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**TRADE FACILITATION WEST AFRICA (TFWA) FED/2017/039-
046 – MIDTERM STRATEGIC EVALUATION**

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TRADE FACILITATION WEST AFRICA PROGRAM (TFWA) FED/2017/039-046 MIDTERM STRATEGIC EVALUATION

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ABBREVIATIONS

BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CCC	Community Computer Centre
CET	Common External Tariff
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of OECD
DFID	UK Department for International Development
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EM	Evaluation Matrix
ET	Evaluation Team
EQ	Evaluation Question
EU	European Union
EUD	EU Delegation to Nigeria
FA	Financial Agreement
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GIZ	German Corporation for International Cooperation
IL	Intervention Logic
IP	Implementing Partners
JQ	Judgment Criteria
KE	Key Expert
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
MS	Member States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PMT	Project Management Team (of TiEG)
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RG	Reference Group
SSCBT	Small Scale Cross Border Traders
TF	Trade Facilitation
TOC	Theory of Change
TFWA	Trade Facilitation West Africa Programme
ToR	Terms of Reference
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
USAID	United State Agency for International Development
WBG	World Bank Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This midterm external evaluation report constitutes the final deliverables of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the TTFWA) FED/2017/039-046 for the period 30th September 2018 - 31st October 2020 and presents results following an in-depth document analysis (focused on the Evaluation Questions of the TFWA programme) as well as from fieldwork from June to July 2022. The objective of the program is to improve the free and efficient movement of goods in the region and internationally through the reduction of time and cost of trade borne by the private sector in West Africa, and by strengthening the ability of regional trading networks to take advantage of these improvements. Specifically, the program aims to achieve this by: (i) improving the existing trade facilitation measures in West Africa and implement them more efficiently; (ii) improving the movement of goods along selected corridors; and (iii) supporting small-scale traders, including women and other key stakeholders in trade facilitation reforms and programs. The expected outcomes of the TFWA programme are: 1. Trade facilitation measures improved and more efficiently implemented; 2. More efficient movement of goods along selected corridors; 3. Barriers for small scale traders reduced with an emphasis on improving conditions for women traders.

The TFWA programme was conceived as a joint effort of key development partners, including the EU, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Germany, with a budget of €55 million (EU contribution €20m). The implementing partners (IP) of TFWA programme are the World Bank Group (WBG) and the German Development Cooperation Agency (GIZ), while its Steering Committee is chaired by ECOWAS and supported by UEMOA as deputy chair.

The **main objectives** of this evaluation are to provide ECOWAS and UEMOA, the relevant services of the European Union, BMZ, the Netherlands (MFA), USAID, other interested stakeholders and the wider public with: (i) An overall independent assessment of the past performance of TFWA, paying particular attention to its results measured against its expected objectives; and the reasons underpinning such results; (ii) Key lessons learned, conclusions and related recommendations in order to improve current and future interventions; (iii) An overview of the key actors or factors that are driving and hindering progress a) in implementing the key activities and b) in achieving key objectives and results.

The **specific objectives** of this evaluation are: (i) To assess for any problem which should be solved and for learning purposes, in particular with respect to the implementation modalities and to the new governance structure established for this programme; (ii) To feed into the next EU joint programming exercise (2021-2027) in identifying priorities and initiatives that can be better addressed at the national, regional and continental levels; (ii) To assess the positioning of EU and its development partners in West Africa in terms of design, implementation, results, impact and responsiveness to trade and trade facilitation in West Africa.

The beneficiaries of the programme are ECOWAS, UEMOA, government departments related to trade, customs, and gender, and the private sector, including trade actors at grassroots level such as small-scale traders and especially women, among others.

The evaluation was conducted between January 2022 and August 2022. The evaluation consisted of a desk review followed by online interviews as well as field visits carried out

between June and July 2022 by the experts in Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Niger and Senegal. The different techniques and data sources enabled the triangulation of data and provided responses to most evaluation questions.

KEY FINDINGS

Relevance

The TFWA was designed based on the identified challenges and needs of the RECS and Member States; and it was supported by studies carried out by ATWA and the EU, which were further elaborated by the World Bank Group (WBG). In relation to the challenges to intraregional and international trade and trade facilitation in West Africa, especially linked to the political economy of the region, the existence of such a programme is justified. The TFWA programme design is still relevant to the originally formulated objectives of the programme and the needs of ECOWAS, UEMOA and their member states. Both ECOWAS and UEMOA are appreciative of the programme which fits within their regional integration strategies. Similarly at country level, the programme has been well received and the activities developed are in line with national trade and regional integration objectives.

Stakeholders indicated that the problems related to TF in West Africa have not changed and efforts to improve the conditions under which trade is carried out are part of an ongoing process which will require further interventions beyond the lifecycle of this programme. The timing of the intervention in addressing issues related to TF has also been praised. The above clearly point out that the actions and the programme's design remain relevant to the overall objectives and strategy of the Financial Agreement (FA). The TFWA programme and its interventions scheduled within the time frame of this programme will contribute to provide a large part of the solutions to TF issues.

The literature review and discussions with the project implementers indicated that there were no major changes in the inputs compared to what was previously planned in the work programmes. Due to COVID-19 there has been a slight change in the budgetary allocations to unexpected activities, with no disruptions in the inputs. Delays to the activities of the TFWA programme were related to the COVID 19 pandemic but also the political and insecurity situation in certain countries (Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso). Other delays during the first two years of the programme were also related to lengthy approval processes and other administrative reasons beyond the control of the programme management. In addition, while the implementers felt that there was a need to update the original ToC, the programme's outcomes align with the modified programme objectives which centred around efficiency, predictability, compliance and resilience & sustainability.

Citing other existing issues, the stakeholders confirmed the lack of domestication of regional policies and the limited capacity of RECs to influence the MS to reverse this position, including information gaps at the policy decision-makers level, and low awareness of the programme's mandate.

The TFWA also successfully addressed some trade facilitation measures, which include the process to facilitate regional transit under Subcomponent 2.2: Establish customs connectivity in one or more corridors. This project later named SIGMAT became the most successful and relevant under Component 2 of the TFWA because it opened up an opportunity through the interconnectivity of national customs systems to eliminate a long-existing obstacle to region integration that requires seamless transit among the Member States. The interconnectivity of the regional customs systems that started as a pilot project with four countries has generated a higher level of enthusiasm and relevance among the customs authorities in the MS.

Overall, while the programme's assumptions remain the same, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were the reason for the main deviation to the programme, including the Coup d'état in Burkina Faso and Mali that delayed or prevented activities in those countries and along certain corridors. Furthermore, the online implementation strategy adopted by the programme implementers in collaboration with the local implementation team during the travel restrictions became relevant and supported the TFWA countries in managing the pandemic through guidelines on facilitating trade. This ensured that trade facilitation and regional integration agenda remain a government priority especially as the nature of the issues has not changed drastically. The initial assumptions remain valid for future actions as the nature of the issues has not changed drastically.

Efficiency

Before the commencement of the programme, the identification of seven ECOWAS countries, as fragile with travel warnings confirmed the constraints of the working environments in the region. Furthermore, the existence of high levels of corruption, trade barriers and non-compliance with international standards in border procedures signalled the complexity of the political economies of these seven West African countries. Consequently, the design of the TFWA to mitigate the risk through a participatory dialogue between the public sector, civil society and the private sector was pertinent to the regional political economy analysis.

Discussions with stakeholders reconfirmed that unpredictable political economy situations remain a risk to the programme's success. Despite taking measures to reduce their impact and enable the smooth implementation of the programme's activities, there is sometimes a change of focus at national level towards more urgent issues (particularly political and security concerns). This results in a de-prioritisation of TF initiatives that influences negatively the national stakeholders' participation and commitment to the project.

To ensure that initiatives were maintained, and activities were implemented at country level, during political conflicts or unstable security situations, the project implementers assigned country focal points to provide technical support as required to maintain the pertinence of the programme. Continued engagement with policy decision makers was also undertaken by implementers regarding the above situation.

Feedback from stakeholders¹ indicated that the programme co-implementers have managed to maintain the programme's activities despite delays in starting its operation due to the complexity of the intervention (with a wide scope of activities) combined with the difficult political and economic situation in each of these countries and the effects of COVID-19. There is an overall appreciation of the management and implementation pace of the programme.

However, the different administrative styles of the implementers, which reflected in their dealings with the RECs, may have created a slight communication gap in project implementation as RECs struggled to adjust to the new project structure of relating to two implementers on same project and same subject matter. There is a presumption that such communication gap might have slowed down the project understanding and implementation by the RECs, especially in their role in coordinating the activities at MS level through an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism. While relating two implementers on the same project may possibly be overwhelming to the RECs with limited human and technical resources, this can be overcome with time, especially with the RECs getting familiar with the pattern of work under the TFWA and improving their human and technical resources.

Effectiveness

The activities under the TFWA are appropriate and are designed to respond to identified trade facilitation issues as well as to contribute to the achievement of the expected results. This observation is shared by the programme stakeholders. Furthermore, during the first two years of operation, the implementation of Component 1 was effective and had more positive outcomes than the two other Components, 2 and 3, based on documents reviewed and confirmation by the programme's beneficiaries.

Undoubtedly, capacity-building activities and sensitization of relevant stakeholders under Component 1 were most active and helped towards better understanding of the TFA measures and impact on trade and border crossing. These resulted in additional number of countries ratifying the TFA, more countries conducting categorization and WTO needs assessment, including support for notifications, adoption of the ECOWAS Customs Code, establishment of the Regional Trade Facilitation Committee (RTFC) and enhanced support to NTFCs to review their institutional frameworks and broaden their representativeness to hold meetings with the attendance of gender advocacy groups. Furthermore, the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) experienced an increase in the number of registered export-oriented companies and products, including the development of an ETLS monitoring tool. The development of regional interconnectivity drive through SIGMAT is also part of an ongoing successful activity. However, limited political will has affected the domestication of protocols and agreements as well as implementation at the national level including poor monitoring regionally. Limited funding and inadequate coordination of human resources at the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions have negatively affected M&E and poor implementation results, including failed harmonization of border procedures, and coordinated border management.

¹ Information from stakeholders from different sources during interviews

Generally, observations from the field work indicate that there is no improvement in the movement of goods along the selected corridors partly due to the inability of the programme staff to travel as from February 2020. Regular checks by police, delays at borders and existence of NTBs are cited as examples by transport and logistics companies and associations that are involved in regional movement of goods across the borders. It is important that the observation on NTBs and others are taken to be relevant for the overall assessment of the TFWA even if not captured within the scope of the current program. It may therefore be an opportunity to consider including roadblocks-related issues and other NTBs in the next EU program. It is believed that the ongoing implementation of the SIGMAT interconnectivity tool will enhance the movement of goods under Component 2. Regarding component 3, very little work had been achieved during the first two years of operation as evidenced during the field visits. The programme was still in a process of gathering information through the surveys carried out at the different borders. Stakeholders operating in this area felt that there was enough data and analysis on this issue (from past projects) and expressed some level of fatigue with studies, capacity building and awareness exercises even in 2022. SSCBT are longing to see the issues addressed and an improvement of the situation at borders. Limited progress in this area by the implementers has been ascribed to the impact of COVID-19 which set in immediately after the gender and SSCBT surveys were concluded by nearly 2020.

One of the major driving forces in the achievement of the TFWA's results has been the instrumental role played by the World Bank Group and GIZ through the provision of constant managerial, technical and logistic support for the programme implementation and trying to maintain the implementation pace to achieve the programme's result. The Multi-donor approach is seen to create more effectiveness in terms of expertise and funding to address TF issues while avoiding parallel programmes being carried out on similar issues.

Two important external factors have been considered as obstacles to the achievement of the TFWA programme results (i) the COVID 19 Pandemic which affected the whole programme and (ii) the coups d'état in Mali in August 2020 and May 2021, and Burkina Faso in January 2022 which have slowed down the engagement in both countries with a suspension of all operations by the implementing partners. The coups d'état had security implications that prevented movement and affected the programme in the affected areas.

Other obstacles identified and confirmed by stakeholders include:

- Lack of reliable trade data
- The inability to access data due to the then-recent introduction of the data security law in the region;
- The low level of working collaboration between the participating RECs;
- The lack of strong commitment by some local governments;
- The political economy issues;
- Shortage of technical staffing at the level of the RECS preventing full involvement in the programme implementation;
- Constant need for capacity building by both ECOWAS and UEMOA;
- Low level of understanding of TF issues, and especially with regards to the trade & gender agenda, the reduced level of motivation and the lack of financial and technical resources at national level;

- Divergence between project implementers (GIZ and WBG) in terms of working methods that may have been challenging for some stakeholders in adapting to the different implementing institutions with different styles on the same project, especially as the stakeholders are familiar with dealing with the institutions differently and on different projects.
- Lack of full involvement of the RECS in the programme's decision-making process, where RECs sometimes feel "left out".²
- UEMOA considering itself to be in a constantly disadvantaged situation.
- Political effect of tenure extension of ECOWAS Commissioners arising from prolonged ECOWAS institutional reforms and its demotivation impact on the programme.

Early signs of impact

The two-year span under which the MTR is being undertaken would be too short to identify any signs of impact. Field investigations with end beneficiaries such as private sector, traders' associations, associations of transporters or clearing agents indicate that the problems at the border were the same in 2020 and have still not changed. There are no signs of perceived impact as a result of the programme's activities. If there were some improvements in the area of trade facilitation, it would be difficult to assess the contribution made by the TFWA programme. Any signs of impact seen in the first two years of the programme's operation could be the result of past or ongoing national or regional programmes as in 2020.

The enthusiasm around the implementation of the SIGMAT system is considered as one of the contributing factors to trade facilitation. There have been some improvements due to the implementation of the SIGMAT in Cote d'Ivoire related to rail cargo. The potential outcome of this achievement could be considered as one of the early signs of impact if the system is effectively operationalized and functioning successfully in the pilot corridors.

Sustainability

Notwithstanding the carefully designed activities under the TFWA to ensure the sustainability of the programme beyond its immediate lifecycle, the capacity of the RECs or MS in human

² The impression here is that the RECs were not part of the project design at the early stage. While RECs were fully integrated into the implementation process there was a gap at the design stage which was almost an exclusive action by the implementers. The question of ownership of the project arising from the fact that the RECs were not part of the design at the early stage became an issue. While this issue was downplayed by the RECs as much as possible because they needed the funds from the donors through the implementers, the ownership issue seems not going away as lack of ownership seems to be a threat to sustainability of the programme if the donors or the implementers are no longer on the scene. Further interrogation of this situation where the RECs are "left out" is linked, rightly or wrongly, to the limited capacity of the RECs in project design, making the implementers to work harder to bridge the limited capacity at the RECs' level. "Capacity development to the RECs cannot be over-emphasized as it is clearly stated in the Concept Note that "Capacity building support is expected to strengthen the ability of ECOWAS and UEMOA to effectively carry out the regional policy dialogue with the view to design regional trade facilitation policies, as well as to monitor the implementation of these policies at the national level." It is important to emphasize the need to enhance inter-departmental cooperation and collaboration within the RECs, particularly at the ECOWAS Commission to ensure that the three components of the TFWA which cut across various departments at the Commission are properly implemented through effective coordination of the relevant departments. The capacity building required at the RECs therefore includes the strengthening of capabilities to coordinate the departments.

and financial resources to follow up on the achievements of the TFWA programme is highly questionable. Therefore, the continuity of the programme cannot be guaranteed once the flow of donors' support is impaired as neither the RECs nor the MS in the majority of countries visited indicated any signs of committed resources towards ownerships and sustainability. Basic activities like the meetings of the NTFC to facilitate the national coordination of the implementation of the TFA under the WTO TFA article 23.2 is funded by donors' support and only Cote d'Ivoire (among the countries visited) seem to have displayed some commitment to supporting their NTFCs. Poor economic situation, poor governance, and limited participation of high-ranking officials in the NTFC meetings have been ascribed as reasons pointing to non-sustainability of the TFWA programme .t The TFWA has developed initiatives such as the NTFC Maturity model to ensure sustainability but they are still heavily donor dependent.

CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation concludes that the TFWA programme design is in line with identified challenges, needs and priorities of both ECOWAS and UEMOA as well as their Member States from the beginning of the project until now. The complexity of the intervention and its wide scope entails that interventions to address TF issues will go beyond the timeline set by the project.

The consolidated approach towards programme implementation is considered as being an efficient way of rationalising donor support which avoids duplication of efforts and enables channelling of resources on areas which require assistance. This approach is commendable for future programmes.

The effects of the COVID 19 pandemic and insecurity in the region have undoubtedly affected the implementation of the programme's activities but the use of ad hoc corrective measures have indicated that implementation pace although slower than expected can be maintained and was generally appreciated by stakeholders. However, other constraints linked to the political economy, lack of skills and motivation, institutional setbacks, information deficiency, lack of motivation, low financial means have contributed to the slowdown of the programme activities and also in addressing TF issues in West Africa. These limitations are regarded as complicated to address but the implementer's presence at the local level, constant communication with regional and national authorities, the sustained provision of technical support and consistent efforts to maintain the implementation pace are considered as essential for the continuity of the programme.

The activities designed in the programme are appropriate and are aimed at achieving the expected results although they have been partially successful during the first two years of operation. While activities related to capacity-building, awareness and sensitization of the relevant stakeholders have influenced countries to carry out the required amendments related to trade facilitation measures, the results were limited regarding the actual implementation of trade facilitation-related policies, including the regional protocols on the free movement of goods and people. More efforts will be required to motivate RECs and countries to domesticate regional policies and protocols as well as show higher levels of commitment in attempts to address TF issues.

The commitment by national and regional authorities to the development of SIGMAT for regional connectivity of customs systems to promote seamless transit movement among the MS is considered an early sign of positive impact whilst it is too early to indicate the same for other activities. Beyond this, no significant improvement has been noted to impress the private sector operators regarding reforms at the borders.

Donors' support has traditionally played a significant role in efforts to promote regional integration within the ECOWAS Member States with the goal of encouraging sustainability by national and regional authorities. However, the goal seems not achievable, even under the TFWA, because the required financial commitment and technical capacity toward sustaining the reforms are not demonstrated by the relevant authorities, particularly by the MS. There is no significant road map to sustain the programme without the continuation of donors' support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthening the ECOWAS Commission to establish an efficient M&E mechanism for a more effective monitoring of regional projects. In the case of the ECOWAS Commission, an enhanced inter-department collaboration should be developed to ensure a more coordinated and effective interface by the ECOWAS Commission with the donors and the Member States to achieve the desired results in regional integration.

Directed to ECOWAS

- The current Members of the 2nd ETLT Task Force who are politically exposed persons in the region can be used to influence national decision-makers and accelerate the domestication of regional and international policies and protocols.

Directed to RECS

- Future programmes should be designed to enable institutions and countries to implement skills learnt through capacity building and ensure an internal institutional transfer of skills to limit institutional memory loss. The development of a human resources strategy followed by capacity building exercises at regional and national level taking into account the above is recommended.

Directed to IP and Donors

- Implement M&E monitoring mechanisms to create benchmark for countries related to their TF performances. The TFWA program has already started work on a regional mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the service standards of border agencies which is in progress. It is imperative that these tools are developed by the end of the project.

Directed to IP and MS

- Awareness for SSCBT is important but capacity building would require a lot of time and effort. Developing a pilot project in few countries in the form of a Trade/Border Information Centre (BIC) to provide effective information support to SSCBT when crossing borders could bring more concrete and positive results. An effective

implementation of the BIC could also put pressure on the relevant authorities at the border posts to carry out their respective tasks which would impact on the implementation of measures related to TF. The Trade Information centre operation in COMESA is an example of a successful venture at various border posts which has had the approval of SSCBT as well as the donors such as the EU in that region³. On a parallel basis, provide support in setting up SSCBT organisations at the border.⁴

Directed to IP and MS

- Involve of policy decision-makers from the beginning of the programme and maintain their involvement throughout the process through effective communication and sustained dialogue to ensure higher levels of ownership and engagement levels as well as continuity of the actions developed by the programme. Efficient leadership and commitment would have a significant impact on motivating and influencing technical and operational staff.

Directed to Donors and IP

- Strengthen the level of involvement and commitment of the NTFCs to ensure sustainability of regular sources of funding (not necessarily donor funding) through stronger participation of the private sector (being the principal beneficiaries). This will create higher levels of ownership and encourage the development of an effective NTFC with lower dependency on development partners.

Directed to IP and MS

- Design a capacity building programme that will enhance the implementing role of the key stakeholders at the national level, especially the Ministries of Trade identified as the “most important stakeholders for trade facilitation policy and implementation within their countries and are most important partners for ECOWAS and WAEMU for the link between regional and country related Trade Facilitation (TF) issues.”

Directed to IP

- Maintain the coordinated approach with implementing partners such as the WBG and GIZ to run large and complex programmes.

Directed to Donors

- Ensure that a higher level of SSCBT female traders is directly targeted for trainings in addition to their representative organisations. While women advocacy groups are important in coordinating these female traders, it is necessary that the advocacy groups work in collaboration with the relevant Ministries of Women affairs at national level.

Directed to IP and MS

³ COMESA Secretariat 2022, Study on the sustainability of Trade Information Desk Offices (TIDOS).

⁴ The reason for suggesting a BIC at a border crossing to support the SSCBT is based on feedback from fieldwork where complaints from the private sector identified limited knowledge of border procedures by the small-scale border traders and specific harassment of women traders as major issues. The presence of an independent structure to provide the necessary information and guidance on procedures, including monitoring border officials' conduct regarding how these traders are treated may be necessary.

- Involve more representatives of private sector, especially those involved in the trading sector in the programme's activities.

Directed to IP

- An enhanced engagement with the MS by the regional organizations (ECOWAS & UEMOA) can help suppress the lack of commitment by officials of MS at different levels in the "implementation of regional policies and in the achievement of expected results." This is possible through a closer working relation with the national governments to implement regional and international commitments that contribute to reducing administrative procedures imposed by the control agencies that are implementing trade facilitation measures at the borders. Following steps are necessary:
 - The Director of Customs at the ECOWAS Commission can closely and regularly engage the heads of Customs administrations in the MS to implement regional customs code, improve on the implementation of the ETLS, and promote regional harmonization and interconnectivity of customs systems.
 - The Director of Customs can create a framework for the establishment of a Coordinated Border Management (CBM) system to encourage 'border agency cooperation' under TFA article 8 with Customs as the lead agency towards harmonized procedures and reduced multiple checks.
 - The Director of Customs should create a more effective M&E to monitor the implementation of trade facilitation measures at the border and regularly debrief heads of agencies at the national level with a view to identifying and reducing barriers to corridor efficiency
 - The Director of Customs and Trade at the ECOWAS should see to it that the AFCTFA NTB monitoring mechanism is successfully implemented. This will provide MS and the NTFC with information and intelligence and enable targeted and efficient actions towards resolving TF issues.
 - The Director of the Private sector at the ECOWAS Commission should interact more closely with the private sector service providers and beneficiaries of trade facilitation measures to enhance the advocacy capabilities of the private sector at the national level. This will help to ensure the involvement of the private sector in the implementation of regional programmes, especially the transport and logistics operators who are directly involved in cross-border activities and can promote compliance.
 - The Director of Trade at the ECOWAS Commission should actively engage Trade Ministers in MS on the implementation of regional trade policies, including participating in selected scheduled meetings of the NTFC and RTFC to determine the level of participation of relevant agencies and the private sector. This will enable the Commission to promote active NTFCs at the national level as envisioned in TFA article 23.2.⁵ Effective NTFCs will promote a coordinated RTFC.

⁵ WTO TFA text: Article 23.2: Each Member shall establish and/or maintain a national committee on trade facilitation or designate an existing mechanism to facilitate both domestic coordination and implementation of the provisions of this Agreement

- The combined efforts of the above three directorates in collaboration with the Director of IT at the ECOWAS Commission can promote active engagements of MS in the implementation of regional trade facilitation measures under the TFWA.
- Above all, since the structure under the TFWA emphasizes the importance of Member States' engagement in the implementation of regional policies, it is imperative that the regional organizations play an active role in engaging more closely the officials of MS at different levels such as the heads of the implementing agencies, NTFCs and Trade Ministers to achieve the desired goal.

Directed to ECOWAS, UEMOA

LESSONS LEARNT

Efficient coordinated aid intervention

The successful coordination of a consortium of donors that financed the TFWA was a positive initiative that should be sustained. Notwithstanding the different priorities of the donors, the coordinated focus has demonstrated the level of efficiency that could be attained in international development through a consortium. Also, the cooperation and expertise drawn from the World Bank Group (WBG) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) that provided technical support to the RECs in project implementation, including support to the National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) in the Member States to hold meetings on trade facilitation issues, are strong elements of the TFWA that should be continued.

Elements influencing the EU external action

The EU external action through the TFWA is within the context of a well-designed programme which has taken into account the various trade related issues as well as the underlying constraints and hypotheses. The implementation of the TFWA programme through a coordinated approach of technical implementers is considered as one of the main factors which facilitated the contribution of the EU external action.

The elements which can be considered as hampering the EU interventions are related to the low level of ownership of member states and RECs. Although efforts are being undertaken by implementing partners, stronger signals must be sent to political decision makers to ensure that they influence their technical staff and provide commitment and resources to indicate higher levels of involvement. In addition, elements such as the COVID 19 pandemic and political instability leading to situations of insecurity in the region have negatively affected the TFWA programme.

Need for EU Commission's continued assistance

Due to the complexity of the issues related to trade in West Africa, shortage of financial resources and the political and economic characteristics of the member states, donor intervention remains a crucial part of development assistance. Maintaining continuous policy dialogue with stakeholders (especially in the area of trade) is key to ensure that needs and policy solutions are adequately identified leading to impactful technical and financial by EU

and other partners. TFWA is part of an ongoing process which will require more than one project lifetime, hence the need for sustained technical and financial support.

Success areas

The effective coordination of regional connectivity project under SIGMAT is remarkable and points toward the capacity of the Customs Department and the IT Department in the ECOWAS Commission to coordinate technical project effectively with the Customs administrations of Member States. It is therefore a great a lesson that a lot can be achieved in other areas of regional development by other Departments applying the right strategy, particularly in trade and infrastructure.

The need for more awareness

Despite the existence of a communications strategy for the programme, observations on the ground and reactions from stakeholders seem to suggest that information is not being absorbed as required. Many of the stakeholders including members of the NTFC, and decision makers are not fully informed about the TFWA programme. Particularly, key end beneficiary representatives in the transport and logistics sector at regional and the MS levels (being the main actors for moving goods among member states under the ETLS and are directly affected by cross-border delays) are not well informed about the TFWA, which implies that a broadening of the communication strategy is crucial. The communication actions may have achieved their targets but the problem seems to be on the end user side. One of the other issues relates to the fact that both public and private sector stakeholders participating at the NTFC levels do not seem to be trickling down information to other private sector operators.

Lack of domestication of international and regional agreements

Despite capacity building and awareness of relevant stakeholders in the provisions of the TFA to promote voluntary compliance by trade operators to ensure international best practices in the performance of duties by the public agencies' operatives, limited support was obtained from the political authorities. This support in form of counterpart funding and commitment would provide additional strength to enhance the activities of the NTFCs at the MS level beyond donors' funding. Furthermore, while targeted progress was made by the TFWA "to domesticate targeted instruments through national regulations, manual of procedures for RECs instruments and compliance with international obligations" under Section II of the TFA, implementation of trade facilitation measures in Section 1 of the TFA seems to pose a challenge to the MS. Reasons ascribed to the challenge are issues related to resources, funds, internet connectivity and others that remain unresolved and threatens sustainability of successes under the TFWA.

