade and gender nexus;
- Key principles of inclusive project management as success factors for trade facilitation; and
- Identification, analysis, and engagement of stakeholders in the project cycle.



In his closing remarks, the Director General of Commerce, representing the NTFC Chairman, thanked the TFWA Program for its excellent support. He also congratulated the NTFC members for their active participation, encouraging them to apply the lessons learned to their trade facilitation activities. Following the session, participants were awarded training certificates to acknowledge their work and to encourage ongoing commitment.



TFWA Program Supports Ghana NTFC in Advancing Trade and Gender Agenda

On November 5, with support from the TFWA Program, Ghana's National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) launched a trade and gender sub-committee. This newly formed committee—the first of its kind in Ghana—will focus on mainstreaming gender into the committee's membership, operations, and trade policy work.

Ghana's Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry, Hon. Nana Ama Dokua Asiamah-Adjei, presided over the launch, calling on NTFC members to develop gender-responsive initiatives to address the negative impacts of current trade policies. Citing findings from the TFWA Program's Small-Scale Cross-Border Trade Survey and Gender Assessment Report, the Deputy Minister reminded participants that women traders face a disproportionate number of challenges—they typically earn less, have less knowledge of trade regulations, and are at higher risk of security threats. Based on the TFWA Program's assessment, she also highlighted the lack of diversity in the Ghanaian NTFC, noting that 73 percent of members are male. While NTFC members have a general understanding of gender as a concept, the sub-committee is an important step toward addressing gender imbalances in the analysis, formulation, and implementation of trade facilitation measures.



Speaking at the launch, TFWA Program focal point Alicia Stephens stated that the sub-committee is expected to create a space to advocate for women traders at the national level. The sub-committee will also strengthen the NTFC's gender institutional capacity and contribute to improving the benefits of trade agreements for all stakeholders, including women. Ms. Stephens pledged that the TFWA Program will continue supporting Ghana's NTFC and its newly established trade and gender sub-committee through an upcoming gender training, which will be held within the broader Inclusive Project Management capacity-building initiative that the TFWA Program offers NTFCs across West Africa.

During this first meeting, sub-committee members agreed to identify all non-tariff barriers specifically affecting women traders. Ultimately, members will propose recommendations to be adopted by Ghanaian customs. The group also agreed to identify several men who will serve as champions of gender issues within Ghana's trade facilitation initiatives.

Ghana is the third country to establish an NTFC gender sub-committee with TFWA Program support. The program has already successfully launched trade and gender sub-committees in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire. Following the latest successful launch in Ghana, the TFWA Program will continue supporting NTFCs and advancing the trade and gender agenda across the region.



TFWA Program Meets with COLEACP on ePhyto Implementation



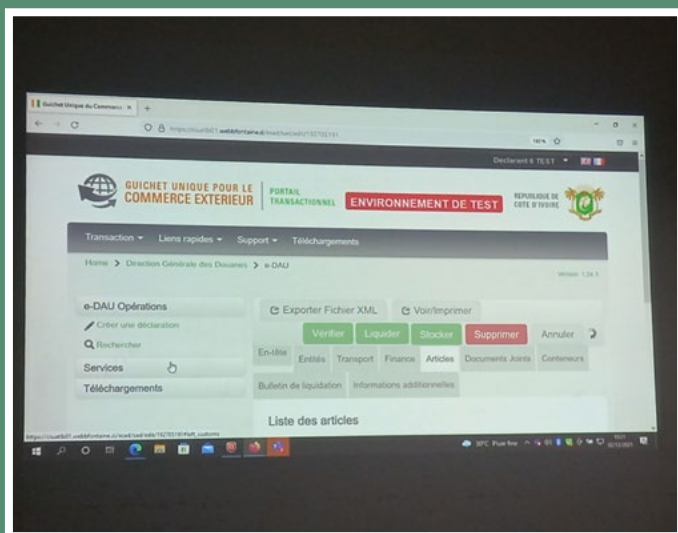
On November 11, a working meeting between the TFWA Program and the Europe-Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Liaison Committee (COLEACP) mission provided an opportunity to present activities related to the implementation of the electronic phytosanitary certificates (ePhyto) solution in Côte d'Ivoire.

The ePhyto solution is an important part of the drive to streamline border processes. ePhyto reduces time for cargo clearance and unnecessary cost burdens in trade. Other benefits include greater time efficiencies in documentation creation and exchange, reduction of time spent on customs clearance processes, and greater collaboration amongst different stakeholders.

Following the agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture and Côte d'Ivoire's single window of trade, the TFWA Program team confirmed that the system will be operationalized in December. This means the system will be in place and in use during the country's mango trade season in March and April. To support the process, COLEACP will link the Ministry of Agriculture with European importers to test ePhyto exchanges.

The TFWA Program supports governments across the region to effectively implement ePhyto solutions while strengthening plant and public health protection.

TFWA Program Holds Validation Workshop on GUCE - CI eRisk Module



In December, the TFWA Program held a one-day workshop at the Ministry of Agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire to validate the Guichet Unique du Commerce Extérieur (GUCE-CI, Côte d'Ivoire's single window platform) eRisk module. The session gathered 11 participants—mainly representatives from the TFWA Program, the Ministry of Agriculture, and GUCE—to test the viability of the module using selected 'high-risk' food products (for example, rice and potatoes). The workshop aimed to build the capacity of selected stakeholders on the module's functionality and use.

The eRisk module is designed to streamline Customs inspection procedures and, as a result, reduce time and costs related to export and import Customs clearance, especially for private operators. Additionally, the module will support the implementation of the electronic phytosanitary certificate, or ePhyto solution. The ePhyto will be fully operational in December. The TFWA Program identified the optimization of risk management for SPS and ePhyto solutions to streamline trade as part of the action plan developed to strengthen the GUCE-CI. This action plan was approved by the government of Côte d'Ivoire after the completion of a risk management diagnostic mission in March 2020.

