5e SYMPOSIUM INTERNATIONAL SUR LE TRANSPORT ET I LOGISTIQUE EN AFRIQUE

Sub-theme 6: 'Performance of transit corridors to landlocked countries: constraints, governance and coordination"

Trade and Transport Facilitation across West Africa: the Borderless Alliance Experience



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Doing Business across Africa is Costly

- Long delays at ports and borders
- Poor Infrastructure, especially at border crossings
- Bad linkages across the continent (land, air, sea)
- Non-recognition of documents or certificates beyond national borders
- Harassement along transit corridors, mainly from uniformed services
- Cumbersome Procedure
- Corruption





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Doing Business across Africa is Challenging

- Diversions along transit corridors
- Smuggling
- Insurgency
- Counterfeit goods (threat to African & local IPR)
- Mis-declaration
- Under-invoicing
- Tax evasion







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Consequences

- Proliferation of internal trade barriers (TBs), Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs), food shortages, high post-harvest losses
- Use of multiple currencies, mostly non-convertible & highly volatile, making intra-African trade finance more expensive and time-consuming than other regions
- Lack of predictability of time or cost, especially for transit cargo
- Non application of regional texts/directives from RECs (ECOWAS, UEMOA) on the principle of free movement of goods and people
- **Low level of economic integration** within the continent, compared to other regions

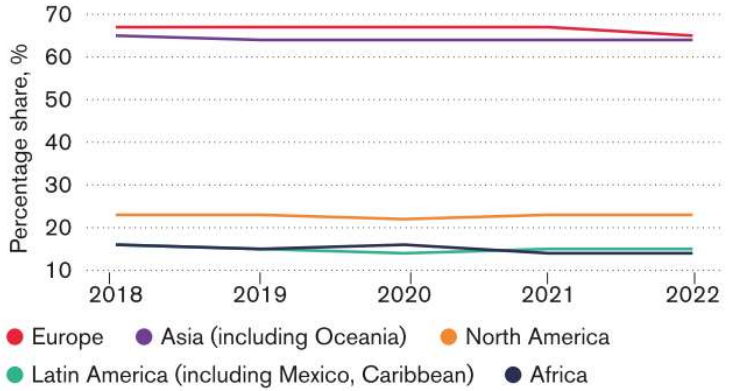
- Local businesses are unable to tap into regional market
- governments lose revenue

Source:
World Trade Statistical Review 2023

Intra-regional merchandise trade

Intra-regional merchandise trade represented 65% of Europe's world trade in 2022, the highest amongst the major world regions. The lowest was for Africa (14% in 2022, down from 16% in 2018).

Source: UNCTADStat.



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- **Borderless** was launched as an **advocacy campaign** for the West Africa Trade Hub's Transport and Road Governance work in March 2010

- Later evolved into a private sector-led advocacy group; in May 2011, **Borderless Alliance** was born. The Alliance was formally launched in May 2012

- Headed in Accra, Ghana, with more than 100 members from across West Africa (Port Authorities, Finance Institutions, Transport Companies, Traders, Producers etc.)

- Currently finalizing transition into a think tank, while maintaining same vision/mission











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The Borderless Alliance Vision

- Promoting competitiveness in trade across West Africa, through the **removal of regional barriers to trade and transport**;
- Advancing free movement of goods and people through the **simplification and harmonization of procedures**;
- Encouraging investment for the creation of more jobs and more income, for the region's people and governments;