Make more efficient use of M&E results

Low levels of domestication of regional protocols and policies, resulting in existing inefficiencies in trade facilitation measures point towards the need for more effective actions following Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) results at regional level. MS should be prompted to abide to their commitments, ensure ownership and improve trading conditions at the national levels.

Importance of local presence

Stakeholders both at regional and national levels indicated that local presence of implementers has greatly helped in maintaining constant dialogue, improve institutional relationships and also providing constant support to member states. This setup has also enabled some improvement in the relationships between ECOWAS and UEMOA. Local presence is considered as a key factor in the programmes efficient implementation and should therefore be fully encouraged in future projects

Low buy in and motivation levels

In most of the countries visited by the evaluation team, the level of buy-in and motivation in dealing with TF issues is weak. There is a lack of consistency in NTFC representations, knowledge gaps about TF issues at decision making level, inefficient in-country communication mechanism (frequent presentation of TFWA programmes is required) and low participation of high-ranking officials. This indicates that although decision makers have signed trade protocols, more dialogue and actions are needed to enhance ownership levels which could result in stimulating higher levels of motivation with technical staff.

Low effectiveness of capacity building

The capacity building exercises carried out generally by the programme do not seem to have the required outcome as further need for training was constantly expressed. Feedback from stakeholders⁶ has not provided strong evidence of being empowered as a result of capacity building exercises. Paradoxically, there is a general fatigue of capacity building exercises with low noticeable impact on beneficiaries. Any strategic approach to training and its future use aimed at institutional reinforcement is not being reflected based on observations during fieldwork. This observation on the ground, however, is with a reservation not to undermine the impact of capacity building interventions by the TFWA. While real impact of the program may not be generally visible to all the stakeholders, it is undisputable that a template to build upon is being laid. For example, strengthening gender capacity of the NTFC members and mainstreaming gender into NTFC workings were issues formerly under the table, but the TFWA has brought them up as regular issues relevant to the NTFC. Furthermore, the initiative toward Regional Trade Facilitation Committee (RTFC) will enhance regional integration and strengthen the Community in continental trade under the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). The NTFC is particularly relevant in monitoring the implementation of the TF measures by border agencies, but it lacks the capacity to carry out the required M&E duties. However, transforming the relevant knowledge into effective action is seen as the main problem. This is more noticeable among the border officials who do not demonstrate the effect of capacity building in their work as border crossings remain challenging, especially the small-scale and women traders. Furthermore, the lack of consistency in participation at the national level reduces the effectiveness of the capacity-building interventions under the TFWA. This inconsistent participation affects the scheduled number of beneficiaries and the expected impact on service delivery. Any training or capacity-building exercise should therefore have a stronger emphasis on the importance of the training and its future use. In effect, while the TFWA seems to have covered significant planned activities, including “the development of regional trade facilitation measures which are aligned with international standards and best practices”, the national implementation agencies that benefitted through capacity building and

⁶ Based on interviews carried out at the RECS levels as well as the country levels

training workshops on the newly adopted regional instruments¹⁷ are yet to effectively demonstrate the impact of their new orientations in the performance of their duties. There is therefore more to be done to build on the foundation laid by the program focusing on the application of training acquired by the beneficiary border agencies and impact on border crossing activities.

Use of online platforms

Extensive use of online platforms for communication and training (specially to counteract the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic and those designed by TFWA and developed by UNCTAD to deliver a vast on-line training support activity for all NTFCs in the region) have proved to be efficient in terms of reduced pressure on logistics and costs. It was found to be more and more adopted as a powerful means to reach out to a larger audience both in terms of meetings conferences and training. Wifi accessibility has a high potential for progress in Africa which implies wider use of online platforms including SSCBT is expected and should be encouraged wherever possible.

Political Economy

Political economy remains a serious threat to interventions related to TF in West Africa. This creates deviations and changes priorities of member states on economic issues thereby affecting the efficiency of actions geared towards Trade Facilitation. Given the volatility of the political situation in the region which impacts on governance and security, disruptions in programme actions are inevitable. Future programmes will have to factor in this possibility and develop alternative plans accordingly or foresee creative actions to adapt to changing situations.

Relationship between RECS

Despite the efforts put in by the programme (such as strategic meetings to enhance the cooperation and exchange between the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions⁸) to improve the relationships between the RECS, the situation is far from being seamless. Issues of unbalanced shared responsibilities in the programme are constantly voiced out and create a permanent and additional issue to be considered in the implementation of the programme. The RECS are still closely linked to their institutional boundaries. They should be further encouraged to share additional responsibilities on future projects and look beyond their institutional set up by giving priority to regional objectives through higher levels of collaboration.

More awareness around gender

Although more activities are yet to be developed in the area of gender, those already started in this area suggest that there has been an increased awareness on this issue. The level of awareness of the programme has been noted to be limited to the implementers of the programme and mostly among gender advocacy groups that attend capacity building workshops. Beyond this circle, the grassroot and frontline women traders crossing the borders are not integrated into the programme. More work is certainly required in this area, including

⁷ TFWA Concept Note: Planned activities, pg 18

⁸ TFWA Program Annual Report: First Year

establishing appropriate structures and mechanisms providing information to support awareness on the ground.

Low involvement of the private sector in most countries

The TFWA programme focusses on building a strong private sector both as service providers and beneficiaries of trade facilitation which includes enhancement of their advocacy capabilities. Despite their representation at the level of the NTFC, there is low level of awareness and complaints about lack of private sector involvement in the programme, especially from the operators on the ground and at grassroots levels. Cote d'Ivoire is an exception among the countries visited where a high level of awareness, commitment, and involvement of the private sector through the NTFC has been observed. Higher involvement of trade related private sector organisation is required by encouraging private sector NTFCs member to pass on information and knowledge to sector specific organisations.

Civil society involvement

Although the program has enabled the mapping of civil society organizations involved in trade and trade facilitation, their level of involvement in decision-making remains low. The potential for them to generate informed proposals as well as their struggle against corrupt practices along the corridors demonstrate that they have a crucial role in the programme. Larger participation of CSOs especially those involved with SSCBTs should be envisaged.

Limited impact by the Ministries of Trade

The TFWA programme identified the Ministries of Trade as the “most important stakeholders for trade facilitation policy and implementation within their countries”.⁹ Lesson from the programme has shown that the Trade Ministries appeared to have made limited impact related to their expected role, particularly in coordinating the NTFC members toward an effective and efficient implementation of trade facilitation measures¹⁰.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report constitutes the final deliverables of the Mid Term Evaluation of the West Africa Trade Facilitation Programme (TFWA) FED/2017/039-046 and presents results based on an in-depth document analysis (focused on the Evaluation Questions) and field work carried out in six member states participating in the programme.

⁹ Document on Specific Terms of Reference – Part A, page 5

¹⁰ For example, the Ministry of Gender/Women Affairs in Nigeria identified as an important stakeholder to address gender inequalities in the implementation of trade facilitation measures is neither familiar nor involved in the activities of the TFWA even though the officials of this Ministry attend meetings of the NTFC at Federal Ministry of Trade. Our interaction with the officials of the Ministry of Women Affairs during fieldwork in Abuja showed their lack of knowledge of the activities under the TFWA. While the women advocacy groups who are also members of the NTFC attended capacity building workshops under the TFWA, there is no linkage with the Ministry of Women Affairs which is the national agency that coordinates gender issues. The missing link here is the limited impact of the Trade Ministry in coordinating the relevant stakeholders involved in the domestic implementation of the TFA. In Ghana where the Trade Ministry seems to be more active in its coordinating role, the situation is better but requires an improvement in ensuring that the private sector women advocacy groups work closely with the public sector gender agency to escalate the activities to the highest-level government official for nation implementation.

The purpose of this report is to provide the context under which the evaluation is being carried out, the objectives of the evaluations, its scope, a brief description of the methodological approach, the evaluation results, key lessons learnt, conclusions and recommendations

This first section of the report provides a general introduction, the context as well as the purpose and objectives of this assignment. Section 3 describes answers to the evaluation questions, Section 4 Gives an overall assessment of the evaluation, Section 5 shows the lessons learnt. Section 6 contains conclusion and Section 7 proposes the recommendations.

1.1. Overall context

As one of the world's fastest growing regions and endowed with rich resources, West Africa is quickly evolving into a global emerging market. While social and economic fragility are common challenges, West African countries also share trade and investment opportunities which have the potential to yield inclusive social and economic development for its 370 million people. Therefore, cooperation on mutual issues is crucial to ensure sustainable economic development and self-reliance.

This potential of West Africa to evolve into a global emerging market was supported by a regional legal framework under the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) Agreement that committed the region's 15 members comprising Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo to promote economic cooperation among member states in order to raise living standards and promote economic development.

However, there is a broad recognition that the earlier aspirations are yet to be achieved largely due to many obstacles to the implementation of the ECOWAS Agreement (Protocol A/P.1/5/79 Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment) such as multiple checkpoints, discriminatory treatment of citizens of other countries and limited application of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), etc. Consequently, while the Regional Economic Community (REC) established over 40 years ago, has provided an enormous contribution to the economic development of the region by harnessing the potential of international trade, the trade potential, particularly for intraregional trade, cannot be fully harnessed due to insufficiently harmonized economic framework, including limited customs cooperation and uncoordinated regional border procedures that are neither standardized nor simplified. Intraregional trade has been characterised by high transaction costs, administrative barriers, heavy border and customs clearance processes, informal checkpoints and roadblocks, etc., all of which impede seamless border crossing for extended periods of time and cause considerable costs.

Although governments and development partners had earlier provided support to regional trade and integration in West Africa, such supports before the TFWA program had often been considered as uncoordinated and fragmented with limited potential to achieve the desired results. For example, an earlier World Bank -assisted regional Trade and Transport Facilitation Program (ALTTFP) in collaboration with the ECOWAS Commission and ECOWAS Member States experienced limited coordination with other programs such as the West Africa Trade &

Investment Hub initiated by USAID, including Borderless Alliance program. These programs had common regional integration objectives but fragmented and did not enjoy a coordinated strategy as currently experienced under the TFWA.

Taking into consideration the above circumstances and challenges, a two-year long research and stakeholder dialogue process (regional organizations, individual countries, and private sector representatives), with the cooperation of ECOWAS and the UEMOA, key development partners and other stakeholders led to the design and funding of the West Africa Trade Facilitation Programme (TFWA). The TFWA program seeks to improve the free and efficient movement of goods in the region and internationally by reducing the time and cost of trade borne by the private sector in West Africa. It seeks goods to move along key regional corridors and to increase engagement of the private sector and civil society in trade facilitation reforms with a particular focus on women and small-scale traders.

1.2. Objectives of the TFWA

The **overall objective** is to contribute to the strengthening of the ECOWAS common market and the integration of the West African region into the international economic and trading systems.

The **specific objectives**:

1. Improved implementation of trade facilitation measures consistent with WTO TFA commitments at regional and national levels;
2. Increased efficiency of trade corridors between West African countries.

1.3. Expected Outcomes of the TFWA

The expected outcomes of the TFWA programme are:

1. Trade facilitation measures improved and more efficiently implemented;
2. More efficient movement of goods along selected corridors;
3. Barriers for small scale traders reduced with an emphasis on improving conditions for women traders.

The TFWA programme is a joint effort of key development partners, including the EU, USAID, Governments of the Netherlands and Germany, with a budget of €55 million (EU contribution €20m). The implementing partners (IP) of TFWA programme are the World Bank (WB) Group and the German Development Cooperation Agency (GIZ), while its Steering Committee is chaired by ECOWAS and supported by UEMOA as deputy chair. The joint effort of key development partners aimed at overcoming the challenge faced by many donors who provided “support to regional trade and integration in West Africa but often in an uncoordinated and fragmented manner.”¹¹ The uncoordinated assistance was often isolated, short-term projects with quick gains rather than longer-term, collaborative efforts focused on root causes. This active collaboration by the development partners was built upon by the TFWA programme. In effect, the implementation of the 3 components under the TFWA was divided between the two implementing partners (IP), the GIZ and the WBG, based on their ongoing interventions in West Africa and appears to be a good strategy for the implementing partners to consolidate on their existing areas of interest and relevance under a coordinated platform provided by the TFWA. Accordingly, GIZ focused on “the acceleration of the process for the creation of a customs union in West Africa through the support to ECOWAS in improving the ETLS, in the development of a Common Trade Policy and in the harmonization of trade-related policies and statistical data. These activities are in Component 1 of the TFWA (Trade Facilitation measures improved and more efficiently implemented). Meanwhile, WBG focused on the facilitation and improvement of trade in five West African countries along three major corridors, including trade facilitation in the UEMOA region aimed at trade facilitation promotion, modernization of customs administration and improvement of border control management.¹² These activities are captured in Component 2 (More efficient movement of goods along selected corridors) and Component 3 (Barrier for small-scale traders reduced with an emphasis on improving conditions for women traders).

1.4. Objectives of the Mid-Term Evaluation

The **main objectives** are to provide ECOWAS and UEMOA, the relevant services of the EU, BMZ, the Dutch MFA, USAID, other interested stakeholders and the wider public with:

- An overall independent assessment of the past performance of the TFWA, paying particular attention to its results measured against its expected objectives; and the reasons underpinning such results;

¹¹ Concept Not, page 4, para 6

¹² Ibid, page 4 footnote 9

- Key lessons learned, conclusions and related recommendations in order to improve current and future interventions;
- An overview of the key actors or factors that are driving or hindering progress in i) implementing the key activities and ii) in achieving key objectives and results.

The **specific objectives** of this evaluation are:

- To assess any problem which should be solved and for learning purposes, in particular with respect to the implementation modalities and to the new governance structure established for this programme;
- To feed into the next EU joint programming exercise (2021-2027) in identifying priorities and initiatives that can be better addressed at the national, regional and continental levels;
- To assess the positioning of EU and its development partners in West Africa in terms of design, implementation, results, impact and responsiveness to trade and trade facilitation in West Africa.

1.5. Beneficiaries of the programme

The beneficiaries of the programme are ECOWAS, UEMOA, government departments related to trade and customs and the private sector. In effect, these beneficiaries in three categories of stakeholders involved in facilitating regional trade are; regional, national, and the private sector with the expected benefits to all the categories of stakeholders as follows: At the regional level, the programme is expected to work closely with regional organizations (ECOWAS, UEMOA) to strengthen regional frameworks and policies, which include the establishment of the regional customs code and the revision of the ECOWAS trade liberation scheme towards intra-regional free trade, and also to create improved monitoring of trade facilitation measures implemented in the region. At the national level, the programme is expected to work with national governments to implement regional and international commitments which help to reduce administrative procedures imposed by the control agencies and implement facilitation measures on the ground. Lastly, at the private sector level, the programme will build a strong private sector both as service providers and beneficiaries of trade facilitation, including the enhancement of advocacy capabilities of the private sector¹³

¹³ Concept Note, page 16, para 2.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION SCOPE

2.1. Evaluation scope

The evaluation will assess the TFWA using the 6 standard DAC evaluation criteria + EU added value specific evaluation criterion. The specific aspects to be evaluated are:

- The materialisation of the expected results and their facilitating / contrasting factors.
- The contribution to SDGs (1, 4, 8, 16) and the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues. The matching of the needs of the regional (ECOWAS and UEMOA) and national partners including as assessment of the AfCFTA and recommendations on how the programme can support ECOWAS member states to take advantage of the scheme.
- The performance of the programme management and its capacity to adapt to changing conditions.
- The governing mechanisms of the Intervention including the effectiveness of various steering committees for project administration.

Stakeholders of the assignment:

This assignment is expected to interact with three main categories of stakeholders (at the regional and national levels and key international cooperation partners involved in TF areas)

Regional level stakeholders include:

- ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions, the Directorates of Trade, Customs, Community Computer Centre (CCC), Gender and Directorate of Transport, Regional private sector organizations and associations involved in trade facilitation.

National level stakeholders include:

- Ministries of Trade, Ministries of Gender / Women Affairs, National Trade Facilitation Committees, Ministries of Transport, Customs Port authorities, private sector, civil society, academia.

Major international cooperation partners active in TF matters in West Africa include:

- World Bank Group, WTO, WCO, UNCTAD, ITC, AfDB, and EU Member States' agencies like BMZ, GIZ, DFID, Netherland MFA, and other country agencies present in West Africa like USAID, CIDA, and JICA.

2.2. Geographical Scope

The geographic scope of this MTE covers the TFWA's trade corridor focus (Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mali, Benin, Togo, Nigeria, Niger), while its temporal scope covers the entire period from 30th September 2018 to 31st October 2020.

2.3. Methodological Approach

The evaluation was carried through the following 4 phased processes: Inception, Desk, Field, and Synthesis, which were developed in the inception report and summarised below.

Inception phase

This phase consisted of a hybrid kick-off meeting with EUD and RG, followed by Documents/ data collection/ review and background analysis and carrying out open-end interviews with TFWA offices. This included an online presentation of Inception reports.

Research Phase

This phase consisted of an in-depth document analysis followed by semi-structured interviews with selected key stakeholders. This exercise included the identification of information gaps and of hypotheses to be tested in the field phase. The Desk Note was presented online.

Field Phase

The field phase consisted of visits to six TFWA member states including ECOWAS and UEMOA MS by the evaluators. Interaction with EUD/RG, ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions, NTFC members, Representatives of donors in MS, and the project implementers. This phase comprised primary data collection and analysis through structured interviews. Some of the interactions were undertaken in the form of a group discussion with private sector operators, with representatives of associations and with NTFC members.

Synthesis Phase

A final analysis and an overall assessment of findings were carried out in this phase which consisted of clustering and prioritizing lessons learned, drawing conclusion from the evaluation questions and providing recommendations on future actions.

Details of the methodological approach are found in Annex 6.

2.5 Limitations

Document review: Several documents were made available later during the evaluation exercise.

Field Visits: The field visits for one country (Mali) had to be changed for security reasons. There were delays in obtaining responses from the stakeholders, especially for the field visits. Much of the planning for the meetings at the national level had to be carried out during the visits.

Accessing information during the fieldwork: A majority of stakeholders found it difficult to relate to the programme activities and results between the start of the programme into 2020.

Interpretation of Results

In making conclusions about the activities and issues the consultants had difficulties in balancing the different opinions from the various stakeholders in the course of this evaluation exercise. It is the consultant's duty to identify the gaps and present them in a way that reflects the reality and provides facts on the programme's performance. The consultants have tried as much as possible to reflect the perceptions of the programmes stakeholders and triangulate the information with other reliable sources.

3. RESPONSE TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

EQ1. To what extent the components financed under the action and their design remain relevant to the overall objectives and strategy of the FA – as originally formulated and/or evolved over time; and in particular, relevance to ECOWAS and UEMOA priorities?

The project was designed to improve the free and efficient movement of goods in the region and internationally through the reduction of time and cost of trade borne by the private sector in West Africa, and by strengthening the ability of regional trading networks to take advantage of these improvements. The response to the existing challenges related to trade facilitation was addressed by the project under the following three component. The first component focusses on creating enabling trade environments in West Africa by improving the implementation of trade facilitation measures at the regional and country level; the second component seeks to find practical and concrete solutions for traders along selected corridors in West Africa to improve the flow of goods along these corridors. Given the importance of small traders (including women) and the unfavourable conditions in which they operate, the third component addresses the challenges they face and aims at reducing trade costs and creating a safer trading environment for small-scale traders at the border, especially.

The project design was based on the identified challenges and needs of the RECS and Member States supported by studies carried out by IMF, WTO and World Bank. According to research and evidence from various reports related to challenges to intraregional and international trade and trade facilitation in West Africa, the components of the programme were and remain relevant to the overall objectives and strategy of the FA address the issues and needs of the participating RECS and Member States.

Judgement Criteria J.C.1.1
Alignment of FA Actions and Design with ECOWAS and UEMOA priorities
Indicator 1.1.1
Reference between the ECOWAS and UEMOA strategies and the MS needs they intend to support

Referring to the EQ1, The J.C.1.1 tries to find evidence whether the FA Actions and Design are aligned with the participating RECs (ECOWAS AND UEMOA) priorities. This is expected to be identified through support required to address the ECOWAS and UEMOA strategies and the MS needs.

With regard to ECOWAS and UEMOA trade strategies, there is a strong convergence between the two regional organizations in relation to the needs of their member states. This convergence attempts to harmonize the existing two different Non-Tariff Barrier (NTB) reporting systems and TFA implementation between ECOWAS and UEMOA. However, this attempt is yet to move beyond discussion level, including the question on how “these link to a continental NTB reporting framework”¹⁴ What appears significant here is the timing of the

¹⁴ TFWA Concept Note, pg 4 last paragraph

implementation of the TFWA with the ambition of the AfCFTA to reduce non-tariff barriers in intra-African trade. In this regard, the relevance of the TFWA cannot be over-emphasized in supporting “the introduction of the AfCFTA NTB reporting mechanism” and ensuring the alignment of the continental and regional NTB reporting mechanisms and institutional structures”. While it remains unclarified how the ECOWAS and AfCFTA elements will align, it is certain that AfCFTA is bringing an additional layer to existing regional trade agreements and it is viewed as a threat to the sacredness of the ECOWAS Customs Union.¹⁵ The suspected threat notwithstanding, the TFWA can provide a mitigating platform for better understanding of the benefits of the AfCFTA by the ECOWAS member states. Implementation of the AfCFTA is expected to expand the intra-African market and trade, particularly, creating broad opportunities in investment by making “local and foreign investment in ECOWAS countries more attractive,¹⁶ especially in the banking and telecommunications sector. With these opportunities under the AfCFTA and the existing “ECOWAS investment code”, which was adopted in 2018, along with implementation modalities, the TFWA can help create an “awareness of the investment code, which is currently lacking in the MS authorities, including sensitization on “what measures to be taken to ensure compliance with the code”.¹⁷ Furthermore, supporting the member states to align their national laws with the regional and continental requirements should be a priority for the TFWA in the remaining period of the project.¹⁸ Among the steps to take to impact the process is to harmonize the ECOWAS investment code which is a regional investor-state dispute settlement mechanism with the dispute settlement that may be proposed under the AfCFTA.¹⁹ Finally, an enabling environment must be created in the MS to attract businesses and long term investment, which requires eliminating national obstacles to investment and ensuring stability and “links to transport and trade networks, fair treatment and reducing corruption.”²⁰ A priority for ECOWAS, therefore, within the TFWA period is to connect the investment promotion agencies (IPAs) and “the negotiations and the private sector to ensure that the positions negotiated at the continental level aligns with the regional commitments.”²¹

It is encouraging that in response to the significant challenges associated with cross-border trade, UEMOA had established a trade liberalization scheme (TLS) based on preferential tariffs since 1983²², with the objective of promoting the free movement of goods with a view to creating a free trade area. Subsequently, UEMOA reviewed its external trade policy, opening up progressively and qualitatively through the Common External Tariff (CET). UEMOA member states have thus harmonized their trade policy with third countries to promote imports of capital goods and inputs, which are necessary to develop the union production potential.

¹⁵ Ibid para 2 pg 5

¹⁶ Draft Note for DDE – AfCFTA-TFWA Impacts, Phase II negotiations, Investment pg 11

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid pg 12, para 2

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² <https://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/FR-Summary-14ECOWASTradeAndTradeFacilitation.pdf>.

Since its inception, ECOWAS has put in place a trade policy aimed at increasing -intra-regional trade, increasing the volume of trade and stimulating economic activities in the region in order to contribute to the improvement of the economic well-being of the region's citizens. One of the key elements of the Community's trade policy is the implementation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) since 1979²³. The objective of ECOWAS is also to progressively establish a Customs Union among the Member States of the Community which will result in the total elimination of customs duties and taxes having equivalent effect. Given their common objectives, the two sub regional organizations have embarked on a process of harmonizing their integration schemes in order to extend their scope to the entire West African region gradually. However, the implementation of these strategies faced will various implementation difficulties.

ECOWAS and UEMOA have also agreed to integrate a sub-committee on small-scale cross-border trade and gender within the Regional Trade Facilitation Committees in the West Africa which aimed at reducing obstacles for small traders, including women.

The above strategies from both RECs indicate that the components of the programme are in line and relevant to ECOWAS, UEMOA and their MS priorities and needs. The activities designed by the programme are addressing on going issues related to trade and trade facilitation.

The TFWA is also aligned with the requirements of the AfCFTA which entails free movement of goods across the continent and relate to trade facilitation, transport corridors and is 'inclusive' in supporting women and small-scale traders like TFWA. According to the Draft Note²⁴ on AfCFTA-TFWA Impacts, there is an opportunity to "*capitalise on political traction and rhetoric around the AfCFTA to take forward the regional trade facilitation agenda*" Discussion with various public and private stakeholders as well as IPs indicate that the AfCFTA has quite an ambitious scope and ECOWAS and UEMOA countries need to ensure that they abide by regional agreements first which could then become a steppingstone for the AfCFTA.

Judgement Criteria 1.1
Alignment of FA Actions and Design with ECOWAS and UEMOA priorities
Indicator 1.1.2
Reference between TFWA formulation documents to ECOWAS, UEMOA and MS needs they intend to support

The second indicator for this judgement criteria looks at how the formulation of the FA document addresses the ECOWAS, UEMOA and member state's needs.

The TFWA Programme Note, takes cognisance of the benefits of trade as a major driver of growth, food security, employment and consequently poverty reduction. The latter being an

²³ <https://ecotis.projects.ecowas.int/policy-development/common-market-and-custom-union/>

²⁴ Philomena Apiko, Amanda Bisong, Bruce Byiers, Poorva Karkare, Sean Woolfrey, Draft Note for DDE - AfCFTA-TFWA Impacts.

area of concern especially in all West African states in addition to rapid urbanization, population growth, increasing scarcity of natural resource. The programme document indicates that *“the impact of trade costs in Africa which are the equivalent of a 219% tariff on a product”*²⁵. The Concept note highlights that *“An improved regional integration with better connectivity systems and increasing participation of regional authorities, Member States and private sector bodies, could help bring transparency and predictability at borders, leverage domestic economies of scales and enhance productivity”*²⁶.

Despite the importance given to regional integration through the Common External Tariff (CET) implementation debate in West Africa and political will at the RECs level to increase²⁷ trade intra-regional trade, the concept note points out the challenges linked to trade facilitation which have an impact on increasing trade transaction costs and reducing trade flows between countries. The need to reduce them was therefore urgent. The following challenges were identified by the TFWA concept note:

- *Existence of trade facilitation policies (such as the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters, CET, and the ETLS) at the regional level, but the degree of implementation is less than optimal;*
- *Underutilization of the ETLS;*
- *Difference of external tariffs on some products in some countries differ from the actual CET;*
- *The need to support the then forthcoming implementation of the ECOWAS Customs code which faced risks of absence of sensitization and awareness raising activities for the national implementation agencies, organized private sector and civil societies;*
- *Coordination failure of the ECOWAS trade policies which required support to the trade facilitation working group of the ECOWAS Commission, established in early 2017;*
- *Slow adoption and implementation of international trade facilitation measures, including the World Trade Organization’s Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA);*
- *The need to improve North-South trade corridors in West Africa that connect the Sahel regions to their coastal neighbours due to lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets and high transit costs;*
- *Inability of the West African trade and economic corridors to operate to their full potential due to complicated, costly and unpredictable border clearance procedures, rules and regulations; Inefficiencies in goods are handling; lack of harmonization of*

²⁵ *Speeding up trade: benefits and challenges of implementing the WTO*, World Trade Report 2015, https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tradfa_e/tradfa_introduction_e.htm.

