



## SEPTEMBER 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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# ECOWAS Commission Launches Electronic Certificate of Origin (e-CoO)



The ECOWAS Commission recently launched the electronic certificate of origin (e-CoO), which aims to streamline procedures, boost confidence in certificate authenticity, and expedite customs clearance, ultimately fostering economic growth and regional integration. Launched with support from partners like the TFWA Program, the e-CoO is a significant achievement for the region and a definitive step toward simplifying and enhancing trade in West Africa.

The e-CoO, which forms the bedrock of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), will be implemented in four pilot countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Nigeria, and Ghana. Felix Kwakye, an ECOWAS Commission representative, emphasized the e-CoO's importance: "The electronic certificate of origin will enable ECOWAS Member States to facilitate trade. This will help member countries increase their local production and facilitate customs clearance. We are making life easier for businesses." Lieutenant Colonel Tia Roland, representing Ivorian Customs, explained that the e-CoO will help simplify trade flows among ECOWAS member states while detecting and preventing fraud.

The TFWA Program congratulates the ECOWAS Commission on reaching this milestone and remains committed to supporting trade facilitation reforms across the region.



## SSCBT-Focused Training Held for Burkinabe NTFC Members



In early August, the TFWA Program, in collaboration with the Burkinabe NTFC, held its second training focused on small-scale cross-border traders (SSCBTs). The two-day workshop aimed to teach NTFC members about the specific needs of SSCBTs. Among other things, NTFC members were given an overview of how the TFWA Program's innovative approach to SSCBT capacity building – focusing on both technical knowledge and behavioral change – can lead to better results. A total of 58 stakeholders were in attendance, half of whom were women. Participants included representatives of border agencies, NTFC members, and some SSCBT association leaders.

Hosted by Maison de l'Entreprise, this initiative builds on the SSCBT training methodology developed and successfully piloted by the TFWA Program in Togo. It aims to sensitize SSCBTs to trade rules/regulations and trader rights/obligations while simultaneously building confidence and personal communication skills.

The Director General of Trade, Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Crafts of Burkina Faso officially closed the two-day training. Many participants expressed the need to scale up SSCBT training efforts, especially for traders at the borders. The training also sparked a conversation on train-the-trainer methodologies as another way to increase the number of SSCBTs reached in Burkina Faso. Additionally, participants also identified funding as a bottleneck and agreed to advocate for more technical and financial support at their respective institutions.

The TFWA Program plans to replicate this training in Benin and Niger in the coming months.





## TFWA Program Continues Supporting NTFC Operationalization

Thanks to TFWA Program support, Guinea-Bissau's NTFC members participated in the ECOWAS NTFC Online Empowerment Program. This capacity-building program—delivered via courses focused on a wide range of topics, including the TFA and International Trade Facilitation standards—aims to improve the skills and competencies of NTFC members across the region. The empowerment program teaches NTFC members how to effectively perform their duties and move their trade facilitation agendas forward in a coordinated manner.

Building on the skills taught in the empowerment program, in July, the TFWA team, supported by the World Bank Office in Guinea-Bissau, conducted a field mission to work with NTFC members and ensure effective coordination of WTO TFA and African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) commitments. During the mission, the TFWA team met with NTFC members and top officials from the trade, customs, tax, investment promotion, and industrial fishing sectors. The discussions focused on supporting NTFC members as they assess the NTFC's maturity, prepare WTO categorization notifications, and diagnose alignment with WTO TFA provisions. The mission yielded a comprehensive NTFC Action Plan as well as four ad-hoc technical working groups (comprising 24 stakeholders) that will analyze WTO TFA alignment, with conclusions expected by October 2024.

The mission also identified several critical issues at the legislative and operational levels and significant logistical and infrastructural challenges. Key recommendations provided by the TFWA Program include strengthening the NTFC's operational role, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and creating strategic planning tools to advance trade reforms.

