



NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2019

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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.

FUNDED BY



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands



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Planning session outlines authorized economic operator and regional operator program

In July 2019, a working session brought together the ECOWAS Commission and a team of experts from the World Customs Organization's Regional Office for Capacity Building for the West and Central Africa Region (BRRC/WCA). The session – held in Abuja – focused on the development and implementation of a regional operator program and an authorized economic operator for customs simplifications, security, and safety in the ECOWAS region. Developing a regional framework will facilitate the implementation of the customs code by member state customs administrations. In turn, these efforts will reduce border crossing costs and delays, improve company competitiveness, increase intra-regional trade, and improve the economic development of states in the region. In addition, the program will harmonise various forms of private sector partnerships developed within ECOWAS member states.

Specifically, the program strives to:

- Contribute to supply chain security and support the fight against insecurity in the sub-region;
- Improve regional economic competitiveness, in general, and business competitiveness, in particular; and
- Strengthen ECOWAS customs administration capacity in trade facilitation at the regional and international levels.

Based on the defined program objectives, activities will be identified and a timetable for their implementation proposed. As a next step, a logical and performance measurement framework and a draft budget covering the program will be proposed.



Second technical committee meeting advances TFWA Program objectives

The second meeting of the TFWA Program Technical Committee took place in Ouagadougou on July 9 and 10, 2019. Technical Committee meetings, which take place twice per year, bring together TFWA regional organizations, development partners, and implementing agencies to review and advance program objectives. The primary role and responsibility of Technical Committee members is to provide inputs to the program and to prepare recommendations for the Steering Committee, which convenes at least once per year.

Over the course of the two-day session, the TFWA Program's implementers – GIZ and the World Bank – gave presentations on a variety of program-related topics, including completed activities. The group worked through each of the program's three components, discussing achievements and challenges to date with the wider group.

Among other topics, the meetings also provided a platform to discuss program-wide communications and the program's results framework. On the final day, the group did a deep dive into selected issues impacting trade corridors in West Africa and also took an in-depth look at program-implemented small-scale trade surveys.

Master trainer workshop on World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement for SME's underway



The ECOWAS Commission – in partnership with the International Trade Centre (ITC) and TFWA – held a master trainer workshop on the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement for small and medium enterprises in English-speaking countries and Cabo Verde in June 2019. The initiative harnesses the train-the-trainer (TOT) methodology to drive trade facilitation skills development at the local level.

The objective of the workshops was to equip representatives from the national Chambers of Commerce and Industry with the technical and innovative teaching tools necessary to deliver private sector trainings to businesses at the local level. At the end of the workshops, the master trainers were able to:

- Understand key teaching techniques to ensure efficient knowledge transfer.
- Facilitate discussions with participants and guide them through exercises and case studies; and
- Deliver the ITC private sector training module on their own.

Following these training sessions, each master trainer will conduct two national workshops in their respective country, spreading lessons learned to wider audiences.

In October 2018, the first Master Trainer Workshop was held for French-speaking countries and Guinea Bissau. As a result of the workshop, the Master Trainers had delivered over ten national workshops for over 250 participants.

Regional consultation meeting focuses on tariff concessions for the African Continental Free Trade Agreement

On June 19-20, 2019, a regional consultation meeting was held in Abuja to harmonize the ECOWAS schedule of tariff concessions within the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) framework. One customs officer and one trade negotiator represented each member state in the meeting, which brought together stakeholders to discuss and develop a common ECOWAS member state position for tariff concession. Once agreed, the position will be submitted to the African Union.

The ECOWAS member states in attendance recognized that although validating the List of Tariff Concessions for Trade in Goods was commenced, the process would be finalized during the preparatory meetings for the 12th Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union on the AfCFTA. This would enable member states that have not yet submitted their contributions or proposals to do so. In addition to moving the position for tariff concessions forward, the meeting also paid special tribute to His Excellency M. Issoufou Mahamadou, President of Republic of Niger, for his outstanding facilitation and for championing the AfCFTA's realization. Overall, the meeting signaled progress and can serve as an example of regional collaboration, which is fundamental to the TFWA Program.

Interdepartmental Trade Facilitation Committee meets to co-ordinate trade facilitation activities

The second meeting of the Interdepartmental Trade Facilitation Committee was held on May 24, 2019. This committee – charged with coordinating all trade facilitation activities undertaken by the commission – brought together key directorates including: Trade, Customs, Free Movement of Persons, Transport, Private Sector, Communications, Gender, and External Relations. Led by the ECOWAS Commission, GIZ and the World Bank Group also participated in the meeting.

Additionally, the ITC and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization were present. At the meeting, the committee discussed trade facilitation interventions and best practices from the region and from across the globe. Specifically, the meeting discussed the modalities for setting up a regional trade facilitation committee, and outlined regional Trade Facilitation Agreement implementation strategy development techniques.

The committee recommended that existing trade facilitation initiatives – such as the Joint Border Program and the related operational manual – are expanded in certain areas (such as informal trade initiatives). The committee also recommended that relevant directorates improve planning and coordination of trade facilitation-related activities, especially within the context of budget preparation. Additionally, the meeting highlighted the need for all directorates to continue to share relevant trade facilitation policies and strategies, ensuring a holistic approach for the implementation of related initiatives.