²⁶ World Bank, GIZ, West Africa Trade Facilitation Program Concept Note.

²⁷ ECOWAS Ministers adopted a policy to increase its current intra-regional trade from 12% to 40% by 2030.

conflicting trade and customs related rules, lack of coordination between border agencies, codes and standards and simplification of customs and border procedures;

- *Challenges linked to Small-scale cross-border trading activities which create income-generating opportunities, (including for disadvantaged groups such as women, unemployed youth and people living with disabilities) and contribute to food security;*
- *Challenges linked to Small-scale (non-registered or ‘informal’) cross-border trade²⁸ is a common feature of West Africa;*
- *Problems faced by Women traders who play a crucial role in small-scale trade activities in the region;*
- *The need for multi stakeholder engagement including the Private sector associations, including those representing small-scale traders and women, along with civil society organizations (CSO), including advocacy groups, which play a crucial role in driving reforms;*
- *The need to support private sector associations and CSOs in West Africa who often lack the financial and technical capacity to be truly effective;*
- *The need to provide technical assistance to private sector logistics service providers that involves trucking companies, freight forwarders, customs brokers, terminal operators;*
- *No steady and significant improvement was made by any of the ECOWAS countries on trade facilitation according to Doing Business Report and the Logistical Performance Index;*
- *Various donor interventions were seen in the form of quick gains rather than rather than longer-term, collaborative efforts focused on root causes;*
- *Assistance provided by development agencies were carried out in an uncoordinated and fragmented manner.*

The need for West African countries and regional organizations to work in a more harmonized manner to address challenges corresponding to the *“implementation of existing commitments and invest time and resources in processes to lower the time and cost involved with cross-border trade”* was considered as a priority to avoid duplication and increase effectiveness of

²⁸ “Small-scale” cross-border trade is the preferred terminology in the context of this program, as opposed to “informal” trade. This is due to three main reasons, as follows: a) the term “small-scale” tends to better represent the reality on the ground, which often features small-sized consignments traded across borders by unregistered operators using both formal and informal channels; b) facilitation of small-scale trade flows, as opposed to larger, commercial-scale ones, can have a more direct impact on livelihoods generation and poverty eradication at grassroots level; and c) the term “informal” tends to carry a negative connotation and can be easily confused with “illegal” – in this sense, small-scale trade should not be confused with or equated to smuggling.

interventions. During the planning discussions for the development of the TFWA project, it was observed that the *“drive to unlock the trade facilitation must come from the Member States and regional organizations”*.

As a response to the above identified issues and challenges, the TFWA programme therefore proposed a *“unique platform for coordination by bringing together a critical mass of donors under one umbrella, marching in one direction, focused on a single vision”*. The idea was to get key development partners together *“to offer an integrated systematic support program with a longer-term perspective, in a major step forward towards avoiding fragmented and duplicative actions and creating complementarity”*. The design of the programme was the result of consultations from various studies and recommendation from a comprehensive programming document based on the scoping and design work undertaken during the Accelerating Trade in West Africa (ATWA) project.

The result was a five-year program (four-year support for GIZ) in support of trade and regional integration in West Africa, aimed at supporting on-going efforts to improve West Africa's trade performance led by regional commissions, national governments, the private sector and civil society.

The TFWA has been designed in line with the priorities of both the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions as well as their respective Member States. These priorities in the programme as well as the activities are consistent with the following strategic documents and their priorities: the Community Strategic Framework (2016 – 2020) of the ECOWAS Commission²⁹; The 2020 Vision and the 2012 Strategy for Regulating Informal Trade in West Africa adopted by ECOWAS; the outcomes contained in the 2013-2017 Informal Trade Regulation Support Programme in the ECOWAS Region (ITRSP), (with particular reference to the availability of *“Reliable and up-to-date information on informal trade”*; Enhancing *Institutional capacities of informal trade stakeholders and their participation in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies on the development of intra-regional trade; the elimination of obstacles to the development of formal trade*); and also the 2015-2020 ECOWAS Plan of Action on Gender and Trade.

The programme also has considered including a balanced mix of hard traditional, trade facilitation interventions (which involve activities that support trade corridor management and enhance regional connectivity, including through the use of state-of-the-art ICT) with softer, more targeted measures³⁰ which related to extensive support to activities in the area of policy dialogue, capacity building, and awareness raising, at regional, national, and also local level. The latter lessons from previous trade facilitation experiences show limited impact of programme activities which are focused on infrastructural developments, with less importance given to capacitating policymakers on designing and implementing trade facilitation reforms, as well as empowering and informing private sector operators (especially those from the Small cross-border trade operators).

²⁹ The Community strategic framework is a medium-term planning document of the Commission which sets strategies and programs to be implemented contributing to creating the desired conditions for economic growth and development within the sub-region.

³⁰ World Bank, GIZ, West Africa Trade Facilitation Program Concept Note.

Taking into consideration the above issues, the objective of the program was to improve the free and efficient movement of goods in the region and internationally through the reduction of time and cost of trade borne by the private sector in West Africa, and by strengthening the ability of regional trading networks to take advantage of these improvements

To address the identified challenges, TFWA programme therefore developed the following a three-pronged intervention:

Component 1: Trade facilitation measures improved and more efficiently implemented

Component 2: More efficient movement of goods along selected corridors

Component 3: Barriers for small scale traders reduced with an emphasis on improving conditions for women traders

The way the actions have been formulated correspond to the areas which requires support for the participating RECS and the member states. These had also been confirmed during the interviews carried out during the fieldwork with the respective representatives of the ECOWAS and UEMOA.

Regarding the Component 1, the gaps observed by the programme and activities in terms of providing countries with the required support in implementing procedures and processes as well as assisting MS to domesticate and implement policies tallies with the observations during the field work which revealed the existence of the identified problems.

Feedback from the fieldwork³¹ on Component 2 reaffirmed the need for the above intervention given that little progress was being achieved in trade facilitation as a result of the existence of numerous problems but mostly related to lack of political will, resistance to change and the political economy in the region.

During the evaluation exercise, stakeholders confirmed that the proposed interventions for Component 3 are justified in line with the low level of progress achieved regarding issues pertaining to SSCBT and especially women traders.

Some of the documents from ECOWAS and UEMOA, such as the "Regional Strategy for the Implementation of the UEMOA Aid for Trade Program"; the "Logical Framework for the Implementation of the Aid for Trade Program of the UEMOA"; the 2020 Vision and the 2012 Strategy for Regulating Informal Trade in West Africa; the 2013-2017 Informal Trade Regulation Support Programme; the 2015-2020 ECOWAS Plan of Action on Gender and Trade indicate that the regional needs are in line with the objectives of the TFWA programme which are to improve the free and efficient movement of goods in the region and internationally through the reduction of time and cost of trade borne by the private sector in West Africa, and

³¹ Information collected from stakeholders at the private sector level as well as the institutional level

by strengthening the ability of regional trading networks to take advantage of these improvements.

Stakeholders indicated that the problems related to TF in West Africa are still very relevant and efforts to improve the conditions under which trade is carried out is part of an ongoing process. Interventions scheduled within the time frame of this programme will contribute to bring part of the solution to TF issues.

Judgement Criteria 1.1
Alignment of FA Actions and Design with ECOWAS and UEMOA priorities
Indicator 1.1.3
Degree of correspondence between the overall and specific objectives of the programme and the overall priorities defined by ECOWAS and UEMOA and the MS in their strategies / policies

This third indicator relative to J.C.1.1 looks at the relation between the overall and specific objectives of the programme and the overall priorities defined by ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Member states.

The programme's objectives are to improve the free and efficient movement of goods in the region and internationally through the reduction of time and cost of trade borne by the private sector in West Africa, and by strengthening the ability of regional trading networks to take advantage of these improvements.

The following documents indicating strategies and policies developed and adopted by both ECOWAS and UEMOA provide evidence to the links between the programmes objectives. According to the UEMOA's common trade policy (UEMOA, 2007): *"the Union's common trade policy covers all the measures and actions implemented separately or jointly by UEMOA with a view to ensuring the perfect functioning of the Union market as well as its supply of all products, which must be there in sufficient quantities and of good quality, and at the best price for consumers"*. Furthermore, the Article 4 of the amended UEMOA Treaty (UEMOA, 2009): mentions that the Union pursues the achievement of the following objectives:

- create a common market between the Member States based on the free movement of persons, goods, services, capital and the right of establishment of persons exercising a self-employed or salaried activity, as well as on a common external tariff and a policy common commercial;
- establish coordination of national sectoral policies, through the implementation of common actions and possibly common policies, particularly in the areas of human resources, land use planning, transport and telecommunications, environment, agriculture, energy, industry and mining;
- harmonize, to the extent necessary for the proper functioning of the common market, the laws of the Member States, and particularly the tax system.

The UEMOA priorities related to trade are defined in its "*Regional Strategy for the Implementation of the UEMOA Aid for Trade Program*³²" and the "*Logical Framework for the Implementation of the Aid for Trade Program of the UEMOA*". The overall objective of this strategy is to help member states increase their exports of goods and services within the framework of the global trading system. In addition, the logical framework of this strategy identifies the following five specific objectives:

- ensure ownership and mastery of trade policies and regulations by experts from Member States and the Commission;
- develop intra-regional and international trade of Member States;
- strengthen trade-related infrastructure in the sub-region;
- diversify and increase the production capacities of the Member States;
- make necessary adjustments and take into account other trade-related needs.

In relation to the TFWA programme, the actions in the above strategy were developed in the areas of internal trade liberalisation and, the management of the CET and safeguard measures, the simplification of regulations and procedures in order to facilitate trade.

The "2020 Vision and the 2012 Strategy for Regulating Informal Trade in West Africa" was adopted by ECOWAS, especially in relationship to the two following areas: a) Optimizing informal trade information systems; and b) Officialising the existing commercial sectors by simplifying and predicting delays and duties; are in line with the programme objectives.

In the "2013-2017 Informal Trade Regulation Support Programme in the ECOWAS Region" (ITRSP), reference is made to three outcomes which are: Outcome 1: Reliable and up-to-date information on informal trade is available; Outcome 2: Institutional capacities of informal trade stakeholders and their participation in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies on the development of intra-regional trade are enhanced), and; Outcome 3: Reforms essential to the elimination of obstacles to the development of formal trade are undertaken.

The "2015-2020 ECOWAS Plan of Action on Gender and Trade" is expected to contribute to the achievement of its four main objectives, i.e.: (i) to increase women's productive capacity and export competitiveness; (ii) to promote gender-sensitive trade policy development and implementation among Member countries; (iii) to strengthen synergy and coordination mechanism for different agencies involved in trade and border management; and (iv) to increase investment in gender sensitive infrastructure to facilitate trade.

It is clear from the documents indicated above for both ECOWAS and UEMOA that there is a strong correlation between the programme objectives and the overall priorities defined by ECOWAS and UEMOA and the MS in their strategies / policies. Discussions at the regional and country level confirmed that the programme objectives were relevant to the context and the priorities of the RECS and their member states.

³² Stratégie régionale de mise en œuvre du programme d'aide pour le commerce de l'UEMOA.

Judgement Criteria 1.2
The design of TFWA programme (duration, conditions, mix of inputs, theory of change) responds to the challenges and specificities of the priorities they intend to support, and the indicators used to measure results are SMART. ³³
Indicator 1.2.1
Evolution in the type of inputs

Based on the results from the TFWA annual reports year 1 and 2, there was no specific indications of evolution in the inputs to the programme, despite interventions and activities related to the COVID 19 pandemic. The latter negatively influenced the programme's activities with reduced capacity to implement various activities due to varying levels of remote readiness. Programme implementers provided solutions such as remote work through internet and wi-fi where needed to support remote work and continuously updated the Year 3 work plan. In response to the effects of the COVID pandemic, the programme implementers had to provide additional efforts in terms of:

Sharing guidelines and information to provide guidance notes on facilitating trade during the pandemic. In addition to promote best practices and further transparency on regional emergency responses and the related border procedures, dedicated COVID-19 webpages were created in the TFWA website and links to the ECOWAS trade information system (ECOTIS).

Collection of information on COVID-19 measures: Provide for depository of information and several mappings of COVID-19 related measures implemented by TFWA country governments.

Monitoring of COVID: the TFWA programme has collected data and carried out research on the impact of COVID-19 crisis on the West African trade and traders including changes in trade patterns, trade modality and economic impact on small-scale traders.

Facilitation of the movement of relief and essential supplies TFWA worked with ECOWAS to circulate the HS codes of the list of these essential goods related to the COVID-19 pandemic to facilitate the importation process of the emergency relief goods.

Discussions with the project implementers indicated that there were no major changes in the financial and technical inputs compared to what was previously planned in the work programmes. Due to COVID-19 there have been a shift in the financial allocations to unexpected activities, but no major disruptions were noted. Even if interventions were required in new areas, the technical support was within the programme framework.

³³ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound

Judgement Criteria 1.2
The design of TFWA programme (duration, conditions, mix of inputs, theory of change) responds to the challenges and specificities of the priorities they intend to support, and the indicators used to measure results are SMART. ³⁴
Indicator 1.2.2
Evolution in the duration of the programme and KPIs

Based on available reports, the overall duration of the programme as reported during the mid-term review timeframe has remained the same. The major disruption to the programme which explains delays in a number of activities is attributed mainly to the COVID pandemic but also due to other factors. The TFWA had a total of 144 activities by September 2020 which was divided into 469 ongoing sub-activities according to the TFWA Program Annual Report: Second Year³⁵. Out of these 469 sub activities, 43 were delayed due to the Covid 19 Pandemic.

The Annual report³⁶ (Annex 2, 2020) indicates that 167 activities were completed as per schedule. Among those uncompleted, 150 activities were considered as ongoing or under discussion. 6 projects were postponed due to COVID. As a result, 19 activities were delayed for various other reasons linked to administrative procedures and delays in approval processes.

The 2020 TFWA Program Annual Report: also provides the following changes that were made in the KPIs which had to be adjusted based on the realities on the ground.

The report notes 4 changes in the OVIS during the second year. These are:

Sub-Results 1.3: Common External Tariff (CET) improved and more efficiently implemented

OVI: Existing non-conforming measures as well as domestic legislative and regulatory restrictions to the CET protocol are addressed in all MS

Proposed Changes

1. Suggested change of indicator: Replace “non-conforming” with “flexibility” because the Supplementary Protection Measures (SPMs) are not aberrations but legal instruments.
2. Suggested change of target value: 2 regional instruments are adopted addressing the SPMs to facilitate the proper implementation of the CET (Regulation on the change of product category and trade defence measures)

Sub-Results 1.4: ETLS improved and more efficiently implemented

³⁴ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.

³⁵ TFWA Program Annual Report: Second Year, Annex 2: Second Year Work Plan Completion Report.

³⁶ Ibid, (Annex2).

OVI: Regional export-oriented companies indicate that ETLs customs procedures which are harmonized with related UEMOA procedures are implemented by the customs administrations in MS

Proposed Changes

1. Suggested change of baseline: 260 companies.
2. Suggested change of target value: 520 companies

Results 2: More Efficient movement of goods along the selected corridors

OVI: Interconnectivity ICT application used in customs/border management systems

Proposed Changes

- Proposed change of target value: 2 applications (each between 2 countries)

Results 3: Barriers for women and small-scale traders reduced

OVI: Average crossing time for small-scale traders at target borders, including women

Proposed Changes

- Proposed change of indicator to “*change in median clearance time for small-scale cross border traders at border (%)*”. Target: 20% reduction.

During the field work, stakeholders indicated that these changes were necessary taking into consideration the pace at which the programme was progressing and also due to the realities on the ground.

Judgement Criteria 1.2
The design of TFWA programme (duration, conditions, mix of inputs, theory of change) responds to the challenges and specificities of the priorities they intend to support, and the indicators used to measure results are SMART. ³⁷
Indicator 1.2.3
References or evidence of changes in design in response to best practices

No changes in the programme design were noted following literature review by the second year of operation. As mentioned above, there have been changes in the way the activities were implemented and, in the approach, mainly due to the COVID pandemic. However, the original design of the program remains the same. This was also confirmed during various discussions³⁸ with the project implementers.

The only change carried out by the implementing partners was related to the formulation of the programmes’ objectives. “The original ToC acknowledged the importance of increasing predictability and reliability but considered them as means to achieving overall time and cost reduction and they are not explicitly mentioned in the program objectives³⁹.” Two years after

³⁷ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.

³⁸ As a result of interviews with representatives of the IP in the countries visited.

³⁹ TWFA Implementing partners, (internal documents) Theory of Change – Proposed Amendments.

the implementation of the programme, the implementing partners based on information and experience on the ground, had a “better contextual understanding of trade environment and the trade facilitation reform processes in the region”⁴⁰, which resulted in the need to update the ToC and objectives for the program. Discussions with them indicated that the above amendments do not entail any changes in the overall impact of the programme. According to the Implementing partners document, the programme’s outcome aligns with the modified program objectives and are centred around four primary themes of *efficiency, predictability, compliance and resilience & sustainability*.

EQ2. To what extent do these components remain relevant to the context and the needs – including needs which are not covered?

Judgement Criteria 2.1
Project components respond to existing needs
Indicator 2.1.1
Reference between Programme components and ECOWAS, UEMOA needs

The response to the JC1.1 provides sufficient evidence of the links between the Programme components and ECOWAS, UEMOA needs. As indicated above, the programme was developed on the basis of in-depth research on RECS and MS needs supported by various documents and studies highlighting the status of progress or lack of progress carried out in the areas of trade and regional integration in ECOWAS and UEMOA.

Through the programme’s three components, the program aimed to “*address the binding constraints for trade and economic integration within West Africa and with the rest of the world, in a holistic manner*”.

These elements were considered while designing the programme:

- focus on creating conducive trading environments in West Africa by improving the implementation of trade facilitation measures at the regional and national levels (consistent with ECOWAS and WTO TFA commitments).
- finding practical and concrete solutions for traders along selected corridors in West Africa⁴¹ to improve the movement of goods along these corridors.
- Addressing the special issues facing small-scale traders and women traders considering that many small-scale traders (including women traders) do not trade in the conventional manner. This will include engaging with stakeholders to explore ways to offset potential losses from trade facilitation measures and form coalitions for reform and advocacy.

Using an inclusive approach, the programme targeted three categories of stakeholders (regional, national and the private sector) involved in the regional trade facilitation process. Working with regional organisations is also vital in supporting the building of regional

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ The proposal is prepared based on the discussions in March where the stakeholders agreed on Abidjan-Ouaga, Tema-Ouaga, Lome-Ouaga and Dakar – Bamako.

frameworks and policies (such as the establishment of the regional customs code and the revision of the ECOWAS trade liberalization scheme to promote intra-regional free trade), and to establish better monitoring of trade facilitation measures implemented in the region. Collaborating with national governments to implement regional and international commitments aiming at reducing administrative procedures imposed by the control agencies and implementing trade facilitation measures on the ground is also vital in the trade facilitation process. Having a strong private sector (though strengthening of their capacities) will help both as service providers and beneficiaries of trade facilitation.

One of the pressing needs expressed by the RECs concerns capacity building to be able to better address TF issues. ECOWAS and UEMOA both are highly appreciative of the technical assistance provided by the TFWA both in terms of boosting institutional capacity and in helping to achieve TF objectives. However, feedback from both regional organisations indicate that the transfer of knowledge in ensuring the continuity of such initiatives is not still sufficient. Based on discussions, even if additional technical transfer of knowledge was made available, both RECS indicated that they face human resources issues which would compromise the ability to absorb additional technical capacity.

Given that the programme also targeted the private sector as one of the beneficiaries, discussions⁴² with the latter in the countries visited indicated that they felt that the level of interaction between them and the programme was weak. NTFCs are usually well represented by the private sector which are supposed to represent the interests of the different groups, however, reactions from associations representing transporters and operators in the logistics sector⁴³ as well as those representing the interest of the SSCBT indicated low levels of interactions.

Judgement Criteria 2.1
Project components respond to existing needs
Indicator 2.1.2
Reference between Programme components and MS needs

The TFWA concept note mentions various gaps related to the implementation of trade policies at the member states level. The report indicates amongst other issues *“the existing disconnect between the ratification of policies and implementation by Member States which entails the need to engage more with stakeholders (implementing and border agencies) on the potential benefits of facilitated trade in the region for both national governments and the region as a whole would be addressed”*. Other highlighted issues include the lack of *“Continuous and inclusive dialogue with Member States and their stakeholders to ensure the ownership of regional policies”*. *“The lack of domestication of trade policies and inclusion in the national planning due to a disconnect between the regional objectives and national interests”* was also highlighted in the report.

⁴² Feedback collected during country visits with representatives of private sector associations.

⁴³ Information was gathered and crosschecked from operators in the countries visited.

A study carried out by the ITC⁴⁴ summarises challenges related to member states in ECOWAS which include: 1. Quality and conformity requirements; 2. Rules of origin, trade information and implementation of existing trade agreements; 3. Customs procedures and trade facilitation at the border.

The above-mentioned findings indicate some of issues which existed at the time of the design of the project and are still part of the challenges at the country levels. The three components of the TFWA programme clearly address most of the challenges related to trade facilitation at the member states level.

The results on the ground however indicate that the lack of domestication of regional trade policies as well as international trade obligations is one of the main issues which prevents MS to achieve progress related to TF. The regional trade policies are trade facilitation measures agreed upon by ECOWAS member states to promote TF within the community. These measures include the Common External Tariff (CET) to harmonize member states tariffs into a regional structure applied by all MS, ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) to promote regional trade through preferential treatment of community goods, the Inter-State Road Transport (ISRT) Scheme to promote cross border transport facilitation, and regional Guarantee system to promote seamless transit within the community. All of these are regional trade policies that are neither fully domesticated nor effectively implemented by the MS and affect regional integration. The international trade obligations include the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) that ECOWAS MS are parties to. The TFA provide broad trade facilitation measures that include Articles 1.3 Enquiry Points such as the BIC to provide relevant information to traders at the border, 2.2 Consultations to promote compliance, 7.1 Pre-arrival Processing to facilitate border clearance through processing prior to the arrival of goods, 7.7 Trade Facilitation Measures for Authorized Operators to facilitate compliant trade, 8 Border Agency Cooperation to promote joint operations at the border, including the operations of Joint Border Post to facilitate border crossings, 11 Freedom of Transit for seamless transit of goods across the community, 12 Customs Cooperation to promote mutual engagement and exchange of information among Customs administrations within the community. Invariably, the international obligations complement the regional trade policies with a common goal to promote TF. The partial or lack of domestication of these measures demonstrates a limited commitment by MS to implement TF measures, including the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). It seems there is a challenge to the ECOWAS MS to effectively participate in the continental free trade area when community integration is still an issue. The impact of the TFWA on MS to domesticate and implement regional and international obligations cannot be over-emphasized in promoting regional integration and international trade within the ECOWAS.

The efforts made by the programme to capacitate national stakeholders through the NTFC is positively received. However, interactions with NTFC members during the field visits indicated that the NTFCs are not ready yet to influence changes required at the national level. Main reasons include the inconsistency of the NTFC representations, inefficient communication

⁴⁴ ITC, Facilitating trade in ECOWAS insights from the ITC business surveys on non-tariff measures. Discussion paper for the high-level regional round table on NTMs in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 14-15 June 2016.

between the NTFCs members and their peers and superiors, the low level of higher-ranking officials and the information gap at the decision-making levels. The evaluators however noted that institutions such as the Customs are more engaged and aware of the issues pertaining to Trade Facilitation. TFWA components try to address the above issue, but reactions from the stakeholders indicate that resolving TF issues is expected to take more time due to the characteristics of the west African region and that continued technical and financial support will be required.

Judgement Criteria 2.2
Project components manage to respond to uncovered needs
Indicator 2.2.1
Reference between Programme components and ECOWAS, UEMOA uncovered needs

Judgement Criteria 2.2
Project components manage to respond to uncovered needs
Indicator 2.2.2
Reference between Programme components and uncovered MS needs

Given the nature of the JC2.2 and the links between the two Indicators 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 this question will be addressed jointly.

The TFWA programme design had actually taken into consideration most of the MS needs based on input from in-depth research. Various studies⁴⁵ highlight that trade in West Africa is characterized by a complexity of factors which negatively affect intra-regional and international trade. In addition to tariff and non-Tariff barriers, political economy issues have had a significant impact on trade in that region. The TFWA Concept note mentions the potential of conducting a *“political economy analysis paying close attention to potential winners and losers by understanding the current systems and why they are as they are in terms of history, institutions, informal ways of working, key actors and rents etc. using the five lenses of political economy assessment developed by European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)”*⁴⁶. This had been achieved by the EPCDM studies which identified challenges existing at the West Africa country levels focusing more particularly on the political economy grouped into the following five categories:

- Structural or foundational factor (rapid urbanisation, RECS heterogeneity, trade based on ethnicity, regional overlapping mandates);
- Formal and informal rules of the game (High regional ambitions and policy frameworks to facilitate intra-regional trade and strengthen regional value chains, regional and national commitments implementation lagging, lack of enforcement mechanisms for the application of regional commitments by member states, Duplication of regional policies);
- Actors, agency, and incentives (export bans, import quotas linked to political survival of ruling elites, Powerful private sector actors block key reforms and regional initiatives,

⁴⁵ Ibid, EPCDM 2016, ITC 2016.

⁴⁶ Carmen Torres and Jeske van Seter, Overview of trade and barriers to trade in West Africa: Insights in political economy dynamics, with particular focus on agricultural and food trade, EPCDM, July 2016.

Rent-seeking by officials (through roadblocks and border bribes etc), Weakest actors in the value chain stay in the informal sector, Public and private stakeholders lack information about regional customs and trade provisions);

- Subsector specific technical and political characteristics (Development of specific value chains constrained by issues such as the nature of the crop, Value chain-specific trade routes, as well as infrastructure and transport needs, Varied interests by specific Value chain-specific actors;
- Exogenous factors (Climate change, Price fluctuations of commodities, Diseases outbreaks, Donor finance and support, Continental processes and commitments).

One example to illustrate the above is the decision of Nigeria on August 20, 2019, to close its land borders to products coming from Benin and Niger which indicates the fragility of regional integration in west Africa.

While the TFWA tries to address most of the above-mentioned issues, there are areas such as heterogeneity of RECS members, political influences on trade policies, climate change, terrorism, internal conflict, and diseases outbreak constitute areas which would require additional effort and longer-term actions.

The issues of the possible impact or preparedness of the RECS and MS related to the AFCTA had been raised during the interviews. Given the existing problems linked to the implementation of the free movement of goods in the Western African region especially regarding the domestication of trade related measures, the AFCFTA is considered as a more longer-term objective which is likely to build up on the bases of the TFWA's potential successes.

EQ3. To what extent or not do the initial programme assumptions remain relevant and how does this affect future implementation?

The programme's assumptions related to the implementation of the three components were the following⁴⁷:

- Global trade conditions remain the same or are more favourable for West African companies that export or import internationally.
- Strong buy-in and political support is received from ECOWAS, UEMOA, and member states.
- Effective coordination and collaboration between ECOWAS and UEMOA is achieved.
- Effective coordination and collaboration between the co-implementing partners (the World Bank Group and GIZ) is achieved.
- The private sector and civil society are willing and able to drive trade facilitation reforms and engage with the public sector.