→ **Through Advocacy**

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Broad Range of Activities

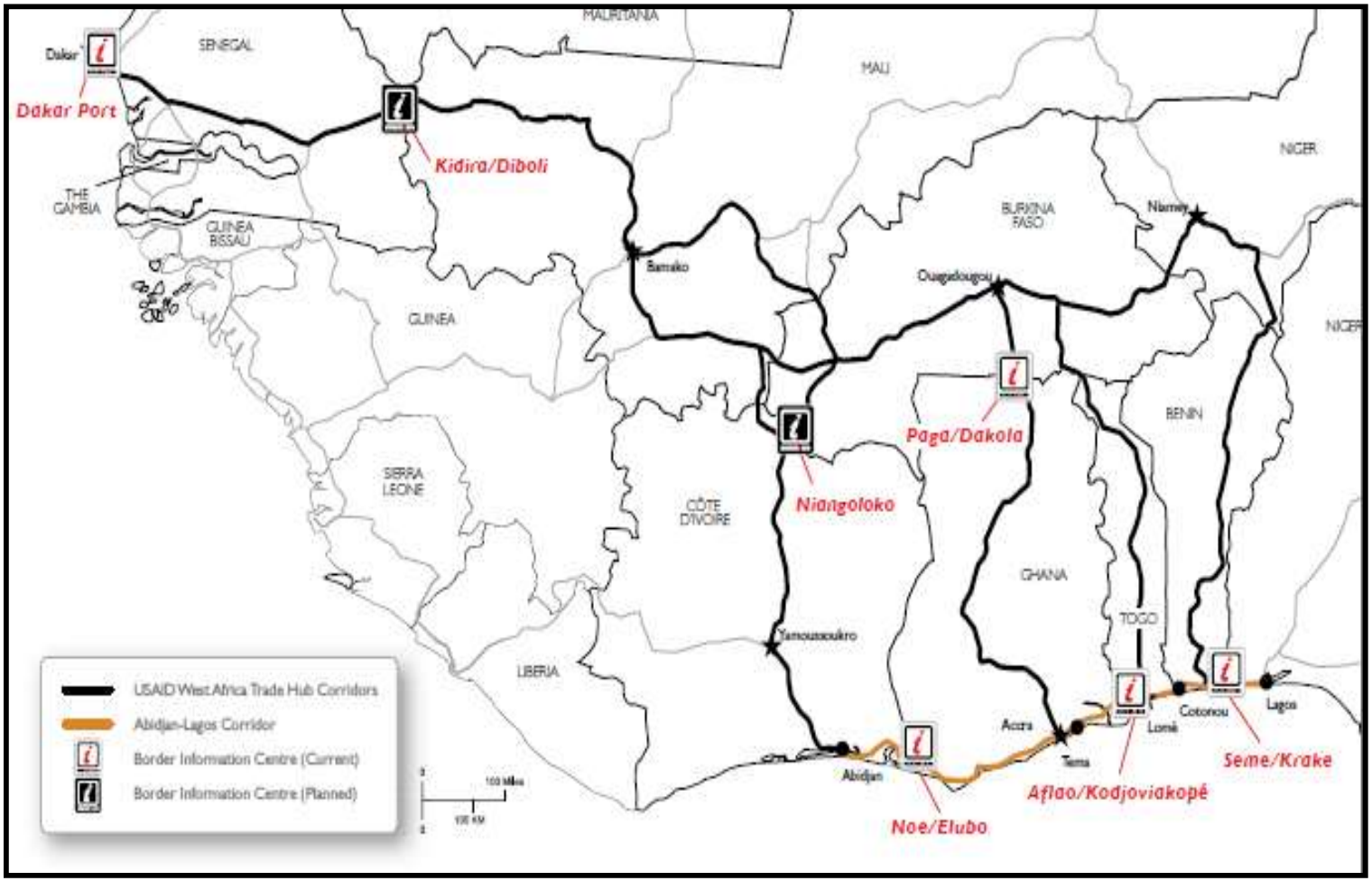
- **Information Dissemination** on Trade and Transport
- Support for Traders and Economic Operators at the Borders; the **Border Information Centers** (BICs)
- Piloting of the **Online Complaint Portal** for Addressing Non-Tariff Barriers to Trade in West Africa (eNTB Portal)
- **Capacity Building** (Training Workshops, Seminars) on CET, ETLS, TFA & more
- **Advocacy** activity (Position Papers, High-Level Meetings, Public/Private Dialogue Sessions, Road Shows, Caravans, Awareness Campaigns)
- **Networking** opportunities with private enterprises and decision makers

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1. Experience From Border Information Centres

BORDER INFORMATION CENTRES









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ADDED BENEFITS

- Provide amicable resolution of minor NTBs in real time
- Escalate more significant challenges to relevant authorities
- Foster cross-border dialogue on trade and related issues
- Disseminate trade information to economic operators
- Supervise collection of cross-border trade data

OPPORTUNITIES

- Scale up to provide more support to national and regional stakeholders
- Currently, waiting for full roll out of regional dashboard to integrate various initiatives into one
- Synergy with the various trade facilitation efforts across participating countries

THREATS

- Need strong local ownership to achieve reasonably level of sustainability
- Must designate respectable and capable advisors to manage these centres
- Need to address financial sustainability concerns



