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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACA: African Cashew Alliance
ATWA: Accelerated Trade in West Africa
BA: Borderless Alliance
BIC: Border Information Centre
CBC: Conseil Burkinabè des Chargeurs
CILSS: Comité Inter-Etats de lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel (Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel)
COSEC: Conseil Sénégalais des Chargeurs
CSOs: Civil Society Organizations
ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States
GIZ: Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GPHA: Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority
GRA: Ghana Revenue Authority
GSA: Global Shea Alliance
IFC: International Finance Corporation
ISRT: Inter-Sate Road Transit
JICA: Japan International Corporation Agency
MTTD: Motor Transport and Traffic Department
NCs: National Committees
NFC: National Facilitation Committee
NRTFC: National Road Transport Facilitation Committee
OFT: Observatoire de la Fluidité des Transports (Observatory for Transport Facilitation)
PACIR: Programme d'Appui au Commerce et à l'Intégration Régionale (Support Program for Trade and Regional Integration)
PICD: Port Information Centre of Dakar
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ProFAB:</td>
<td>Food Across Borders Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEMOA:</td>
<td>Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (West African Economic and Monetary Union)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID:</td>
<td>United State Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFA:</td>
<td>Trade Facilitation Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAFM:</td>
<td>West Africa Food Markets</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCO:</td>
<td>World Customs Organization</td>
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1 BACKGROUND

Established in 2011, Borderless Alliance is a private sector-led regional advocacy organization. It aims at facilitating trade and transport in West Africa through advocacy. Specifically, Borderless Alliance works to remove non-tariff barriers, including road harassments, and also collaborates with countries in the region for an effective implementation of ECOWAS and UEMOA protocols and international conventions on cross-border trade, including Inter-State Road Transit. The Alliance is convinced that the simplification and harmonization of administrative procedures involved in trade facilitation can help to drastically reduce delays along the corridors, create a conducive business environment for investment, to create more jobs, and, therefore, generate more revenue to help reduce poverty.

Borderless Alliance (BA) currently has 80 member organizations from the private sector and is working in close collaboration with public institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs) and the media to increase intra-regional trade. To do this, the Alliance creates platforms for public-private sector dialogue and advocacy to find appropriate solutions to the challenges facing the region in terms of free movement of people and goods, and road governance. In its mission, the Alliance has the support of two economic communities in the region (ECOWAS and UEMOA) and development partners, to collect and regularly disseminate credible data on the actual state of intra-regional trade. This report gives an overview of the BA activities conducted during the 2016 financial year. The report focuses on the main strategic pillars of activities of the Alliance, namely:

- advocacy;
- capacity building;
- road governance;
- diversification of Borderless Alliance’s membership base;
- Border Information Centre activities;
- technical services rendered to its members;
- strengthening the Borderless Alliance Secretariat;
- and cooperation with financial and technical partners in the promotion of regional integration.
2 ADVOCACY

Summary of Key Advocacy Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Key issues Discussed</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Borderless 2016 Annual Conference in Cotonou, Benin                     | May 2016      | Regional Integration through the Development of Trade and Transport.  
• Promoting Port Efficiency in West Africa  
• Removing Intra-regional Trade Barriers  
• Financing Trade and Transport | 150 participants from 11 countries |
| Technical Workshop on Improved and Facilitated Trade in West Africa     | June 2016     |  
• Enhancing the flow of transit trade by managing trade corridors;  
• Efficient ports and effective border crossings; customs information exchange mechanisms between neighboring countries  
• Increasing transparency of trade procedures; and promoting collaboration between national border agencies | 30 participants |
| Media Sensitization Workshops on WTO – TFA in Benin                     | December, 2016|  
• Details of Trade Facilitation Agreement  
• Benefits of Trade Facilitation Agreement | 28 participants (26 men and 2 female facilitators). |
| Media Sensitization Workshops on WTO – TFA in Burkina Faso             | December, 2016| Details of Trade Facilitation Agreement  
Benefits of Trade Facilitation Agreement | 42 representatives (30 men and 12 women) |
| High-Level Advocacy Meeting with the Government of Benin                | December 2016 |  
• Removal of certificate of origin requirement on agricultural products and livestock  
• Briefing on the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation agreement  
• Reduction of checkpoints on the roads  
• Free flow of goods (market) between Benin and Nigeria and in the sub region  
• Use of civilians called “klébés” by the uniformed forces (customs, Gendarmerie and Police) to extort money on the roads  
• Fake drugs entering Benin  
• Establishment of a telephone line for complaints | |
| Joint Meeting of Customs & Private Sector Actors at Noe/Elubo Border    | December 2016 |  
• Challenges faced by customs at each side of the border  
• Challenges faced by freight forwarders at each side of the border  
• Challenges faced by transporters at each side of the border | A total of 32 participants |

2.1 Borderless 2016 Annual Conference

In May, Borderless Alliance organized its 5th Annual Conference in Cotonou, Benin, under the theme “Regional Integration through the Development of Trade and Transport.” This is the Alliance’s biggest outreach event that comes off every year. As had been the case with previous events, the Conference was a platform for dialogue among the private and public sectors in West Africa. Dubbed “Borderless 2016” and organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Trade of
the Republic of Benin, the Conference, brought together more than 150 participants from 11 countries. These consisted of the private sector – traders, manufacturers, transporters, freight forwarders; donors/development partners – USAID, GIZ, the World Bank Group, the African Development Bank, JICA and the European Union. Others are regional economic communities – ECOWAS and UEMOA; government officials – Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Minister of Industry, Trade and Handicraft and the Minister of Transport, both of the Republic of Benin.

Besides the opening ceremony being graced by high-level personalities, the conference also held a two-day panel discussion in three thematic areas: *Promoting Port Efficiency in West Africa; Removing Intra-regional Trade Barriers;* and *Financing Trade and Transport.* These panel discussions provided an interactive platform for participants. High level experts from both private and public sectors in the sub region, as well as international organizations, took turns to share their experiences and best practices to: remove obstacles and barriers to trade; promote cross-border trade; and create appropriate funding tools for trade and transport stakeholders.

On measures aimed at promoting efficiency of ports in West Africa, port authorities presented innovations in terms of tangible and intangible infrastructure (technology and procedures) aimed at facilitating port operations and reducing delays and costs. Port users, notably from the private sector, made suggestions to improve the efficiency of port operations. On removing intra-regional trade barriers, panelists highlighted the major barriers to trade, ways to eliminate those barriers and the advantages the region stands to have if barriers to intra-regional trade are removed. Looking at how to finance trade and transport, participants examined challenges stakeholders in the trade and transport sector, as well as Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), faced in accessing credit facilities and the opportunities available to capitalize on. At the General Assembly, new members of the Executive Committee were elected to steer the affairs of Borderless Alliance for the next two years (2016 – 2018).

### 2.2 Technical Workshop on Improved and Facilitated Trade in West Africa Project

In June, Borderless Alliance organized a regional conference, co-hosted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission and the World Bank Group, under the *Improved and Facilitated Trade in West Africa* project. The project aims to unlock transit challenges across key trade corridors in West Africa. Over 40 representatives from the ECOWAS Commission, the European Union, the World Bank Group, USAID West Africa, the Federation of West Africa Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FEWACCI) and stakeholders from the public and private sectors along three main trade corridors in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Niger, and Ghana, attended the two-day technical workshop in Accra, Ghana.
The event brought together stakeholders along the trade corridors to share best practices in implementing reforms that facilitate trade. Main themes included: enhancing the flow of transit trade by managing trade corridors; efficient ports and effective border crossings; customs information exchange mechanisms between neighboring countries; increasing transparency of trade procedures; and promoting collaboration between national border agencies. The ECOWAS Commission, through its Director of Customs, Mr. Salifou Tiemtoré, reaffirmed the Commission’s commitment to implementing programs that facilitate regional integration and making it work for private sector operators and the people of West Africa.