⁴⁷ TFWA Program, First Year Annual Report, October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019.

The overall assumption that “*Global trade conditions remains the same or are more favorable for West African private trading firms and that Global trade environment does not face big shocks*” has been the one that caused the most deviations to the TFWA Programme. Undeniably, COVID-19 had impacted the global economy and has had major consequences on the implementation of the TFWA programme’s components.

Key Findings relative to the Judgement Criteria

Judgement Criteria J.C.3.1
The Initial assumptions were close to real conditions and valid during the first two years of the implementation of the programme
Indicators I 3.1.1
Changes in the conditions under which the programme was being run

The judgement Criteria 3.1 tries to find out whether during the first two years of the programme implementation, the initial assumptions remained valid and whether there have been any major disruptions to the programme due to changes in the operating environment.

The major disruption in the implementation of the programme has been the COVID Pandemic, terrorist attacks and political instability which affected national regional and global trade conditions but remains within the first assumptions indicated. Response from interviews and TFWA annual reports indicate that the programme had to adapt itself to the changes caused by the COVID with new working techniques and procedures. Refinement of the baseline and targets were required, and new target dates set for 2021.

Conscious that changes to any of these external factors would impact on the program results, the TFWA Annual Year 1 report, suggested “*reviewing these assumptions periodically*”. In order to ensure that the conditions under which the TFWA programme is monitored especially regarding highly volatile security context in which the program operates, the TFWA programme, felt that conflict sensitivity needed to be incorporated into the activities. This initiative aimed at assessing “*to what extent planned activities are affected by the changing security situation and how activities might contribute to existing conflict situations so as to mitigate any potentially negative impacts*”⁴⁸. The TFWA program therefore engaged in a peace and context assessment in order to integrate a “do-no harm” approach into planned activities. However, the coup d’état in Mali in August 2020 and May 2021 slowed down the engagement in the country, and Nigeria continued to close its border with Niger prohibiting any corridor/bilateral work along this corridor. The coups d’état had security implications that prevented movement and affected the programme in the affected areas. The non-operationalization of SIGMAT on the Dakar-Bamako corridor is also due to the same reason. This situation led to Mali’s suspension from regional bodies, thus bringing a number of activities to a halt.

Judgement criteria J.C. 3.1
The Initial assumptions were close to real conditions and valid during the first two years of the implementation of the programme

⁴⁸ Ibid 2019.

Indicators I.3.1.2

Degree to which programme has been affected by deviations from assumptions

Relative to the J.C. 3.1, the second indicator looks at how the programme activities and results have been affected by any changes in the conditions under which the programme was being run.

The programme was not actually affected by deviations from the assumptions, which was probably well defined (Global trade conditions remain the same or are more favourable for West African companies that export or import internationally). However, it was the risks related to that assumption that caused deviations to the programme. COVID 19 pandemic was a unique incident affecting countries worldwide while the Coup d'état in Mali was of a regional nature. The project implementers indicated that efforts were made, and measures taken during the COVID -19 Pandemic to ensure that the constraints to the programme's progress was reduced to a minimum due to the following initiatives:

Higher degree of online work and communication

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, *"TFWA team members managed to maintain lines of communication virtually with counterparts⁴⁹".* Communication was heavily dependent on the use of online platforms. Instead of physical meetings, this was carried out using various means (calls, video conferences and WhatsApp messages). Discussions with stakeholders⁵⁰ indicated that this was a major challenge especially with regional organisations like ECOWAS and UEMOA who usually have a preference for physical meetings to carry out business. Trainings and workshops were also organized through online platforms. Conference participation by the ECOWAS, the UEMOA Commission and member states were also held online. Project implementors also maintained regular dialogue to find solutions to the situation. By September 2020, while *"in person meetings and workshops, in several key TFWA countries, Activities, regional events mission travels to the borders and international expert travels were kept on hold which caused activities to be delayed"⁵¹.*

The importance of local presence

The TFWA programme highlighted the *"importance of field presence in successfully running a complex operation even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic"*. The project implementors confirmed that presence on the ground became even more evident during the travel restrictions period which was also mentioned in the Annual Report 2. In country presence proved to be an efficient way of continuously maintaining the dialogue with counterparts. The TFWA Second year report suggest that *"relationship that were built by focal points in all focus countries have allowed TFWA to maintain active lines of communication virtually with counterparts through calls, video conferences and WhatsApp messages to move the project forward"*.

⁴⁹ TFWA Annual Report, Second Year, October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020.

⁵⁰ Information gathered from various representatives of the RECS.

⁵¹ Ibid.

The other two external elements which affected the implementation of the TFWA programme were (i) the Coup d'état in Mali resulting in a slowed down of the country's engagement at national level and (ii) the fact that Nigeria continued border closure with Niger prohibiting any corridor/bilateral work along this corridor.

The COVID Pandemic has also caused delays in Togo regarding the mapping and inventory that aimed at identifying that all border agencies are integrated into the Single Window (GUCE), limiting the stakeholder dialogue. Due to security related travel constraints to the border some of the engagement had to be made at the headquarters by the TFWA team to gauge interest in facilitating border agency cooperation between Togo and Burkina Faso.

The TFWA Annual Report Yr 2. stated that *"The delayed launch of the assessment of the SIGMAT implementation by UNCTAD caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to be kicked off during the second half of Year 3, or as soon as travel can resume"*

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic the programme had to carry out impact studies (as indicated in the Annual Report on Component 3) on small scale cross border traders and women. In the same programme component, delays were due on a project related to the support to access leasing instrument for the renewal of fleets.

Delays were also experienced due to COVID on a project (in collaboration with ENDA-CACID and its partner NGOs/CSOs/CSOs networks) aimed at supporting civil society organizations (CSO) and private sector organizations and strengthen CSO Coalitions/Platforms working on trade facilitation for more effective policy engagement.

Support to TFWA Countries in managing the COVID-19 Pandemic

Due to the COVID-19 impact on the programme and implementing countries, immediate post-pandemic support measures were presented at the fourth Technical Committee in June 2020. These new activities which were not foreseen the second Steering Committee in December 2019 were taken in response to the needs from the governments and the regional organizations of ECOWAS and UEMOA. The following measures were taken by the programme management team:

Shared guidelines and information - guidance notes were shared to stakeholders on *"facilitating trade during the pandemic as well a hub for all Trade and COVID-19 information developed by the World Bank Group, a TFWA Program co-implementing partner, and best practices by other international organizations, including guidelines on protection of front-line workers from WHO and WCO"*.

A compilation of *"depository and several mappings of COVID-19 related measures implemented by TFWA country governments"* was carried out by the TFWA programme. This comprised *"status check on the borders and customs procedures for essential goods clearance and protection of front-line workers"* amounts others.

Data collection and research *"on the impact of COVID-19 crisis on the West African trade and traders including changes in trade patterns, trade modality and economic impact on small-scale traders"* was carried out.

TFWA provided support to NTFC in TFWA focal countries on their business continuity during this crisis, to ensure that trade facilitation and regional integration agenda remains on the government priorities. TFWA also supported *“the ECOWAS Heads of the NTFCs meeting virtually to discuss the NTFCs contribution to trade and customs policies coordination during COVID-19 crisis and the RTFC regional coordination of practices once established.”*

TFWA also facilitated the importation process of the emergency relief goods worked through collaboration with ECOWAS

Overall, during the field work, stakeholders indicated that despite TFWA continued to make progress against the targets set in the program results framework, some program indicators would be delayed or at risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the programme therefore proceeded with in some refinement of baseline and targets based.

Judgement criteria J.C. 3.2.
The initial assumptions are likely to remain valid for the implementation of the programme
Indicators I. 3.2.1
Validity of initial assumption for future implementations

The indicators in this judgement criteria tests whether the initially proposed assumptions are still valid for future implementations

Assumptions related to external factors

The initial assumptions related to the external factors remained valid for the rest of the implementation of the programme.

Global Trade and COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID 19 pandemic brought unexpected disruptions to the global economy and undoubtedly to the implementation of the TFWA programme. Measures were undertaken by the programme for the continuity of the programme and to circumvent additional impacts due to COVID-19. The following strategies were adopted by the TFWA team for the Year 3 work plan:

Potential issues related to COVID -19	Mitigation strategy by the TFWA team
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, stakeholders were constrained to work remotely, resulting in lower implementation capacity due to varying levels of remote readiness.	Provision of internet and wi-fi capacity as required to support remote work and continuous updating of the Year 3 work plan.
Potential changes in TWFA country members to counteract the pandemic's impact	Consider flexibility in TFWA's support, provided that changes are in line with the program's objectives, and continuous revision of Year 3 work plan.

<p>Preliminary results from an analysis on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on SSCBTs indicates a reported 50% loss of revenue by a large population of traders.</p>	<p>Connecting the eligible SSCBTs to available national cash transfer services and devising a way to support SSCBTs to have access to cheaper transport and market are being considered as potential solutions. As a support to the Dakar-Bamako joint corridor management committee, <i>“the TFWA program will conduct awareness raising and sensitization events for private sector actors on the COVID-19 pandemic”</i>.</p>
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Regional Trade

Both in the first and second year of the programme, the programme identified the deteriorating security situation and border closures related to trade in several ECOWAS countries. The report mentions *“Violent conflicts pose a risk to traders and may have a negative impact on the program’s activities and thus achieving results. Moreover, the increased number of checkpoints can hamper the benefits of simplified border procedures”*. To reduce the impact on the programme, an integrated peace and conflict analysis to assess mitigation options was being conducted in the first year. In the second year, the strategy for the forthcoming year was focussed on monitoring of *“the security situation in the region in cooperation with the program’s risk management offices on the ground”*. Discussions around security concerns with the partners while planning activities were undertaken including further mitigation options were considered. The project implementers also mentioned that constant interaction with country officers and government representatives are undertaken to have a constant update on the security situation which helps in taking corrective measures related to the programme. However, when situations are complicated and deteriorate, implementers are bound to halt all operations.

Assumptions related to the TFWA programme

The assumptions linked to coordination and collaboration between ECOWAS and UEMOA, between the co-implementing partners and the willingness and ability by the private sector and civil society to drive trade facilitation reforms and engage with the public sector were still valid but they had to be closely monitored and corrective measures taken as required in case of any deviations.

ECOWAS /UEMOA relationship

To improve the communication between the two beneficiary RECS (ECOWAS and UEMOA) the TFWA Second Year Annual report mentioned that there was *“still room for improvement in harmonizing the voice of ECOWAS and UEMOA”*. To mitigate this shortcoming, the TFWA programme refers to adherence to the governance structure of the program making sure that ECOWAS is responsible for ensuring that UEMOA is included in all discussions and decision-making processes. The report also recommends that, achieving higher levels of coordination and having common stands by the two RECS could also be possible thought *“Improved the use of the Joint Secretariat and establishment of joint working groups (ECOWAS, UEMOA as well as implementing partners) on specific program intervention areas (such as gender & SSCBT and communications)”*. Discussion with the stakeholders and observations during the field work indicated that although this is a complex situation, the assumption was still valid as the relationship.

Working modalities

To work around the constraints posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic, which meant tackling issues of “*Postponement of in-person regional meetings, trainings, and workshops due to the COVID-19 pandemic*”, the programme favoured the possibility of virtual activities, “*use of video/TV/radio channels to reach private sector and other stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic and explore thematic webinars on technical topics*”. This would also entail a continuous revision of the workplan.

Ensuring Stakeholder participation and ownership

Due the complexity of a multi country program and the involvement of a high number of stakeholders, the TFWA programme highlighted the need in both of their annual reports (2019 and 2020) of efficient planning especially “*to ensure that all stakeholders are consulted*”. This would encourage higher levels of ownership which would lead to sustainable results.

Discussion with the private sector and representatives of women associations in business as well as SSCBT indicated that their level of involvement was not very satisfactory as they do not feel that there is sufficient interactions and the situation on the ground has not significantly improved. While they are aware that the implementation of trade facilitation measures take time, there is a general feeling that problems in this area have been known for years and yet actions to address the issues are still missing especially at the borders.

EQ 4. To what extent have the Implementing Partners been able to adapt their programming actions to issues related to the political economy of countries and sub regions in achieving the programme’s objectives?

This EQ looks at the efficiency with which the programme is being implemented based on the response to political economy issues in addition to the highly volatile security context.

Judgement Criteria 4.1
IP have made progress in achieving the planned results and targets as outlined in the logical framework within constraints of the political economy of countries and sub regions
Indicator 4.1.1
Implementation of schedule of project showing programme is on track

The answer to the evaluation question 4 is based on the Judgement criterion J.C. 4.1. which investigates the level of progress on results and targets outlined in the logical framework despite challenges related to the political economy of countries and sub regions. For the first indicator, the ET will try to find evidence whether the implementation of the project was on track.

At the end of the Year 2, looking at the results provided by the Annex 2 of the TFWA 2020 Annual Report, the delays due to COVID can only be attributed to 42 sub activities out of 469 ongoing. One activity was reported as postponed due to COVID. A total of 108 sub activities were reported as completed on time and 9 activities were considered as ongoing or under discussion. This left a total of 351 activities which were delayed for various reasons other than COVID 19.

Feedback from the stakeholders indicated that the delays were due to various reasons which were mainly administrative in nature related to contracting and procurement processes, delays of response and approval from national level or regional institutional levels and situations of political economy. Some of the delays were also due to the limited availability of data in the region. Data collection had recourse to contingency plans and sometimes “proceed with program design and interventions without reliable data”. The existence of new data protection laws measures made it more difficult for the authorities to release data with personal information included (that is, customs data)⁵². There is also another major issue which is the lack of reliable trade data. A combination of the above led to delays in carrying out diagnostics. The above was confirmed during the discussions with stakeholders in the field work.

As a result, the project implementation was disturbed, and activities rescheduled for the third year.

Judgement Criteria 4.1
IP have made progress in achieving the planned results and targets as outlined in the logical framework within constraints of the political economy of countries and sub regions
Indicator 4.1.2
Current constraints and how they have been addressed

The implementation of the TFWA encountered many political economy constraints through 2020 that could impede on its full implementation by 2023. In 2022, some ECOWAS countries are facing political crises linked to insecurity, such as Burkina Faso and Mali which have led to numerous internal displacements. The goods traded within the region (mainly food products) are produced mostly in rural areas and due to the displacement of populations, the production of these countries has fallen sharply. This has had a negative impact on cross-border trade for these countries. Moreover, the coups d'état in Guinea, Mali and Burkina have led the ECOWAS Commission to impose certain sanctions. In the case of Mali, all the ECOWAS countries' borders were closed which halted all trade with other member countries. The above crises can potentially change the priorities of these countries away from trade and trade policies with a direct impact on day-to-day trading activities.

Being aware of the highly volatile security context and in anticipation of crises, in the first year of operation, *“the TFWA program engaged in a peace and context assessment in order to integrate a “do-no harm” approach into planned activities”*. The objective was to appraise the extent to which scheduled activities are impacted by any change in the security situation. The assessment would also look at how activities might contribute to existing to improve the situation and reduce any negative impacts.

⁵² Togo - Law N°2019-014 relating to Personal Data Protection; Nigeria Data Protection Regulation 2019 (NDPR), Benin Law No. 2017-20; Niger - Law No. 2017-28, amended in December 2019 by Law No. 2019-71.

The Annual year 2 report indicated that the security situation is being monitored through the program's risk management offices on the ground and discussions are being held with partners during planning activities with the consideration of additional mitigation options.

To address specific issues such as gender and facilitating gender mainstreaming, capacity building exercises were planned since 2019 (some done till end 2020) with the objective of outlining a strategy or framework to guide the RTFC to design, monitor and implement gender-friendly trade policies and processes.

Discussion on the ground reconfirmed that political economy represent the greatest uncertainties. Despite taking measures to reduce their impact and enable the implementation of the programme's activities with minimum resistance, there is sometimes a change of focus at the national level towards more urgent issues. This results in a de prioritisation of TF initiatives which jeopardises any TF initiatives at national level.

For implementers, although limited in their capabilities in cases of insecurity or political conflicts, attempts are made to maintain constant engagement with decision makers to find ways for sustained interventions. Assigning country consultants or embedding staff to provide support technical support as required have proved to be beneficial in these situations.

EQ 5. How did the specific activities funded under the action contribute to the achievement of the expected results?

The aim of this evaluation criteria is to assess the level of effectiveness both at the level of the activities and at the level of the outcomes in relation to the programme's inputs. In assessing the achievement of programme results, relative to the activities carried out, the two judgement criteria used will look at which activities helped to achieve required results and whether sufficient resources were allocated to achieve the expected results.

Judgement criteria J.C.5.1.
Appropriate specific activities have been developed to timeously achieve the programme's expected results
Indicators I.5.1.1
Evidence of activities funded under the action which enabled to achieve the expected results

The answer to this judgment criteria is evidenced by the appropriateness of the number of activities which were designed, and which enabled the achievement of the expected results. Based on interviews and available documents (Annual reports) on the overall programme's performance, Component 1 seems to have more positive outcomes than the two other components 2 and 3 during the MTR evaluation period. This was also confirmed during the consultations with the programme implementers and the beneficiaries. Considering the activities under each component and their expected results, the TFWA annual report year 2, provides the following information on each of the indicators:

Results 1: Trade facilitation measures improved and more efficiently implemented

OVI 1. Number of West African countries that apply ECOWAS trade facilitation policies and procedures

It is reported that the revision of national customs codes by MS in line with the regional customs code was an ongoing process. The Supplementary Act on Mutual Assistance and Cooperation between Customs Administrations was adopted and will be implemented on a pilot basis in 4 countries (Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, Nigeria). This represented 50% progress on the set target of 8 countries. Other drafts that were developed include: Draft Regulations on Advance Ruling; Community Transit Regime; Customs Duty Relief; Conditions for the Accreditation and Organization of Customs Agent profession; Authorized Economic Operators; Intellectual property rights; Transshipment; and Coastwise trading procedures had been developed but were yet to be validated and adopted.

OVI 2. Number of West African countries with harmonized customs and/or border procedures and improved corridor management

It is reported that only Senegal and Mali were in the process of harmonizing their procedures along the Dakar-Bamako corridor, including at their respective borders. The report also mentions that the corridor management along the Dakar-Bamako corridor is improved through regular exchange and planning within the joint corridor management committee. This result corresponds to the targeted 2 countries which was as initially planned. No significant achievements in Ghana and Nigeria. While Joint Border Post exists between Nigeria and Benin at the Seme-Krake border, the customs/border procedures are yet to be harmonized (though the affected border is not included in the corridor under the TFWA). The continued existence of multiple checks confirmed by the private stakeholders is an indicator of a lack of harmonized border procedures and improved border management. Fieldwork confirmed that the number of checkpoints between Dakar and Bamako has been reduced from 72 to 4. However, juxtaposed checkpoints still entail high costs and long delays.

OVI 3. Number of ECOWAS MS ratified the WTO TFA

Compared to the baseline, an increase of 4 out of 5 targeted countries (Guinea (Oct 2019), Cabo Verde (Feb 2020) and Liberia (April 2021) ratified during the reporting period in addition to Burkina Faso (Sept 2018) that had already ratified the WTO TFA. Guinea Bissau has yet to ratify the WTO TFA. Ghana and Nigeria ratified the WTO TFA before the commencement of the TFWA, Niger and Senegal did the same in 2015 and 2016 respectively. However, these countries are yet to domesticate the agreement in their national legislations.

OVI 4: Number of ECOWAS MS submitted category notifications - Category A and Category B & C

14 out of the targeted 15 ECOWAS countries had submitted the notifications for Category A which represents an increase of 4 countries from the set baseline. Regarding the Category B, 14 countries had submitted the notifications and 08 countries for category C for the target set at 15 countries.

Results 2: More Efficient movement of goods along the selected corridors

Regarding results 2, by September 2020, there was no indication of any results progress as none were measured at the time of the publication of the report.

The reasons which slowed down the intervention in the region and respective countries are: the COVID-19 pandemic, the presidential elections in several countries, the coup d'état in Mali

and Nigeria's continued border closure with Niger prohibiting any corridor/bilateral work along this corridor. Generally, observations from the field work indicate that there is no improvement in the movement of goods along the selected corridors. Transport and logistics companies and associations that are involved in regional movement of goods across the borders cited incidents of delays by border officials based on NTBs. While the ongoing interconnectivity of customs through SIGMAT is commendable, multiple checks along the corridors raise concerns for trade facilitation driven by the National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs), in the countries visited. The example of regular checks by police in member states for security reasons was cited as constraints to seamless regional trade, including the ETLS along the corridors. Effective implementation of SIGMAT is expected to enhance transit goods along the corridors.

Related to the sub results 2.1: Simplified customs and border regulations between countries along the selected corridors

Some programmes were launched in Senegal (improvement of their capacity to manage customs risk), Cote d'Ivoire (implementation of the voluntary compliance framework and an automated pre arrival customs risk assessment) and Burkina Faso (technical assistance to strengthen the ability of individuals and organizations to perform SPS inspection). The target results related to the following other subcomponents in sub result 2.2 and 2.3 which are Customs connectivity in one or more corridors established; New regional regulation on transit guarantees adopted by ECOWAS MS; Simplification, harmonization and implementation of regional transit procedures along one selected corridor; and two countries establishing a single functioning bond guarantee on one corridor were all still in progress. While the new regional regulation on transit guarantees might have been adopted by ECOWAS MS, no evidence that such regulation has been domesticated and is operational by member states was found during the field visits. The regional guaranteed system to support SIGMAT is said to be underway.

Results 3: Barriers for women and small-scale traders reduced

No potential changes were yet measured as per the Annual report 2020.

Component 3 comprises 3 sub results which are:

- Number of processes/procedures/policies related to small-scale trade facilitation simplified, streamlined or eliminated;
- Number of small-scale traders targeted by trainings of whom many women;
- Number of countries receiving gap assessments for transport and logistics regulatory framework.

During the field visits, it was evidenced that very little work had been achieved on component 3 which was principally due to the inability of the IPs to be present on the ground mainly due to COVID in the first 2 years. The programme was still in a process of gathering information through the surveys carried out at the different border. Stakeholders operating in this area felt that there was enough information on this issue although an update of the situation was required to develop solutions. Some level of fatigue with studies, capacity building and awareness was also expressed by relevant organisations working with SSCBT's and women. The studies, capacity building and awareness were not necessarily those targeted to women operators or their associations but mainly to the stakeholders who are supposed to facilitate trade at borders. The problem faced by SSCBT at borders was reported to be still the same in 2022. Although work has been carried out in studying best practices related to the conditions

of trade at borders for SSCBT, traders are yet to see an improvement in the situation at the border posts. Fieldwork in Ghana and Nigeria confirmed training for small-scale and women traders' organizations, especially in advocacy against non-tariff barriers at the border and discrimination against women traders. Unfortunately, there was no clear evidence of the trickling down of the trainings to SSCBT or the involvement of real traders in the training as no verifiable list of participants was available. The information gap is therefore mainly due to the lack of passing on information at the grassroot levels. In addition, there is no evidence that procedures related to small-scale trade facilitation were simplified. Certainly, additional work is required here in terms of further sensitisation, particularly in establishing a mechanism to provide information to educate and assist the small-scale and women traders in cross border procedures to overcome the barriers. These mechanisms could be inspired by similar set ups in other parts of Africa which have their own specificities but provides a system which enables SSCBT to have access to the correct information about their rights so that border trading is facilitated.

The Programme annual report as of December 2020 report that the interventions under the above three sub-components were considered as work in progress.

Judgement criteria J.C.5.2.
Sufficient funds have been allocated to specific activities to timeously achieve the programme's expected results
Indicators I.5.2.1
Evidence of tasks being completed within budget and time frames.

This indicator relative to this criterion looks at how adequate were the inputs in completing the activities on time using allocated resources and achieving the expected objectives.

Although TFWA Annual Reports 2019 and 2020 do not mention availability of resources, discussion with the implementers indicated that up to end 2020, there were no shortage of funds to implement the programmes activities. In terms of the timings of planned activities, the COVID 19 Pandemic had brought about some changes, but this did not have major consequences on the programme budget.

EQ6. What factors contributed/are contributing the most to the achievement of the expected results and which ones (if any) created/are creating obstacles to such achievements?

The EQ 6 looks at the factors that have helped in the achievement of the expected results or were considered as hindrances in trying to achieve the programme's results. This will be evidenced by the identification of positive or negative elements (internal or external to the programme) which have had an effect on the results.

Judgement criteria (JC) JC 6.1.
The expected results were achieved through a number of contributive factors
Indicators (Ind) 6.1.1.

Number of factors that have helped in achieving the expected results

The Judgement criteria 6.1 attempts to identify positive factors that have helped in achieving the expected results.

One of the key driving forces in the achievement of the TFWA's results has been the instrumental role played by the World Bank Group and GIZ. Consistent motivation and effort behind the interventions is commendable and appreciated by the programme's beneficiaries. The provision of constant managerial support, technical expertise logistics, organisation of meetings, carrying out studies and providing communication tools are considered as crucial for the programme implementation without which the whole programme could be compromised. Due to the shortage of staff and technical knowhow both at the regional and MS levels, inputs from the implementers have contributed to the achievement of results. In addition, during the first year of operations, the implementation team developed a monitoring and evaluation tool in the form of a results framework to monitor and evaluate the program. This enabled the team to review the results based on the emerging design of the activities, diagnostics and data gathering experience.

Considering the highly volatile security context in which the program operates, the implementing partners decided to incorporate conflict sensitivity needs through a "do no harm approach" into the planned activities. The objective of this approach was to *"assess to what extent planned activities are affected by the changing security situation and how activities might contribute to existing conflict situations so as to mitigate any potentially negative impacts"*.

Proper staffing both geographically and thematically due to the wide and complex intervention scope as well as regular communication through bi-monthly program team calls between the team members of the World Bank Group and GIZ, in addition to ad hoc meetings between the Abuja-based staff in the respective organizations were as factors which contributed to achieve the programme results. Component based discussions were also organized with co-implementers and the regional bodies.

In order to have a closer coordination with the regional commission based in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, a focal point for UEMOA was assigned. Moreover, the World Bank Group had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UEMOA to formalize the partnership. Furthermore, to allow more regular technical discussions to take place on each of the results areas, ECOWAS and UEMOA had assigned their thematic focal points for the program.

Both ECOWAS and UEMOA confirmed during interviews that additional support staff was considered as one of the factors that helped in the monitoring and implementation of the programme. UEMOA however claimed that the staff allocation was not balanced compared to similar support provided to ECOWAS, therefore, considering itself to be in a disadvantaged position. The level of being disadvantaged and the impact of this disadvantaged position on UEMOA could not be verified. The relevance of this comment, however, is that it reflects the level of rivalry that is ongoing between the ECOWAS and the UEMOA Commission. An effective collaboration between the two regional bodies working for a common regional interest would undermine the perceived disadvantaged position claimed by UEMOA as both commissions can strengthen each other. It is important that ECOWAS Commission which has

all the West African countries as Member States be strengthened to effectively perform its role in regional integration. Therefore, it would be relevant to balance the specific interest of the two commissions for more positive mutual collaboration.

