



JUNE 2024 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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TFWA Program Hosts Communications Training at ECOWAS RTFC Meeting



In May, the TFWA Program organized a communications training workshop during the ECOWAS Regional Trade Facilitation Committee (RTFC) meeting in Cotonou, Bénin. The workshop aimed to build the knowledge and capacity of RTFC members in communications concepts, principles, tactics, and best practices — all essential tools for their respective NTFCs to develop and operationalize comprehensive communications strategies.

The training is part of the TFWA Program's regional capacity-building efforts to improve NTFC efficiency and sustainability while fostering the regional harmonization of practices among NTFCs in ECOWAS Member States. During the session, participants were introduced to the TFWA Maturity Model, an approach for NTFCs to self-assess institutional and capacity needs and identify ways to improve effectiveness and performance. The training also introduced the ECOWAS Regional Communications Framework for NTFCs. The framework helps NTFC members effectively communicate their activities and initiatives by using innovative outreach and engagement techniques that support trade facilitation measures. Other modules covered during the session include:

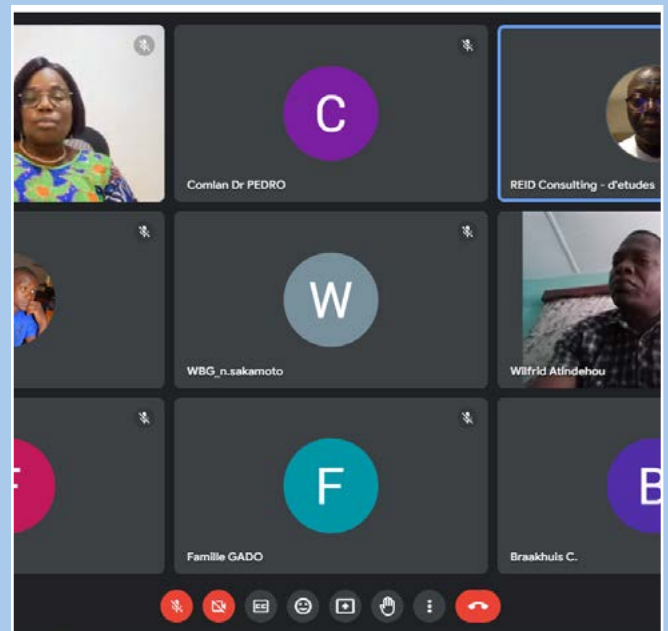
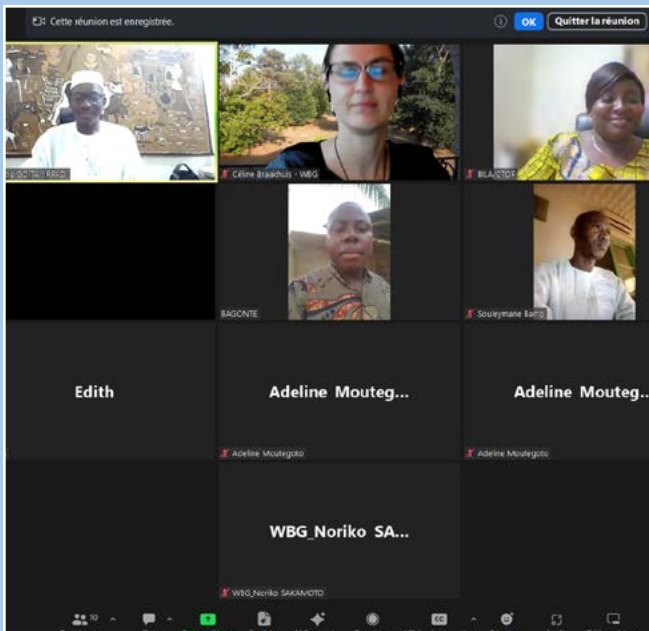


The framework helps NTFC members effectively communicate their activities and initiatives by using innovative outreach and engagement techniques that support trade facilitation measures. Other modules covered during the session include:

- Communications 101: Basics and Planning
- Designing an Awareness Campaign for Leadership Building and Change Setting
- Building an Effective Communication Strategy Framework
- Mastering Key Communication Skills
- Accessing Communication Performance By Key Performance Indicators and Monitoring Tools

The workshop concluded with positive feedback from participants, who greatly appreciated the shared insights and experiences and looked forward to bringing their knowledge back to their home countries.