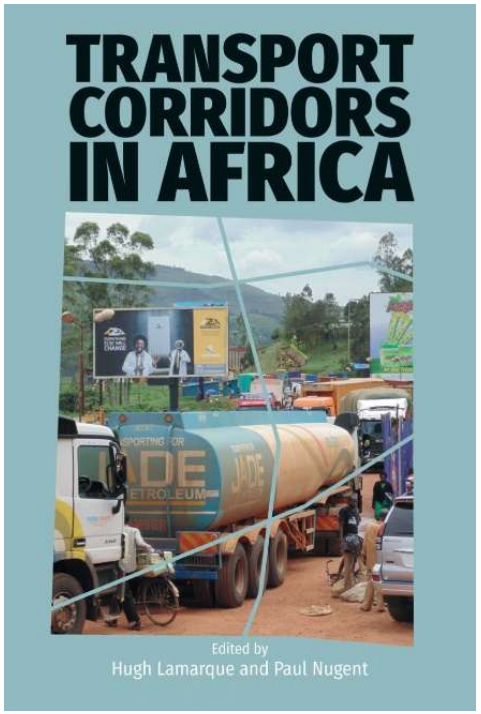




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2. Observations during regional/national missions



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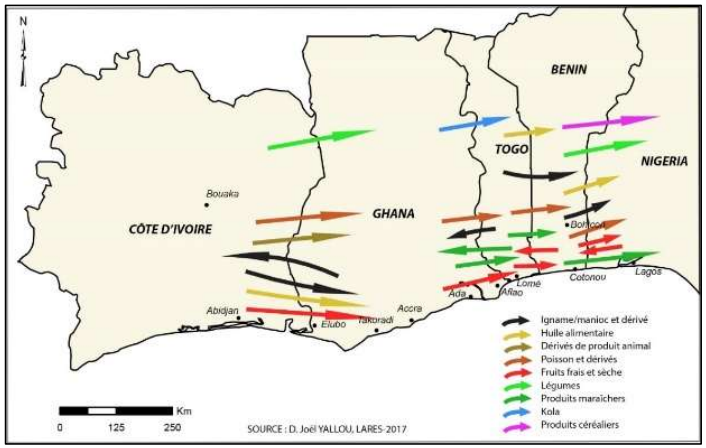
- Collaboration with the African Governance and Space (AFRIGOS) project of the University of Edinburgh
- Collaboration with various development agencies (JICA, GIZ, USAID etc.)
- Selected corridors in West Africa: Abidjan-Lagos and Tema-Paga
- Collaborations with national agencies

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3. Corridor Studies





- Transport costs along specific corridors
- Study on specific problems of women traders on the Abidjan-Lagos and Senegambia Corridors (2017)
- Diagnostic study on the movement of small-scale cross-border women traders (2020)
- Etc.

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Costs of Road Corruption

Maximum Bribe (Aflao)

$82

Per J9 Truck

Extortion as a Trade Barrier

The "Invisible Tax" of road harassment significantly inflates logistics costs. Extortion occurs regardless of compliance, forcing operators into a "Pay or Lose" scenario.

$30 – $40	$40 – $50
Hilacondji Border	Seme Border

The Informal Trade Challenge

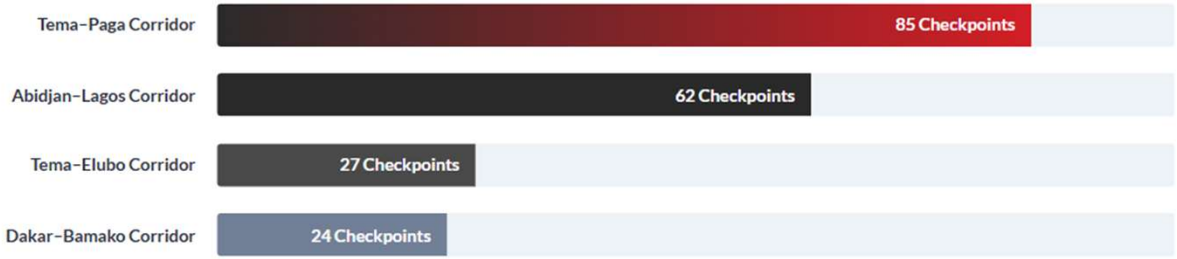
Parallel Infrastructure

Commerce flows through unofficial channels because informal routes simply cost less than compliance. This creates a parallel economy that hides the true volume of regional trade.

