



DECEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

Contents

Regional Updates

ECOWAS NTFC Empowerment Program Rolled Out Across the Region	2
ECOWAS Hosts 4th Meeting of Regional Trade Facilitation Committee	3
NTFC Gender Capacity Building Workshop Held in Nigeria and Benin	4
UEMOA Hosts Regional Meeting of NTFC Heads.....	5

Country-level Updates

Burkina Faso.....	6
Ghana	7
Senegal.....	8
Togo.....	9

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.

FUNDED BY



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands



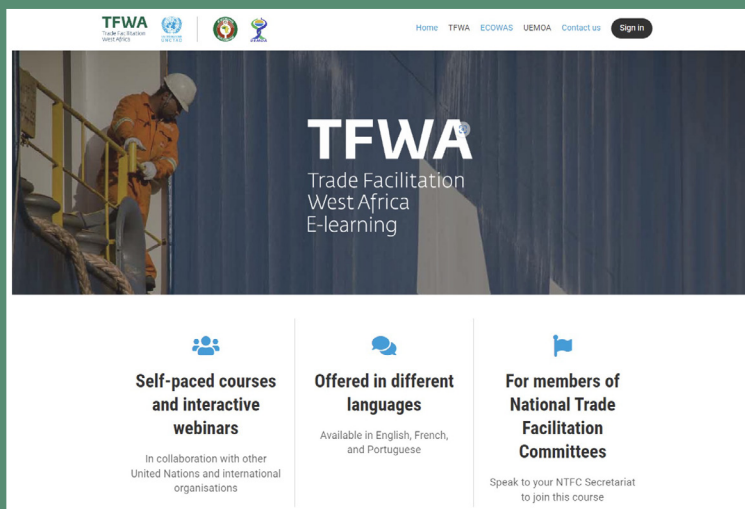
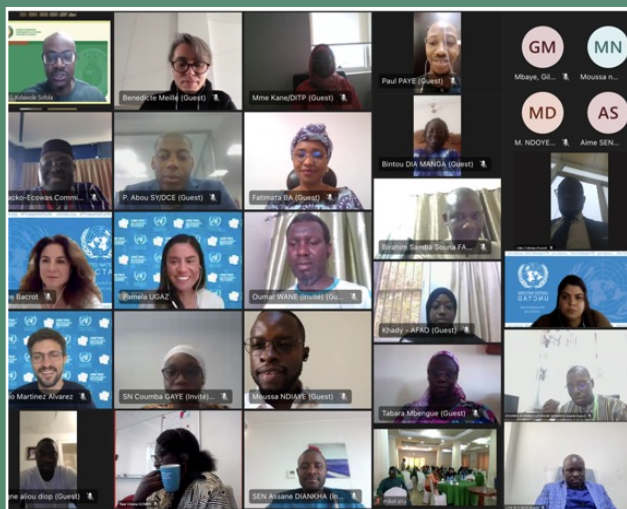
IMPLEMENTED BY



WORLD BANK GROUP
THE WORLD BANK IFC International
Finance Corporation



ECOWAS NTFC Empowerment Program Rolled Out Across the Region



The program was officially launched November 2, 2022 during the 2nd ECOWAS Regional Trade Facilitation Committee (RTFC), and its first phase was successfully concluded in November 2023.

ECOWAS Hosts 4th Meeting of Regional Trade Facilitation Committee



The fourth meeting of the ECOWAS Regional Trade Facilitation Committee (RTFC) was held from November 20 to 22 at the ECOWAS Commission in Abuja. The meeting was well-attended by high-level stakeholders, including: representatives of ministries responsible for trade, customs administrations, transport and national chambers of commerce from 11 ECOWAS Member States, as well as representatives of the Federation of West African Employers' Organization (FOPAO), Federation of Businesswomen and Entrepreneurs (FEBWE), Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FEWACCI), ENDA CACID, the ECOWAS Commission, and other development partners: German Development Agency (GIZ), the World Bank Group (WBG), UNCTAD, and the International Trade Centre (ITC).