TFWA Program Launches Group Mentoring Process



In March, the TFWA Program, in collaboration with the African Center for Trade, Integration and Development (ENDA CACID), successfully launched an online group mentoring process in Benin and Togo. With the help of GARED in Togo and PASCiB in Benin, this training built on the advocacy skills consolidation workshops the program held for CSOs earlier this year.

The group mentoring process aimed to guide participating CSOs in developing and implementing advocacy strategies using techniques learned during the earlier advocacy consolidation workshops. The session was facilitated by experienced mentors, who worked closely with participants to explore advocacy planning in more detail and teach them how to design effective and impactful strategies for trade facilitation. CSOs were divided into groups (four groups in Togo and three groups in Benin) and further sub-divided to work on relevant themes for each country:

Togo Themes

- Increasing the TTFC's involvement in reducing road harassment of informal women traders at borders.
- Improving female traders' access to travel documents for easier border crossing with goods.
- Reducing harassment by authorities, especially extortion at the borders.
- Reducing the number of checkpoints on the Lomé-Ouagadougou corridor in Togo.

Benin Themes

- Reducing logistics costs at borders for women trading in agricultural goods.
- Ensuring the security of women and their perishable goods by reducing administrative barriers at borders.
- Reducing the costs required to obtain an identity document for informal women traders to improve their ability to cross borders.

In Togo, mentors supported the mentees throughout the planning phase, which involved researching, analyzing data, setting realistic objectives, selecting target audiences, planning activities and required resources, and drafting advocacy messages. With their mentors' ongoing support, the four groups from Togo are working towards completing an action plan and advocacy messages.

Meanwhile, the mentors provided three sessions to each advocacy group in Benin. During the sessions, mentors facilitated inter-session coordination, provided technical advice on determining viable advocacy issues and objectives, and adapted data collection tools to provide solid evidence in advocating for change. The three groups are currently working on the second half of their advocacy action plan and drafting advocacy messages.

As the final learning activity within the CSO advocacy capacity development process, CSOs will launch their advocacy plans and participate in a multi-stakeholder dialogue.



Program Hosts Capacity-Building and Sustainability Workshop for SSCBTs

The TFWA Program successfully conducted a capacity-building and sustainability workshop for Small-Scale Cross Border Traders (SSCBTs) in partnership with the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) of Côte d'Ivoire.

Held on June 6-7 and hosted by the Côte d'Ivoire Chamber of Commerce, an NTFC member, the workshop built on the SSCBT training methodology developed by the TFWA Program to sensitize these traders on rules, regulations, trader rights, and obligations. Tested and refined in Togo, the methodology combines technical trade content with behavioral content – such as proactivity, self-confidence, communication, and conflict resolution – to ensure small-scale traders, especially women, have the soft skills needed to apply the acquired technical trade knowledge.

The workshop was held in Abidjan and aimed to familiarize NTFC members with the training needs and preferences of SSCBT associations in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as to incite the adaptation and assimilation of the training in-country.

More specifically, the workshop strived to:

1. Sensitize key public and private stakeholders from the trade sector, as well as potential local training providers and SSCBT associations, on the content and methodology of the training.
2. Convince these stakeholders of the relevance and need for the training among the SSCBT community.
3. Engage a dialogue to identify potential local training providers to assimilate and deliver the training post-TFWA Program.

The two-day training included 27 participants comprised of:

- Key TFWA Program partners;
- Border authority and other key member representatives of the National Trade Facilitation Committee;
- Potential local training providers who could assimilate and deliver the SSCBT training; and
- SSCBTs and SSCBT association leaders.

The workshop reconfirmed the relevance and need for the training modules. The strong representation of institutions involved in cross-border trade in Côte d'Ivoire not only enabled a broad appreciation of the training content, but also gave an encouraging picture of the breadth of organizations capable of providing this training locally. Discussions also touched on possible replication in Côte d'Ivoire, including beyond the lifetime of the TFWA Program.