61.2%
Ghana–Togo Informal Trade

55.7%
Ghana–CI Informal Trade

Burden of Non-Tariff Barriers



Proliferation of internal trade barriers leads to massive post-harvest losses and increased commodity prices.

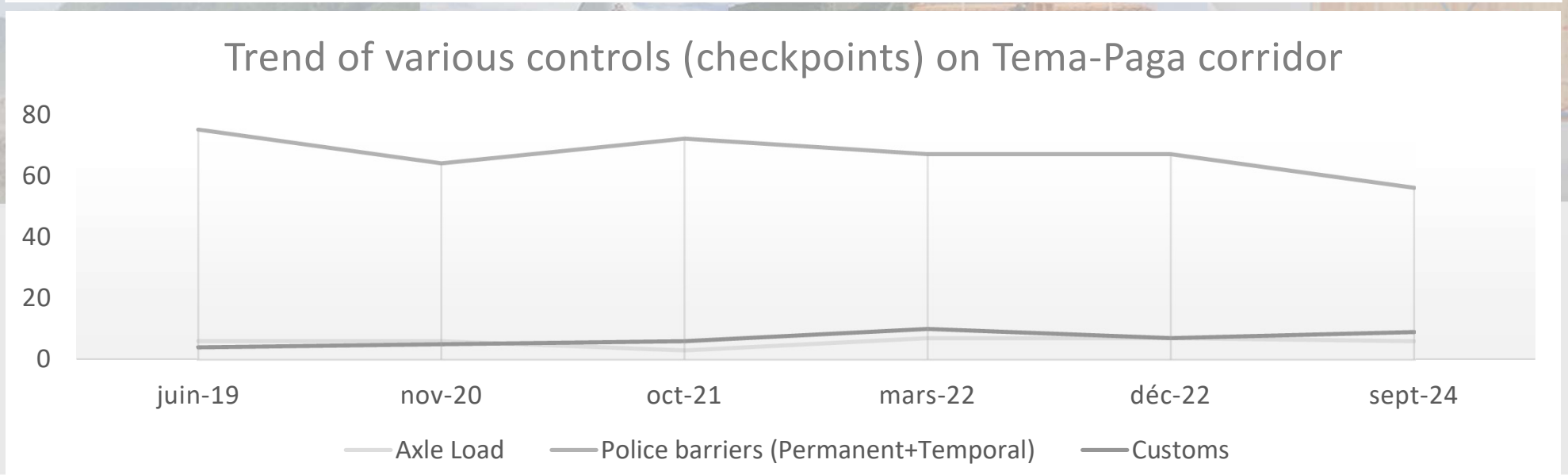
Sources:

- Study on the Specific Problems of Women Traders on the Abidjan-Lagos Coridor, March 2017
- Diagnostic Study on the Movement of Small-Scale Cross Border Women Traders on Three Corridors in West Africa, April 2020

(Source: Ghana Shippers Authority)

TEMA – PAGA CORRIDOR OVERVIEW 2019 -2024

Period	Axle Load	Police			Customs	TOTAL
		Temporal	Permanent	Total		
Jun-19	6	38	37	75	4	85
Nov-20	6	26	38	64	5	75
Oct-21	3	16	56	72	6	81
Mar-22	7	11	56	67	10	84
Dec-22	7	11	56	67	7	81
Sept - 24	6	2	54	56	9	71



(Source: Ghana Shippers Authority)

TEMA – ELUBO CORRIDOR OVERVIEW (2023)

- ❑ Tema–Elubo Corridor Overview
- ❑ Distance: ~391.5 km
- ❑ Total Checkpoints (June 2023): 27

Police: 23 (19 permanent, 4 temporary)