For their part, the World Bank Group acknowledged the enormous potential of West African countries to strengthen competitiveness and increase flows, which could drive growth, reduce poverty, and deliver jobs to the region. According to Ronke-Amoni Ogunsulire, IFC Country Manager for Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger and Togo, the World Bank Group was pleased to be working in partnership with regional organizations, member states, the private sector and development partners to help the named countries unlock transit challenges along key trade corridors, and improve their competitiveness within the global economy. The Improved and Facilitated Trade in West Africa project seeks to support the ECOWAS Commission to improve trade in the West African region and, specifically, transit trade along the region’s major trade corridors. It focuses on reducing the time and cost to trade, and increasing border agency cooperation and coordination, to encourage a better flow of goods within the region, and with international trading partners.
2.3 Media Sensitization Workshops on WTO – TFA in Benin and in Burkina Faso

As part of its continued efforts at facilitating trade in the West Africa sub region, Borderless Alliance organized two workshops in Benin and Burkina Faso in December to sensitize the media and, by extension, citizens, authorities, governments and other stakeholders in the trade and transport sector on the need for countries to ratify the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO-TFA). This initiative by Borderless Alliance is to complement the efforts being made by countries aimed at ensuring the ratification of the WTO-TFA. Below is a summary of the deliberations during the events in Benin and Burkina Faso.

2.3.1 In Benin

The workshop, which took place on December 13 in Cotonou, brought together 28 participants (26 men and 2 female facilitators). These comprised representatives of national, regional, and international media houses, investment and export promotion agencies, Ministry of Trade, USAID West Africa Trade Hub, and other stakeholders in the trade and transport sector.

Presiding over the opening ceremony, the Technical Advisor on Trade at the Ministry of Trade, Mr. Tidjani Chakirou, who represented the Minister of Trade, lauded the efforts of Borderless Alliance at facilitating trade in the West Africa region. He indicated that the Government of Benin was ready to support trade facilitation efforts both at the national and regional levels. Mr. Chakirou said to demonstrate the importance attached to trade facilitation activities, the government would design training programs to create awareness on the importance of trade facilitation in the country and in the West Africa region.

It was indicated that the TFA was at the level of the Parliament of the Republic of Benin, awaiting the attention of Parliament for its ratification.

The discussions on the TFA provided an opportunity for the participants to raise a number of problems, including the obstacles created by certain Member States, particularly Nigeria, preventing products from Benin from entering its territory.

2.3.2 In Burkina Faso

A total of 42 representatives (30 men and 12 women) of media organizations, Ministry of Trade, investment and export promotion agencies, Ministry of Transport, Office of the Prime Minister, and Customs participated in the workshop on December 20 in Ouagadougou.

Chairing the opening ceremony, the Cabinet Director at the Ministry of Trade, Mr. Christian Somda, expressed gratitude to Borderless Alliance for the initiative to sensitize key people, such as journalists, who will, in turn, create the awareness in citizens on the benefits of trade facilitation agreements and the need to ratify the WTO-TFA.
During the discussions, it became apparent that the Government of Burkina Faso had sought technical and financial support from donors to conduct a study on the successful implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. The result of the study is that technical state institutions have been entrusted with the implementation of the WTO TFA. These institutions include customs, ministries of commerce, transport and justice, the Council of Ministers, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Burkinabe Shippers Council, Agency for the promotion of exports from Burkina Faso and other regulatory bodies and institutions responsible for quality assurance in the country.

In addition, a draft law ratifying the WTO TFA had been submitted to the National Assembly of Burkina Faso.

2.4 High-Level Advocacy Meeting with the Government of Benin

In December 2016, Borderless Alliance held three separate meetings with officials of the Government of Benin on measures being adopted by the country to facilitate trade and improve the business environment in that country. These are the Director – General of Customs, the Minister of Trade, Industry and Handicraft, and the Minister of the Interior. It is worth noting that the country has, on many occasions, indicated and demonstrated its commitment to improving road governance in order to promote a favorable environment for business operators in-country and in the sub region. Borderless Alliance held discussions with the officials to discuss ongoing measures and others yet to be adopted by the Government. The experience of Benin could also be shared with other countries.
The issues discussed included:

- Briefing on the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation sensitization workshop organized for journalists and other trade and transport stakeholders in Benin
- Removal of certificate of origin on agricultural products and livestock
- Reduction of checkpoints on the roads
- Free flow of goods (market) between Benin and Nigeria and in the sub region
- Use of civilians called “klébés” by the uniformed forces (customs, Gendarmerie and Police) to extort money on the roads
- Fake drugs entering Benin
- Establishment of a telephone line (hotline) to enable users of the corridor to lodge complaints

On December 13, 2016, the Executive Secretary of Borderless Alliance, Mr. Justin Bayili, met with the Director General of Benin Customs, Mr. Pierre-Claver Tossou in Cotonou. This was to discuss measures adopted and those yet to be put in place by Customs towards facilitating trade. The Director General of Customs indicated that the Government of Benin, through his organization, had removed the requirement for a certificate of origin on agricultural products and livestock. This was contained in a circular issued by Customs on December 12, 2016. The message was circulated to all Directors of Customs, Unit Heads, Heads of Security Checkpoints, Heads of Border Security, Divisional Heads, Heads of Institution and Heads of Trade and Transport Unions.

In addition, the Director General of Customs reassured the delegation of the suppression of the Special Tax on Re-export.

Borderless Alliance met with the Benin Minister of Industry, Trade and Handicraft, Mr. Lazare Maurice Sehoueto, on December 14, 2016. The meeting afforded the opportunity for Borderless Alliance to brief the Minister on the TFA media sensitization workshop held the previous day, recommendations and what the Government of Benin could further do to improve the business environment. The Executive Secretary of Borderless Alliance, Mr. Justin Bayili, expressed gratitude to the Minister and the Government for steps already taken to improve the business environment in Benin and in West Africa. He reiterated that Borderless Alliance’s commitment to trade facilitation in the West Africa sub region and, thus, organizing the TFA media sensitization workshop for journalists in Benin was part of Borderless Alliance’s effort to assist countries to ratify the WTO-TFA. The Executive Secretary expressed Borderless Alliance’s continued readiness to collaborate with West African states to increase trade in the sub region. For his part, the Minister, in turn, expressed gratitude to Borderless for organizing the workshop and said targeting journalists was something in the right direction.

The Minister gave the assurance that steps had been taken to remove all checkpoints for vehicles. There would, however, be checkpoints for the presence of security agencies in case of any issue requiring their presence and action. The Government of Benin was implementing a decision to sanction Heads of Sections, Units or Departments for the misbehavior of any subordinate security officer.
On free flow of trade between Benin and Nigeria, the Minister said the Benin Government had taken steps to structure their trade relations with Nigeria. He observed that the Government of Nigeria might have a point in not allowing goods from Benin in their market or passing through their market to other countries. Nonetheless, the approach used needs to be reconsidered. Structuring the economy and trade relations with Nigeria is one way of overcoming the problem. He also mentioned the adjustment of prices of goods in Nigeria to correspond with the devaluation of their currency as another step that could help solve crippling businesses. He appealed to the ECOWAS Task Force to intervene to ensure free flow of goods in member countries. The Minister further called for a dialogue between the Central Bank of Francophone West Africa (BCEAO) and the Central Bank of Nigeria in order for facilitate financial transactions. He urged Borderless Alliance to continue its efforts at facilitating trade in the sub region.

On December 15, 2016, Borderless Alliance, together with the Trade Advisor of the Krake Border Information Center, representatives of USAID Benin and the USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub, met the Benin Minister of Interior, Mr. Sacca Lafia, in his office. Borderless Alliance, once again, commended the Minister on the improvement of road governance. Specific mention was made of the Hillacondji, the Togo-Benin border – Cotonou where checkpoints had been reduced to only one, and the Cotonou – Malanville northern corridor where there is one checkpoint per 100 km. This notwithstanding, Borderless Alliance mentioned at least four police, gendarmerie, and customs checkpoints still mounted by the Mayor and the Chief of Seme. Borderless Alliance also mentioned the presence on the streets of civilians commonly known as "Klébés", used by uniformed services to extort money from road users (traders and drivers). The representative of USAID Benin mentioned fake medicines entering the country from Nigeria and called on the Minister to reinforce checks at the borders.
In his response, the Minister pledged to remove the barriers and checkpoints along the corridors. He emphasized that checkpoints should be at the borders, but not internally. He revealed that his Ministry was in the process of putting out a telephone line for citizens to call and report on road harassments. He also promised to cause the arrest of all civilians on the road. He further promised that by January 1, 2018, all uniformed officers would wear name tags to facilitate easy identification by complainants and the general public. On fake medicines coming into Benin, a list of them was being compiled to help arrest, judge and sanction dealers accordingly. To tackle the payment of illicit taxes, the Minister said measures would be taken to sensitize people not to pay. The Minister concluded by reiterating the commitment of the Government of Benin to ensuring free movement of persons and goods.

