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Promoting Trade in West Africa II

Improving the efficient movement of goods in the ECOWAS region

The Challenge

With its young and growing population and natural resources, West Africa has enormous potential for trade development, which is, however, yet to be fulfilled. West African trade is still characterized by a lack of appropriate policy framework and its effective implementation, resulting in high transaction costs, unpredictable tariffs and multiple non-tariff barriers. Additionally, customs connectivity along trade corridors is needed to facilitate the movement of intra-regional trade in West Africa.

The *Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)* aims to facilitate intra-regional trade among its 15 member states, leading to the establishment of a common market in West Africa. Support for ECOWAS trade facilitation provided by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the European Union attempts to bring coordinated and far-reaching assistance to address the challenges of trade facilitation in the West African sub-region.

Our Approach

The Action *Promoting Trade in West Africa II (WATIP II)* is part of the larger *Trade Facilitation West Africa Program (TFWA)*, which is a multi-donor initiative to improve the efficient movement of goods in the ECOWAS region by supporting the ECOWAS Commission in the following three technical areas:



Project name	Promoting Trade in West Africa II
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Funded by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) European Union
Lead Executing Agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Project region	ECOWAS Commission 15 ECOWAS Member States
Duration	10/2018 – 09/2022
Financial Volume	Total : 23,15 million EUR EU: 15 million EUR BMZ: 8,15 million EUR

1. Trade facilitation measures improved and more efficiently implemented:

Support the development of regional policies and instruments related to facilitating the implementation of the ECOWAS Customs Code at national levels and to further enhancing the implementation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS).

2. More efficient movement of goods along selected corridors:

Support to the establishment of an interconnectivity system that allows for the automated transmission of customs data and data of other border agencies so as to facilitate the movement along selected trade corridors.



Implemented by





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*Photo left: ECOWAS Commissioner
Trade, Customs and Free Movement,
ECOWAS Vice-President, ECOWAS
Commissioner Political Affairs,
Peace and Security, May 2019*

Photo right: Harbour of Benin

3. Barriers for women and small-scale trader reduced:

Strengthening the role and awareness of the private sector and civil society in regional and national dialogues on trade facilitation.

In addition to the intervention areas as part of the TFWA program, the project WATIP II supports the ECOWAS commission in a 4th technical area:

4. Effective support to ECOWAS taxation reforms:

Support to ECOWAS in the context of its intra-regional trade liberalization and trade facilitation policies in order to broaden the taxbase, thereby increasing the national tax revenue.

Partners

The Action provides technical advisory services, process consulting and tailored capacity building interventions in these four technical areas. Beneficiary institutions include the ECOWAS Commission and its departments, national customs and tax administrations, the ETLS National Approval Committees, regional and national business federations as well as small-scale traders, including women, and civil society organizations in ECOWAS Member States.

To ensure ownership over the outcomes, the project is fully aligned with ECOWAS priorities and work plans, especially the 2016 - 2020 ECOWAS Strategic Framework. Analytical reports and other studies, conducted as part of this project, are processed within partner structures and, hence, will become integral part of the ECOWAS system, thereby contributing to the institutional memory of the ECOWAS.

Envisaged Impact

The Action is working towards achieving meaningful and sustainable results in each of the four technical areas:

1. With respect to trade facilitation:

- Regional trade facilitation policies and instruments are developed and implemented
- Capacities for monitoring and implementation of trade facilitation have been improved
- Common external tariff (CET) application improved and more efficiently implemented
- ETLS improved and more efficiently implemented

2. With respect to free movement of goods:

- Establish customs connectivity in one or more corridors
- Regional transit along corridors improved

3. With respect to reduced barriers for women and small-scale traders:

- Regional and national advocacy and sensitization system instituted

4. With respect to taxation reforms:

- National tax revenue is increased

Though each of the results focuses on one of the four distinct technical areas, the results are also interrelated and complementary. Thus, trade facilitation measures under Result 1 intervene directly at the level of the ECOWAS Commission, while support to ECOWAS interconnectivity and transit under Result 2 targets both, the regional and the national levels. Interventions under Result 3 complete the picture by ensuring that the private sector, who is directly affected by the implementation of trade facilitation reforms, is sufficiently informed to take full advantage of an improved trade regulatory environment. To complement the work on trade facilitation measures, Result 4 aims to broaden the tax base for increased national tax revenue. This way, WATIP II acknowledges the importance of the ECOWAS Commission in coordinating trade facilitation policies while at the same time recognizing the essential role of member states in implementing policies at the benefit of traders, who are the main profiteers of any trade facilitation reform.

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