A number of potential constraints to the adoption of the training were identified, notably funding for both training of trainers and eventual training rollout, as well as the need to precisely define the profile of SSCBT targeted/eligible. In addition, participating organizations raised the need to build similar capacity among public officials, in parallel to SSCBTs.

This workshop is the first in a series of capacity-building events to be held by TFWA Program in Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Niger. These trainings aim to establish a dialogue with potential local training providers to assimilate and deliver the training post-TFWA Program, as well as to identify potential challenges and constraints to implementation.





TFWA Program Advances SPS Planning and Validation

In the agriculture trade sector, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures increase food safety while also protecting human, animal, and plant health. Investing in SPS capacity contributes to agricultural productivity, trade and economic growth, and poverty reduction.

Against this backdrop, the TFWA Program organized a validation workshop in June, gathering more than 60 public and private sector participants, including the Advisor to the President of the Republic and a representative of the Minister of Agriculture. By gathering these key stakeholders, the TFWA Program aimed to support the formulation of a strategic plan to define Togo's SPS priorities.

The session built on progress realized over the past several years. With TFWA Program support, Togo has made significant improvements in policy coherence and strengthened efforts to build SPS capacity and actively engage SPS expertise. The country is also focusing on improving infrastructure and facilities, such as the laboratories at the Togolese Institute of Agronomical Research (ITRA), to advance the analysis of agricultural and food products to support the effective implementation of SPS measures.

During the session, participants discussed and validated several vital texts and frameworks to implement SPS measures and facilitate safe trade:

- National SPS policy document, including the strategic framework and logical framework;
- Five-year action plan;
- Bill implementing SPS measures in Togo;
- Overall strategic diagnosis of ITRA laboratories;
- Strategic development plan for ITRA laboratories; and
- Draft decree to create a National Food Security and Development Laboratory.

At the end of the session, participants recognized that the training was an important step in advancing SPS measures. The TFWA Program will continue to provide technical support to the relevant Togolese authorities as they make progress in ensuring that SPS reforms deliver measurable improvements for the country.





TFWA Program Supports Senegal Customs to Streamline Risk Management

Since 2020, the TFWA Program has provided technical assistance to the Senegalese General Directorate of Customs (Direction Générale des Douanes, or DGD) to modernize and adopt an integrated customs risk management strategy based on data analysis. The approach has helped authorities reduce fraud, improve safety, increase security, and advance the operational efficiency of customs, creating an overall positive effect on trade flows.

In May, the TFWA Program supported a mission in Dakar to continue supporting this work. During the mission, the Deputy Director of the DGD and the Director of the Customs Investigations Department (Direction des Enquêtes Douanières, or DED) expressed appreciation for the TFWA Program's contributions to implementing risk management for post-clearance controls. Thanks to the program's ongoing support, Senegal customs has adopted an "ecosystem" for post-clearance controls that is based on data and risk analysis. With the control plans successfully developed and adopted, contentious revenues (duties and taxes + fines) liquidated during the 2023 fiscal year increased by 29% compared to 2022, 56% compared to 2021 and to 119% compared with 2020. The contentious revenues recovered on the basis of procès-verbaux followed a similar increase since 2020. In the first ten months of 2023 alone, customs saw a 151% increase in contentious revenues liquidated on the basis of procès-verbaux.



These commendable efforts also foster digitalization, transparency, and coordination within customs departments responsible for control. This ultimately decreases the time and cost of post-clearance audits for low-risk consignments by allowing customs to focus on high-risk shipments. Regarding sustainability, the Senegal Customs Administration established a functional unit with dedicated staff trained to administer the risk-based post-clearance system (centered on an Annual Control Plan).

As next steps, the TFWA Program hopes to finalize the transfer of data analysis skills to the CCVC, which involves revising and finalizing the 2025 Control Plan (for the CCVC to fully assume its role of steering the DGD's risk management strategy for post-clearance controls). Additionally, the Deputy Director, DGD, Director, DED, and a WBG delegation (including Senegal's Lead Economist) discussed continuity plans after the closure of the TFWA Program. To show their appreciation, a customs representative presented a gift to the WBG delegation at the end of the meeting.