Following the discussions with the Government of Benin on issues affecting free flow of trade in West Africa, Borderless Alliance would also embark on regular monitoring to evaluate the extent to which the promises and commitments made by the Government of Benin during these meetings are fulfilled.

2.5 Joint Meeting of Customs & Private Sector Actors at Noe/Elubo Border

As part of fulfilling ProFAB’s objective of ensuring free circulation of agricultural products across West Africa, Borderless Alliance organized a joint meeting between the Customs at Noe and Elubo border, together with private sector actors, such as freight forwarders and transporters. The workshop which was under the theme “Customs Clearance Procedures and Implementation Difficulties at the Elubo / Noé Border” took place on December 19, 2016 at Elubo, Ghana.

The key objective of the meeting was to bring together stakeholders from the public and private sectors to dialogue and come up with practical action points on how to improve border crossing procedures at the border. A total of 32 participants, comprising the Head of Customs and other Senior Officers at the two sides of the border, freight forwarders and transporters, participated in the meeting.

During deliberations, the two sides of customs presented the key challenges they face at their end, followed by separate presentations from the Freight forwarders in Elubo and Noe as well as the transporters.
The key challenges and recommendations of the Joint Noe / Elubo Border Meeting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major challenges</th>
<th>Key recommendations/Action points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private sector stakeholders do not understand customs procedures and regulations properly.</td>
<td>Need for further training for private sector stakeholders (clearing agents, transporters, traders etc.) on the customs procedures at the border.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congestion due to limited parking space and of the fact that many of the drivers park before looking for documentation and money for border crossing procedures. Sometimes the clearing agents are not at the border when the trucks arrive.</td>
<td>Owners of goods and Truck drivers should ensure that they have all the necessary documentation before the truck arrives at the border. Major stakeholders of Noe and Elubo border community to contact the local assembly to explore the possibility of constructing a large parking space close to the border area where trucks can park while waiting for procedures to commence at the border. The border community should engage government to construct more infrastructure at the border.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some complained that activities at the Noe Border usually slows down from 12:00 – 14:30 when the customs at Noe border are on lunch break</td>
<td>Customs officers to do a special arrangement internally to run a shift system for their break and ensure that there is someone at post at all time to process documents even during break hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Solution/Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing of outward transactions in Elubo with memorandum accompanying them sometimes delay when the Senior Customs Officers are not available to sign them</td>
<td>Ghana Customs have committed to ensuring that power is delegated to the next Officer in charge to sign the document if the Senior Officer is not available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearing agents from Noe complained about delay in processing trucks at the Elubo Border due to issues with landing certificates and double inspection of trucks</td>
<td>Ghana Customs has committed to ensure that the issue is looked into and resolved to ensure quick flow of trucks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of the goods registered under ETLS have their HS codes changed or reclassified as a result of the introduction of the ECOWAS CET. This makes processing of such goods difficult and slow.</td>
<td>Exporters to ensure that they contact the ETLS National Approval Committees in their home country to effect the changes in the HS codes before exporting those goods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some importers still try to import goods that have been banned from being transported across land frontiers. For instance, importation of rice into Ghana through the borders is banned and also importation of irons into Cote d’Ivoire through the borders is banned.</td>
<td>Private sector should continue to educate their members about these banned commodities and avoid going against the ban.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g. 25 trucks of iron rods from Ghana have been prevented from crossing the Noe border because of a ban on transportation of iron rods across the frontiers of Côte d’Ivoire.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some importers of perishable goods complained that they are unable to process their goods for border crossing on Sundays because both the Clearing Agents and customs do not process goods on Sunday</td>
<td>Any importer (especially for perishable goods) who intends to cross the border on Sunday is required to give prior notification to the clearing agent and customs for them to facilitate the crossing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 CAPACITY BUILDING

3.1 Workshop on ECOWAS Rules of Origin for Cross-border Trade Stakeholders

Borderless Alliance organized a training workshop in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire in February, to enhance the capacity of cross-border trade stakeholders in understanding the rules of origin and the benefits of community-originating goods as set out by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

More than 43 cross-border trade stakeholders participated in the workshop. These comprised representatives of manufacturing companies, and cashew processors, and freight forwarders operating in Côte d’Ivoire. Participants were taken through some key topics which include:

- ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS);
- Rules of origin within the ECOWAS region;
- ECOWAS certificate of origin; and
- ETLS Agreement procedures for companies and products.

The ETLS puts a duty-free tax on all manufactured goods originating from West Africa, as a means of improving trade competitiveness in the West Africa region. However, many traders in the West Africa region are not informed on this initiative by ECOWAS. Regarding the workshops, participants indicated that the training workshop would improve the operations of their companies, both in the interior and at the borders of the country.

3.2 Training Workshops for Livestock Traders

Information that Borderless Alliance, in collaboration with its partners, had gathered from livestock dealers plying the Tema – Paga route pointed to about 41 illegal police check points on the Tamale – Paga route, which is a stretch of the Tema – Paga Corridor. This left livestock truck drivers torn between paying GHS 30.00 – GHS 50.00 and moving their trucks, and spending close to 3 hours on the road with the animals and all associated risks. It was also discovered that clearing agents at the Paga collected GHS 580.00 for documentation, but the documents were issued covering a cost of GHS 435.00.

At a Regional Police Commanders’ meeting in Kumasi, in Ghana, the Police emphasized that livestock traders and transporters often did not comply with road transport regulations and haulage trucks often did not meet prescribed road safety standards in Ghana. The transporters on the other hand, also complained about constant police harassment.

Due to these difficulties encountered, the Borderless Alliance in March, organized a series of training events for livestock business operators in Burkina Faso and in Ghana, on good road governance at the Kossodo Livestock Market in Ouagadougou, in Burkina Faso, and at Paga, in Ghana, respectively. This followed the Alliance’s identification that road harassments result from the behavior of both law-enforcing agents, on one side, and drivers, traders and truck
owners, on another side. In Ouagadougou, more than 100 stakeholders, including traders, transporters, representatives of CILSS, COFENABVI, GHAFLIP, USAID Trade and Investment Hub, came together to discuss road harassments in the livestock trade on the Ouagadougou-Tema Corridor. From the discussions, it was revealed that livestock traders and transporters were faced with many difficulties on the corridor, especially on the Paga-Tema stretch. The stakeholders were sensitized on good practices in the livestock trade on the Ouagadougou-Tema Corridor, laying emphasis on the importance of proper documentation on livestock and the vehicles.

The training at Paga also brought together more than 50 livestock drivers, traders and truckers. It was done on a one-on-one basis, as and when the truck drivers arrived at the border from Burkina Faso. Participants were taken through best practices like proper dressing, requisite documentation on the trucks and for the drivers and approaching the security check points and barriers rightly.

Participants took the opportunity to voice the “frustrations” they were going through in using the route. They mentioned under declaring of animals as a problem, but attributed it to the attitude of police officers on the road. According to truck drivers, at a meeting that had been held earlier with the police, it was agreed that they declare the goods properly. However, police officers on duty at the Paga Police Barrier still collected money from them. Thus, they resolved to under declare their goods and to use money saved out of the under declaration to “bribe” the police.

3.3 Training Workshops on ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET)

Borderless Alliance organized sensitization workshops on the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) across five borders across the region. Financed by GIZ, the workshops aimed at: strengthening the capacity of customs officials at the border in understanding the CET; raising awareness among the private sector and cross-border traders for a better understanding of the
provisions of the CET; and educating the media and, through them, the general public on the benefits of the CET and the Customs Union. During these workshops, participants were taken through four areas: General Aspects of Regional Integration; Basics of Customs Management; Basics of Common External Tariff; and CET Accompanying Measures and Instruments.

Number of People Trained:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training locations</th>
<th>Customs officers</th>
<th>Other Government Agencies officers</th>
<th>Freight forwarders</th>
<th>Other private sector actors</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paga</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noe</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aflao</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakola</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krake</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>74</strong></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
<td><strong>182</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.3.1 Paga Border

From March 8 – 10, Borderless Alliance (BA) organized the training workshop in collaboration with the Ghana Customs and with support from Ghana Shippers’ Authority (GSA), host institution for Borderless Alliance National Chapter in Ghana. An average of 35 stakeholders from both the public and private sector participated in the three-day workshop.