Established in 2021, the RTFC serves as a platform to ensure cooperation and coordination between Member States for harmonized implementation of national, regional, and international trade facilitation initiatives. The body plays a key role, under the upcoming Regional Trade and Transport Facilitation Strategy, in ensuring integrated Member State oversight in by-nature intra-regional trade facilitation initiatives in line with the ECOWAS Vision 2050.

The overall objective of the fourth meeting was to review the implementation of trade facilitation reforms within the framework of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and the African Continental Free Trade Area, as well as consider emerging issues related to the free movement of goods in the region.

The meeting also aimed to:

- Validate terms of references for RTFC sub-committees;
- Review progress of key initiatives such as the ECOWAS Online Empowerment Program for NTFCs;
- Discuss strengthening collaboration between trade and transport committees;
- Consider non-trade barriers issues in the region; and
- Adopt the RTFC Annual Work Plan.

The TFWA Program remains committed to supporting ECOWAS and the RTFC in enhancing trade facilitation across the region.

NTFC Gender Capacity Building Workshop Held in Nigeria and Benin



The TFWA Program organized regional training sessions for NTFC and gender sub-committee members on Mainstreaming Gender to Improve Trade Facilitation Outcomes. The training was held from October 16 to 17 in Lagos and brought together more than 40 members from different institutions (57% women, 76% from the public sector, 22% from the private sector, and 2% from civil society) who actively participated in the training. The workshop also took place in Cotonou from October 23 to 24, with 36 participants (47% women, 3 representatives from the private sector, and 1 representative from civil society).

These trainings are part of broader TFWA Program efforts to both empower NTFCs, as well as support the mainstreaming of gender and SSCBT issues into their workings. They thus build on prior steps supported by the program, including the amendment of NTFC decrees (to include gender stakeholders), the establishment of dedicated structures/sub-committees, and the inclusion of SSCBT and gender elements into their roadmaps/action plans. Similar efforts are underway – albeit at different stages of progress – in various TFWA Program countries such as Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Niger, and Senegal, among others.



The objective of the training was to empower NTFC members, including members of their respective gender sub-committees to:

- Understand key gender concepts that underpin gender mainstreaming as it relates to the work of the NTFC;
- Apply best practices to mainstream gender into NTFC operations and policy making;
- Apply stakeholder mapping and analysis (Nigeria Gender Mainstreaming related case study);
- Understand key concepts of gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation in order to prioritize action steps to promote gender sensitive monitoring in their country; and
- Understand and apply techniques of gender responsive budgeting to promote gender equality.

Workshop participants appreciated the information received from the facilitators and from one another. At the end of the sessions, participants in both countries were awarded certificates and made key recommendations:

- Simplify and harmonize border clearance procedures for SSCBTs beyond the ECOWAS ETLS. In that regard, more consultations with a large number of SSCBTs are needed to tailor the simplification to their needs;
- Organize regular capacity building, sensitization, and awareness raising activities for SSCBTs and border officials regarding simplified border declarations; and
- Conduct a mapping of existing cross-border trade data within NTFC institutions in order to design a comprehensive gender disaggregated data collection mechanism to inform inclusive trade policy designs.

UEMOA Hosts Regional Meeting of NTFC Heads



Under the auxiliary agreement concluded with the TFWA Program, the UEMOA Commission organized a regional workshop from October 25 to 26 in Lomé to further strengthen the integration of practices of UEMOA NTFCs. The Commission—having pioneered proactive support for NTFCs over the last decade—continues to facilitate the exchange of practices and tools to support enhanced regional integration through the trade facilitation agenda.

The workshop was attended by 45 key stakeholders, including: 35 in-person participants, 4 experts per Member State (excluding Niger), 2 World Bank executives, 4 representatives of the UEMOA Commission, and 1 representative of the ECOWAS Commission. Member State delegations were composed of experts from the NTFCs and structures in charge of trade facilitation policy in each country.