Once enabled, the eRisk module is expected to cover several areas in identifying and addressing risks:

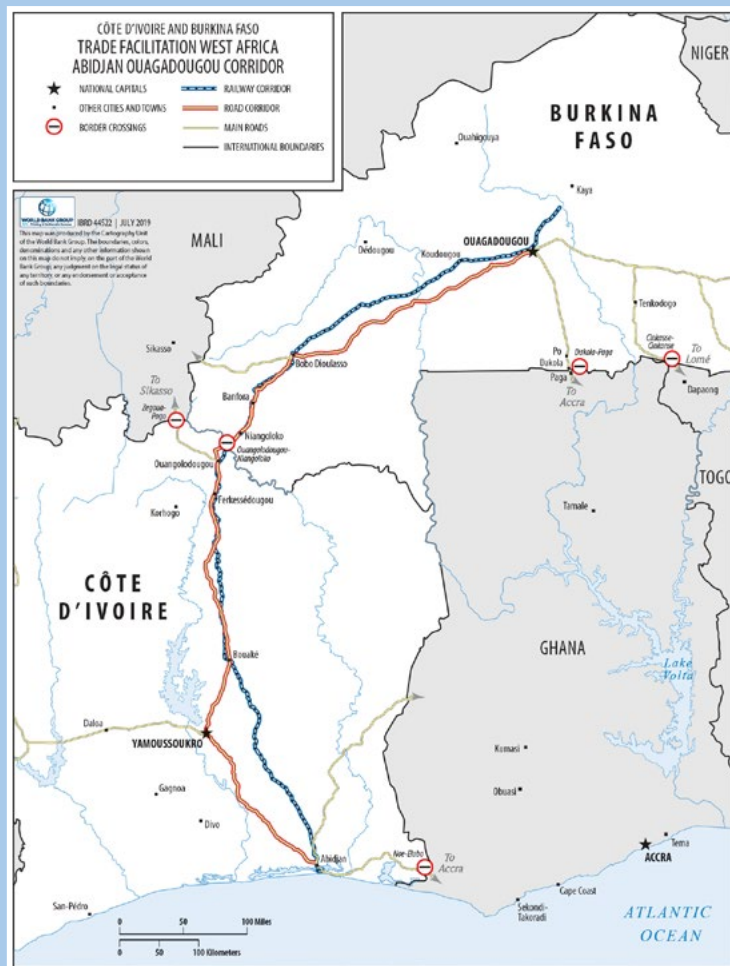
- The codification of risks according to the specificities of the sectors of activity;
- The classification of products according to the risks they present;
- Dematerialization of risk analysis procedures for plants and plant products;
- Sanitary and phytosanitary inspections on priority risks; and
- Anticipation of SPS risk management measures for imported goods by the NPPO.

In the coming weeks, the Ministry of Agriculture, with support from Ivorian Customs, will finalize the list of products to be included on the platform, followed by a second workshop to validate the module and the list in February 2022.

Launch and Scoping Meeting of the Voluntary Compliance Framework Project Held

On December 6, with support from the TFWA Program, the Customs administration in Côte d'Ivoire launched a strategic framework for managing regulatory compliance in the fight against Customs fraud and to provide implementation support for the voluntary compliance of companies. More than 20 members of the Customs administration attended the event, including the General Manager.

The framework aims to create an enabling environment for the eventual full operationalization of a national voluntary compliance scheme. The framework also strives to support the Customs administration with the successful implementation of the new compliance strategy, policies, and standard operating procedures (including sensitization classroom training). At the same time, the framework accounts for on-the-job mentoring of Customs officers, managers, and business entities as well as providing auditing monitoring and evaluation services to support sustainable delivery. These goals support the TFWA Program's overarching vision to make trade easier, faster, and more cost effective in Côte d'Ivoire and across the region.



Learn more about our work to improve the time and cost of trade along the Abidjan-Ouagadougou corridor:

[Download the Abidjan-Ouagadougou Factsheet here](#)

TFWA Program Empowers CSOs/NGOs to Influence Regional Integration Policies



In Senegal, the TFWA Program hosted a three-day workshop to build the capacity of selected civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The workshop targeted organizations that are active in the trade space with the goal of highlighting and advocating for relevant and contemporary issues related to trade facilitation. Findings from a recent study by TFWA Program show that the majority of CSOs/NGOs are connected to networks or federations working at regional and/or international levels. This provides an opportunity for civil society actors to participate in advocacy campaigns and influence national and regional policies. CSOs/NGOs have experience monitoring ECOWAS trade policies and trade agreements and—through active regional participation—can help push the trade and trade facilitation agendas across the region. The TFWA Program aims to foster inclusive advocacy, data, and information dissemination along with multi-stakeholder dialogues.



In his opening address, Dr. Cheikh Tidiane Dieye, Director of the African Centre for Trade, Integration and Development at ENDA-CACID, highlighted the critical role CSOs play in the development and integration processes in the ECOWAS region. He also highlighted the many skills they need to implement advocacy that effectively influences ECOWAS protocols on trade and free movement. Col. Samba Souna Fall of the Senegal National Committee on Trade Facilitation and Adja Coumba Sall Fall from the ECOWAS National Office expressed the importance of strategic engagement by non-state actors in regional trade and integration programmes.



Maiko Miyake, TFWA Program Manager, assured participants of the TFWA Program's commitment to strengthening civil society's advocacy efforts. The TFWA Program will continue to support NGOs and CSOs with a focus on regional coordination and empowerment.