Stakeholders included Customs, Veterinary Services, Immigration, the Bureau of National Investigations (BNI), National Security, Traders and Freight Forwarders. Customs officers from nearby posts within the region, including Pusiga and Kulungugu, also joined the Paga officers to benefit from the training. The event was also covered by selected electronic and print media houses. Only two females were participated in the workshop. This apparently reflects the fact very few women are engaged in the transport and logistics business at the borders due to the harsh environment.
3.3.2 Noé Border

Twenty-eight border users attended the workshop organized at the Noé Border, Côte d’Ivoire, from March 22-24. Participants comprised customs officers, freight forwarders and shippers. On behalf of the Ivorian Director General of Customs, the Head of Customs Bureau in Noé, Mr. Sekongo SANAN, said his organization attached great importance to capacity building and that it was the reason they supported the activity. He then said the ECOWAS CET was a new tool that needed to be publicized among stakeholders working in the domain of customs clearance. He expressed the hope that after the training, customs revenue would increase at Noé Border. Freight forwarders raised some practical challenges, resulting from the implementation of the CET, which they were facing. These include:

- The removal of tariff lines on personal belongings and mortal remains;
- The fact that SIDAM considered personal belongings as new goods and customs duties largely exceeded the 2.5% which was perceived before;
- The descriptions of subheadings (in the tariff) were not always complete in the customs system and when printing the declarations, labeling them did not show the nature of the goods.

The three-day training workshop was organized in collaboration with the Ivorian Customs and the Office Ivoirien des Chargeurs (OIC) – the Côte d’Ivoire Shipper’s Council. The OIC recommended that the same kind of training be extended to the stakeholders at the Abidjan Port.
3.3.3 Aflao Border

At the Aflao Border in Ghana, Borderless Alliance, in collaboration with the Ghana Customs and the Ghana Shippers’ Authority, brought together about 62 stakeholders for the CET workshop from March 30 – 31. These included Customs Officers at the Aflao Border, freight forwarders and their representative associations, the State Insurance Company (SIC) – national guarantors for the transit bond, Food and Drugs Authority, etc. The media was also represented.

While acknowledging the efforts of key partners in the trade and transport industry, Mrs. Sylvia Asana Owu, Deputy CEO of the Ghana Shippers’ Authority (GSA), assured them of the GSA’s continuous support and cooperation to improve road governance and trade facilitation in general. She explained that the law governing the CET came into effect following the passage of the Customs (Amendment) Act, 2015 (Act 905), by the Ghana Revenue Authority. She said importers in Ghana were, however, uncertain whether the new law would lead to an increase or a decrease in cost of importation and had, thus, called for extensive sensitization on the ECOWAS CET. Mrs. Owu further explained that implementing the CET would bring on board some benefits for shippers across the sub region. She, therefore, appealed to all stakeholders in the trade and transport industry to consider the long-term benefits of the CET and to support its implementation process.

Evaluative feedback from participants highlighted the following concerns and requests:

- All officers at major points of entry into the country should be given the opportunity to take part in the CET training exercises;
- Police should also be a part of the training programs;
- Periodic trainings for different groups of participants should be conducted;
- Continuous sensitization and training was needed for effective implementation of the CET;
- Implementation would be effective only if efforts were made to ensure harmonization in the implementation process for all member states.
3.3.4 Dakola Border

The workshop at the Dakola Border in Burkina Faso was organized in collaboration with the Conseil Burkinabé des Chargeurs (CBC) – the Burkina Shippers’ Council, from April 12 – 14. Thirty-four representatives of customs, freight forwarders and shippers participated.

Representing the Director General of Customs, the Head of Dakola Customs Bureau, Mr. Sanou Sabarikagny, mentioned that the CET was a new tool that would bring a custom union to the ECOWAS region. Therefore, all stakeholders in customs clearance must be informed for a better implementation of the tool. He expressed the hope that after the training, participant’s capacity would be strengthened not only in the CET, but also in the HS tariff, the customs valuation, and the various aspects of regional integration.

Recommendations made at the workshop include:

- Organizing separate training sessions for customs and freight forwarders for better understanding of each actor;
- Providing training materials (manuals) to participants before the event for them to provide them with basic information and to enable them participate effectively.
3.3.5 Cotonou and Kraké

Borderless Alliance, in collaboration with the Benin Customs and the Conseil National des Chargeurs du Bénin (CNCB) – Benin Shipper’s Council, organized the training on the ECOWAS CET on May 03-4 in Cotonou, and a one-day workshop at the Kraké Border, both in Benin. The workshop in Cotonou was attended by 27 participants and that of Krake Border was attended by 17. These comprised freight forwarders, shippers, traders and representatives of some government agencies.

The Representing the Director General of Benin Customs, the Regional Director of Customs for Ouemé and Plateau Bureau, Mr. Tossou Pierre Claver, said the quality of human resources necessarily required training and that it was a challenge for his organization. That, he said, was the reason Benin Customs supported a training of that kind. He further observed that the training afforded customs the opportunity to discuss certain issues with the private sector.

Private sector actors took advantage of these two workshops to raise some concerns:

- Some customs officers demanded illegal payment of CFA 25,000 to counter sign the certificate of origin at Benin borders;
- At what level of processing agricultural products a certificate of origin would be required. This, they said, was because, women in cross-border trade were very often asked to provide certificate of origin for their small scale processing products.

3.4 Workshop on ECOWAS Rules of Origin in Burkina Faso

Under the USAID TIME GRANT initiative, Borderless Alliance organized a one-day informative workshop on “ECOWAS Rules of Origin” in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in June, to boost the understanding of business operators in trade regulations and to ensure a smooth operation of their businesses. The workshop brought together more than 45 stakeholders, made up of shea and cashew processors, manufacturing companies and some freight forwarders operating at Ouagarinter. As one of the advantages of having a common regional market in West Africa, companies and products, which meet the originating product criteria, must get approval from ECOWAS and National Approval Committees. Two major issues discussed at the workshop include: ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS); and Processes and Procedures for acquisition of the ECOWAS Certificate of Origin.

While admitting that a smooth implementation of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme was a sure way to realizing a common market in the sub region, traders observed that the six-month period given for companies to get approval from ECOWAS and National Approval Committees was long and remained a challenge to them.
3.5 Training Workshop for Shea and Cashew Stakeholders in Ghana

In June, Borderless Alliance, in collaboration with African Cashew Alliance and the Global Shea Alliance under the USAID TIME Grant, organized a capacity building and sensitization workshop for shea and cashew stakeholders in Tamale, Ghana, on Customs Export Procedures and ECOWAS Rules of Origin.

The event brought together more than 40 representatives of the shea and cashew sectors, the Northern Region Shippers’ Transit Committee, Customs, Immigration, Police, Ghana Export Promotion Council, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Standards Authority, among others. In addition to a presentation on the USAID TIME project and the Borderless Alliance E-Platform for reporting and resolving non-tariff barriers, participants were also taken through the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), Rules of Origin, Customs Export Procedures and their benefits to regional trade in West Africa. Participants observed that the training was useful as it would enhance their businesses.

Recommendations made at the workshop include:

- The need for customs to increase efforts to sensitize and educate stakeholders on their documentation requirements
- The need for customs to facilitate the payment of goods in Tamale instead of referring all payments to Accra
- The extension of the use of the GCNet ICT center in Tamale to accommodate other customs related ICT requirements
- The need for regular training workshops for stakeholders in the shea and cashew sectors to increase their understanding of trade rules and regulations and to increase their competitiveness.
A section of participants at the workshop in Tamale

3.6 Training Workshop for Cross-Border Women Traders (AFAO-WAWA)

After almost 40 years of implementation of the ETLS, there remains a significant gap in ownership as well as understanding by stakeholders including administration officials, traders and transporters. Women especially, representing about 52% of the regional population, are almost 70% illiterate, making them the most affected by the ignorance of their right to move freely without hindrance.

Recognizing the specific need for education of women in regional integration policy, the ProFAB program, the Association of West African Women (WAWA), in collaboration with "Borderless Alliance" organized a workshop in Dakar on 24th August 2016 on the fundamentals of cross border trade for agricultural products.