The regional workshop was a continuation and consolidation of past initiatives organized with the TFWA Program. For example, national workshops were hosted in 2020 and 2021 in seven countries to:

- Support the adoption of the regional maturity model for NTFCs as a tool to support the establishment and strengthening of institutional and consultative capacities for the coordination of trade facilitation reforms;
- Disseminate the findings of the TFWA Program regional field survey on SSCBT and gender conducted along six corridors targeted by the program; and
- Develop recommendations for the systematic integration of gender into regional trade facilitation dialogue, policies, and reforms.

These national workshops enabled high-quality recommendations for the NTFCs and governments on the practical implementation of these studies and tools. The aim is to support effective and inclusive institutional capacities and trade facilitation policies benefiting regional and local economic operators and SSCBT, especially women.

The regional workshop presented and helped consolidate the recommendations of the national workshops held in 2020 and 2021, and further defined practical ways to strengthen the coordination platforms and inclusive NTFC public-private dialogue. Over the course of the sessions, participants explored how to define synergies with existing evaluation mechanisms, agree on a regional framework to support their implementation, and set up sustainable regional monitoring and evaluation arrangements to promote regional convergence of trade facilitation initiatives. A regional framework to support the implementation of these recommendations was adopted and the NTFCs also adopted a new reporting mechanism on their activities benefiting from the UEMOA financial support. This new process will be implemented from March 2024.



Program hosts ePhyto Training



From November 13 to 17, the TFWA Program, with technical support from the IPPC and UNICC, held a training of trainers (ToT) in Ouagadougou on the ePhyto GeNS application. The workshop follows the virtual workshop held for experts from the ministry of agriculture—who are now ePhyto GeNS system administrators—and Burkina Faso's NPPC's efforts to gain access to the IPPC website.

The two-day training focused on the essential role NPPOs play in the implementation of ePhyto GeNS, a web-based system to facilitate the creation of ePhytos. In terms of benefits, the ePhyto GeNS will allow Burkina Faso to better secure its phytosanitary certificates and reduce issuance time and cost.

By the end of the session, participants had a broader understanding of the GeNS application and its functions (from the initiation of the phytosanitary certificate application, to its issuance, with the option of issuing an electronic invoice and payment). Participants also made several recommendations and agreed to next steps:

Major recommendations:

- Encourage participants to become accustomed to the GeNS at their respective workplaces;
- Follow up and support participants (by the experts previously trained on GeNS);
- IPPC to provide participants with links to user manuals for the each training module;
- Extend the training to other GeNS users; and
- Initiate the pilot phase of certificate dematerialization testing with the trained candidates.

Next steps:

- Identify pilot exporters to start the pilot phase;
- Launch test phase with countries already active in e-Phyto; and
- Organize an information and awareness-raising workshop before the launch of e-Phyto Burkina.



ECOWAS Empowers SSCBTs on Rights and Obligations in Ghana



In October, the ECOWAS Commission, with technical assistance from the TFWA Program, held training sessions for traders as part of the the ECOWAS Sensitization and Awareness Campaign Caravan. The training was delivered along the Tema-Ouagadougou Corridor for Tema, Kumasi, Techiman, and Bolgatanga traders. The hybrid sessions were held virtually from October 9 to 23 and in-person from October 16 to 18.

The SSCBT Awareness training focused on improving trader awareness of trader rights and obligations in the context of cross-border trade. The objective was to build trust and improve communication with authorities, ultimately making trade safer, faster, and cheaper for SSCBTs.

Officials from the Ghana Police Service (GPS), Ghana Immigration Service (GIS), Ghana Revenue Authority-Customs Division, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ghana Export Promotion Authority (GEPA), Ghana Shippers Authority (GSA) actively participated in the training sessions. In Techiman, the session took place in the presence of the Queen Mother (of the land of Techiman), a well-regarded royal figure in the community.