To continue supporting Guinea-Bissau's NTFC in its coordination and planning mandate, plans are underway for an additional TFWA Program mission in December 2024. At the same time, the TFWA Program is planning a capacity-building/field campaign targeted at SSCBTs. This campaign will highlight the benefits of international, continental, and regional trade facilitation instruments and show how traders, especially women, can better reap these benefits. The TFWA Program is committed to ensuring Guinea Bissau is capacitated to coordinate a robust trade facilitation implementation strategy that improves cross-border trade.





## TFWA Program Supports Customs Risk Management in Mali

Risk management and analysis is an important step in modernizing customs operations. With TFWA Program assistance, Malian Customs has achieved many important milestones within this space, including developing a new risk analysis and management strategy. Customs also undertook an operational diagnosis of procedures and processes, and adopted a human resources management model based on best practices of recruitment, mobility, training, and skills development through the implementation of the Forward Management of Jobs and Skills (FMJS). This builds on work from earlier this year when the TFWA Program helped train about 30 customs officers in intelligence analysis and risk management.

More recently, the TFWA Program, within the framework of the Customs Mutual Administrative Assistance Agreement and with approval from the Ivorian Customs Administration, helped train four Malian customs inspectors (at the Côte d'Ivoire Customs Training Center in Abidjan). The training was led by WCO experts and attended by customs officials from Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Mali, who actively participated in the session. This initiative was the latest step in improving customs' approach to risk management, and focused on the exploitation and advanced analysis of information from the Abidjan SCF/WCO database on Malian goods in transit through Ivorian ports. Specifically, the training aimed to demonstrate possible uses of the SCF/WCO software and strengthen the visible and sustainable targeting capacity of customs administrations.

Looking forward, the customs administrations of Mali and Côte d'Ivoire will jointly define a framework for information exchange while also working to identify risk indicators from manifests. The TFWA Program congratulates Malian Customs on its continued dedication to risk management, which builds on the 22 reforms Malian Customs has adopted since 2020 to improve its efficiency.







## TFWA Program Delivers SSCBT Training in Nigeria

In September, the TFWA Program successfully launched its small-scale cross-border traders (SSCBTs) training in Lagos. Following two highly successful pilots delivered by the program in 2022 and 2023, this training is supported by the National Association of Nigerian Traders (NANTS) and hosted in collaboration with six of the country's largest trade associations.

This six-week training is an essential element of the program's technical support for SSCBTs, especially women. The training was designed to develop skills through a combination of personal initiative and trade-specific technical knowledge, and will likely reach 200 SSCBTs. Throughout the training, participants will walk through thirteen capacity-building modules covering a wide variety of topics, including the free movement of people and goods in ECOWAS, traders' rights and obligations, import/export documentary requirements, and access to finance. From a pedagogical standpoint, the training program also focuses on personal initiative, developing self-confidence, strengthening trainees' interpersonal communication and negotiation skills, and teaching SSCBTs how to manage abuses. NANTS, with the TFWA Program's support, also conducted a train-the-trainer session for seven national trainers in Abuja. This should help pave the way for sustainability beyond the TFWA Program's lifetime.

Preparations for similar TFWA Program SSCBT trainings are underway in The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Senegal, with an expected rollout between September and November 2024. By the end of the year, about 1,200 SSCBTs (mostly women) are expected to have completed this innovative training. This will bring the total number of SSCBTs reached by the TFWA Program to almost 4,000, well beyond the target of 3,000 indicated in the program's results framework.



## TFWA Program Supports Senegalese Customs for Risk Management



With technical assistance from the TFWA Program, Senegal's Customs Administration has made significant progress toward adopting a control and risk management strategy based on data. Thanks to the program's support, the Direction des Enquêtes Douanières (DED) established the Cellule de Ciblage et de Veille Commerciale (CCVC) in 2021 (with dedicated staff specialized in data analysis) to support post-control audits and investigations. Today, the CCVC has reached technical maturity to integrate the "data analysis" function within the DED, including the development of the DED's annual control plan for import and export operations. This means that risk management for post-clearance control is now operational and fully integrated into DED's services.