The workshop aimed specifically to inform stakeholders and users especially women of the existence of the program, its objectives and deliverables, increase awareness of ECOWAS instruments and tools on the free movement of agricultural products and to educate women processors and traders of agricultural products their rights to free movement.
The event brought together 107 participants (70 women and 37 men) and 15 journalists. It was chaired by the Director of Integration of ECOWAS Bureau in Dakar. Other participants included the Director of Customs, Representative of the Ministry of Women’s affairs, Police, Gendarmerie, Forestry Services, the ECOWAS Gender Center and USAID. Key topics of discussion included road harassment encountered by women traders and discussions on the various ECOWAS instruments and tools.

3.7 Trainings for Grantees of West African Food Market (WAFM) Program

To assist in building the capacity of agriculture based companies to increase their engagement in inter-regional trade, WAFM collaborated with Borderless Alliance to train selected grantees from Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger and Nigeria.

Borderless Alliance entered into an agreement with West Africa Food Markets Programme (WAFM) on 18th January 2016, to carry out two training events on cross-border trade procedures – one in Burkina Faso for the francophone grantees, and the other in Ghana for anglophone grantees.

The first training workshop was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from September 8 - 9, for 19 representatives from five companies. The second one was organized in Accra from October
13 to 14, for 18 participants of four companies from Nigeria and Ghana. The overall objective of these training sessions was to build the capacity of grantees benefiting from the challenge fund to handle cross border trade, increase food production and improve the value chain to ensure smooth agricultural trade on the major transit trade corridors through:

- training in cross border procedures and customs documentation to promote the free flow of agriculture produce on the corridors;
- sensitizing farmers and traders on optimizing the use of available funds in order to increase food production and to take advantage of the regional food market;
- sharing experiences of well-established cross border traders in agricultural products;
- helping trainees appreciate the level of challenges that include road harassments on the corridor and how to manage them; and
- educating trainees on the existence of resolution mechanisms for non-tariff barriers to trade.

Topics discussed during at the trainings sessions: Basic Customs procedures for export and cross border trade; Basics of Common External Tariff (CET); ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme and Rules of Origin; and others.

A section of the participants from Ghana and Nigeria receiving training in Accra
Participants observed some challenges specific to some countries.

*Burkina Faso:* Cumbersome export procedures; road harassments: numerous checkpoints, delays and extortion; and lack of harmonization of regional trade protocols.

*Niger:* Lack of professionalism in the transport sector; high cost of transportation; lack of awareness of regional trade policies; and numerous unapproved checkpoints.

*Ghana:* Documentation delays; bureaucracy, especially at customs outfits; delays in issuance of certificate of origin; GCNet link failure; high “unapproved” fee charges by customs officers; and delays at borders when consignments need to be offloaded.

*Nigeria:* Standardization of Export & Import Processes and Procedures per country; standardization of quality parameters between countries; standardization of axle-load limits per truck; availability of information (transparency of required documentations & certifications as well as transaction costs.

Evaluations conducted before and after the trainings showed participants’ knowledge levels on export procedures, ETLS and CET were significantly increased as a result of the training. In the training at Ouagadougou, participants with high knowledge of Export procedures increased from zero prior to the training to 55% at the end of the training. Similarly, 93% of the participants had low knowledge of ETLS prior to the training, but at the end of the training 30% indicated having high knowledge of ETLS with 70% having moderate knowledge. Similarly, participants with high knowledge of CET increased from zero to 35% at the end of the training in Ouagadougou. In the training in Accra also, the proportion of participants with high knowledge of export procedures increased from 10% to over 80% at the end of the training. Additionally, participants with high knowledge of ETLS and CET increased from zero to over 75% at the end of the training, indicating significant knowledge gain among participants at the end of the training.

Recommendations made by participants at the end of the training sessions include:

- The need for regular/periodic trainings on regional integration issues which seem to be very important for companies involved in intra-regional trade
- Further evaluation to assess impact of the training on the trading activities of the grantees
- Participants also suggested the following additional training needs
  - Training on standards certification for produce
  - Training on branding of products
  - Training on insurance and vehicle regulations across the region
3.8 Private Sector Actors’ Sensitization Workshop on ECOWAS Common External Tariff

In December 2016, Borderless Alliance participated in a sensitization workshop in Abuja, Nigeria, organized by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to increase awareness of private sector actors in West Africa on the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET).

Organized in partnership with Borderless Alliance and funded by GIZ, the workshop brought together 24 representatives of private sector actors from Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Participants were also sensitized on safeguard measures taken by ECOWAS to protect specific goods within the Community from external shocks resulting from the importation of similar goods from outside the Community. Thus, participants were taken through the structure of the ECOWAS CET, which are the various categories of goods. These include: essential social goods; basic necessities, basic raw materials, capital goods and specific inputs; final consumer goods; and specific goods for economic development.

The ECOWAS CET, which came into force on January 1, 2015, constitutes an important means to achieving a common market in the sub region. It promotes uniformity and harmonization of customs procedures and charges in order to obtain the same results at the borders of member states. Opening the workshop, the Director of Customs at ECOWAS, Mr. Salifou TIEMTORE, said it was important for the private sector actors to acquaint themselves with the CET, in order to derive maximum benefits from it.

Participants at the CET workshop in Abuja
4 ROAD GOVERNANCE

4.1 Abidjan – Ouagadougou Corridor Verification Trip

In January, Borderless Alliance conducted a verification trip on the Abidjan-Ouagadougou corridor to assess the level of harassment and implementation of some ECOWAS/UEMOA protocols on free movement of goods along the corridor.

The results of the mission were used to conduct a road governance workshop in Ouagadougou. The main findings are below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data sheet 20-30 January 2016</th>
<th>Type of checkpoint</th>
<th>Number of checkpoints</th>
<th>Bribes (CFA)</th>
<th>Delays (mn)</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gendarmerie</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Police</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>26,000</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Police</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>310</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Following the verification trip, Borderless Alliance, in collaboration with the Burkina Shippers Council and the Burkina Chamber of Commerce, organized a one-day road governance and advocacy workshop, to present the results of the survey to about 60 trade and transport stakeholders. These stakeholders included representatives of the Burkina Faso Ministry of Transport, UEMOA, freight forwarders, transport and drivers’ unions, Police, Gendarmerie, Consumer Protection and Trader Associations and the media. It was universally agreed that road harassments and high cost of transport in the region make transport activities unattractive and uncompetitive. Nonetheless, an opportunity exists for transport operators to become more professional to take full advantage of the prospects in the transport sector.

4.2 E-Platform Sensitization Workshops

Borderless Alliance organized two separate sensitization workshops in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and in Kumasi, Ghana, to introduce an E-Platform. This followed a training of focal members in November 2015. The introduction of the E-Platform is an initiative which would eventually culminate in ridding transit trade corridors and other trade routes of harassments suffered by traders and other transport stakeholders in the West Africa sub region. The ultimate objective for the introduction of the E-Platform is to improve identification and monitoring of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs), as well as contribute towards the improvement of the policy environment in the sub region. The process of identifying and presenting the platform to targeted focal point groups in Burkina Faso and Ghana, and to monitor NTBs on the Tema-Ouagadougou
Corridor on a pilot basis for the regional project was supported by the USAID Trade and Investment Hub.

About 45 participants for the Kumasi event included representatives of the Police Service, Customs, the State Insurance Company (SIC), the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU), the Ghana Highway Authority (GHA), the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI), the Ghana Chamber of Commerce (GCC), freight forwarders, transport companies, livestock traders’ associations, tomato traders and transport associations, and driver and transporter associations. The Chief Executive Officer of the GSA, Dr. Kofi Mbiah, lauded the introduction of the E-platform as it would support already existing channels, like the GSA Shipper Complaint Centers, through which complaints were being received.

The workshop in Ouagadougou brought together about 50 participants, comprising representatives of the Burkina Shippers Council (CBC), freight forwarder, government institutions and CILSS and UEMOA (regional economic organizations in francophone countries). The Managing Director of CBC, Mr. Ervé Sébastien ILBOUDU, did not only encourage participants and the general public to make good use of the E-platform to improve trade on the Tema – Ouagadougou Corridor, but also expressed delight for the initiative. He explained that CBC was in the process of acquiring a dedicated line on which complainants could call or send short messages. At both workshops, participants were taken through the introduction of the E-platform and a practical demonstration of key features and use of the platform.