Customs: 2

Axle Load: 2

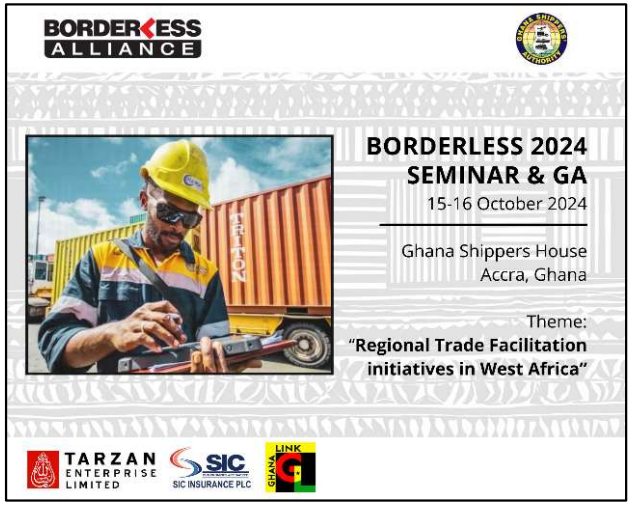


- ❑ Travel Duration: 3–4 days



4. Regional Conferences





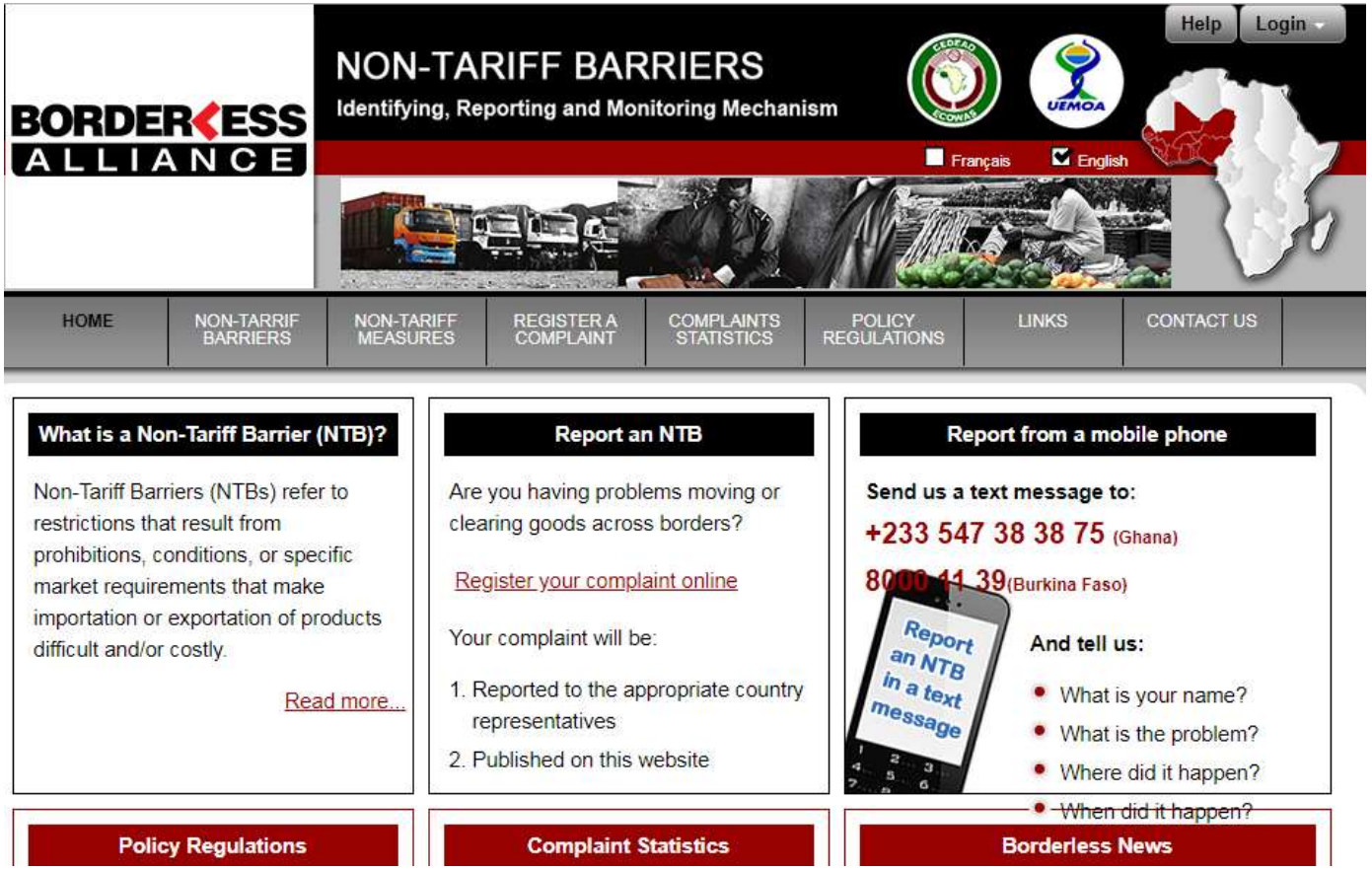
- Latest one in October 2024 in Ghana
- Theme: "Regional Trade Facilitation Initiatives in West Africa"
- Sharing and learning Best Practices from a wide variety of stakeholders
- Mass information dissemination on matters of regional trade, transport and transit