The training was an interactive event comprising of several activities, exercises, and role play. This allowed participants to simulate real-life scenarios of interaction between traders and public officials at the borders, highlighting some of the obstacles faced by women traders, including lengthy customs procedures, limited knowledge of border-crossing rules and procedures, and harassment. Participants exchanged experiences (while travelling for business, crossing borders, or shipping goods) and were encouraged to ask questions and participate in discussions with key authorities at the event. Many expressed their appreciation, commended the quality of the training, and requested more, similar training in the future.

In addition to the trainings, the caravan comprised market visits to interact with traders and a meeting with customs officers at Paga border (between Ghana and Burkina Faso).

With the successful completion of the SSCBT awareness training in Togo and now in Ghana, the TFWA Program will continue its support to empower women with the skills/knowledge to trade easier and safer across borders.





Program Mission Advances Work in Senegal



This quarter, the TFWA Program undertook a mission from November 15 to 21 to support the Direction des Enquêtes Douaniers (DED) in its efforts to adopt a risk analysis approach for post-clearance control. The Cellule de Ciblage et de Veille Commerciale (CCVC)—created in 2021 under the DED (with TFWA Program assistance) to support post-control audits and investigations—has helped entrench risk-based methodology at the core of post-clearance control processes.

As a result, risk management is now fully integrated into customs post-clearance controls to support the elaboration of the annual control plan and provide daily technical support to customs officers in charge of audits. Overall, risk management is necessary to detect risky consignments and fraud, protecting both revenues and the security of citizens.

The TFWA Program also supported efforts to foster coordination and the sharing of information between the CCVC and the officers in charge of conducting the audits/post-clearance controls. Nonetheless, systematic feedback to the Cellule regarding inspection results (successful and unsuccessful) still needs to be reinforced to improve the efficiency of the service and the targeting criteria.

The results of DED's commitments and reforms (in terms of risk management and data analysis for the selectivity of files to be audited) were extremely positive. Penalties settled in the first ten months of 2023, on the basis of official findings reports, increased by +86.6% compared with all penalties settled during 2020, at the start of the reform program. Compared to 2021, when the unit was established, a 33% and 10.1% increase was measured compared with 2022. All this is based on the 2021, 2022, and 2023 control plans drawn up during previous technical assistance sessions.

The Deputy Director of Senegal Customs was very pleased with the results and requested regular updates on the progress of the technical assistance. He also asked about the World Bank's technical support post-TFWA. The Program is already in conversations with the WB CMU in Senegal to discuss continuation.

TFWA Program Supports Phytosanitary Oath Ceremony



International trade is a key driver of economic growth and development. Many countries depend on importing and exporting plants and plant products to sustain their economies. Yet trade introduces and spreads plant pests, which can have serious consequences in the recipient country. To manage these pest risks and ensure safe trade, phytosanitary control posts are situated at the country's entry points and are staffed by phytosanitary inspectors. These inspectors control transit conditions of the consignments and verify possible risks, in line with the phytosanitary requirements. This is how plants and plant products are controlled upon import or inspected before export.

To effectively carry out their role, phytosanitary inspectors must be technically and legally qualified. To do this, they are continually equipped to conduct phytosanitary risk analysis during controls and inspections at border crossings. Because the law gives them the power to operate legally—with their activity being recognized as a prerequisite for customs clearance procedures for products subject to this requirement—oaths are required.

Togo's Plant Protection Directorate (DPV) has 45 phytosanitary inspectors located in its 21 phytosanitary control posts. The Ministry of Agriculture of Togo, with technical support from the TFWA Program, organized the swearing-in ceremony for these phytosanitary inspectors. In total, 37 inspectors took the oath in Lomé on October 13, and eight inspectors took the oath in Kara on October 20.



Thanks to the TFWA Program's technical support, Togo has reviewed its national SPS procedures and standards, in line with international SPS standards, to facilitate safe trade and gain access to markets.