### 4.3 Workshop in Burkina Faso to validate Road Governance Survey Results

In March 2016, Borderless Alliance, in collaboration with its local partners – the Burkina Shippers’ Council (CBC) and the Chamber of Commerce – organized a road governance workshop in the Burkina capital, Ouagadougou, to present results of road governance surveys conducted in January on the Abidjan – Ouagadougou corridor. The workshop brought together about 60 trade and transport stakeholders. These include representatives of: the Burkina Faso Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure and Road Safety; UEMOA Commission; CBC; freight forwarders; transport and drivers’ unions; Chamber of Commerce; Police; Gendarmerie; Consumer Protection and Trader Associations; and the media. Apart from disseminating the road governance survey report, advocacy on good road safety and security were also addressed.

The Burkina Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Road Safety, Mr. SOULAMA Souleymane, expressed concern about road harassments and high transport cost in the region, as issues making transport activities unattractive and uncompetitive. In the mix of challenges in the transport sector, there is also an opportunity for transporters to become professional in order to take full advantage of the prospects existing in the transport sector. For its part, JICA reiterated the commitment of the Japanese government to support the regional integration agenda. It is in this regard that the Yokohama 2013-2017 action plan (TICAV5) accords great importance to the promotion of regional integration in order to develop intra-regional trade through infrastructure.

32
development in the trade and transport sectors. The elimination of the Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) would also help advance the regional integration agenda.

4.4 Workshop to validate Tema – Ouagadougou Corridor Transport Costs held in Tema

In May 2016, a workshop to validate transport costs on the Tema – Ouagadougou was organized for the Accelerating Trade in West Africa (ATWA) Project in Tema. The ATWA is working to assess the current status of transport and logistics procedures and costs in selected countries in the sub region (Côte d’Ivoire, Togo, Burkina Faso and Ghana). This was to establish changes in the procedures and costs at the Ports and along trade corridors over the last few years and to identify key areas where their support could make an impact to improve the business environment. The purpose of the workshop was to conduct focus group reviews on the status of various procedures and costs documented to ensure that these are representative of the actual situation that pertains on the corridor.

The event brought together a carefully selected group of trade and transport stakeholders from along the corridor to review time and cost data that had been collected as a result of prior interviews, and to agree on the current costs, processing time and delays that are experienced at the various stages of the cargo clearance process.

These included representatives from the Ghana Shippers Authority (Paga and Tema), Burkina Shippers Council, Ghana Institute of Freight Forwarders (GIFF), Customs Brokers Association of Ghana (CUBAG) and Joint Association of Port Transport Unions (JAPTU). Freight forwarders included Damco Logistics, Bollore Africa Logistics and Buvensa Co Ltd from Tema, and Tesco West Africa Agency from Paga. Staff from Saana Consulting, ECDPM and Borderless Alliance were also present.

On the general corridor performance, feedback from stakeholders was supported by the results of a Perception Survey conducted in mid-2015 where 280 stakeholders were interviewed. Below are some key findings of this survey:

- The general perception by 60% of stakeholders interviewed that the trade clearance environment on the Tema-Ouagadougou transit corridor has deteriorated over the past two years.
- Comprehension of the procedures at Tema port is acceptable, however results suggest that processing is perceived to be slow and quite expensive
- At the Paga border, economic operators generally understand the procedures. Processing time and costs of transaction were also found to be acceptable
- The main challenges reported on the Tema - Paga section of the road corridor were the multiple police checkpoints and unlawful extortion, which leads to long delays
Some of the key issues that came up during the interaction with stakeholders and were tabled for discussion at the workshop included high costs, exchange rate volatility, a reduction in transit volumes and the need for joint inspections at Tema Port, problems with freight sharing, multiple checkpoints and unlawful extortions along the road corridor, and the need for an improved parking lot and sanitation facilities at the Paga Border.

During group discussions, existing data sheets were reviewed and a consensus reached by each group on the existing formal costs, informal costs, standard times and delays experienced at the various points on the corridor.

Key issues highlighted are indicated below.

**Tema Port Transit Import Procedures and Costs**

- Significant delays are currently experienced at Meridian Port Services (MPS) to secure container permits. Delays of up to an entire day are experienced.
- Positioning of containers at GPHA also results in considerable delays
- Invoicing for GPS tracking device is currently done per declaration but should be done per truck as several declarations may be eventually loaded unto the same truck.
- There are insufficient rest areas for truck drivers in Tema
- The issue of VAT being charged on transit cargo is hindering the transit trade through Ghana, as neighboring countries like Togo and Cote d’Ivoire do not apply this charge. This makes transit through Ghana less competitive.

**Tema Port Transit Export Procedures and Costs**

- Network failures among the shipping lines can cause containers to miss their vessels. This results in delays at the port and additional costs for exporters.
- It is necessary to ensure that incoming cargo from Burkina, meant for export through Tema follows the correct procedure in passing bonds at Paga. Currently, bonds are passed using companies that the cargo is not actually affiliated to which also disrupts efforts to collate accurate statistics on transit exports. This case arises as some exporters are not properly registered and do not have all the requisite documentation.

**Paga Import/Export procedures and costs**

- It should be encouraged to arrange payment of forwarding fees of 10,000 FCFA to forwarders in Paga acting on behalf of parent companies in Tema directly between companies. This will reduce the exchange of monies at the border and will discourage the activities of ‘Goro boys’ (unlicensed individuals playing the role of freight forwarders) where they still exist.
There has been some progress in the establishment of the parking lot at the border. Land has apparently been acquired as some compensation has already been paid to some border dwellers. The process however needs to be expedited.

As a follow-up, results from the validation workshop will be incorporated into the various data sheets for further analysis and input into the ATWA diagnostic study.

### 4.5 LAKAJI Corridor Road Governance Caravan in Nigeria

In June 2016, Borderless Alliance jointly organized a weeklong Road Governance Caravan with the USAID Nigeria Expanded Trade and Transport (NEXTT) project, along the Lagos – Kano – Jibiya (LAKAJI) Corridor in Nigeria.

This was a public-private sector engagement that would enable the enactment of appropriate policies to ensure free flow of trade and also to create public awareness on best road governance practices in the Northern Corridor. The Caravan was also meant to strengthen the cooperation between business operators along the LAKAJI Corridor and policy makers on removal of trade barriers. The ultimate objective of these would be to increase overall trade and transport competitiveness.

The team comprised representatives of NEXTT, the Nigeria Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) and the Borderless Alliance. In all, about 128 trade and transport stakeholders from the Niger, Kaduna, Kano and Katsina States benefitted from the Caravan. These included representatives of: truck drivers; Government Officials; Nigerian Shippers’ Council; National Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA); Civil Society Organizations; Nigeria Police Force (NPF); Nigeria Customs Service (NCS); Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC); Media; National Association of Nigerian Traders (NANTS); and National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW).

At the end of the Caravan, participants made a number of recommendations and also suggested some follow-up activities that would help improve the business environment along the Lagos – Kano – Jibiya (LAKAJI) Corridor.

### 4.6 Workshop and Road Governance Caravans in Abuja and Seme, Nigeria

In August, more than 70 trade and transport stakeholders (customs, police, traders, government officials, border users, financial institutions, civil society organizations, etc.) took part in a sensitization workshop organized in Abuja and Seme, Nigeria, by the National Association of Nigerian Trader (NANTS), in collaboration with Borderless Alliance. Participants were drawn from the public and private sector.

Key issues raised include:
• Removal of trade barriers to pave way for free implementation of the Protocol on free movement of persons and goods as adopted by ECOWAS member states;
• Challenges limiting free movement of Nigeria’s agro-commodities across borders in West Africa.
• Effective involvement of civil society organizations and other smaller business groups in national programs and activities being developed to promote regional economic integration, particularly the free movement of agro-products across borders;
• The rising import of cereals from outside ECOWAS which deprives Nigeria of much needed markets and employment generation through agriculture;
• The inability of ECOWAS member states to link national policies with regional ones which has been a setback for individual countries;
• The need to increase food security in the sub region despite security challenges faced by some ECOWAS member countries in the sub region;
• The need for a vibrant agricultural sector to take most countries in the sub region out of poverty; and
• The need for continuous advocacy/sensitization workshops to influence policies and change behaviours so the desired impact would be felt.