Regular exchanges within the ECOWAS Commission were established, through an inter-departmental TF Committee with 2 inter-departmental TF Committees (IDTFC) with meetings held in May 2019 and in May 2020. Both organisations confirmed that there is positive progress in working together. However, there seems to be a consistent level of dissatisfaction about the level of support each organisation benefits from and their level of engagement in the TFWA programme.

A Regular exchange platform with the MS on best practices in implementing TF measures (initiated by UEMOA): The Regional Forum for National Trade Facilitation Committees was set up in September 2019. This platform had 2 meetings so far (2019 & 2020) with an objective of at least one meeting planned per annum⁵³. During the field visit, the setting up of the RTFC was indicated as being a positive initiative in terms of monitoring and coordination of the TF initiatives however it was indicated that the success of this initiative depends on those driving it. The setting up of the forthcoming TFMS developed by the WDG and GIZ is expected to significantly improve the M&E of TF in West Africa and be an efficient tool contributing to the achievement of the programme's results.

The revision of the legal instruments in 2018 relating to the ECOWAS rules of origin and origin recognition procedures aimed at updating and simplifying the legal texts linked to the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) has also helped in the trade facilitation process in West Africa⁵⁴.

Stakeholders generally acknowledge, that providing technical support to the NTFC had helped to create greater awareness and visibility and has set the base for Trade Facilitation at national levels. However, observations during the field missions indicated that, continued support and additional work are required to accompany NTFCs. Another factor contributing to the achieving results related to trade facilitation is the multi donor approach which provides a rationalisation of development partners intervention which could have otherwise led to the duplication of support on trade issues.

Judgement criteria (JC) JC 6.2.
Existence of obstacles in the achievement of the results
Indicators (Ind) 6.2.1.
Number of factors which are obstacles to achieving results

This Judgement criteria J.C.6.2 looks at the obstacles which have prevented the programme in achieving its expected results.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ <https://etls.ecowas.int/>.

Documentary evidence and discussions with stakeholders during the field visits indicate that a number of obstacles were identified preventing the TFWA from achieving the programme's results.

Two major external factors considered as disruptions to the achievement of the TFWA programme results are (i) the COVID 19 Pandemic which impacted the whole programme implementation and (ii) the coup d'état in Mali in August 2020 which has slowed down the country's engagement following a suspension of all operations by the implementing partners. Security issues in Burkina Faso before the coup and ongoing one in Nigeria cannot be downplayed.

To counter the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, the implementing partners took corrective measures to mitigate its effects on the programme. The activities developed in response to the COVID Pandemic to support the programme include:

- Shared guidelines with all stakeholders and information on facilitating trade during the pandemic;
- Collection of information on COVID-19 measures by compiling a depository and several mappings of COVID-19 related measures implemented by TFWA country governments. And in line with WHO recommendations;
- Monitoring of COVID-19 impact related to the consequences on traders and especially small-scale traders;
- Supporting NTFC to ensure that trade facilitation and regional integration agenda remains on the government priorities;
- Facilitation of the movement of relief and essential supplies especially regarding the importation process of the emergency relief goods related to COVID.

Other factors identified as obstacles to achieving results include:

- Overall lack of reliable trade data, both aggregated or detailed.
- The inability to access data due to the then recent introduction of the data security law in the region. The data was expected to be used to establish good baselines and targets for the results framework.
- The low level of working collaboration between the participating RECS. Despite efforts being made to improve the communication and coordination between the two participating RECs, the situation is far from being satisfactory. In addition, the high level of institutional bureaucracy at the level of the regional organisations especially regarding decision making and approval processes are still considered as elements which affect the achievement of the programme results.
- The lack of strong commitment by national governments, mentioned in the annual reports and confirmed by stakeholders during the field work are indicated as obstacles preventing the completion of activities, hence affecting the expected results.
- The political economy issues as highlighted in the EPCDM report are still a reality. Nigeria continues to close its border with Niger prohibiting any corridor/bilateral work along this corridor. The fear of new conflicts and increase of insecurity levels in some countries such as Burkina Faso has been highlighted.
- Shortage of technical staffing at the level of the RECs makes it difficult to be fully involved in the implementation of the programme.

- In terms of capacity building, both ECOWAS and UEMOA reiterated the need for capacity building for the technical teams to help in meeting the objectives of the programme despite previous capacity building exercises despite the provision of embedded staff by GIZ for example. The other issue pointed out however is the shortage of recipients in these organisations to absorb technical expertise. The mobility of the trained staff is another factor which indicates the complexity of the situation in providing sustained support to the programme.
- At the country level, it has been observed and confirmed on various occasions that the lack of understanding of TF issues, the reduced level of motivation and the lack of financial and technical resources are constraints to attaining the expected results.
- Frustration from the RECs about “who is in the driving seat” was expressed to the evaluation team. Circumstances where major decisions related to the programme are taken, and RECS being presented with “fait accompli” situations or being left out were also mentioned. RECs indicated that they are being perceived as being ceremonially the head while most of the decisions and tasks are being driven by the implementers. The other side of the coin is that due to limited technical resources at the RECS level, the management of a complex project such as the TFWA would not be realistically feasible only with RECS given their existing responsibilities particularly coordinating the affairs of the MS in the implementation of trade facilitation measures. This also explains why the design of the project made provision for IP management. Discussions with RECS and IP as well as annual reports indicate that there is sufficient communication around activities and decision making.

EQ 7. To what extent early signs of impact have been or are going to be materialised?

This EQ aims at identifying any early signs of impact or indications of whether results are going to be materialised.

Judgement criteria J.C. 7.1
Programme actions have generated to partial transformative effects on the beneficiaries
Indicators I. 7.1.1.
I 7.1.1 – Evidence of early signs of impact

Judgement criteria J.C. 7.1
Programme actions have generated to partial transformative effects on the beneficiaries
Indicators I. 7.1.2.
I 7.1.2 - Evidence of linking results achieved/to be achieved with the region's development goals

The two-year span under which the MTR is being undertaken would be too short to identify any signs of significant impacts. In an attempt to address both JCs, the annual reports and any other available documents do not provide any indication of initial impacts. The 2020 TFWA Annual report indicates an increase in 4% of the ECOWAS in the share in international exports trade in value terms. The evaluation could not verify whether this increase could be attributed solely to the impact of the TFWA programme. Field investigations with the programme's beneficiaries such as representatives of the private sector, traders' associations, associations

of transporters or clearing agents indicate that the problems at the border were the same in 2020 and have not improved much (in 2022). It was too early to identify any visible signs of perceived impact as a result of the programme's activities in 2020. Had there been some improvements in the area of trade facilitation, it would be difficult to assess the TFWA programme's contribution to these results. These could be due to the impact of past or ongoing national or regional programmes. As at 2020 and even at the time of the field work (between June and July 2022) the situation at the borders is reported as being unchanged. Operators still faced various constraints including bottlenecks and delays at borders.

The enthusiasm around the implementation of the SIGMAT system is considered as one of the contributing factors to trade facilitation. There have been some improvements due to the implementation of the SIGMAT in Cote d'Ivoire related to rail cargo. The potential outcome of this achievement could be considered as one of the early signs of impact if the system operates successfully.

EQ 8. To what extent have the actions taken the appropriate measures to ensure a maximum degree of sustainability (financial, technical, institutional, and political)?

Judgement criteria J.C. 8.1
ECOWAS and UEMOA as well as MS develop ownership criteria and remedial measures to ensure future sustainability of programme
Indicators I. 8.1.1
Evidence of ownership towards programme activities in terms of committing resources (human and financial) and active participation in programme activities.

The Concept Note of the TFWA programme indicated that the program would be “*designed carefully and regularly monitored to ensure that sustainability will be ensured beyond the immediate program lifecycle*”.

The sustainability element of the program would be ensured by:

- the commitment and willingness of ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions at a high level to take ownership of the objectives of the program (linked to the respective RECS adopted trade facilitation agenda, policies, different protocols and instruments);
- active involvement in the programme’s preparation;
- effective involvement in the implementation of the activities;
- acquisition by the Regional Organizations and States of the capacities necessary to meet the challenges of implementing the WTO TFA;
- institutional strengthening of ECOWAS and UEMOA commissions staff and relevant Member States representatives on trade facilitation and the trainings for the beneficiary structures;
- transfer of the specialized knowledge they will benefit from international experts, offer a guarantee of the sustainability;
- involvement of the trade facilitation stakeholders from private sector and civil society in trade facilitation reforms and programs;
- financial and/or in-kind contributions from the regional organizations and Member State governments considered as a token of their buy-in and commitment through the signing of Cooperation Agreements and/or Memorandum of Agreements between the implementation partners and with the Regional Organizations and the relevant national governments.

Documentary review till end 2020 provide no specific indications of ownership initiatives from the participating RECS and the MS towards ensuring future sustainability of programme. However, discussions from the field interviews indicated that the level of involvement of the RECS in terms of ownership of the objectives of the program (linked to the respective RECS adopted trade facilitation agenda, policies, different protocols and instruments), their level of active involvement in the programme’s preparation and effective involvement in the implementation of the activities is generally commendable. The RECS been involved in preparation an implementation of the programme with UEMOA claiming being less engaged at the beginning of the project. One of main issues underlined is the lack of influence of the RECS to enable MS to domesticate policies protocols and instruments. Only very few countries have shown strong levels of commitments and domestication of regional initiatives.

The absence of sanctions on member states has been raised and indicated as one of the reasons for the low levels of domestication of policies.

The development of RECs capacities to meet the challenges of implementing the WTO TFA and the level of institutional strengthening of REC staff had been delayed to year 3. The REC however mentioned that capacity building is a continued process as constant skill upgrading exercise but also due to staff turnover. By end of 2020 there was no transfer of the specialized knowledge from international experts as a guarantee of the sustainability due to the heavy workload in the RECS directorates.

Interviews with representatives of ECOWAS, UEMOA and Member states during the field indicated that there is still a high dependency on development partners for any future programmes.

One of the major observations during field work was a serious lack of information on the TFWA by stakeholders despite communication actions undertaken about the programme activities and the level of progress made. This issue was highlighted at the last TFWA Technical Meeting in July 2022. While communication targets were achieved, information about the programme did not seem to have reached decision makers and various stakeholders. This could be one of the reasons contributing to a lack of political commitment and also the low level of motivation among technical staff and NTFC members. The lack of internet access, and shortage of funding to organise the simple events such as the NTFC meetings are other demotivating factors. Reactions from countries visited like Nigeria and Burkina Faso have evidenced this situation. The difficulties in motivating stakeholders to participate in the NTFC meetings was mentioned on various occasions. The WBG also mentioned the difficulties in organising NTFC meetings in Burkina Faso.

From the private sector side, while there was a very varied level of participation in the programme. The main organisations like the chambers of commerce were the ones involved. However, representatives of traders and transporters showed low level of interest as no visible changes were being experienced by them.

At the regional level, ECOWAS also indicated that RECs are still dependent on donor funding. They acknowledge that there have been ongoing capacity building programmes but due to the inherent shortage of human resources and staff turnover, technical sustainability is not maintained. This also illustrates that without donor funding, a very limited number of activities would be possible including the possibility of non-activity.

Cote d'Ivoire has however indicated a stronger sense of sustainability with a higher level of involvement at the governmental level. There is more concern and understanding from the private sector about trade facilitation issues as confirmed by the Cote d'Ivoire Chamber of Commerce. Agencies such as the Ministry of Agriculture highly appreciate the project's intervention and indicated their willingness to move forward with the Project.

This situation has been aggravated by the Covid 19 Pandemic and the present and forthcoming impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war. According to statements in the UN General

Assembly⁵⁵. “The developing countries need more financial aid, influence in multilateral institutions to overcome economic devastation from Covid-19. Actually, even in 2019 in a UN meeting, it was mentioned that “alarming signs of debt accumulation and distress are being seen, disproportionately affecting least developed countries”⁵⁶. This could explain that ECOWAS and UEMOA countries where the majority of members are from LDCs, the issue of sustainability is not on the agenda. The expectations of continued support from development partners are likely to remain during the coming years.

Judgement criteria J.C. 8.1.
ECOWAS and UEMOA as well as MS develop ownership criteria and remedial measures to ensure future sustainability of programme
Indicators I.8.1.2
Evidence of commitment to implement remedial measures in support of programme implementation.

There is limited documentary evidence of the RECS and MS about developing ownership criteria and remedial measures to ensure future sustainability of programme. During the field work it was clear that based on the observations from the above responses, neither RECS nor MS had indicated any initiatives being undertaken to ensure sustainability as at end of 2020. Responses from interviews about the situation in 2022 also confirmed the same.

However, significant efforts have been made at the regional and national levels to leverage TFWA activities towards the implementation of the AfCFTA in terms of institutional framework alignment, synergies in planning, etc. to ensure sustainability of the TFWA activities and approach.

Moreover, the TFWA programme has developed, the NTFC Maturity Model, the NTFC Training Framework, the NTFC Communications Framework, the NTFC toolbox including guidance notes, training materials, repository of good practices, which aim at ensuring the sustainability of action, transferred to the RECs through the liaison staff and made available on the TFWA website.

The above two observations still indicate that the sustainability actions are heavily donor driven and ownership and sustainability at the national level is still non-existent.

EQ 9. What have been the key obstacles to building the ground for sustainability and what could be recommended to improve it in the future programming?

Judgement criteria J.C. 9.1
No sustainability actions identified by participating RECs and MS due to constraints
Indicators I. 9.1.1

⁵⁵ UN General Assembly, Plenary, Seventy-Sixth Session, 6th, 7th & 9th Meetings GA/1236622 September 2021.

⁵⁶ High-level dialogue on financing for development, UN meetings ga/12191 26 September 2019.

Evidence of constraints related to the sustainability of the programme
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The main reasons for the lack of sustainability actions by the participating RECs and MS are the economic situation (lack of financial resources) and shortage of staff, technical skills gaps, low levels of understanding of the TF issues, lack of leadership and governance issues.

At the RECS level, limited financial resources and the shortage of staff have been repeatedly highlighted. There is still a high expectation that development partners will continue to support which reduces the incentive to get involved in being autonomous financially and technically. RECs are also aware that the level of skill required and easy access to technical expertise is more feasible by development partners.

The need to develop internal capacity is considered as one of the main priorities but, staff turnover especially with higher technical expertise becomes a sustainability issue on which RECs have limited control. Furthermore, where staff turnover is not an issue, the existing staff responsibilities are more than what they can cope with resulting in limited capacity and low productivity.

One of the activities mentioned in the Year 2 report indicates “Assist ECOWAS to identify additional funding for the implementation of the WCO ROCB June 2021 and Assist ECOWAS in monitoring implementation of activities for first year”. This statement illustrates the capacity shortage even at the monitoring and fund sourcing level.

At the country level, the situation is even more of a concern. Most of the beneficiary countries in this programme are LDCs. Comments from stakeholder interviews indicated that due to this situation countries have other urgent priorities than focussing on TF issues. National Security and the resolution of ongoing conflicts is probably part of them. As illustration, one of the representatives of a non LDC country indicated how difficult it was to organise TFWA meetings and the need sometimes to use own resources to ensure that participants turn up at meetings. - Some kind of gratification is expected for participating in meetings or workshops this includes those trying to solve the TF issues which could be one of the reasons for the lack of motivation. The lack of consistency in participation of TFWA meetings is also another illustration of the reduced level of commitment from each organisation which lead to the need for constant update during most NTFC meetings.

The lack of participation from high-ranking officials has also been put forward by stakeholders as one of the reasons for the lack of motivation and the absence of sustainability issues. The World Bank however indicated that actions are being undertaken to have more regular meetings with political decision makers to inform them about the programme and its progress. This situation illustrates an internal information gap between officers participating in the programme and meetings and their superiors.

Judgement criteria J.C. 9.2

Options for improving future programming identified

Indicators I 9.2.1

Evidence of solutions for avoiding constraints in future programming
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Based on the above observations, the involvement of political decision makers and higher-ranking officials at the beginning of the programme is vital. Their involvement should also be maintained to ensure that they understand the programme's progress, intervene whenever problems arise and maintain their participation. This will prompt them to take actions or elaborate strategies for the continuation of such initiatives.

More efficient communication at higher levels is therefore crucial. The current programme has developed appropriate communication tools, but the information does not seem to reach the relevant decision makers.

Remarks have been made (by UEMOA) about the lack of understanding of the texts and protocols which explains the low level of domestication of the protocols and agreements. Any future programme must ensure that there is full understanding of the laws and protocols from the decision makers to relevant officers. This could provide more clarity on the long-term impact of TF on regional integration issues and hence encourage the need to develop sustainability actions.

Due to the design of the current programme, there is limited involvement of the private sector, it is therefore important that the main stakeholders from the private sector be involved as the main beneficiaries of any TF initiatives. The involvement of the private sector could empower them to participate more intensely in the programme as they would be the ones to encourage actions related to sustainability on TF interventions either through technical or financial support and or incite national governments to develop sustainability strategies.

It has been observed that the level of Public Private Dialogue in the participating countries is very low. The NTFCs emulate this function but a stronger PPD trade-related issues should be encouraged to enable the authorities and the beneficiaries to understand each other and especially the need to facilitate trade and the action that is required.

One of the key outcomes for subcomponent 3.3 "Regional and national advocacy and sensitization system instituted" is "Results from the public private dialogues implemented by the Member States or Companies." The role of the private sector in championing the reforms in the TFWA and as the intended beneficiaries of all the components cannot be over-emphasized. Therefore, the need to sustain the PPD as a backbone to the success of the TFWA is most relevant. Lack of capacity by Member States to support such dialogues through funding is a barrier that should be overcome by strong support from the private sector who are the intended beneficiaries of all the components".⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Concept Note, pages 41 and 42

EQ 10. What has been the effective role of ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions, member states and other stakeholders in the implementation of the TFWA programme so far and to what extent has the programme addressed or not, the structural shortcomings in terms of human resources capacity, coordination, interface with implementing partners and system strengthening of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions

The ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions are the central organs in the implementation of the TFWA. The two commissions are expected to play a vital and effective role in the coordination of member states and other stakeholders in program implementation. However, their effectiveness is limited due to lack of capacity to carry out their activities as identified by according to B. Byiers and C. T. Dieye⁵⁸. *“Though regional Commissions rather than secretariats theoretically have greater ability to enact measures affecting member states, both regional bodies have limited means to monitor or enforce how member-states implement regional policies.”* This limitation was expected to be addressed through Component 1 of the TFWA program to strengthen the commissions and other stakeholders. Sub-component 1.2 Capacities for monitoring and implementation of Trade Facilitation provides for the following expected outcome: “The objective of this sub-component is to support the region in the implementation of trade facilitation measures and improve the capacities of the regional organizations and national stakeholders in monitoring the implementation of trade facilitation measures.”⁵⁹ This component is expected to address the lack of capacity by Member States and the regional organizations “to successfully establish a scheme or mechanism for monitoring the implementation of TF policies.”⁶⁰

Judgement criteria J.C. 10.1
Participating RECs and MS have played a positive role in the implementation of the TFWA
Indicators I. 10.1.1
Evidence of areas of intervention by participating RECs and MS

Being part of the TFWA Steering Committee, chaired by the ECOWAS Commission and supported by the UEMOA Commission as deputy chair both RECs have been involved in various levels of interventions in the implementation of the TFWA. There is a high level of ownership besides their monitoring and coordinating role, the RECs have contributed at the administrative technical level to the programme’s components. They have intervened through their participation in technical meetings on various programme components and activities, the development of strategic plans, institutional capacity assessment and establishing task forces. They have also provided contributions on technical issues such as the NTFC on SIGMAT and on various Customs reforms matters.

The existence of additional staff either embedded within the organisation or as consultants affected by the RECS have helped them in intervention on technical matters. Based on reactions from the fieldwork, the RECs however note that even, then, their interventions were

⁵⁸ Bruce Byiers and Cheikh Tidiane Dieye, “Understanding UEMOA-ECOWAS relations.

⁵⁹ Ibid Bruce Byiers and Cheikh Tidiane Dieye pg.19.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

limited due to the shortage of staff and insufficient technical capacities. It has also been observed that ECOWAS has played an important role at the level of NTFC and SIGMAT as well as dealing with issues related to Customs whereas UEMOA's contribution was more on the Gender issues. UEMOA's contribution to gender issues became more noticeable in handling of the logistics of some meetings that supported discussions on trade and gender reports. This contribution to logistics is significant as in-kind contribution from the regional organization and accepted "as a token of their buy-in and commitment at the inception".⁶¹ Sustainability is enhanced when regional organizations are able to support logistics for stakeholders' meetings without waiting for donors' support in this regard.

During the interviews, it was reported that the acquisition by the RECS of the capacities necessary to meet the challenges of implementing TFWA was still lacking. The institutional strengthening level of ECOWAS and UEMOA commissions staff to ensure the continuity of the TFWA interventions was weak. The evidence in support of this claim is simply available when questioning the RECs ability to sustain the TFWA without donor support or the technical support of the implementers? Negative answers provide evidence that the RECs are yet to demonstrate the institutional capacity to implement regional integration programs. For example, the free movement protocol under the ECOWAS Agreement has not been successfully implemented by the RECs to ensure the free movement of people and goods toward regional integration within the ECOWAS. The TFWA became necessary as an intervention programme to overcome the challenges faced by the RECs, particularly funding and technical support. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanism is key to successful project implementation. While the RECs have an M&E system, it lacks effectiveness and needs to be enhanced. The level of achievement attained in the TFWA is linked to the implementers' support of the RECs. Despite training and capacity building, the level of transfer of specialised knowledge was not at satisfactory levels. The frustration expressed by the relevant stakeholders on limited "specialized knowledge" was based on the expectation that the TFWA would strengthen the "ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions' staff and the relevant Member States representatives on trade facilitation" through the transfer of the specialized knowledge from international experts to guarantee the sustainability of the programme.⁶² While the specialist knowledge was not defined, it would include monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity which was assessed to be weak both at the regional and national levels. Furthermore, no strategic approach to the sustainability of TF-related interventions at the institutional levels was being developed indicating that there is still a very strong dependency on donor support. The combination of a shortage of finance to recruit additional staff, the inability to maintain technical expertise and the need for constant capacity building on the same set of expertise does not provide the best conditions to ensure the sustainability of interventions. While the RECs may depend on donor support in technical areas, including studies to identify detailed specific issues in regional integration, it is necessary to demonstrate commitment to regional integration through the capacity to implement various trade facilitation measures like the CET, ETLS and Customs Code that are created by the RECs and the MS.⁶³

⁶¹ Concept Note: page 45 para 6.

⁶² Concept Note: page 45 para 4.

⁶³ Ibid page 43, section 4.2 Capacity -building plan.

Judgement criteria J.C. 10.2
Structural shortcomings and system strengthening of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions have been addressed by the programme.
Indicators I. 10.2.1
Evidence of actions related to system strengthening ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions carried out by the program.

Taking cognizance of the shortcomings at both RECS levels, the implementing partners have provided strong support to both organisations. Actually, at the beginning of the programme, the implementing partners ensured that both ECOWAS and UEMOA have the required staff to consolidate strong relationships already established through previous regional trade facilitation projects. The TFWA Programme supports the “*current framework that the regional bodies use to maximize their effective collaboration*”. The World Bank Group had even signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UEMOA to formalize the partnership. In addition, both ECOWAS and UEMOA have assigned their thematic focal points for the program, which has allowed more regular technical discussions to take place on each of the results areas.

The TFWA programme has provided support to the ECOWAS-UEMOA dialogue under the sub results 1.2. (Monitoring capacity and trade facilitation measures implementation improved) and (Number of TF measures harmonized between RECs (ECOWAS and UEMOA) increased) as an ongoing activity. The annual report 2 refers to the following two OVIs, which are “*Regular exchange within the ECOWAS Commission is established, through an inter-departmental TF Committee*” and “*Number of TF measures harmonized between RECs (ECOWAS and UEMOA) increased*”.

The activities under these results include:

- Support at least one meeting of ECOWAS-UEMOA Joint Technical Secretariat to discuss trade facilitation related issues.
- Regular exchange within the ECOWAS Commission is established through an inter-departmental TF Committee, including a regular exchange platform with the MS on best practices in implementing TF measures.

The Annex 3 of the annual report indicates one activity “*Continued support of ECOWAS-UEMOA Joint Technical Secretariat on trade facilitation-related issues, including harmonization of ECOWAS and UEMOA levies*”. Also “*strengthened the capacities of the Trade Directorate to review, design, and implementation of Trade Facilitation and related policies*”⁶⁴ and “*Developed training plan and module to strengthen gender capacity of Regional Trade Facilitation Committee (RTFC)/NTFC members and mainstream gender into RTFC/NTFC workings*.”⁶⁵

⁶⁴ TFWA Program Annual Report: Second Year, Annex 3: Third Year Work Plan.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Both RECS acknowledge that capacity building has been provided and that additional human resources support through embedded staff or the provision of consultants as support for the implementation of the Programme. However, despite these arrangements by the implementers, RECs indicated in 2022 that there were still shortcomings in terms of human resources capacity and coordination levels. Moreover, the relationship between ECOWAS and UEMOA has slightly improved but still there is room for significant improvement. These claims were repeatedly mentioned during interviews by both RECS. Evaluating the claims by the RECs from the perspective of the need for the programme to achieve its stated objectives, two key elements must be sustained, as follows: (1) Continuous capacity building in relevant areas, especially M&E for the RECs to enable the regional organizations effectively “play facilitative roles”⁶⁶ in the implementation of the WTO TFA, and the improvement of corridor management in West Africa, (2) The regional bodies must fully commit to the full cooperation by removing the “risk on the relationship and trade facilitation priorities between the two main “regional bodies”⁶⁷. Limited results in donors’ programmes can be expected as long as the two commissions exist independently. While a merger of the two bodies is contemplated as a solution to the rivalry between the two commissions, the practicability of a merger and impact on Trade Facilitation is a idea better left for the two commissions or the political authorities in the region to debate and agree on a common ground in the interest of the region.

4. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Context

TWFA was designed based on the identified challenges and needs of the RECS and Member States supported by studies carried out by IMF, WTO and World Bank. Considering the situation of intraregional and international trade and in West Africa especially linked to the political economy of the region, the existence of such a programme is justified. Both ECOWAS and UEMOA are appreciative of the programme which fits within their regional integration strategies. Similarly at the country level the programme has been well received and the activities developed are considered to be in line with national objectives. The intervention is however seen as an ongoing process which will require interventions beyond this programme’s lifecycle.

Programme Management

The multi development partner funding approach together with a joint programme management (WBG and GIZ) is considered as efficient combination for the rationalisation of fragmented donor interventions. In addition, World Bank Group and GIZ with strong internal Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems have established a solid framework and structure for the programme’s management and governance. It has been widely acknowledged by the programme’s beneficiaries that the WBG and the GIZ’s roles are instrumental in the implementation of the TFWA programme. Their constant administrative, logistical, managerial and technical support is commendable.

⁶⁶ Concept Note: Page 43, section 4.2 Capacity-building plan, bullet point 2.

⁶⁷ Ibid: Page 47 paragraph 5 Regional bodies.

To address human resource gaps in the implementation of the programme at ECOWAS and UEMOA, the programme implementers have assigned technical staff in these organisations. In addition, focal points were also designated at member states level. This has proved to be an efficient setup especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic to ensure efficient lines of communication with the member states. A communications strategy was also developed for the programme's visibility.

The programme design had taken into account measures to mitigate impact as a result of changing security situation by incorporating conflict sensitivity needs through a "do no harm approach" into the planned activities. This was achieved through proper staffing, appointing focal points, regular team communication.

