



PROMOTING WEST AFRICA TRADE INTEGRATION (WATIP)

WATIP is an EU-funded project with co-financing from the German Government. The objective is to accelerate the process of achieving a customs union by supporting the ECOWAS Commission in Implementating trade-related regulations, improving the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS), developing a common trade policy, facilitating the harmonisation of trade-related policies and statistical data, as well as disseminating trade-related information.



CONTEXT

Created in 1975, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has succeeded in gradually increasing the economic, political and social links among its fifteen Member States.

Despite some notable successes achieved in recent years such as the adoption of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET), certain challenges remain. Trade within the region has stagnated for the last two decades. Furthermore, several regional policies are either not implemented, under-utilised or hindered by political, institutional or regulatory constraints.

Due to the limited capacity of the ECOWAS Commission and Member States to monitor and enforce ECOWAS rules, these implementation deficiencies often remain unnoticed or unresolved. The ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS), the CET, regional trade policy and international trade negotiations are some of the critical issues required for the advancement of regional economic integration.

BENEFICIARIES AND PARTNERS

The beneficiaries of the project are the ECOWAS citizens through the ECOWAS Commission, especially its Directorates of Trade and Customs, as well as through the UEMOA Commission. Support may also be directed to other organisational structures of the Commissions as well as to other regional institutions.

Budget of the Action	Total: 11.5 million € EU: 10 million € BMZ: 1 million € ECOWAS: 0.5 million €
Area of Intervention	Regional Economic Integration and Trade
Partners	ECOWAS, UEMOA Relevant Regional Institutions
Duration	2014–2018





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AREAS OF INTERVENTION

The project consists of two components:

1) Implementation and coordination of the West African regional economic integration process

• Implementation and coordination of trade-related regulations

WATIP aims at improving the implementation and coordination of trade-related regulations and ensuring an enhanced cooperation on the trade-related activities carried out by ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions. This entails supporting the two Commissions in implementing the trade sector work within their Joint Technical Secretariat as well as establishing a monitoring mechanism to oversee the application of regulations.

• Trade information

Through an enhanced regional trade information system, WATIP supports the ECOWAS Commission in better disseminating and communicating national policies on customs and trade to regional and national public stakeholders.

2) Increase in trade and achievement of a Customs Union in West Africa

• ECOWAS Common Trade Policy

The project supports the ECOWAS Commission in the formulation of a common ECOWAS Common trade policy. The provided technical assistance contributes to enhance regional and national capacities for the negotiation and implementation of the most favourable trade agreements for the Member States. More generally, the aim of WATIP is to assist the region in the implementation of selected trade agreements.

• Improvement and harmonisation of economic statistical data

WATIP supports the ECOWAS Commission in improving and harmonising the regional trade and economic statistical data gathered and analysed by the Commission. This entails a review of the current state of harmonisation of statistical data and support for the selection and use of appropriate economic analysis software.

To take advantage of existing synergies and with a view to maximising the impact of the project, WATIP is implemented by the Support Programme to the ECOWAS Commission of the GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) funded by the German Government.

• ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS)

The project aims at intensifying the utilisation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) and of other complementary schemes by, for example, extending or reforming related rules. This can be achieved by carrying out impact analyses by country and sector, by identifying and closing potential gaps of existing ETLS regulations and by analysing complementary systems for free movement of goods. To reach this goal, WATIP also offers capacity-building activities to officials of ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions, national government bodies and the private sector.

• ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET)

WATIP supports the region in monitoring and harmonising the ECOWAS CET with the UEMOA CET. With the date fixed for the implementation of the CET fast approaching, the project assists the ECOWAS Commission in implementing the CET road-map, with a particular emphasis on monitoring, coordination and training of regional and national trade and customs officials as well as private sector representatives.

• Coordinated fiscal policies

In order to compensate for a decline in state revenues, WATIP assists the region in developing coordinated fiscal policies on the basis of impact studies and other analyses. For this purpose, the project offers capacity-building measures for the simulation of fiscal reforms.

This project is part of the EU-funded project “Support to Regional Economic Integration and Trade” aimed at integrating West Africa into the global economy and at establishing an effective common market.

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