A similar activity, a public-private dialogue and road governance caravan, was organized along the Lagos-Seme corridor. About 120 representatives of trader and transport associations, freight forwarders, customs, police and immigration, and other border users participated in the discussions at the final destination at the Seme Border.

The caravan was meant to:

• Influence activism and political will on the part of government to respond to and enforce regional trade protocols;
• Monitor implementation of the ECOWAS policy instruments on trade; and
• Facilitate effective implementation of the ETLS and the ECOWAS Common External Tariff along the corridor.

Participants expressed their views on the challenges they go through in trade. It was a general view that there is the need for free flow of trade, but that should be balanced with security, health and other likely threats that can affect human life. Again, participants called for more sensitization activities on free flow of trade as that would be a way to influence behaviors and bring about the needed change desired by all.
4.7 Driver’s Guide Validation Meeting in Niger

As part of efforts to reduce procedural inefficiencies and delays on the roads, Borderless Alliance avails informative and educative materials for drivers, in the form of a drivers’ guide for specific countries. During the quarter, the Alliance held a planning meeting in Niamey, Niger, with the National Transport and Transit Facilitation Committee (NFC) on the development and production and the Niger drivers guide. The key objective of the meeting was to present the first draft of the driver’s guide to the committee, based on the information provided during the first planning meeting held early on, validate the information collected, and additionally collect outstanding information to complete the guide.

The Borderless Alliance team met eight people/institutions, including the President of the Niger National Facilitation Committee, Mr. Attaoulahi Zakaouanou, the president of the Borderless Alliance National Committee, Mr. Gerard Delanne, representatives from the Ministry of Transport, Transport Operators, Drivers and Gendarmerie for their inputs to the guide. The guide is expected to be formally launched in the next quarter.

5 TECHNICAL SERVICES TO OUR MEMBERS

5.1 Second BIC Forum in Accra, Ghana

The Borderless Alliance Secretariat brought together all Trade Advisors and Border Information Centers (BIC) Host institutions for the Second BIC Forum in Accra, Ghana. The forum was meant to strengthen the professional capacities of the BIC to enable them to address the challenges of facilitating border trade and also to engage Host Institutions on plans for handing over of the BICs to them. Represented were trade advisors from the various BICs in Seme, Krake, Dakar Port, Dakola, Aflao and Noe. The Host Institutions represented include the Shippers Councils of Burkina Faso, Senegal, Benin, Nigeria, Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire.

Areas covered include: a presentation on the USAID Food Across Borders Program (ProFAB) and the tasks assigned Borderless Alliance under the said program; a presentation by each BIC on its key activities in 2016; and a review of the revised scope of work and reporting templates and indicators that should be included in the reports of the trade advisors. Trade Advisors were also trained on the lodging and management of non-tariff barriers into the e-platform on www.tradebarrierswa.org.

Discussions also included the strengthening of collaboration between the BICs and Host institutions. Participants also highlighted some recommended activities for 2017 at the various borders. The following recommendations were made at the Forum:

- Concerning the introduction the E-Platform in Nigeria, a visit to the Nigeria Shippers Council (NSC) may be required for a detailed explanation of the tool to enable buy-in at the highest level, and to facilitate the peculiar issue of the need to manage a large and diversified
focal point group.

- National Committee presidents should be included in subsequent BIC forums to enable them to contribute to shaping the activities of the BICs which should be in line with the individual country strategies.

- Trade Advisors should be supported with key information of the Alliance as well as copies of the Membership forms to support their membership drive efforts at the BICs.

- The need to draft a new MoU with the host institutions to reflect the current state of the BICs and handing over agreement.

5.2 Operations of the Border Information Centers

The BICs assist traders in three broad areas – 1) Information dissemination on border crossing procedures, 2) on-site technical assistance for traders, truck drivers, freight forwarders and 3) training of economic actors based on stakeholder needs. In addition to the daily tasks of assisting traders in transit, import and export documentation and procedures, below is a summary of some key operations of the BICs for the period under review:

5.2.1 Aflao Border Information Centre

- A group of 8 women traders who were new to cross border trade were sensitized on border crossing procedures as well as export and import procedures for maize and the ECOWAS trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS).
- The Trade Advisor interacted with 20 Truck drivers and sensitized them on the need to have proper documentation on the trucks and the consignments to enhance easy clearance.
- The Trade Advisor met with the new Customs Sector Commander together with freight forwarders to discuss how best to speed up clearing procedures at the border.

5.2.2 Seme Border Information Centre

- The Trade Advisor held interactive meeting with truck drivers at Krake / Seme Parking area to discuss their challenges with crossing the border. The challenges they outlined included extortion form uniformed personnel and delays in crossing the border. These challenges have been forwarded to the head of customs at the border is being taken up.
- Trade Advisor met with customs and police to discuss measures to remove illegal checkpoints at the border
- In all, a total of 40 actors comprising of 14 females and 26 males were assisted and their assistance ranges from border harassment and sensitization.
- 285 information flyers on export, import and transit procedures were also distributed during the period
5.2.3 **Dakola Border Information Centre**
- During the period, a total of 77 drivers loaded with pipes who were delaying at the border due to problem with their freight forwarders and customs were resolved with the help of the trade Advisor and they were released quickly
- Six drivers of trucks containing fertilizers who were being delayed by customs were assisted and released to cross the border
- The Trade Advisor interacted with a group of drivers at their parking lot to discuss the challenges they face which have been forwarded to customs for redress
- The Trade Advisor met with the Head of Customs at Dakola concerning the closure of the Ghanaian border for the elections and they were assured that things were going to be managed to avoid outright closure.
- The Trade Advisor assisted the Borderless Secretariat in organizing a media sensitization forum on WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement in Ouagadougou.

5.2.4 **Noe Border Information Centre**
The Trade Advisor interacted with Customs and private sector actors such as freight forwarders, transporters and traders to understand their challenges with custom procedures. Following this interaction, the Trade Advisor in collaboration with the Borderless Secretariat initiated a joint meeting with customs, freighters, transporters and traders from both sides of the border to discuss existing issues and how they can collaborate to resolve them. The meeting which took place at Elubo was attended by 32 participants including 5 Senior Customs Officers from Ghana and 4 from Cote d’Ivoire.

5.2.5 **Krake Border Information Centre**
The Trade Advisor, in collaboration with the Borderless Secretariat, initiated meetings with the Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Interior, and Customs to discuss the following issues:

- the requirement of the Benin Customs Certificate of Origin for agricultural products;
- the collection of a special tax on transit;
- the collection of a special tax of re-export;
- the phenomenon of klébés;
- illegal check points.

The outcome of these meetings is that Government has issued a directive to ban the above illegal practices.

5.2.6 **Dakar Port Information Centre**
- The Trade Advisor supported in the training of importers and exporters on Customs procedures in Trade in West Africa, organized by the Senegalese Shippers’ Council (COSEC).
- Working session with the head of the Dakar oil customs office on the safety and security concepts of the transport of hydrocarbons on the Dakar-Bamako corridor
10 truck drivers were assisted to transit through Senegal.
Visit to the northern zone of the port of Dakar to discuss with Director of the port operations the issue of congestion of vehicles at the port.
5 companies were sensitized on import and export procedures in Senegal

Number of stakeholders supported by the Border Information Centers (BICs)

5.3 Production of Simplified Regional Trade Regulations
Inadequate knowledge of the protocols on regional trade is partly the cause of harassment on the various corridors of West Africa. Thus, within the framework of the Food Across Borders Program, Borderless Alliance undertook to first of all identify all the ECOWAS and UEMOA protocols that govern trade and transport facilitation in the region, and then simplify them, for better accessibility to users in the public and private sectors.

A total of 51 regional trade regulations, comprising ECOWAS and UEMOA regulations, relating to trading of agricultural products in West Africa, have been compiled and simplified into non-technical language for the understanding of the common person. These regulations will be disseminated from the first quarter of 2017 to key high level stakeholders such as chambers of commerce, shippers’ council, traders associations (importers and exporters), transporters associations, Freight forwarders associations, ministries of trade and transport, Customs, port authorities among others.