Programme implementation

The programme encountered delays in the setting up and in updating baselines and targets in addition to the effects of the COVID pandemic during the first year of its operation. This represented a major setback which had negatively affected the project implementation with major disruptions in organising meetings, field visits, and trainings. The implementation team reacted efficiently by adapting working modes and using online platforms extensively. Technical support provided by both agencies to the TFWA, RECS and the member states have been relentless.

Based on available reports, the overall duration of the programme as reported during the mid-term review timeframe has not changed, though discussions on extensions were had during the field visits. Generally, the various delays, the programme's progress was considered as satisfactory by most of the stakeholders. Initiatives such as the RTFC was indicated as being a positive for monitoring and coordination of the TF initiatives. However, it was reported that such initiatives depend on the leadership associated to it to make it function effectively. The setting up of the forthcoming TFMS developed by the WBG and GIZ is expected to significantly improve the M&E of TF in West Africa.

RECs Role

ECOWAS and UEMOA have a coordinating and advisory role in the programme. Their active participation in the implementation of the programme on the administrative, logistical, advisory as well as technical level has been appreciated but considered as being insufficient. The TFWA programme's scope has been indicated as being overwhelming for these organisations especially in terms of technical input and coordination. The participating RECS are already overstretched at human and financial capacity level in running their current activities. Being involved in the TFWA activities demanded higher levels of commitment and efforts in addition to their existing workload thus affecting their contribution to the programme. This has been illustrated by delays in internal approvals and processes. The lack of technical personnel and staff turnover was pointed out as one of the major reasons for the need for continued support and capacity building. The fact that capacity was not being fully translated into relevant skills to monitor the programme's implementation of regional policies was raised as an issue.

Although progress is being made to improve the working relationships between ECOWAS and UEMOA, there are still perpetual signs of disagreements and lack of harmonious approach to the implementation of the TFWA. UEMOA indicated that it was in a disadvantaged position compared to ECOWAS in the regarding its role in the implementation of the TFWA.

One of the matters raised by the RECs refers to that of decision making regarding the programme implementation which is perceived to be more in control by the implementers. RECs sometimes have the impression of not being part of the decision-making process as they indicated of being informed of decisions after they are made.

Component 1

During the first two years of the programme implementation, the most active activities and results revolved around capacity-building and sensitization of relevant stakeholders on the reforms under the TFWA which helped towards better understanding of the TFA measures and impact on trade and border crossing. Consequently, this prompted an increase of the number of countries that ratified the TFA, conducted categorization and WTO TFA needs assessment.⁶⁸ The results on the ground were however less visible with very low levels of domestication of protocols and agreements and implementation at the national level due to limited political and poor regional monitoring. Limited funding and inadequate coordination of human resources both at the ECOWAS Commission and at member states level have negatively impacted on M&E and poor implementation results regarding harmonization of border procedures and coordinated border management.

Component 2

While attempts are made to apply ECOWAS trade facilitation policies and procedures (ETLS), and the Common External Tariff (CET), the existence of a high level of non-compliance by traders as well as the prevalence of NTBs are major elements affecting the efficient implementation of trade facilitation measures at the border crossings. In addition, private operators (especially trade and logistics companies and associations) reported no improvement in the movement of goods along corridors, continued existence of multiple checks and delays which illustrates a lack of harmonised border procedures and improved border management. Reforms at the country level is sometimes the result of national initiatives which started before the TFWA but receives the programme support such as the implementation of the interconnectivity system SIGMAT. The effective implementation of SIGMAT is positively acknowledged by customs authorities and seen as one of the solutions to enhance transit goods along the corridors.

Component 3

In the first two years of the project, the field work was carried out was limited around the component 3 due to the inability to travel because of COVID Restrictions. Most of the activities were related to information collection at various borders due to the lack of sufficient data to develop solutions in that area and capacity building and diagnostics. There has been an acknowledgement of training advocacy at the border and discrimination against women

⁶⁸ TFWA Program, Annual Report: Second Year October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2021, P 73, Results 1.5.

traders. Some level of fatigue was expressed by stakeholders with recurrent studies, capacity building and awareness although these were considered as necessary as an update of the situation. According to stakeholders⁶⁹ the nature of the problem is known and have remained the same for years and even at the time of carrying out the field work in 2022. Representatives of stakeholders at border are eager to see the implementation of solutions even if they are implemented on a pilot level. Although the context is different, experiences of trade information centres in COMESA countries could be developed on a pilot basis. While capacity building of the SSCBT is essential, it will be a time and fund consuming exercise. Focussing on the establishment of efficient information centres could be more impactful than providing training due to the absorptive capacity levels of SSCBTs.

An attempt by the programme to create linkages between some result areas seems limited to the Concept Note and not on the ground, with the notable exception of sub-components 1.2 and 1.5. While result 1.4 on “ETLS improved and more efficiently implemented”⁷⁰ resulted in the review of the approval process which created the possibility to submit applications through emails and enabled faster processing at the ECOWAS Commission, sub-component 3.1 on “More efficient and cheaper border crossing for small scale traders, including women through “full implementation of the ETLS” related to small-scale traders, and female traders is yet to be realized. Under 1.4, chambers of commerce were identified as among the stakeholders to be affected by the simplification of the measures under the ETLS. The process of identifying the potential beneficiaries among the small-scale traders and women may be challenging and the accruable ETLS benefits may be uncertain. Beyond the advocacy groups that are currently benefiting from capacity building workshops under the TFWA, integrating a Border Information Center (BIC) into the program may help achieve the desired goal targeted at the small-scale and female traders. The role of component 3 as “an important safeguard measure to the overall program” cannot be overemphasized and therefore requires more effort to identify the targeted beneficiaries as in the case of the chambers of commerce under 1.4

Ownership

The TFWA programme had been designed to ensure that there is a high level of ownership at both the regional and national levels to ensure stronger commitment and continuity beyond the programme’s lifecycle. A series of initiatives had been planned in the programme in terms of active involvement, institutional strengthening, transfer of knowledge, engagement of the private sector and CSOs and contribution (financial or in kind) from RECs. However, the RECs indicated that there are no strategies in place to ensure the sustainability of the actions undertaken under the TFWA. There is a high level of dependency for any future programme at the RECS level. There were also claim of no specialised knowledge transfer from international experts to ensure sustainability.

Weak commitment and lack of ownership regarding actions geared towards trade facilitation was evidenced during the field work. Discussions with national stakeholders indicated lack of funding capacities, focus on other national priorities and absence of any sustainability strategy compromises any initiative towards the continuity of the actions. The need for external funds

⁶⁹ Feedback from stakeholders from various sources.

⁷⁰ Concept Note, page 23.

or in some case the low level of funds allocation to run the NTFC indicated high dependency on donor funding. The lack of consistency in the NTFC meeting and repeated introduction of the TFWA programme to NTFC, inefficient intra institutional information communication are signs of low levels of capacity. Some countries like Cote d'Ivoire despite not having a strategy for the continuity of the programme's actions have expressed interest in pursuing the actions under TFWA further as some actions have brought concrete results as in the case for the E-phyto certification.

Communications

The TFWA program has developed a Core Communications Group (CCG), comprising focal points of ECOWAS, UEMOA, WBG and GIZ, which holds monthly meetings on the programme's communications' priorities. A TFWA programme website has been launched in three languages with country specific pages and monthly updates on information relevant to Trade and Trade facilitation in the region and a TFWA program video produced. Information about the program has also been shared on four different World Bank Group social media channels and claims to have 530,000 followers. However, reactions on the ground during fieldwork did not reflect sufficient knowledge levels from those participating in the programme's activities. Very few NTFC members at national level are well versed with the TFWA programme. Despite the production of significant amounts of information on the TFWA programme, questions raised whether recipients do read and absorb the information. The issue was also pointed out at the last TFWA technical committee meeting about political decision makers not being fully aware of the programme and the progress made.

Risks

Discussions on the ground reconfirmed political economy issues being the greatest risks to the programme's implementation. Despite taking measures to reduce their impact and enable the implementation of the programme's activities with minimum resistance, there is a sometimes a shift in the interest at national level and with a tendency to focus on more urgent issues. This results in a de-prioritisation of TF initiatives and hence demotivates stakeholders at national level. The TFWA will have to keep a close eye on the evolution of the situation to ensure that the implementation occurs with the minimum constraints.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

The evaluation concludes that the TFWA programme is in line with identified challenges, needs and priorities of both ECOWAS and UEMOA as well as their Member States as evidenced by studies carried out by IMF, WTO and World Bank Group and confirmed by stakeholders. The programme building on past projects including the Improved and Facilitation Trade in West Africa (IFTWA) and ongoing initiative around Trade Facilitation and the multi donor approach and funding ensures the rationalisation of the intervention.

The programme's wide scope tried to capture most activities required to address TF issues. However, some initiatives not included in the programme but linked to TF issues such as the the Groupage system initiated in Togo for smaller traders have become part of the uncovered needs carried out by the programme.

The assumptions initially formulated under which the programme remain valid. The major disruption brought by the COVID 19 Pandemic affected the programme schedule and its operative mode, but alternative solutions sought by programme implementers to limit the damages caused by this situation and ensure the continuity of the intervention is praiseworthy. The significant delays resulting from the Covid 19 Pandemic, the Coup d'état in Mali and other administrative reasons did not require any additional inputs but prompted programme implementers to adapt to the new situation and develop new working modes.

Efficiency

Overall, the consolidated approach towards programme implementation is considered as being an efficient way of rationalising donor support which avoids duplication of efforts and enables channelling of resources on areas which require assistance. This approach is commendable for future programmes.

In terms of efficiency, at the end of the Year 2 of the programme implementation, the COVID-19 pandemic has been the main reason but not the only one for causing delays in the programme implementation. Stakeholders indicated that other delays were due to various reasons which were mainly administrative in nature related to contracting and procurement processes, delays of response and approval from national level or regional institutional levels, various inter institutional hiccups and also lack of quality data. However, despite these delays programme implementers as well as RECs consider the progression to be satisfactory.

Project implementers indicated that although there is constant monitoring of the political economy situation in the region through the program's risk management offices on the ground, mitigation options depend on the seriousness of the issues. While some options allow to operate around the problems, other situation would require a complete halt of operations or a "wait and see" situation. Adapting programming actions depends on the nature of the situation with close monitoring.

Constant engagement with decision makers, maintaining working relationships with the national technical staff, recourse to advocacy and use of platforms such as donor reference groups are also part of the interventions used by donors. Local presence through embedded staff or dedicated focal points constitutes support in finding solutions to adapt to political economy issues.

Political economy issues in West Africa represent a constant threat as evidenced by three Coups in the region recently. The deteriorating situation in several participating member states represent a risk to the programmes activities which could lead to further negatively affecting the programmes operations.

Effectiveness

The activities designed in the programme are appropriate and are contributing to achieve expected results. The pace at which the progress is being achieved on the results however varies. The COVID 19 pandemic has been one of the main reasons (but not the only one) for the non-achievement of the programme's objectives within the required time frame during the first two years of its operation.

Overall, Component 1 has been more successful than components 2 and 3 till end 2020. However, while for most of the activities have been carried out, expected results have been limited in other relevant areas that include the implementation of trade facilitation related policies such as the TFA, implementation of the ECOWAS Customs Code, and the enforcement of the existing regional measures. More importantly are the pending domestication of regional policies and protocols, and international standards including the TFA. The domestication of regional codes by Member States, the establishment of Border Information Centre (BIC) to support coordinated border management and seamless crossing are not yet in place.

Capacity-building and sensitization workshops are necessary towards better understanding of the TFA measures and impact on trade and border crossing, however, these were not translated into the effectiveness of project implementation. Limited political will has affected the domestication of protocols and agreements and the implementation at the national level which includes weak harmonization of border procedures and coordinated border management. In addition, poor regional monitoring, limited funding and inadequate coordination of human resources at the RECS levels have negatively impacted on the achievement of expected results.

Early Signs of impact

A two-year implementation period of the programme is too short to observe any early signs of impact. For most of the private sector operators, there has been no improvement in the conditions under which trade is carried out. Progress, enthusiasm, and commitment by national and regional authorities around the development of around the SIGMAT project are already showing signs of positive impact when the project will be realised.

Sustainability

Despite activities and actions planned under the TFWA programme aimed at ensuring sustainability beyond the immediate program lifecycle, there are very little signs of actions toward the sustainability of the intervention. The RECs and the member states have made are

providing technical inputs wherever possible, but this does not ensure the technical sustainability of actions under the TFWA programme. According to the RECs⁷¹, dependence on development partners for any future interventions is inevitable. The same reactions had been noticed at the member states level. Even maintaining commitment at the NTFC levels, without external support, was observed as being problematic. Only very few countries such as Cote d'Ivoire have shown higher levels of ownership and enthusiasm in the domestication of regional initiatives where even the private sector has provided positive signs in moving the regional agenda forward.

Other reasons for the lack of sustainability actions by the participating RECs and MS are the economic situation of the member states and the region, the lack of leadership and governance issues and lack of participation of higher-ranking officials in the NTFC and the TF process.

⁷¹ Following feedback from various representatives of both RECS.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthening the ECOWAS Commission to establish an efficient M&E mechanism for a more effective monitoring of regional projects. In the case of the ECOWAS Commission, an enhanced inter-department collaboration should be developed to ensure a more coordinated and effective interface by the ECOWAS Commission with the donors and the Member States to achieve the desired results in regional integration.

Directed to ECOWAS

- The current Members of the 2nd ETL Task Force who are politically exposed persons in the region can be used to influence national decision-makers and accelerate the domestication of regional and international policies and protocols.

Directed to RECS

- Future programmes should be designed to enable institutions and countries to implement skills learnt through capacity building and ensure an internal institutional transfer of skills to limit institutional memory loss. The development of a human resource strategy followed by capacity building exercises at regional and national level taking into account the above is recommended.

Directed to IP and Donors

- Implement M&E monitoring mechanisms to create benchmark for countries related to their TF performances. The TFWA program has already started work on a regional mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the service standards of border agencies which is in progress. It is imperative that these tools be developed by the end of the project.

Directed to IP and MS

- Awareness for SSCBT is important but capacity building would require a lot of time and effort. Developing a pilot project in few countries in the form of a Trade/Border Information Centre (BIC) to provide effective information support to SSCBT when crossing borders could bring more concrete and positive results. An effective implementation of the BIC could also put pressure on the relevant authorities at the border posts to carry out their respective tasks which would impact on the implementation of measures related to TF. The Trade Information centre operation in COMESA is an example of a successful venture at various border posts which has had the approval of SSCBT as well as the donors such as the EU in that region⁷². On a parallel basis, provide support in setting up SSCBT organisations at the border.⁷³

Directed to IP and MS

⁷² COMESA Secretariat 2022, Study on the sustainability of Trade Information Desk Offices (TIDOS).

⁷³ The reason for suggesting a BIC at a border crossing to support the SSCBT is based on feedback from fieldwork where complaints from the private sector identified limited knowledge of border procedures by the small-scale border traders and specific harassment of women traders as major issues. The presence of an independent structure to provide the necessary information and guidance on procedures, including monitoring border officials' conduct regarding how these traders are treated may be necessary.

- Involve of policy decision-makers since the start of the programme and maintain their involvement throughout the process through effective communication and sustained dialogue to ensure higher levels of ownership and engagement levels as well as continuity of the actions developed by the programme. Efficient leadership and commitment would have a significant impact in motivating and influencing technical and operational staff.

Directed to Donors and IP

- Strengthen the level of involvement and commitment of the NTFCs to ensure sustainability of regular sources of funding (not necessarily donor funding) through stronger participation of the private sector (being the principal beneficiaries). This will create higher levels of ownership and encourage and the development of an effective NTFC with lower dependency on development partners.

Directed to IP and MS

- Design a capacity building programme that will enhance the implementing role of the key stakeholders at the national level, especially the Ministries of Trade identified as the “most important stakeholders for trade facilitation policy and implementation within their countries and are most important partners for ECOWAS and WAEMU for the link between regional and country related Trade Facilitation (TF) issues.”

Directed to IP

- Maintain the coordinated approach with implementing partners such as the WBG and GIZ to run large and complex programmes.

Directed to Donors

- Ensure that a higher level of SSCBT female traders is directly targeted for trainings in addition to their representative organisations. While the women advocacy groups are important in coordinating these female traders, it is necessary that the advocacy groups work in collaboration with the relevant Ministries of Women affairs at national level.

Directed to IP and MS

- Involve more representatives of private sector especially those involved in the trading sector in the programme’s activities.

Directed to IP

- An enhanced engagement with the MS by the regional organizations (ECOWAS & UEMOA) can help suppress the lack of commitment by officials of MS at different levels in the “implementation of regional policies and in the achievement of expected results.” This is possible through a closer working relation with the national governments to implement regional and international commitments that contribute to reducing administrative procedures imposed by the control agencies that are implementing trade facilitation measures at the borders. Following steps are necessary:
 - The Director of Customs at the ECOWAS Commission can closely and regularly engage the heads of Customs administrations in the MS to implement regional

customs code, improve on the implementation of the ETLS, and promote regional harmonization and interconnectivity of customs systems.

- The Director of Customs can create a framework for the establishment of a Coordinated Border Management (CBM) system to encourage 'border agency cooperation' under TFA article 8 with Customs as the lead agency towards harmonized procedures and reduced multiple checks.
- The Director of Customs should create a more effective M&E to monitor the implementation of trade facilitation measures at the border and regularly debrief heads of agencies at the national level with a view to identifying and reducing barriers to corridor efficiency
- The Director of Customs and Trade at the ECOWAS should see to it that the AFCTFA NTB monitoring mechanism is successfully implemented. This will provide MS and the NTFC with information and intelligence and enable targeted and efficient actions towards resolving TF issues.
- The Director of the Private sector at the ECOWAS Commission should interact more closely with the private sector service providers and beneficiaries of trade facilitation measures to enhance the advocacy capabilities of the private sector at the national level. This will help to ensure the involvement of the private sector in the implementation of regional programmes, especially the transport and logistics operators who are directly involved in cross-border activities and can promote compliance.
- The Director of Trade at the ECOWAS Commission should actively engage Trade Ministers in MS on the implementation of regional trade policies, including participating in selected scheduled meetings of the NTFC and RTFC to determine the level of participation of relevant agencies and the private sector. This will enable the Commission to promote active NTFCs at the national level as envisioned in TFA article 23.2.⁷⁴ Effective NTFCs will promote a coordinated RTFC.
- The combined efforts of the above three directorates in collaboration with the Director of IT at the ECOWAS Commission can promote active engagements of MS in the implementation of regional trade facilitation measures under the TFWA.
- Above all, since the structure under the TFWA emphasizes the importance of Member States' engagement in the implementation of regional policies, it is imperative that the regional organizations play an active role in engaging more closely the officials of MS at different levels such as the heads of the implementing agencies, NTFCs and Trade Ministers to achieve the desired goal.

Directed to ECOWAS, UEMOA

⁷⁴ WTO TFA text: Article 23.2: Each Member shall establish and/or maintain a national committee on trade facilitation or designate an existing mechanism to facilitate both domestic coordination and implementation of the provisions of this Agreement

1. LESSONS LEARNT

LESSONS LEARNT

Efficient coordinated aid intervention

The successful coordination of a consortium of donors that financed the TFWA was a positive initiative that should be sustained. Notwithstanding the different priorities of the donors, the coordinated focus has demonstrated the level of efficiency that could be attained in international development through a consortium. Also, the cooperation and expertise drawn from the World Bank Group (WBG) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) provided technical support to the RECs in project implementation, including support to the National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) in the Member States to hold meetings on trade facilitation issues are strong elements of the TFWA that should be continued.

Elements influencing the EU external action

The EU external action through the TFWA is within the context of a well-designed programme which has taken into account the various trade related issues as well as the underlying constraints and hypotheses. The implementation of the TFWA programme through a coordinated approach of technical implementers is considered as one of the main factors which facilitated the contribution of the EU external action.

The elements which can be considered as hampering the EU interventions are related to the low level of ownership of member states and RECs. Although efforts are being undertaken by implementing partners, stronger signals must be sent to political decision makers to ensure that they influence their technical staff and provide commitment and resources to indicate higher levels of involvement. In addition, elements such as the COVID 19 pandemic and political instability leading to situations of insecurity in the region have negatively affected the TFWA programme.

Need for EU Commission's continued assistance

Due to the complexity of the issues related to trade in West Africa, shortage of financial resources and the political and economic characteristics of the member states, donor intervention remains a crucial part of development assistance. Maintaining continuous policy dialogue with stakeholders (especially in the area of trade) is key to ensure that needs and policy solutions are adequately identified leading to impactful technical and financial by EU and other partners. TFWA is part of an ongoing process which will require more than one project lifetime, hence the need for sustained technical and financial support.

Success areas

The effective coordination of regional connectivity project under SIGMAT is remarkable and points toward the capacity of the Customs Department and the IT Department in the ECOWAS Commission to coordinate technical project effectively with the Customs administrations of Member States. It is therefore a great a lesson that a lot can be achieved in other areas of regional development by other Departments applying the right strategy, particularly in trade and infrastructure.

The need for more awareness

Despite the existence of a communications strategy for the programme, observations on the ground and reactions from stakeholders indicate that information is not being absorbed as required. Many of the stakeholders including members of the NTFC, and decision makers are not fully informed about the TFWA programme. Particularly, key end beneficiary representatives in the transport and logistics sector at regional and the MS levels (being the main actors for moving goods among member states under the ETLS and are directly affected by cross-border delays) are not well informed about the TFWA which implies a broadening of the communication strategy is crucial. The communication actions may have achieved their targets but the problem seems to be at the end user side. One of the other issues relates to the fact that both public and private sector stakeholders participating at the NTFC levels do not seem to be trickling down information to other private sector operators.

Lack of domestication of international and regional agreements

Despite capacity building, sensitisation awareness, there is a lack of domestication of international and regional agreements by Member States which is an indicator of weak commitment levels by the political authorities of the MS. Additional efforts are required to make decision makers understand the benefits of the TFA they endorsed and encourage them to abide to these agreements through the implementation of relevant measures.

Make more efficient use of M&E results

Low levels of domestication of regional protocols and policies, resulting in existing inefficiencies in trade facilitation measures point towards the need for more effective actions following Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) results at the regional level. MS should be prompted to abide to their commitments, ensure ownership and improve trading conditions at the national levels.

Importance of local presence

Stakeholders both at the regional and national levels indicated that local presence of implementers has greatly helped in maintaining constant dialogue, improve institutional relationships and also providing constant support to member states. This setup has also enabled some improvement in the relationships between ECOWAS and UEMOA. Local presence is considered as a key factor in the programmes efficient implementation and should therefore be fully encouraged in future projects

Low buy in and motivation levels

In most of the countries visited by the evaluation team, the level of buy-in and motivation in dealing with TF issues is weak. There is a lack of consistency in NTFC representations, knowledge gaps about TF issues at decision making level, inefficient in-country communication mechanism (frequent presentation of TFWA programmes is required) and low participation of high-ranking officials. This indicates that although decision makers have signed trade protocols, more dialogue and actions are needed to enhance ownership levels which could result in stimulating higher levels of motivation with technical staff.

Low effectiveness of capacity building

The capacity building exercises carried out generally by the programme do not seem to have the required outcome as further needs for training was constantly expressed. Feedback from

stakeholders⁷⁵ have not provided strong evidence of being empowered as a result of capacity building exercises. Paradoxically, there is a general fatigue of capacity building exercises with however low noticeable impact on beneficiaries. Any strategic approach to training and its future use aimed at institutional reinforcement is not being reflected based on from observations on the ground. The NTFC is particularly relevant in monitoring the implementation of the TF measures by border agencies, but it lacks the capacity to carry out the required M&E duties. However, transforming the relevant knowledge into effective action is seen as the main problem. This is more noticeable among the border officials who do not demonstrate the effect of capacity building in their work as border crossings remain challenging, especially for the small-scale and women traders. Furthermore, the lack of consistency in participation at the national level reduces the effectiveness of the capacity-building interventions under the TFWA. This inconsistent participation affects the scheduled number of beneficiaries and the expected impact in service delivery. Any training or capacity building exercise should therefore have stronger emphasis on the importance of the training and their future use.

Use of online platforms

Extensive use of online platforms for communication and training (specially to counteract the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic and those designed by TFWA and developed by UNCTAD to deliver a vast on-line training support activity for all NTFCs in the region) have proved to be efficient in terms of reduced pressure on logistics and costs. It was found to be more and more adopted as a powerful means to reach out a larger audience both in terms of meetings conferences and training. Wifi accessibility has a high potential for progress in Africa which implies wider use of online platforms including SSCBT is expected and should be encouraged wherever possible.

Political Economy

Political economy remains a serious threat to interventions related to TF in West Africa. This creates deviations and changes priorities of member states on economic issues thereby affecting the efficiency of actions geared towards Trade Facilitation. Given the volatility of the political situation in the region which impacts on governance and security, disruptions in programme actions are inevitable. Future programmes will have to factor in this possibility and develop alternative plans accordingly or foresee creative actions to adapt to changing situations.

Relationship between RECS

Despite the efforts put in by the programme (such as strategic meetings to enhance the cooperation and exchange between the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions⁷⁶) to improve the relationships between the RECS the situation is far from being that of a seamless one. Issues of unbalanced shared responsibilities in the programme are constantly voiced out and creates a permanent and additional issue to be considered in the implementation of the programme. The RECS are still closely linked to their institutional boundaries. They should be further encouraged to share additional responsibilities on future projects and look beyond their

⁷⁵ Based on interviews carried out at the RECS levels as well as the country levels.

⁷⁶ TFWA Program Annual Report: First Year.

institutional set up by giving priority to regional objectives through higher levels of collaboration.

More awareness around gender

Although more activities are yet to be developed in the area of gender, those already started in this area suggest that there has been an increased awareness on this issue. The level of awareness of the programme has been noted to be limited to the implementers of the programme and mostly among gender advocacy groups that attend capacity building workshops. Beyond this circle, the grassroots and frontline women traders crossing the borders are not integrated into the programme. More work is certainly required in this area, including establishing appropriate structures and mechanisms providing information to support awareness on the ground.

Low involvement of the private sector in most countries

The TFWA programme focusses on building a strong private sector both as service providers and beneficiaries of trade facilitation which includes enhancement of their advocacy capabilities. Despite their representation at the level of the NTFC, there is low level of awareness and complaints about lack of private sector involvement in the programme especially from the operators on the ground and at grassroots levels. Cote d'Ivoire is an exception among the countries visited where a high level of awareness, commitment, and involvement of the private sector through the NTFC has been observed. Higher involvement of trade related private sector organisation is required by encouraging private sector NTFCs member to pass on information and knowledge to sector specific organisations.

Civil society involvement

Although the program has enabled the mapping of civil society organizations involved in trade and trade facilitation, their level of involvement in decision-making remains low. The potential for them to generate informed proposals as well as their struggle against corrupt practices along the corridors demonstrate that they have a crucial role in the programme. Larger participation of CSOs especially those involved with SSCBTs should be envisaged.

Limited impact by the Ministries of Trade

The TFWA programme identified the Ministries of Trade as the “most important stakeholders for trade facilitation policy and implementation within their countries”.⁷⁷ Lesson from the programme has shown that the Trade Ministries appeared to have made limited impact related to their expected role, particularly in coordinating the NTFC members toward an effective and efficient implementation of trade facilitation measures⁷⁸.