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5. Borderless NTB System

WWW.TRADEBARRIERSWA.COM



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Overview of Borderless NTB System



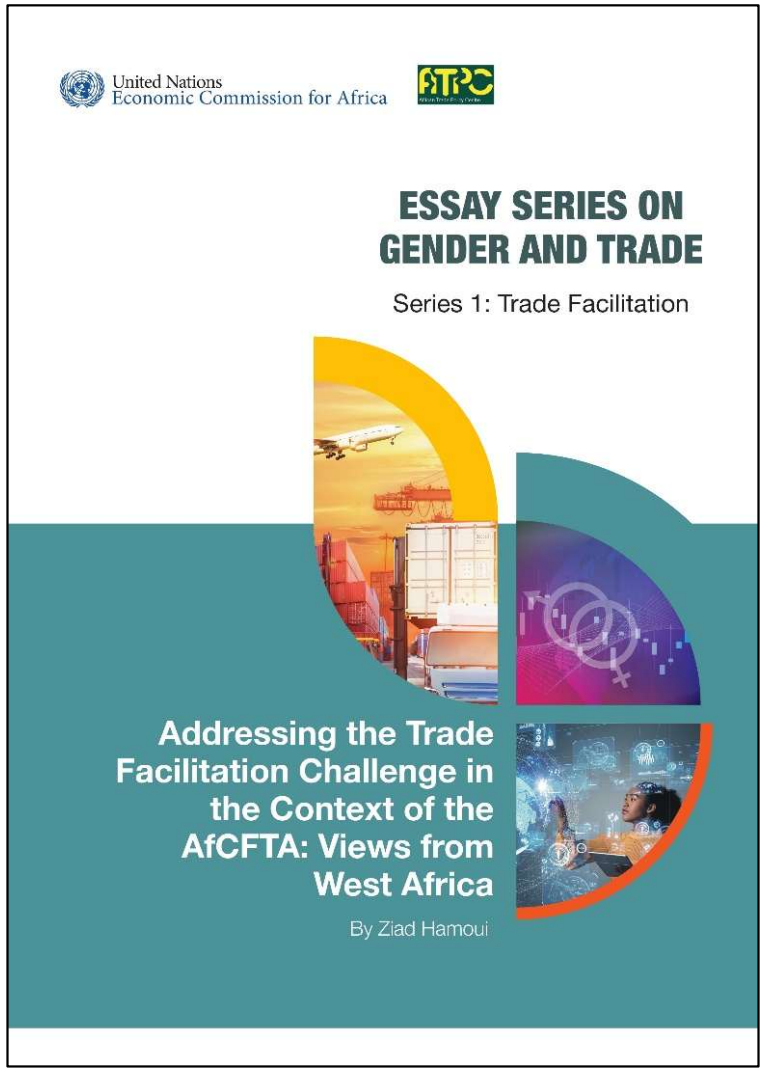
Objectives:

- ✓ Report, follow-up and resolve some non-tariff barriers, including road harassment;
- ✓ Serve as advocacy tool;
- ✓ Contribute to trade facilitation through information dissemination (government directives impacting business environment)

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Addressing TF Challenges at the borders*



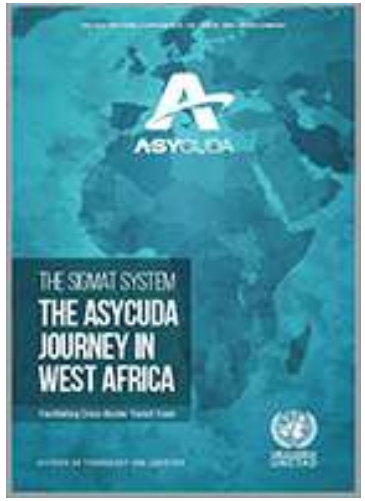
CHALLENGES	RECOMMENDATIONS
Lack of Adequate Border Infrastructure	Addressing Cross-Border Infrastructure
Entrenched Culture of Gender Bias	Ending Gender Bias in Trade
Absence of Adequate Information Desks	Redressing Information Deficiencies
Informal Nature of CBT	Formalizing Trade via Enhanced Trade Data Collection
Dispute Resolution	Dispute Settlement Under the AfCFTA

