



ECOWAS
Economic Community of West African States

Regional Integration

ECOWAS launched the regional Customs interconnection project called SIGMAT, to enhance regional integration through the automation of transit procedures in the union

Situation

ECOWAS and its member States face multiple challenges for transit across key trade corridors in West Africa:

- Scarce information on transit goods at transit and destination points
- Long transit processing time at the border
- High trade costs.

Solution

Under the SIGMAT project, the ASYCUDA Programme and ECOWAS member States, with the support of WCO and donors like the World Bank, developed a regional transit module to exchange transit information among the Customs clearance systems. The solution was implemented in 2019 in 3 main corridors: Abidjan-Ouagadougou, Lomé-Ouagadougou and Cotonou-Niamey. As of the fourth quarter of 2020, the solution has been tested in Mali and Senegal, the latter not using ASYCUDAWorld as a Customs clearance system. Twelve member States out of 15 use ASYCUDA system as a Customs clearance IT system.

Result

At the departure country, a transit declaration is registered and a copy is electronically sent to the transit and destination countries' systems to warn of the arrival of goods. Customs agents at the border or at the destination office only confirm the arrival of goods on the transit declaration received in their system. The confirmation is sent electronically to the departure country.

- Shorter transit processing time at the border: 1 hour average for goods destined to Niger transiting through Benin or Togo
- Facilitated trade & trade community acceptance: 111% increase of transit documents (T1) processed in the corridor Abidjan-Ouagadougou in September 2020 (3,123) compared to September 2019 (1,478)
- Increased revenue
- Increased cooperation between member States through data exchange
- Automated targeting of transiting goods for inspection.

1.57

Billion kilograms of goods transited from Benin, Burkina Faso and Togo to Niger from February 2019 to September 2020



“ The vehicles that pass through the borders normally spend days or weeks at the borders before they are cleared. With the SIGMAT project, it is now reduced to barely hours so the costs for transportation are reduced.

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*Wale Ajala,
Director, IT Services Directorate,
ECOWAS Commission*

Partners:





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Total Number of Customs Offices

35



35 Using the solution

- 16 Niger
- 14 Burkina Faso
- 5 Benin

Volume of Activity on 3 corridors

(Average per month in 2019)

10,700

T1 Transit Documents

Corridor Abidjan-Ouagadougou

1,900

T1 Transit Documents
(Average per month in 2019)

7 Days 15 Hours

Average transit time ⌚
(From departure to arrival office)



1,350

Men



150

Women

Corridor Lomé-Ouagadougou

5,000

T1 Transit Documents
(Average per month in 2019)

8 Days 19 Hours

Average transit time ⌚
(From departure to arrival office)

Corridor Cotonou-Niamey transit time

3,800

T1 Transit Documents
(Average per month in 2019)

1 Hour

Average transit clearance time at borders offices ⌚

Top 5 Goods transiting through the 3 corridors

(Per weight, in million kilos)