⁷⁷ Document on Specific Terms of Reference – Part A, page 5.

⁷⁸ For example, the Ministry of Gender/Women Affairs in Nigeria identified as an important stakeholder to address gender inequalities in the implementation of trade facilitation measures is neither familiar nor involved in the activities of the TFWA even though the officials of this Ministry attend meetings of the NTFC at Federal Ministry of Trade. Our interaction with the officials of the Ministry of Women Affairs during fieldwork in Abuja showed their lack of knowledge of the activities under the TFWA. While the women advocacy groups who are also members of the NTFC attended capacity building workshops under the TFWA, there is no linkage with the Ministry of Women

ANNEX 1: LIST OF PEOPLE CONTACTED

List of people interviewed (Burkina Faso)

Surname	Name	Institution	Position	Email
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Icboudo	Adama	Services de Douanes	Directeur Facilitation	aicboudou@ifc.org
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CISSE	Himail	L'Organisation des transporteurs routiers du Faso (OTRAF)	Secrétaire Permanent	cisseisma@yahoo.fr
Niambi	Emile	Association Professionnelle des Transitaires	Secrétaire de l'Organisation	burkinatt5@gmail.com

Affairs which is the national agency that coordinates gender issues. The missing link here is the limited impact of the Trade Ministry in coordinating the relevant stakeholders involved in the domestic implementation of the TFA. In Ghana where the Trade Ministry seems to be more active in its coordinating role, the situation is better but requires an improvement in ensuring that the private sector women advocacy groups work closely with the public sector gender agency to escalate the activities to the highest-level government official for nation implementation.

		& Commissionnaires en Douanes Agrées		
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Dr Bationo	Timothee	Direction Générale des Services Vétérinaires BF	Chef de Service de l'Inspection et de la Santé Publique Vétérinaire	70558458/70626648

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Kouakou	Marc	Bollore		
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List of people interviewed (Niger)

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Adamou	Soumanan	Syndicat	Chargé des relations extérieures	
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ANNEX 2. THE EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation was carried out by three consultants in view of their backgrounds to form the team for this assignment. Overall, the team brings strong experience in evaluation, trade and regional integration. The individual team members are:

- **Veepin BHOWON (Team Leader)** is a senior economist and evaluator with over 25 years of experience in trade and regional trade integration. His expertise includes the areas of trade facilitation, Rules of Origin, NTBs, customs, investment promotion trade and industrial policies (including regulatory and legal reforms), data analysis and research work
- **Tajudeen OLANREWAJU** a senior Nigerian trade policy and trade law expert with over 35 years of general professional experience in trade-related areas, including Trade, Customs, Trade Facilitation and Competitiveness. He also has extensive experience in development cooperation and in all phases of project cycle management.
- **Tibi Didier ZOUNGRANA** is an experienced Burkinabe trade economist with solid experience in international trade in West Africa: WTO issues, Economic Partnership Agreements, Regional Trade Integration, Trade Liberalization Scheme, export and trade promotion strategies, as well as evaluation of projects, programmes, policies and strategies, employment, growth, market access in the EU market and other potential markets

Backstopping and role of the members of the consortium

The specific assignment was implemented by TiEG and FCG Germany. TiEG was responsible for overall management while FCG was responsible for quality control throughout the project lifecycle.

TiEG's input, tasks and responsibilities	FCG's input, tasks and responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent and manage the Consortium on all matters relating to this specific assignment • Liaise with CA on contractual issues • Final validation and sign-off of all deliverables • Activate financial monitoring • Ensure timely payments of KE2 and KE3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate the Quality Assurance plan • Provide operational and technical backstopping to Key Experts • Quality control of deliverables and final outputs • Ensure timely payments of Team Leader

The **Project Management Team (PMT)** interfaced with the **Evaluation Team (ET)** on a regular basis.

Mr. Michel DOUMONT, the Framework Project Director, legal representative of TiEG, is responsible for the overall management of the contract with CA including all administrative aspects and all contractual and financial issues of this assignment.

Mr. Nicolas SANSON, the nominated **Project Manager**, is in charge of day-to-day management of the project. He liaised with all major stakeholder representatives and with the experts to ensure that information is shared in a timely and transparent fashion. He assisted in critical decision-making in close consultation with the Project Director.

Ms. Milica SIMIN, our **Quality Controller**, an expert with a strong experience in EU funded projects including project/programme evaluations, is responsible for the quality management of the project as well as coordination of technical backstopping services.

Mrs. Michaela SEVALD, our **Project accountant**, is responsible for financial management of the project, in-and-out invoicing, financial control, monitoring and timely payments of experts.

ANNEX 3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This methodology reflects in-depth knowledge and familiarity with the subject area of the project. It is based on appropriate interpretation of the ToR and understanding of the key issues related to trade facilitation in West Africa.

1. Principles, privacy, confidentiality and security

1. 1 Principles

In order to successfully reach the objectives of this assignment, the evaluation was based on the following principles and criteria and incorporated lessons learned from our previous similar projects and the use of best practices.

Principles	Concrete application
Participatory and consultative	The evaluation was participatory and consultative and involve as many stakeholders as possible.
Independence and Impartiality	The evaluation team tried to avoid any potential conflict of interest and to ensure that the evaluation is carried out impartially to avoid biases and provide legitimacy to its findings. The factual information and data were methodically and clearly distinguished from assessments.
Credibility	Building on independence and impartiality, the evaluation used a rigorous methodological approach which ensured that results, conclusions and recommendations were based on objective, reliable and valid data and their thorough analysis.
Utility	The main objective of this evaluation was to gain useful insights that could feed into the strategy, planning and management at the programme level. The evaluation therefore was conducted in ways that enhanced the likely utilization of both the findings and of the process itself to inform decisions and improved performance.
Transparency	The evaluation was intended to be carried out in a transparent manner through regular consultation with stakeholders while working towards maintaining confidence and ownership throughout the process of developing the findings, conclusions and recommendations.
Triangulation	The evaluation used triangulation, i.e. using different data sources and collection techniques to gather different perspectives and tested the consistency of information. In the absence of triangulation possibilities, any findings coming from a particular source or group of respondents would be clearly indicated.
Inclusivity and Gender Equality	The choice of stakeholders for interviews aimed to ensure stakeholder participation from a wide range of types of actors to capture multiple points of view and uphold respect for gender equality and diversity.
Confidentiality	Confidentiality and anonymity of respondents was protected throughout the process, i.e. during the collection, storage, analysis and publication of data.
Ethical	This evaluation was carried out in professional integrity and ensured that the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence. The evaluators were also sensitive to the beliefs and customs of local social and cultural environments

The ET also conducted contribution analysis to distinguish to the highest feasible extent the added value of the intervention itself as compared to inputs from other sources that led to any identified changes.

The ET ensured that all conclusions and recommendations were supported by evidence and be comprehensible in order to prove and justify the assessment in a credible fashion.

The timing of online interviews, field visits in the region and meetings was critical, so the ET planned, communicated and agreed schedules well on time by using the most effective channels and means of communications including common digital platforms.

1.1.1 Privacy, confidentiality and security

Given that this evaluation collected data which might be considered as sensitive, the ET took into account the following:

Measures were taken to ensure stakeholders' privacy and confidentiality during and after the data collection process, more specifically where stakeholders were likely to be vulnerable. The stakeholders were informed that no information would be presented using specific names or individual statements.

De-identification of data and de-linking of data or assignation of institution was carried out during the data collection and especially data collation processes. All data analysis were produced in a consolidated manner.

Each team evaluator ensured that the information collected was securely stored and protected in password protected files. The sharing of information among the ET consisted of consolidated information after collation and analysis by each evaluation expert. Access to raw data was limited by password protected document and available to the expert which has collected the raw data.

Each expert was responsible for the raw data collected and collated by him. The evaluators ensured that the information collected was presented in a consolidated manner and not reflect the opinion of any individual stakeholders.

2. The Evaluation Criteria

This evaluation was carried out using the six standard DAC criteria⁷⁹ as specified in the TOR.

3. Evaluation questions

The Evaluation exercise was undertaken using evaluation questions related to each of the criteria described above and guided by the causal relationships in the Programme's Theory of Change. The Evaluation was carried out through a summative and formative perspective. However, this exercise predominantly focussed on the summative aspect (backwards looking)

⁷⁹ Evaluation (10 December 2019) of the document "Evaluation Criteria: Adapted Definitions and Principles for Use" (DCD/DAC(2019)58/FINAL).

which implied assessing achievements in hindsight, providing evidence on what has been achieved (or not) and the elements which contributed to it. The formative (forward-looking) perspective was to be taken into consideration to inform future decision-making for the programme and providing indications and recommendations for the continuation of the project and or extension thereof.

The evaluation expected to answer the following set of questions related to the DAC evaluation criteria:

Relevance

- To what extent the components financed under the action and their design remain relevant to the overall objectives and strategy of the FA – as originally formulated and/or evolved over time; and in particular, relevance to ECOWAS and UEMOA priorities?
- To what extent do these components remain relevant to the context and the needs – including needs which are not covered?
- To what extent or not do the initial programme assumptions remain relevant and how does this affect future implementation?

Efficiency

- To what extent have the Implementing Partners been able to adapt their programming actions to issues related to the political economy of countries and subregions in achieving the programmes objectives?

Effectiveness

- How did the specific activities funded under the action contribute to the achievement of the expected results?
- What factors contributed/are contributing the most to the achievement of the expected results and which ones (if any) created/are creating obstacles to such achievements?

Early signs of Impact

- To what extent early signs of impact have been or are going to be materialised?

Sustainability

- To what extent have the actions taken the appropriate measures to ensure a maximum degree of sustainability (financial, technical, institutional, and political)?
- What have been the key obstacles to building the ground for sustainability and what could be recommended to improve it in the future programming?
- What has been the effective role of ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions, member states and other stakeholders in the implementation of the TFWA programme so far and to what extent has the programme addressed or not, the structural shortcomings in terms of human resources capacity, coordination, interface with implementing partners and system strengthening of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions.

4. The Theory of Change (TOC)

The answers to the evaluation questions were informed and guided by the programme's Theory of Change, which contributes to the understanding of essential elements and causal relationships of the TFWA programme related to the area of trade facilitation. For the scope of this evaluation, the existing theory of change⁸⁰ was of particular importance.

The TFWA has developed a causal model which is outlined in its Concept Note. The overall objective of the programme is "Poverty reduction and increased prosperity of West African Citizens: productivity and income growth linked to improved food security and increased employment opportunities" and the programme's Vision states "Increased Trade: Greater economies of scale, export-diversification and economic transformation.

The TFWA impact is expected to be "Trade Facilitated: Reduced time and Cost for the International Movement of Goods Improving Predictability and Reliability for traders".

To achieve this objective, the programme expects the following outcomes

1. Trade Facilitation Measures improved and efficiently implemented;
2. More efficient movement of goods along selected corridors;
3. Barriers for small scale traders reduced with an emphasis on improving conditions for women.

The TFWA programme aims at achieving a series of intermediate outcomes described as "outputs" to the three main components of the programme (outcomes) with an overlap of beneficiaries in the context of trade facilitation. The beneficiaries of the programmes are:

- RECS;
- National Governments;
- Private sector Organisations;
- Private sector operators which include small scale traders.

Changes in the ToC

According to the implementing partners "The original ToC acknowledged the importance of increasing predictability and reliability but considered them as means to achieving overall time and cost reduction and **they were not explicitly mentioned** in the program objectives⁸¹."

Two years after the implementation of the programme, the implementing partners had a "*better contextual understanding of trade environment and the trade facilitation reform processes in the region*"⁸², which resulted in the need to update the ToC and objectives for the program. The Implementing partners document provides the following reasons which justify this modification:

- 1) "Improving predictability, reliability and certainty in trade is just as important as increasing trade efficiency. Anecdotal evidence shows that traders want to be able to predict trade procedures, time and cost, and receive equal, consistent treatment for

⁸⁰ World Bank, GIZ, West Africa Trade Facilitation Programme. Concept Note.

⁸¹ TWFA Implementing partners, (internal documents) Theory of Change – Proposed Amendments.

⁸² Ibid.

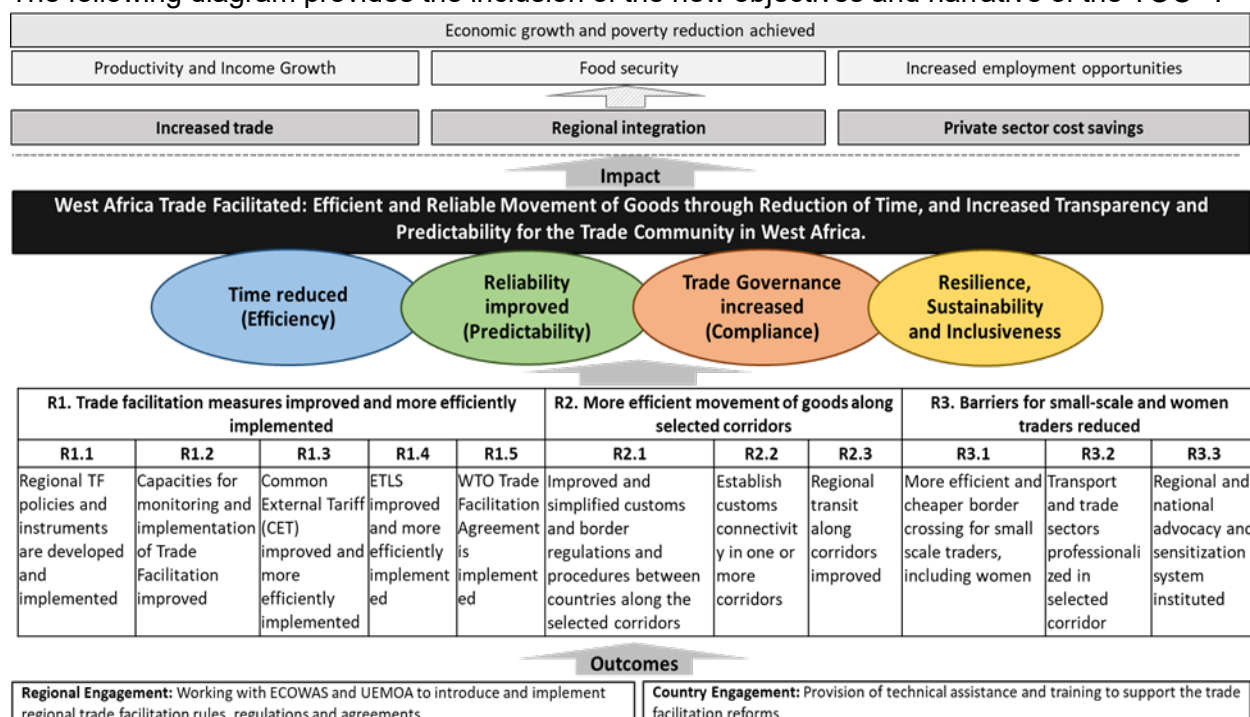
similar types of goods. The region's traders, especially small-scale cross border traders, especially are prone to suffer from inconsistency and lack of transparency where bribes are still expected during all aspects of the trade procedures.

- 2) Original objective includes notion of "free trade" which often implies removal of tariff and quotas, which are outside of the scope of the program. Similarly, trade costs reduction is mainly achieved through the reduction in transaction cost which is already captured by reduction of time.
- 3) The Program's intended beneficiaries should not be limited to the private sector, but the trade community as a whole, including the public sector and other stakeholders. "

The proposed amendments in the description of the programme objectives were therefore:

Original:	Proposed amendment:
To improve the free and efficient movement of goods in the region and internationally through the reduction of time and cost of trade borne by the private sector in West Africa. By this, the TFWA program strengthens the ECOWAS common market and the integration of West African region into the international economic and trading system.	Efficient and Reliable Movement of Goods through the Reduction of Time, Increased Transparency and better Predictability for the Trade Community in West Africa. By this, the TFWA program strengthens the ECOWAS common market and the integration of West African region into the international economic and trading system.

The following diagram provides the inclusion of the new objectives and narrative of the TOC⁸³.



The above amendments do not entail any changes in the overall impact of the programme. According to the Implementing partners document, the programme's outcome aligns with the modified program objectives and are centred around four primary themes of *efficiency*,

⁸³ Ibid

*predictability, compliance and resilience & sustainability. Related to **efficiency** the document indicates that “Improving trade efficiency through the simplification, modernization and harmonization of trade procedures and practices, can reduce time needed to export and import goods. According to the World Bank Group report on Border Management Modernization, the existence of outdated and overly bureaucratic border clearance processes imposed by customs and other agencies are seen as posing greater barriers to trade than tariffs⁸⁴. The importance of **predictability** is explained by “Measures to create a more transparent, predictable trading environment enable traders to gain an accurate picture of expected time and monetary costs associated with moving goods across borders. Research shows that **compliance** can “also cut the indirect transaction costs that traders incur because of delays at the border and the resulting loss of business”.⁸⁵ The report also notes that *Resilience & Sustainability are also crucial as “When trade facilitation activities and efforts are reliant on external sources, reforms are not sustained and sometimes reverted back, once the source of the external fund dry out”⁸⁶. Mechanisms such as the National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs), need to be reinforced assigning clear responsibilities to members, and close monitoring of results. Past experiences of COVID19 as well as the Ebola Crisis have indicated that the region suffers from unveiled systemic weaknesses which have addressed to ensure increased and sustained trade flows as well as food security.**

Based on the root causes affecting regional and international trade flows, the causal chains as described in the newly proposed Theory of Change on how the project aims to achieve its intended goals and objectives are clear and logical. Overall, the main and intermediary outcomes are realistic. Undeniably, COVID 19 has been the only major problem that had a significant impact in the implementation of the activities related to the programme. This has delayed the implementation but did not challenge the causal path to attain the expected result. However, based on the initial discussions with key stakeholders (during the inception phase), the assumptions linked to the realisation of these objectives were considered as being too ambitious. It was stated that the realities of the problems on the ground have been underestimated which have led to some areas where some activities could not be implemented.

5. The logical framework

The comments on the logical framework are linked to those from the Theory of change. Once more based on discussions with key stakeholders, the overall appreciation of the logical framework and the indicators related to the results and outcomes as presented in the logical framework are considered to be satisfactory. The main concerns affecting the programme’s implementation are related to some of the indicators and assumptions which have been considered as being overambitious within the set time frame. Questions have been raised and comments made on issues such as the institutional set up, the political economy of sub regions

⁸⁴ Gerard, McInden, Enrique Fanta, Widdowson David, and Tom Doyle. 2015. *Border Management Modernization*. Washington DC: World Bank.

⁸⁵ Grainger, Andrew. 2011. “The role of the private sector in border management reform” in *Border Management Modernization*. Chapter 12. Washington DC: World Bank.

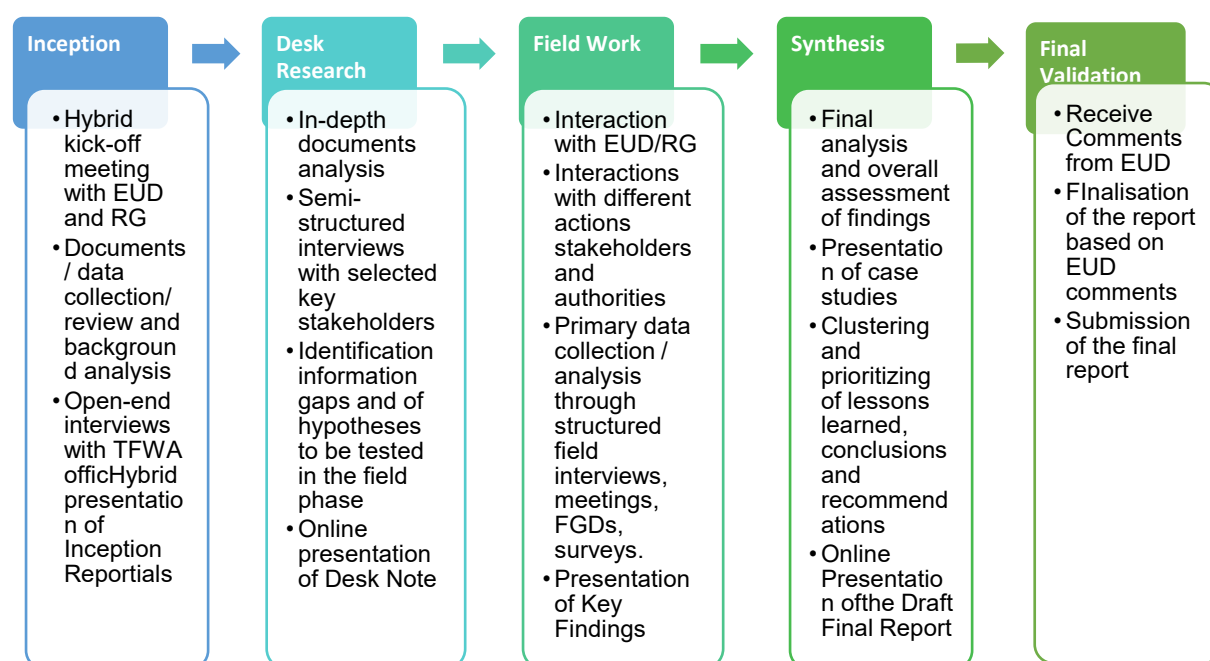
⁸⁶ TWFA Implementing partners, (internal documents) Theory of Change – Proposed Amendments.

and a lack of appetite from stakeholders for some activities which constitute constraints to the achievement of the programme's goal.

Following changes proposed in the TOC, the implementing partners indicated that no specific changes to overall results framework or to the indicators were required as other broader indicators were included. The implementers also mentioned that the changes are not likely to decrease the emphasis on time related indicators relative to other indicators already in the results framework.

6. Evaluation process

The evaluation was carried through the following 4 phased process: Inception, Desk, Field, and Synthesis and the workflow is summarized as shown below.



6.1 Inception Phase

The objective of the inception phase was mainly to set the approach, elaborate and finalise on the methodology and set out the logistics of the evaluation. The outcomes were shared by the client for validation and comments which subsequently constituted the roadmap for the evaluation.

The inception phase comprised of the kick-off meeting between the ET and the EUD, the government of the Netherlands and USAID. The objective of the Kick-off meeting was to have general comments from the funding partners and their expectations on the evaluation process. This included an overview of the programme's performance and any additional expectations. Issues such as the TOR, the evaluation objectives and scope, coordination, accessibility of data, and the overall process were discussed by the ET. The meeting also looked into the logistics of additional interviews with the implementing partners and the beneficiaries, work plan and the next steps.

A brief desk research and few open-ended interviews between the ET and the key informants (World Bank, GIZ, ECOWAS and WAEMU) were carried out during the inception phase. These

meetings were aimed at having initial reactions and comments on the programme's performance capturing main issues which would guide this evaluation and get a better insight on the expectations from this evaluation.

The inception phase also reviewed the rationale of the evaluation which was clarified during the interviews carried out with key informants. An initial analysis of the various key informants and stakeholders who participated in the programme was also undertaken to understand each one's role and contribution in the project.

A gap analysis of information sources was also carried out through an inventory of the reports produced during the programmes and those made available to the consultants. These would consist of technical, financial, third-party reports and evaluations reports and well as any relevant literature.

An analysis of the Logical framework as well as the theory of change has been undertaken based on available report and also reaction from stakeholders.

The inception phase also consisted of proposing an evaluation matrix which forms the main analytical framework for the evaluation and whose objective is to define the data sources to be used to answer the evaluation questions while taking into account availability of data, time and budget.

During the inception phase data collection techniques have been determined on the basis of their suitability to answer the evaluation questions. The evaluation tried to rely on a mixed method design to allow triangulation of multiple data sources and stakeholder groups. These consisted of Document Review, Key informant interviews and focus groups (whenever possible). A preliminary list of stakeholders was compiled, and a temporary planning of the online and field work had been determined. Interviews were carried out with "Key informants" who were identified as those who have first-hand knowledge about the issues being investigated, were directly involved in the project and represent a vital node in the group of people related to the study. "Stakeholders" represent those who were affected by or affecting the issue through their participation.

6.2 Desk Phase

The desk phase consisted mainly of an in-depth document analysis (focused on the evaluation questions). at gathering secondary data through in-depth analysis of all documents and literature available for the evaluation. The ET attempted to collect documents both internal to the programme and also those produced by third parties which were linked to the TFWA or trade facilitation in the West African region. The preliminary list of documents compiled in the inception phase were completed in a document review checklist. Information gathered during this exercise looked at the preliminary answers to the evaluation questions which also complemented information collected during the inception phase.

The results obtained during that stage flagged out main issues related to the TFWA, identified information gaps and also the hypotheses which had to be tested during the field phase. Investigation during the desk phase also helped to identify any foreseeable constraints and

limitations and their impact on the evaluation. Corrective measures where applicable were proposed.

This phase also looked at the logistics in preparation of the field phase. The list of Key informants and stakeholders to be contacted was finalised and potential dates of the field visits and meetings indicated. This was carried out through initial communication with stakeholders in various countries. The allocation of tasks by each member of the ET was provided. Taking into consideration of the current situation in Burkina Faso and Mali, which were of the countries which has been selected for the field visit, the ET ensured that visits would be carried out in countries safe for fieldwork. Due to security and suggestions from the implementers, it was suggested to replace Mali with Niger. The output for this phase was summarised in a desk note and was presented during an online session.

6.3 Field phase

The phase consisted of field visits by the ET with identified key informants and stakeholders in the selected countries. The information collection techniques comprised mainly of interviews, where possible focus groups and additional reports. The interviews were the main source of qualitative information for this evaluation. Interviews were carried out with two broad categories of respondents who were the key informants and the stakeholders. Purposive sampling was used to select the key informants in the categories mentioned below (Table 1.) to collect context-specific, in-depth qualitative information.

(i) Key Informants interviews (KII)

The KIIs was carried out through a semi structured questionnaire which was designed in phase 2 to address various groups of Key Informants and stakeholders. A detailed list of key informants was drawn based on those who have in-depth knowledge on the TFWA programme. The assistance of the RECS, EUD, Implementing Partners, Member States was solicited in finalising the list of the Key informants. The proposed group of key informants consisted of:

Table 1: Categories of Key Informants

Key Informants	Sample
Funding partners	Representatives of EUD/USAID, BMZ, Netherlands in the selected countries
Implementing Partners	Key Representatives in each Programme component
RECS (ECOWAS and UEMOA)	All key staff responsible for each component of the programme
Officers of relevant Ministries in selected Member states involved in TFWA	Government Representatives for each institutions/ component involved in the implementation of the programme.
Private Sector Organisations involved in the implementation of the programme	Whole Population (at regional level and if possible, at National Level)

During the interviews, Key informants were requested to suggest other KI or stakeholders who may be interviewed.

(ii) Stakeholders' interviews

A questionnaire guide designed for stakeholders was used for this exercise. The main data expected to be collected was mainly linked to the short-term effects or early signs of impact of

the programme from beneficiaries. Wherever possible information was collected from other development agencies involved in trade facilitation programme or projects.

The countries and cities identified for the field work comprised (Burkina Faso: Ouagadougou; Cote d'Ivoire: Abidjan; Ghana: Accra; Niger: Niamey; Nigeria (Abuja); Senegal: Dakar and Mali: Bamako was carried out online)); The field phase was crucial in the process of gathering hands-on evidence from various stakeholders and in triangulating the information with data in the previous phase. This step was used to test the hypotheses that had been made in the previous phase and ensure that the information collected would be reliable and robust to provide evidence to the evaluation's findings.