*Link to publication: https://repository.uneca.org/handle/10855/49479

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Finalizing SIGMAT Roll-Out: Advancing Customs Interconnectivity in West Africa









- Border agency cooperation is key to successful TF measures
- Connecting national Customs systems as a priority to share data on transit operations
- **S**ystème **I**nterconnecté de **G**estion des **MA**rchandises en **T**ransit (SIGMAT) is crucial to connect regional Customs in ECOWAS area

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Main Lessons & Way Forward

- Complementing hard infrastructure (West Africa Growth Ring, Abidjan-Lagos Corridor…) with a soft infrastructure approach (interconnectivity through SIGMAT, road governance advocacy…) will ensure the success of current and future development projects along the road corridors
- Focusing trade facilitation interventions at border crossings, to ensure smooth transit of regional / international trade & drive formalization
- Cooperation and collaboration with border agencies, private operators, development partners, other advocacy groups, is key towards advancing the free movement agenda across ECOWAS region (goods and people)









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Conclusion

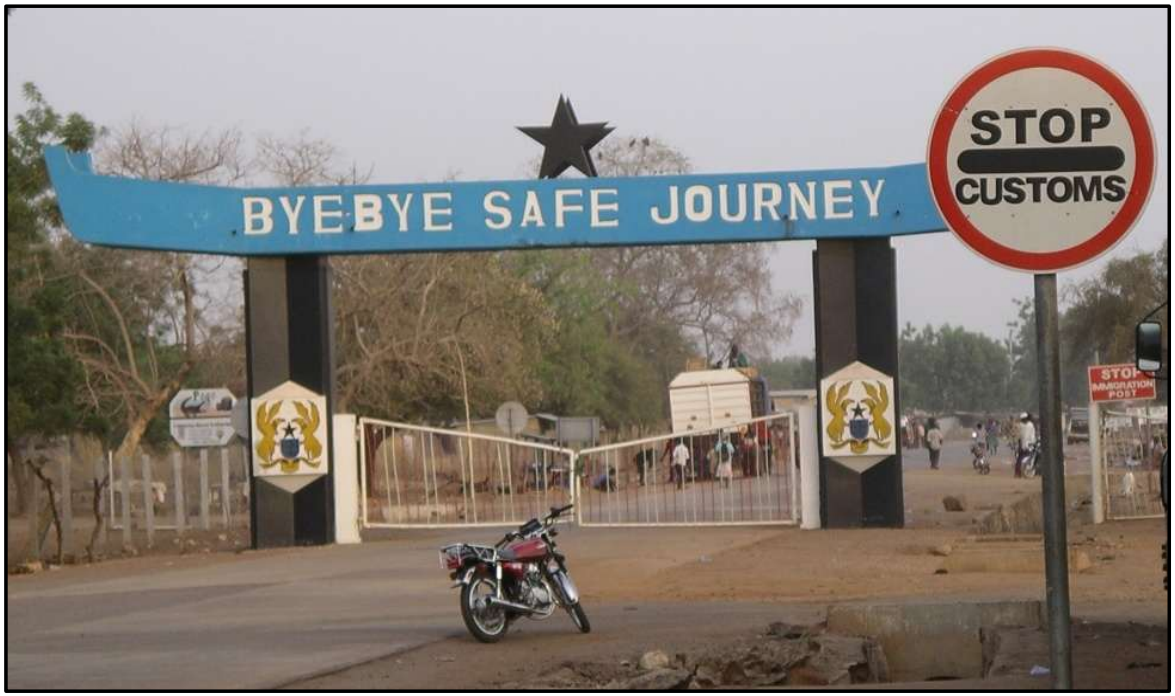
- Perennial, **inadequate focus on land border crossing** (infrastructure, procedure, capacity)
- Policy-makers need **better information** about who and what goes across their borders, to help formulate better policies
- **Building trust** is a key to a successful public-private partnership
- More **public-private collaboration needed** to align national, regional and continental policy priorities, to help drive intra-African trade volumes (AfCFTA Secretariat is key in promoting intra-African trade and enhancing CBT)







Borderless Alliance:
Removing Trade Barriers in West Africa



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