Pilot field survey sheds light on cross-border trade and gender

In April 2019, a pilot field survey was conducted along the Dakar-Bamako corridor as part of the preliminary analytics being conducted under the TFWA Program. Focused on cross-border trade and gender, the survey was designed to generate empirical evidence, helping address the principal trade facilitation challenges affecting small-scale traders along the corridor, especially women.

Specifically, the research aimed to explore

- i) the extent and importance of non-recorded cross-border trade due to small-scale transactions;
- (ii) the situation for small-scale traders and any impediments to their activities at border crossings;
- (iii) the treatment of women traders at border posts and any gender-specific constraints they face; and
- (iv) the institutional framework and support that exists for small-scale border operators.

With this in mind, researchers from Ipsos Nigeria carried out the Dakar-Bamako pilot study in four markets along the Senegal/Mali border. Separate quantitative questionnaires on small-scale, cross-border trade and gender were administered to officials and to three different target groups of traders and service providers (porters, transporters, and intermediaries). In total, 506 people responded to the survey, which was complemented by findings from four qualitative focus group discussions (with 68 total participants), key informant interviews (with 34 stakeholder representatives), and imagery analysis.

Shedding light on cross-border trade along the corridor, respondents across all groups identify safety, infrastructural improvements, access to finance, and awareness raising as major priorities. Based on these respondent priorities, four areas were identified for support by the TFWA Program: raising awareness and improving behavior, simplifying procedures and increasing their transparency, upgrading infrastructure with a view to enhancing security, and improving access to information, finance, and markets. Ultimately, the outcomes of this regional field survey will inform the TFWA Program's activities, notably those supporting the development and implementation of regional trade facilitation measures, as well as those activities aimed at improving selected corridors. The Dakar-Bamako corridor survey is the first in a series of TFWA Program surveys, which will eventually cover all six of the program's priority corridors. The pilot results generated a number of lessons and observations, which will guide the survey as it is rolled out to the remaining five TFWA Program corridors.



Pilot Site, Kidira (Dakar - Bamako Corridor), A&B: Pilot Interview.

C: Porter, D: Border Cross, E: Truck Park



Capacity building workshop on trade policy held in Abuja

The ECOWAS Trade Directorate and GIZ experts joined the Capacity Building Workshop on Stakeholders Engagement on African Trade Policies and ECOWAS Regional Trade Policy Dialogue Forum, which took place in Abuja in late April. The four-day workshop is a continental African Union initiative – to which GIZ, through the TFWA Program, provides technical and organizational support – aimed to train and build capacity with ECOWAS Member States and with regional economic communities, focusing on stakeholder engagement around trade and trade-related policies. Additionally, the workshop covered trade policy formulation, negotiation, and implementation.

Technical areas of discussion included:

- (i) operationalizing regional and national trade policy dialogue platforms;
- (ii) effectively engaging private sector, academic, and civil society organizations around regional and continental trade policy processes; and
- (iii) strengthening the culture of inclusiveness while promoting dialogue within ECOWAS and the African Union.

COUNTRY-LEVEL UPDATES



Cabo Verde



ECOWAS trade policy sensitization workshop engages stakeholders in Cabo Verde

The ECOWAS Commission, with support from TFWA, organized a three-day sensitization workshop in Cabo Verde from June 4 to 6, 2019. The workshop aimed to create awareness on ECOWAS and international trade-related policies and protocols, contributing to their effective and efficient implementation.

In total, 65 people took part in the workshops, including representatives from the Cabo Verde Chambers of Commerce and 40 participants from the private sector. During the three-day sensitization workshop, participants discussed the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme, the benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement, the private sector's role in trade-related policies and protocols, and the ECOWAS customs code.

The first day of the workshop targeted private sector actors, while the second and third days targeted national customs officers. Overall, the workshop served as an important platform for regional stakeholders to come together and advance the trade facilitation agenda.

COUNTRY-LEVEL UPDATES



Guinea-Bissau



ECOWAS trade policy sensitization workshop targets the private sector and customs authority

A two-day sensitization workshop took place in Guinea-Bissau on April 29 and 30, 2019. As a collaboration between the Chambers of Commerce and the Guinea-Bissau Customs Authority, the workshop aimed to create awareness of ECOWAS regional trade and other trade-related policies.

This included shedding light on the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement, the African Continental Trade Agreement, and the ECOWAS customs code, contributing to their effective and efficient implementation. The workshop also strived to provide access to information on regional and continental trade policies for the private sector and for customs authorities.

The event was chaired by the director of ECOWAS Customs Union and Taxation Directorate, with 67 private sector representatives in attendance. On the second day – which focused on the new customs code – 25 customs officers attended the event. Following this successful session, the TFWA Program is planning additional sensitization workshops as part of the TFWA Program's regional implementation.

COUNTRY-LEVEL UPDATES



Nigeria



Organization of Women in International Trade meets in Lagos

In collaboration with TFWA and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Nigerian Chapter of the Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT) organized a one-and-a-half-day sensitization meeting in Lagos on June 27 and 28, 2019. A representative of the Federal Ministry of Industry and Trade and Investment chaired the event, highlighting the importance of the meeting and sessions.

During the sessions, presenters outlined and discussed the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement, private sector rights, African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) advantages in Nigeria, and the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme.

In addition to these topics, DFID delivered a session to guide exporters on the required steps, as well as the Nigerian agencies available to facilitate and finance international trade. By the end of the meeting, OWIT members supported the need for Nigeria to sign the AfCFTA agreement. OWIT's Nigerian branch was formed in 2018 and this meeting served as an important opportunity to engage the newly established group.