(iii) Group Interviews and Focus Group discussions

The ET plan planned carry out **group interviews** and or **focus group discussions** especially with beneficiaries of the programme. The objective of carrying out these types of group discussions were to provide a variety of opinions and ideas from groups of operators (Large corporates, MSMEs and Small-Scale traders) involved in trading activities. However, this was not possible due to time factor and the non-availability of stakeholders simultaneously. Some group discussions were however possible with UEMOA, WBG and NTFC's in Nigeria and Niger.

(iv) Direct observation

Based on the discussions with few traders' representatives, the ET believed that "Direct observation" would add value to the evaluation process especially at borders. Unfortunately, this was not possible due to time constraint and security issues at borders.

Outputs

The consolidated findings resulting from the field and the desk work was presented online with the programme stakeholders at the TFWA technical meeting in June which included preliminary conclusions.

6.4 Synthesis Phase

This process consisted of the final analysis and an overall assessment of findings. Using data and information collected from the various methods described below, the ET has provided answers to the evaluation questions with a mix of evidence to make appropriate judgements about the programme. The data and information collected addressed assumptions made in the theory of change and the Log Frame and how the programme intended to produce desired results. Mixed methods of evaluation, such as numerical and textual analysis as well as triangulation of various data sources and perspectives was used to substantiate the evaluation findings. The lessons learnt, conclusions and recommendations are presented in clusters or issue based related to the evaluation questions. The results of the report will be presented online to the client. The presentation will focus on the evaluation questions where data and information will be produced to support evidence for all findings, conclusions and recommendations. The consultants will take on board all comments from the validation exercise and integrate them in the final report.

6.5 Validation phase

After the presentation of the report the consultants will ensure that the final version of the report integrates all comments received from the EUD and the reference group. The final version of the report will then be submitted as the final report.

7. Data collection framework

The data collection techniques have been determined on the basis of their suitability to answer the evaluation questions. The evaluation relied on a mixed method design to allow triangulation of multiple data sources and stakeholder groups. The following data collection methods was used:

a) Document review - which included three main types of sources:

- All Internal documents (related to the TFWA programme) in the three concerned components. This included reports of various projects, work plans & budgets, progress or final reports, monitoring data. Reports in connection with TWFA from the RECS as well as corporate publications were reviewed.
- Publications, evaluations or studies related to activities carried out under TWFA.
- External (third party) documents and studies linked to trade facilitation in West Africa, in particular regarding the programme's three components.

b) Key informant interviews - which were semi-structured and conducted either face-to-face or by online meetings. A draft interview guide along with a framework of target groups for individual questions was designed. Following the indicative lists of personal and institutional contacts which were compiled based on the ET's experience and professional networks as well as preliminary interviews with key stakeholders', interviews were mainly conducted with the following groups:

- Representatives of the main target groups/beneficiaries for the TWG programme (Representatives of RECs, Representatives of regional and national private sector organisations, Chambers of commerce and traders Associations, Freight forwarding Associations, Trade promotion institutions, Small Scale traders associations, Women's traders associations, policy makers; market partners);
- Development and implementing partners;
- Other external stakeholders, NGOs working in the trade areas such as representatives of small-scale traders and working on gender issues related to trade.
- The ET plans to carried 180 interviews during this evaluation

c) Group Interviews and Focus Group discussions

The ET could not undertake **group interviews** and or **focus group discussions** as planned, due to the time limitations and non-availability of stakeholders. Some group discussions were however possible with UEMOA, WBG and NTFC's in Nigeria and Niger.

d) Direct observation - which can also add value in an evaluation process was undertaken during the field visits. This was mainly carried out when the ET has the opportunity to meet with NTFC's during their meetings and appreciate the level of exchanges and contributions.

The figure below provides an overview of the data collection framework, including evaluation criteria which imply evaluation questions detailed above, key dimensions for analysis and the data collection methods foreseen as main lines of evidence.

Table 2 : Data collection framework

Evaluation questions related to the following criteria	Key Dimensions for analysis	Main lines of evidence
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance to overall objectives, strategy 	Document review Key Informant interviews
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compatibility of intervention Avoidance of duplication of other programmes and project Partnerships with other development partners working in the same areas. 	Document review Key Informant interviews
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance of programme and projects to improve trade facilitation Factors contributing to the achieving the programmes' objectives Constraints to the programmes' performance 	Key Informant interviews Case studies
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of the resources in achievement of the programme's objectives 	Document review Key Informant interviews Data review
Early signs of Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive or negative primary/ short term effects of the development intervention Changes occurred to date as a result of the intervention 	Key Informant interviews Case studies
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indications of initiatives by beneficiaries to continue the intervention beyond the project's timeline 	Document review Key Informant interviews
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of Gender considerations 	Document review Key Informant interviews
Environment and climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indications of action related Environment and climate sustainability 	Document review Key Informant interviews
EU Value Added	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of beneficiaries' awareness about the programme and perception of EU's contribution to the programme 	Document review Key Informant interviews

8. Evaluation Matrix

To facilitate the evaluation, an evaluation matrix was developed to define which data sources would be used to answer the evaluation questions while taking into account availability of data, time and budget. The evaluation matrix is an organizational tool which helped to plan an evaluation. This tool is usually prepared during the inception phase of the evaluation, and is then used throughout the data collection, analysis and report writing phases. The evaluation matrix forms the main analytical framework for the evaluation. It reflects the evaluation questions to be answered and helps to consider the most appropriate and feasible method to collect data for answering each question. It guides the analysis and ensures that all data collected is analysed, triangulated and then used to answer the evaluation questions, leading to conclusions and recommendations. The evaluation matrix is presented in Annex 1.

ANNEX 4: TFWA PROGRAMME LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Outcomes, Results	Indicators	Assumptions	Source	Baseline	Target	Period
Overall Goal/Impact: (1) Increased trade flows by reduced cost of trade and increased capacity of stakeholders to engage in trade related activities; (2) Strengthened ECOWAS common market and the integration of the West African region into the international economic and trading systems						
Program Impact Subject to an ex-post evaluation of the Programme (Note that the Programme success will not be measured by these aspirational impact indicators due to problems of attribution. This programme should be judged by its outcomes).	- Private sector saving from efficient movement of goods within the region and internationally	Global trade conditions stay same or are more favorable for West African private trading firms. Global trade environment does not face big shocks.	Calculation of the WBG	0	TBD (target in USD)	Subject to ex-post evaluation
	-					
	-					
	- ECOWAS value of intra-regional exports		- WTO data set: table on merchandise exports by destination https://data.wto.org/	10%	~11%	
	- ECOWAS share in international exports trade (value)		- ECOWAS internal statistics - Cross verification with ITC Trade Map https://www.trademap.org/tradestat/Bilateral_TS.aspx	0.5%	Increased by 4% to ~1%	
	- Exports of goods and services as percentage of GDP		African Development Bank Socio Economic Database	25%	about 25% (counterbalance projected decline through 2020)	

Outcomes, Results	Indicators	Assumptions	Source	Baseline	Target	Period
	– Average Global Competitiveness score		Table: http://dataportal.opendataforafrica.org/nbyenxf/afdb-socio-economic-database-1960-2020?country=1000650-ecowas	45.5	Minimum of three countries improve score	
– Results Indicators by Program's Components						
Results 1: Trade facilitation measures improved and more efficiently implemented	– Number of West African countries that apply ECOWAS trade facilitation policies and procedures	The ECOWAS Commission and MSs involved in the trade corridors development remain committed to reforms.	ECOWAS / MS regulations	0 ⁸⁷	8	Annually
	– Number of West African countries with harmonised customs and/or border procedures and improved corridor management		ECOWAS data and national customs administrations and government statistics (Senegal and Mali)	0	2	Annually
	– Number of ECOWAS MS ratified the WTO TFA		WTO website	10	15	Annually
	– Number of ECOWAS MS submitted category notifications		WTO website	10	15	Annually
	– -Category A – -Category B & C			6	15	

⁸⁷ ECOWAS Customs Code adopted in 12/2017 but not yet implemented. Regulations to operationalise the ECOWAS Customs Code are neither adopted nor implemented.

Outcomes, Results	Indicators	Assumptions	Source	Baseline	Target	Period
Results 2: More Efficient movement of goods along the selected corridors	– Median clearance time of goods along the selected corridors:	The ECOWAS Commission and MSs involved in the trade corridors development remain committed to reforms. Regional export-oriented firms remain supporting in responding to surveys	Sample Survey/ Port data /Customs Data of MSs / ECOWAS A feedback loop will be established, where data will be collected a few months after each reform – a pulse check			Annually, and Ad-hoc after important reforms
	– Dakar-Bamako			TBD	TBD	
	– Abidjan-Ouagadougou			30(2017)	26	
	– Tema-Ouagadougou			TBD	TBD	
	– Lome-Ouagadougou			TBD	TBD	
	– Cotonou-Niamey			TBD	TBD	
	– Lagos-Kano			TBD	TBD	
	– Interconnectivity ICT application used in customs/border management systems	MSs customs share administrative data	ECOWAS Communiqué, project reports	0	1 (between 2 countries)	Annually
Results 3: Barriers for women and small-scale traders reduced	– Percentage of small-scale traders experienced harassment at least once in the last six months	Effective coordination among the Customs Departments and other government agencies of the countries part of a selected corridor.	SSCBT Survey Q80	30%	15%	Annually
	– Male small-scale traders			11%	6%	
	– Female small-scale traders			19%	9%	
	– Average crossing time for small-scale traders at target borders, including women		Time-to-cross surveys SSCBT	50	25	Annually
	– Increase in awareness of ECOWAS rules, regulations and procedures among small-scale traders, including women		Perception surveys SSCBT Q64	4%	30%	Annually

Outcomes, Results	Indicators	Assumptions	Source	Baseline	Target	Period
Results 1. Trade facilitation measures improved and more efficiently implemented						
Outcome 1.1 Regional TF policies and instruments are developed and implemented	- Regional customs code implemented by ECOWAS Member States	Strong buy-in from ECOWAS Commission and ECOWAS member states	ECOWAS	Regional customs code adopted but not yet implemented	Regional customs code is adopted and implemented by at least 8 Member States	Once a year
	- # of new Regional regulations to operationalize the regional customs code adopted by ECOWAS Member States	Private sector and civil society are willing and able to benefit from trade facilitation reforms	ECOWAS	0	2	Annually
	- Regional regulations to operationalize the regional customs code implemented by # ECOWAS Member States		ECOWAS	0	8	Once a year
	- National procedures/ policies/ practices that were improved/ eliminated in line with an ECOWAS framework for risk management		ECOWAS	0	5	Once a year
Outcome 1.2 Capacities for monitoring and implementation of TF improved	- Number of national level reforms to which Members States attribute the role of ECOWAS		ECOWAS member states	2 – CET & ETLS	At least 5 national level reforms	Once a year
	- Regular publication of the monitoring results of the		ECOWAS	0	Results of monitoring	Once a year

Outcomes, Results	Indicators	Assumptions	Source	Baseline	Target	Period
	implementation of TF measures by ECOWAS				published yearly	
	- Regular exchange within the ECOWAS Commission is established, through an inter-departmental TF Committee		ECOWAS	0	8	Once a year
	- Regular exchange platform with the MS on best practices in implementing TF measures established by the ECOWAS Commission		ECOWAS MS	No	Yes	End of project
	- Number of TF measures harmonized between RECs (ECOWAS and UEMOA) increased.		ECOWAS UEMOA	0	3	End of project
Outcome 1.3 Support for the implementation of Common External Tariff (CET)	- Number of countries achieving full compliance with the CET increased		ECOWAS MS	0. All MS have deviations from the tariff	10 MS applying the CET (full compliance)	Once a year from 2019
	- MS successfully renegotiated their tariff commitments at the WTO in line with CET		ECOWAS/ WTO	0. CET is infringing current MS obligations at the WTO	CET is WTO compliant	Once a year from 2019
	- Existing non-conforming measures as well as domestic legislative and		ECOWAS MS	Study to determine existing	At least 10% of these measures are	Once a year

Outcomes, Results	Indicators	Assumptions	Source	Baseline	Target	Period
	regulatory restrictions to the CET protocol in all MS identified			domestic measures within the first 6 months of program implementation	addressed in selected MS	
Outcome 1.4 ETLS improved and more efficiently implemented	– Regional export-oriented companies indicate that ETLS customs procedures which are harmonized with related UEMOA procedures are implemented by the customs administration in MS.		ECOWAS	88% of 296 companies	45% of 650 companies	End of project
	– Effective ETLS monitoring system developed.		ECOWAS	No monitoring system	Effective Monitoring system exists	Once a year
	– Number of MS customs administration apply ETLS at the border in line with ECOWAS rules.		ECOWAS MS	6	10	Once a year
	– Increased utilization of the ETLS by private sector, ownership of firms disaggregated by sex		ECOWAS	311 products and 118 companies newly registered (average 2014-2017)	90% increase in the number of newly approved products and registered companies	Once a year
Outcome 1.5	– Number of WTO TFA categorization		WTO	6	15	Bi-annually

Outcomes, Results	Indicators	Assumptions	Source	Baseline	Target	Period
WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement is implemented	assessments completed by MSs					
	– Number of workshops to support WTO TFA ratification		WTO	0	4	Bi-annually
	– National trade facilitation committee established with a formal legal instrument (including stakeholders with gender-sensitive mandates)		WTO/MS	6	15	Once a year
	–					
– Results 2. More efficient movement of goods along selected corridors						
Outcome 2.1 Improved and simplified customs and border regulations and procedures between countries along the selected corridors	–					
	– Number of legal changes adopted to border requirements to improve and/or eliminate unnecessary border requirements	Strong buy-in from ECOWAS Commission and ECOWAS member states Private sector and civil society are willing and able to benefit from trade facilitation reforms	WB	0	6	Annually
	– Number of risk management system implemented		WB	0	9	Annually
	–					
	–					
Outcome 2.2 Establish customs connectivity in one or more corridors	– a regional customs interconnectivity system		0	0	1 operational between 2 MS	Once every two years

Outcomes, Results	Indicators	Assumptions	Source	Baseline	Target	Period
	between 2 Member States of ECOWAS which can be up scaled to more member states is well functioning				(Senegal and Mali)	
Outcome 2.3 Regional transit along corridors improved	– New regional regulations on transit guarantees are adopted by ECOWAS MS		ECOWAS MS	0	2 harmonized transit procedures along 1 corridor	Once a year
	– Regional transit procedures are simplified, harmonized and implemented along the selected corridors		ECOWAS Customs directorate or Mali and Senegal customs	0	At least two (2) transit procedures are harmonized in one Corridor	Once a year
	– Two countries establishing a single functioning bond guarantee on at least one additional corridor		ECOWAS/National Customs Administrations	0	1 mechanism implemented in 2 countries (Senegal and Mali)	Once a year
– Results 3. Barriers for women and small-scale traders reduced						
Outcome 3.1 More efficient and cheaper border crossing for small scale traders, including women	–	Strong buy-in from				
	–	ECOWAS				
	–	Commission and				
	–	ECOWAS member				
	–	states				
	– Number of processes/procedures/policies related to small-scale trade facilitation simplified, streamlined or eliminated	Private sector and civil society are willing and able to benefit from trade facilitation reforms	Program team	0	3	Bi-annually

Outcomes, Results	Indicators	Assumptions	Source	Baseline	Target	Period
	– Number of small-scale traders targeted by trainings of whom how many women		Program team	0	3000	Bi-annually
Outcome 3.2 Transport and trade sectors professionalized in selected corridor	– Number of countries receiving gap assessments for transport and logistics regulatory framework		ECOWAS/MS	0	5	Bi-annually
Outcome 3.3 Regional and national advocacy and sensitization system instituted	–					
	– Number of CSO representatives targeted by trainings		Program team	0	2000	Bi-annually
	– Issues raised in PPDs on TF-related issues are proposed for resolution.		Program team	0	6	Annually
	– Number of media appearances in target areas	Trainings and events are open to the media (as opposed to a closed-door session) Radio and video clippings can be captured post-publication	News clips/ web links/local newspapers/ other media	0	60 local, national, or regional media pieces	Once a year

ANNEX 5: EVALUATION MATRIX

Relevance				
EQ1. To what extent the components financed under the action and their design remain relevant to the overall objectives and strategy of the FA – as originally formulated and/or evolved over time; and in particular, relevance to ECOWAS and UEMOA priorities?				
Evaluation criteria covered				
Judgement criteria (JC)	Indicators (Ind)	Information sources		Methods / tools
		Secondary	Primary	
JC1.1. Alignment of FA Actions and Design with ECOWAS and UEMOA priorities	I 1.1.1 – Reference between the ECOWAS and UEMOA strategies and the MS needs they intend to support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports Project reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs
	I 1.1.2 – Reference between TWFA formulation documents to ECOWAS, UEMOA and MS needs they intend to support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs
	I 1.1.3 – Degree of correspondence between the overall and specific objectives of the programme and the overall priorities defined by ECOWAS and UEMOA and the MS in their strategies / policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports Project reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs
JC 1.2 - The design of TFWA programme (duration, conditions, mix of inputs, theory of change) responds to the challenges and specificities of the priorities they intend to support, and the indicators	I 1.2.1 – Evolution in the type of inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports Project reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs

used to measure results are SMART. ⁸⁸	I 1.2.2 – Evolution in the duration of the programme and KPIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TFWA programme documents • ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents • Annual Progress reports • Project reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative analysis • Desk review • Individual Interviews • FGDs
	I 1.2.3 - References or evidence of changes in design in response to best practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TFWA programme documents • ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents • Annual Progress reports • Project reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative analysis • Desk review • Individual Interviews • FGDs

⁸⁸ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.

EQ2. To what extent do these components remain relevant to the context and the needs – including needs which are not covered?				
Evaluation criteria covered				
Judgement criteria (JC)	Indicators (Ind)	Information sources		Methods / tools
		Secondary	Primary	
JC2.1 Project components respond to existing needs	I 2.1.1 - Reference between Programme components and ECOWAS, UEMOA needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports Project reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs
	I 2.1.2 - Reference between Programme components and MS needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports Project reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs
JC 1.2 - Project components manage to respond to uncovered needs	I 1.2.1 - Reference between Programme components and ECOWAS, UEMOA uncovered needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports Project reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs
	I 1.2.2 - Reference between Programme components and uncovered MS needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports Project reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs

EQ3. To what extent or not do the initial programme assumptions remain relevant and how does this affect future implementation?				
Evaluation criteria covered				
Judgement criteria (JC)	Indicators (Ind)	Information sources		Methods / tools
		Secondary	Primary	
JC2.1 The Initial assumptions were close to real conditions and valid during the first two years of the implementation of the programme	I 2.1.1 – Changes in the conditions under which the programme was being run	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports Project reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs
	2.1.2 – Degree to which programme has been affected by deviations from assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports Project reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs
JC 1.2 – The initial assumptions are likely to remain valid for the implementation of the programme	I 1.2.1 – Validity of initial assumption for future implementations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD IP, ECOWA and UEMOA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs

Efficiency

EQ 4. To what extent have the Implementing Partners been able to adapt their programming actions to issues related to the political economy of countries and subregions in achieving the programme's objectives?

Evaluation criteria covered				
Judgement criteria (JC)	Indicators (Ind)	Information sources		Methods / tools
		Secondary	Primary	
JC 4 .1 IP have made progress in achieving the planned results and targets as outlined in the logical framework within constraints of the political economy of countries and subregions	I 4.1.1 – Implementation of schedule of project showing programme is on track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents Annual Progress reports 	Feedback from Interviews with IP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews
	I 4.1.2 – Current constraints and how they have been addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents Annual Progress reports 	Feedback from Interviews with IP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews

Effectiveness

EQ 5. How did the specific activities funded under the action contribute to the achievement of the expected results?

Evaluation criteria covered				
Judgement criteria (JC)	Indicators (Ind)	Information sources		Methods / tools
		Secondary	Primary	
JC 5.1 Appropriate specific activities have been developed to timeously achieve the programme's expected results	I 5.1.1 – Evidence of activities funded under the action which enabled to achieve the expected results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports Project reports 	Feedback from Interviews with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews
JC 5.2 - Sufficient funds have been allocated to specific activities to timeously achieve the programme's expected results	I 5.2.1 – Evidence of tasks being completed within budget and time frames.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports Project reports 	Feedback from Interviews with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews

EQ 6. What factors contributed/are contributing the most to the achievement of the expected results and which ones (if any) created/are creating obstacles to such achievements?

Evaluation criteria covered				
Judgement criteria (JC)	Indicators (Ind)	Information sources		Methods / tools
		Secondary	Primary	
JC 6.1 The expected results were achieved through a number of contributive factors	I 6.1.1 – IND: 6.1.1: Number of factors which have helped in achieving the expected results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports Project reports Third Party Studies 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Contribution analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs
JC 6.2 - Existence of obstacles in the achievement of the results	I 6.2.1 – Number of factors which are obstacles to achieving results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports Project reports Third Party Studies 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs

Early signs of impact

EQ 7. To what extent early signs of impact have been or are going to be materialised?

Evaluation criteria covered				
Judgement criteria (JC)	Indicators (Ind)	Information sources		Methods / tools
		Secondary	Primary	
JC 7.1 Programme actions have generated to partial transformative effects on the beneficiaries	I 7.1.1 – Evidence of early signs of impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents Studies carried out by the programme 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative and qualitative analysis Individual Interviews FGDs Observation
	I 7.1.2 - Evidence of linking results achieved/to be achieved with the region's development goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative and qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs

Sustainability

EQ 8. To what extent have the actions taken the appropriate measures to ensure a maximum degree of sustainability (financial, technical, institutional, and political)?

Evaluation criteria covered				
Judgement criteria (JC)	Indicators (Ind)	Information sources		Methods / tools
		Secondary	Primary	
JC 8.1 ECOWAS and UEMOA as well as MS develop ownership criteria and remedial measures to ensure future sustainability of programme	I 8.1.1 – Evidence of ownership towards programme activities in terms of committing resources (human and financial) and active participation in programme activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs
	I.8.1.2 – IND 8.2: Evidence of commitment to implement remedial measures in support of programme implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs

EQ 9. What have been the key obstacles to building the ground for sustainability and what could be recommended to improve it in the future programming?

Evaluation criteria covered				
Judgement criteria (JC)	Indicators (Ind)	Information sources		Methods / tools
		Secondary	Primary	
JC 9.1 No sustainability actions identified by participating RECs and MS due to constraints	I 9.1.1 – Evidence of constraints related to the sustainability of the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs
JC 9.2 – Options for improving future programming identified	I 9.2.1 – Evidence of solutions for avoiding constraints in future programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA and the Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs

EQ 10. What has been the effective role of ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions, member states and other stakeholders in the implementation of the TFWA programme so far and to what extent has the programme addressed or not, the structural shortcomings in terms of human resources capacity, coordination, interface with implementing partners and system strengthening of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions?

Evaluation criteria covered				
Judgement criteria (JC)	Indicators (Ind)	Information sources		Methods / tools
		Secondary	Primary	
JC x .1 Participating RECs and MS have played a positive role in the implementation of the TFWA	I x.1.1 – Evidence of areas of intervention by participating RECs and MS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD with IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs
	I.x.1.2 – Evidence of results related to structural shortcomings of ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions carried out by the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD IP, ECOWAS, UEMOA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs
JC x .2 - Structural shortcomings and system strengthening of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions have been addressed by the programme	I x.2.1 – Evidence of actions related to system strengthening ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions carried out by the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TFWA programme documents ECOWAS and UEMOA Documents Annual Progress reports 	Feedback from Interviews and FGD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review Individual Interviews FGDs

ANNEX 6: DATA COLLECTION FRAMEWORK FOR INTERVIEWS

DATA COLLECTION FRAMEWORK FOR INTERVIEWS							
Discussion questions and prompts	Funding Agencies	Implementing partners.	RECS	Govt. Institutions	Corporates/ Business Associations	MSME reps	Small Scale Traders
RELEVANCE							
To what extent the components financed under the action and their design remain relevant to the overall objectives and strategy of the FA – as originally formulated and/or evolved over time; and in particular, relevance to ECOWAS and UEMOA priorities?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
To what extent do these components remain relevant to the context and the needs – including needs which are not covered?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
To what extent or not do the initial programme assumptions remain relevant and how does this affect future implementation?	✓	✓	✓				
EFFICIENCY							
To what extent have the Implementing Partners been able to adapt their programming actions to issues related to the political economy of countries and subregions in achieving the programmes objectives?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EFFECTIVENESS							
How did the specific activities funded under the action contribute to the achievement of the expected results?	✓	✓					
What factors contributed/are contributing the most to the achievement of the expected results and which ones (if any) created/are creating obstacles to such achievements?	✓	✓	✓				
EARLY SIGNS OF IMPACT							
To what extent early signs of impact have been or are going to be materialised?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SUSTAINABILITY							

To what extent have the actions taken the appropriate measures to ensure a maximum degree of sustainability (financial, technical, institutional, and political)?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
What have been the key obstacles to building the ground for sustainability and what could be recommended to improve it in the future programming?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
What has been the effective role of ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions, member states and other stakeholders in the implementation of the TFWA programme so far and to what extent has the programme addressed or not, the structural shortcomings in terms of human resources capacity, coordination, interface with implementing partners and system strengthening of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

ANNEX 7. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Questionnaire Guide

QUESTIONS	Devpt. Partners	IP	RECS	Govt. Inst.	Pvt sector
Relevance					
• Are the design of the TFWA programme and its components still relevant to the original objectives and strategy the FA?	X	X	X	X	X
• Are the Components of the TFWA still relevant to the ECOWAS and UEMOA priorities	X	X	X		
• Do the TFWA components respond to the needs of the context and needs of the RECS and MS?	X	X	X	X	
• Do the TFWA component respond to uncovered needs of the RECS and the MS?	X	X	X	X	
• Are the initial programme assumptions still relevant to the programme?	X	X	X	X	X
• If not how to they affect future implementation of the TFWA programme	X	X	X	X	X
Efficiency					
• What actions have Implementing Partners taken to adapt their programming actions to political economy issues of countries and subregions to achieve the programme's objective		X	X		
Effectiveness					
• How did specific activities funded under the action contribute to the achievement of the expected results?	X	X	X	X	X
• What factors contributed/are contributing the most to the achievement of the expected results	X	X	X	X	X
• Which factors (if any) created/are creating obstacles to the achievement of the TFWA's results.	X	X	X	X	X
Early Signs of Impact					
• Can you provide indications/evidence of initial impacts that the TFWA programme in terms of increased trade, regional integration, Private Sector Cost savings, Productivity and income growth, food security, increased employment opportunities			X	X	X
Sustainability					
• Have the programme's actions taken sufficient appropriate measures to ensure a maximum degree of sustainability (financial, technical, institutional, and political)?		X	X	X	
• What have been the major obstacles to building the ground for sustainability?		X	X	X	
• What actions would you recommend ensure sustainability in the future programming?		X	X	X	
• What effective role have you played in the implementation of the TFWA programme?		X			
• Has the programme addressed or not, the structural shortcomings in terms of human resources capacity, coordination, interface with implementing partners and	X	X	X	X	

system strengthening of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions?					
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ANNEX 9: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Separate .pdf file

ⁱ TFWA Concept Note: Planned activities pg 18