Borderless Alliance is currently developing simplified brochures in the form of leaflets containing these protocols, for presentation and dissemination at the various workshops, caravans and road shows.
6 BUILDING A STRONG MEMBERSHIP

6.1 BA National Chapters of Ghana, Burkina Faso and Mali elect new Executive Committees for 2016-2018

In October 2016, the Borderless Alliance Secretariat supported an Annual General Meeting organized by the National Chapter of the Borderless Alliance in Ghana, which was held at the premises of the Local Host Institution, the Ghana Shippers’ Authority, in Tema. Sponsored by DAMCO Logistics and Tarzan Enterprise Ltd., both members of the National Committee, the meeting brought together representatives of 16 out of 26 member organizations in Ghana. Meeting participants reviewed past activities and achievements for 2016/2017 and also planned activities for 2017. A key issue discussed was the non-regular payment of dues. It was agreed that this hurts the local chapter’s activity level and also undermines the perception of commitment by the rest of the Alliance’s stakeholders. Members also agreed that meetings with top leadership of particular organizations requiring re-introduction on the Alliance could easily be arranged. The national committee was reconstituted as follows:

- Tarzan Enterprise Ltd. – President
- Association of Ghanaian Industries (AGI) – Member
- British American Tobacco – Member
- DAMCO Logistics – Member
- Ghana Shippers Authority – Host Institution
- Satellite Trans Ltd. – Member
- USAID / ADVANCE – Member

The President of the newly constituted national committee, Mr. Ziad Hamoui, pledged his commitment to expand the membership base in Ghana.

The Borderless Alliance National Committee in Burkina Faso also elected into office a new executive committee during a General Assembly held in Ouagadougou on October 27. At the meeting, 10 organizations present, out of 17 members of the National Committee, adopted the Rules of Procedure and renewed the Executive Committee Office, which now consists of 5 members, made up of:

- A President: Burkinabe Council of Shippers (CBC);
- A General Secretary (Host Institution): Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Burkina Faso (CCI-BF);
- A Treasurer: Association of Transport Sector Stakeholders in Land locked countries in West and Central Africa (ATPSL / AOC);
- A Public Relations Officer: Agency for the Promotion of Exports of Burkina Faso (APEX);
- A coordinator of information centers: Confederation of National Federations of Livestock and Meat Producers of West Africa (COFENABVI-AO)

The Organization of Road Transporters of Faso (OTRAF) and the General Directorate of Land and Maritime Transport (DGTTM) have been designated as Commissioners for the National Committee.

It must be noted the Mali is also in the process of renewing the members of its National Committee.

7 STRENGTHENING THE BORDERLESS ALLIANCE SECRETARIAT

7.1 Borderless Alliance Organizational Capacity Assessment
In July 2016, the West Africa Trade and Investment Hub, through a team of consultants, conducted an organizational capacity assessment of the Borderless Alliance. The objective was to measure the impact of the Hub’s capacity building efforts for BA so far and to help develop a capacity building plan for the coming years. Specific areas assessed include: Governance; Administration; Human Resources Management; Financial Management; Service Delivery; External Relations; and Sustainability.

The Trade Hub will continue to support BA through coaching and monitoring visits, engagement of a marketing company to improve BA brand visibility, finalization of a procurement and M&E manual, and also assist to identify and support capacity building activities for staff as needed.

7.2 Recruitment of New Employees at the Secretariat
In the second quarter of the year, Borderless Alliance recruited a Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist. This was to ensure systematic tracking of the activities of the Alliance to measure and document achievements/successes and lessons learned from the implementation of the activities. In quarter four, the Alliance also recruited a Communications Assistant to help report and document the activities and results of the Alliance.

7.3 Borderless Alliance Services and Perception Survey
Borderless Alliance (BA) offers services (including consultation at Border Information Centers; receipt of Non-Tariff Barrier complaints and resolution, BA newsletters and reports) to both members and non-members without charge, with the view of improving the business environment in the region for the benefit of all.
The need arose for BA to look into ways of covering the costs from fees for services in order to make the provision of those services sustainable. A review of BA’s service offering recommended that a comprehensive survey be conducted to verify which services members would expect to receive for free and which services they would agree to pay for. BA contracted Strategic Development Alliance, which conducted the survey in February and March 2016. Specific objectives of the survey were to:

- Identify organizational strengths and areas of opportunity for Borderless Alliance
- Rank the importance of service offered by Borderless Alliance to members and non-members
- Identify competitive advantages and opportunities for improvement in Borderless Alliance services
- Identify service quality improvement priorities for Borderless Alliance partners
- Identify changes in service quality to Borderless Alliance partners
- Provide a proven and effective segmentation scheme for Borderless Alliance operations
- Determine the demographic profile of Borderless Alliance partners
- Rank the importance of service attributes to Borderless Alliance partners

Respondents to the survey, which was administered through the Survey Monkey online platform and in-person interviews with key stakeholders, were from eight of the nine countries in which BA is active. These include; Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. Respondents also represented the entire gamut of trade and economic activity in West Africa from agriculture through manufacturing to logistics. Civil society organizations, port authorities, government and quasi-government structures, professional services institutions and trade unions were also represented.

Respondents reiterated the importance of the BA mandate of facilitating the free movement of goods within the region by working towards the removal of physical and structural barriers to trade. This is evident in the fact that even in the few instances where respondents were not fully satisfied with their interactions with BA over the years, they still indicated that they would recommend BA to others.

On the issue of fees, respondents felt that charging separately for the proposed services would be onerous for members after they have paid the annual membership dues. A better way to go around it is to offer a bouquet of services for paid up members with an optional add-on package at a fixed fee. Non-members could then be charged for the services in the add-on package and for specialized services.

A key issue that the BA secretariat needs to address is the definition of structures for, and involvement of, national committees in in-country activities. This was a recurring issue in the in-person interviews in Côte d’Ivoire and Nigeria.
Throughout 2016, Borderless Alliance continued to work with its key partners and stakeholders in various collaborative ways in order to achieve the common goal of ensuring a West Africa where goods and persons can be moved quickly, efficiently and cheaply from one destination to the other. Borderless Alliance continued to enjoy the support of donors/partners, notable among them being: ProFAB supported by USAID and the Canadian Cooperation; the USAID/ West Africa Trade Hub and African Partners Network (USAID/THN); the Japan International Agency for International Development (JICA); and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank Group and DFID through the West African Food Markets Program.

USAID continued its traditional support to the Alliance through its THN project. This support enabled the financing of the running costs of the Executive Secretariat and of certain technical activities; Trainings of focal points of the electronic platform, trainings for livestock traders; As well as support for the annual Borderless 2016 Conference.

JICA’s support has enabled several activities on road governance, including verification missions, caravans and road shows.

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) also was instrumental in supporting the Borderless 2016 Conference in Cotonou, Benin and supported the organization of several training sessions on the ECOWAS CET.

Finally, during the year 2016, the Alliance continued to benefit from the technical support of the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions, thus contributing to its social recognition in the region and to the partners and Member States of these two institutions. In particular, it has contributed valuable information to the Task Force of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme, of which it is also a resource organization. For two consecutive years, the UEMOA Commission has provided financial support for the organization of the Annual Conferences.
Key Partners for 2016

9 CONCLUSION

During the year under review, Alliance Borderless continued to grow in all aspects of its operations. The year 2016 saw the election of a new Executive Committee and the renewal of the National Committees' offices in several countries, in accordance with the wish to see the National Committees more empowered and autonomous. The new leaders of the Committees have already began to actively organizing activities at the national level and are playing their role of representing the Borderless Alliance at national and international meetings to which the Alliance is invited to participate.

The year also witnessed increasingly close cooperation between the Alliance and a range of major regional and international institutions. This cooperation has resulted in the major advocacy activities including those related to road governance conducted during the year under review.
The Alliance continued to take full control of the network of Borderless Information Centers in the region, a project initiated by the USAID West Africa Trade Hub and now fully managed by the Borderless Alliance with support from the Host Institutions. These Centers continue to provide information and technical assistance to economic operators crossing the main borders of the region and to contribute to meetings for the benefit of the border communities.

However, there is a risk in that to date, the Alliance has depended primarily on USAID support. It is therefore essential to explore new partnerships and new sources of income from other development partners and the Regional Economic Communities: ECOWAS and UEMOA. The private sector in general and the members of the Alliance in particular should be encouraged to support the administrative costs of the Alliance in order to ensure its sustainability as an institution.