Further, the CCVC now has the capacity to support the work of the Direction du Renseignement de l'Analyse du Risque et de la Valeur (DRAV), which continues to make progress related to the appropriation of data analysis. This would significantly impact revenue increases in the context of post-clearance controls, mainly from disputed revenue assessments and collections.

During a recent TFWA Program mission, the DRAV developed and presented a comprehensive risk-mapping report to a committee composed of representatives of the Direction des Opérations Douanières (DOD), chaired by the Deputy Director of Customs. The mission aimed to initiate collaboration and information-sharing between these directorates while also highlighting the lack of data on customs control results, which prevents the establishment of exhaustive risk mapping and limits the implementation of an effective clearance risk management system.

The TFWA Program will continue to provide technical support to the DRAV to strengthen the collaboration initiated with operational services, support the proposed initiative to improve the collection of control results, and finalize the operationalization of data methodologies implemented to support valuation and risk mapping.



## TFWA Program Trains SPS Inspectors in Togo



The TFWA Program continues to provide technical assistance to the National Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee in Togo. In August, the program held two trainings to strengthen the capacity of the border officials responsible for inspecting consignments and verifying possible plant pests at borders—an important safety measure impacting the flow of goods in and out of the country.

The workshops aimed to strengthen the technical and operational skills of 45 phytosanitary inspectors from the Plant Protection Directorate (DPV)—the same inspectors who were sworn in last year with TFWA Program support. These officials oversee the phytosanitary controls that reduce the introduction and spread of harmful pests, which is a cornerstone of safer trade. In this latest training, the inspectors were trained to recognize major quarantine pests, taught different control methods, and guided through essential phytosanitary inspection procedures. Specifically, the training highlighted procedures and inspection manuals for key products while outlining verification procedures for imports and exports. Regulated pests, phytosanitary risk analysis, different symptoms indicating required quarantine, and pest control methods and strategies also featured heavily in training.



At the end of the sessions, the DPV and the National SPS Committee were encouraged to review the country's phytosanitary analysis procedures for imported seeds and continue highlighting the importance of phytosanitary considerations among critical stakeholders. The TFWA Program has had tremendous success in encouraging the adoption of SPS procedures in Togo, and it remains committed to advancing these critical safety measures.



# TFWA Program Trains Technical Committee of Trade Facilitation in Togo

From July 30 to August 2, the TFWA Program organized training sessions for members of the Technical Committee of Trade Facilitation (TCTF). These sessions aimed to support Togo's efforts to develop action plans that effectively integrate trade facilitation reforms into the government's sectoral planning and successfully promote trade competitiveness and social cohesion.

The training on "Inclusive Project Management and Mainstreaming Gender to Improve Trade Facilitation Outcomes" is part of broader TFWA Program efforts to empower NTFCs at the governance and technical levels. The three-day session brought together more than 40 members from different institutions (30% women, 76% public sector, 17% private sector, and 1% civil society).

The training strived to empower TCTF members, including members of their respective gender sub-committee, so they could understand and apply:

- Key concepts and principles of an inclusive project management cycle: identification, planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation;
- Key gender concepts that underpin gender mainstreaming as it relates to the work of the TCTF;
- Best practices to mainstream gender into TCTF operations and policy-making;
- Stakeholder mapping and analysis (Nigeria gender mainstreaming case study);
- Key concepts of gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation to prioritize steps that promote gender-sensitive monitoring; and
- Techniques for gender-responsive budgeting to promote gender equality.

At the end of the workshop, the TCTF agreed on a timetable and outlined a path focused on developing a monitoring matrix for trade facilitation reforms, integrating good practices and inclusive planning, incorporating monitoring and evaluation tools, and utilizing methods acquired during the workshop.

