



## MARCH 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 CSO Advocacy Skills Consolidation and Practice Sessions



At the end of January, the TFWA Program organized training sessions for CSOs in Lomé, bringing together 24 CSO representatives, half of whom were women. In Cotonou, the team hosted a workshop in early February that reached 18 CSO representatives. In both countries, top-ranking officials from the government and the ECOWAS Commission attended the workshops.



These sessions form part of the second phase of the program's "Enhancing the Voice of Citizens in Trade Facilitation Policy Dialogue" initiative. The workshops were implemented in collaboration with the African Center for Trade, Integration and Development (ENDA CACID) and other local partners, including GARED (Togo) and PASCiB (Benin).

The training aimed to support CSOs to:

- Consolidate and apply the skills and knowledge learned in phase one, including using effective advocacy actions to develop advocacy strategies for trade facilitation.
- Reinforce communication, influence, and persuasion skills, and practice writing advocacy messages for trade facilitation.

In Togo, Mr. Batchassi Katchali, Director of Foreign Trade and President of the Technical Trade Facilitation Committee, and Mr. Banjai Barros, the ECOWAS Resident Representative, underscored the importance of CSO actions in advancing trade facilitation. They also stressed the relevance of the TFWA Program on both the national and regional levels.

In Benin, Mr. Eustache Pomalegni, Representative of the Minister of Industry and Trade and NTFC Focal Point, Mr. Amadou Diongue, ECOWAS Resident Representative in Benin, and Mr. Emmanuel Akakpo, Economic Expert of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, participated in the training.

During the opening remarks, stakeholders were reminded of the institutional framework for the implementation of the TFWA Program. The program also highlighted the current ECOWAS crisis that threatens the free movement of people and goods and the relevance of CSO advocacy efforts within the crisis.

Throughout the workshops, participants demonstrated the knowledge and techniques learned and, most importantly, showed enthusiasm for applying those lessons to their work. As the next steps, a series of group mentoring sessions will be provided to support participating CSOs in developing and rolling out the advocacy strategies.



## TFWA Program Holds Risk Management & Customs Intelligence Analysis Workshop



From January 29 to February 2, the TFWA Program supported a workshop for customs agents on risk management and customs intelligence analysis. Held both online and in Bamako, the two-day session attracted 30 (in-person) and 3 (virtual) participants from the Malian Customs administration. Mr. Takouo Tai Jules, Ivorian Customs Administrator and WCO Certified Master Trainer, facilitated the in-person session with virtual support from Denis Berger, SYDONIA Expert, Bernard Touboul, TFWA Consultant and Customs Specialist, and Sidikou Salihou Mamadou, TFWA Program Consultant.

The workshop forms part of the TFWA Program's ongoing activities to improve customs' efficiency in risk evaluation and mitigation. The TFWA Program already successfully completed a risk analysis and management (RAM) strategy diagnosis in February 2023, a RAM strategy for the Malian Customs Administration in March 2023, and an operational diagnosis of the customs' RAM operational processes and procedures in August 2023.

During the sessions, experts highlighted the importance of using tools for risk management and intelligence analysis in day-to-day customs activities to facilitate trade and optimize the performance of Mali's customs department. By the end of the workshop, several recommendations emerged:

- Build a pool of national experts and trainers in risk management and intelligence analysis;
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- Make customs officials aware of institutional and individual training opportunities (online modules via the WCO's CLiKC platform and the Customs Learning and Knowledge Community);
- Update the profiles of agents in charge of risk management and intelligence analysis and;
- Establish a formal framework for exchanging and sharing information related to customs seizures and findings within the a priori and a posteriori control services.

Other recommendations from the diagnostic report include building capacity within the customs administration that aligns with sustainable RAM's objectives. This support must be structured around a human resources management model and based on best practices in recruitment, mobility, training, and skills development.

Overall, the workshop was very well received. Malian Customs commended the quality of the session, both in terms of the relevance of the modules and the expertise of the facilitators. As part of the regional cooperation between the Mali and Ivorian customs administrations, the director general of Malian Customs sent a letter of appreciation to the director general of Ivorian Customs, thanking him for the successful workshop.

The next stage of the TFWA Program's RAM technical assistance to Mali Customs will focus on building the post-clearance inspection capacity of about thirty customs inspectors.



# TFWA Program Hosts Phytosanitary Risk Analysis Training



To prevent the entry and spread of pests, countries should identify potential pest risks and propose phytosanitary measures to mitigate these risks. Phytosanitary risk analysis (PRA) is a science-based process used to assess risks posed by pests and identify options to manage those risks.

Against this backdrop, the TFWA Program is supporting the government of Togo in its efforts to strengthen sanitary and phytosanitary procedures and establish a team to conduct a risk analysis. Specifically, the support focuses on Togo's compliance with the international regulations decreed by the International Plant Protection Convention. To ensure the government is equipped to perform the job, the TFWA Program organized a capacity-building workshop from February 26 to March 1 in Kpalimé, Togo.

The five-day session gathered 34 participants from several key agencies and institutions, including the Universities of Lomé and Kara, Togolese Institute of Agronomic Research, Institute of Consulting and Technical Support, Directorate of Plant Protection, Directorate of Agricultural Seeds and Plants, Directorate of Plant Sectors, Directorate of Livestock, Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture (DPA), Togolese Standardization Agency, National Institute of Hygiene, Directorate of the Environment, Regional Directorate of Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development of Plateaux-Ouest, Association of Professional Processors and Exporters of Vegetables and Fruits, and Togolese Consumers Association.

During the workshop, participants learned the methodological bases of the PRA and developed two draft orders:

1. Establishing the creation, composition, and operation of the PRA National Committee of Experts; and
2. Appointing members to the PRA National Committee of Experts.

The workshop significantly contributed to a broader understanding of the PRA. At the end of the sessions, the participants called on the Togolese Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development to accelerate the process of adopting the draft texts.



## TFWA Program Hosts Border Management Workshop in Cinkansé

In March, the TFWA Program, with support from the Transport GP and Togo's PIUs, held a workshop for border management agencies and logistics operators from Togo and Burkina Faso. The workshop attracted more than 50 participants, who reviewed a diagnostic of the Cinkansé border, which is located along the Lomé-Ouagadougou corridor, one of the program's priority corridors. The Cinkansé border connects Togo and Burkina Faso and is an important entry point between the two countries.

In support of the TFWA Program's efforts to improve border management, the workshop aimed to review and finalize the diagnostic of the Cinkansé border. The finalized report includes a detailed roadmap to improve border-crossing formalities, which will reduce border-crossing time and facilitate faster trade along the corridor. Across the region, trade barriers along corridors and at borders result in procedural delays and long transit times, which continue to raise transaction and logistics costs and negatively impact trade flows. Addressing these challenges can help corridor performance, advance trade facilitation, and increase trade competitiveness. The diagnostic plays an essential step in improving border management at this important trade point.

