



Press Release

ECOWAS and TradeMark Africa Partner to Boost Trade Efficiency and Economic Prosperity in West Africa

Nairobi, Kenya, 30 May 2024: The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and TradeMark Africa (TMA) today inked a strategic collaboration geared towards improving trade facilitation, opening transportation corridors, and promoting economic integration within West Africa. The collaborative agreement aims to enhance the use of digital technologies to improve trade efficiency, reduce trade barriers at border crossings, and foster a conducive environment for business operations throughout the region.

Dr. Omar Alieu Touray, President of the ECOWAS Commission, and Amb. Erastus Mwencha, TradeMark Africa Board Chairman, formalised the agreement during a signing ceremony in Nairobi, Kenya, on the sidelines of the African Development Bank Group 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM).

TradeMark Africa will bring experience from the Eastern, Southern, and Horn of Africa regions, and aims to expand support to enhance trade corridor infrastructure and connectivity, improve compliance of traded goods to international quality standards, as well as strengthen structures to empower women and youth in trade. The two organisations will also develop and implement climate resilience and mitigation strategies to promote more environmentally friendly and sustainable trading practices.

Dr. Omar Alieu Touray stated, *"The partnership with TradeMark Africa is a strategic step towards achieving the economic integration goals of ECOWAS. By leveraging TMA's expertise in trade logistics and capacity building, we can address pressing challenges at our borders and improve the transit environment. This partnership sets a robust framework for prosperity that will benefit all member states and strengthen the business landscape in West Africa."*

Amb. Erastus Mwencha expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership, stating that the signing of the agreement is a significant milestone for TMA as it is keen on expanding its trade facilitation efforts to West Africa, with an emphasis on the Abidjan-Lagos corridor and interlocking routes. *"This collaboration marks a significant milestone in our efforts to streamline trade processes across Africa. By partnering with ECOWAS in adopting cutting-edge trade facilitation techniques, we aim to reduce overall trade costs and enhance the competitiveness of West African economies on the global stage. Our goal is not just to facilitate trade but to catalyse sustainable economic development that benefits all stakeholders in the region,"* said Amb. Mwencha.

Speaking at the same function, Dave Beer, TMA CEO, commented: *"We are pleased to collaborate with ECOWAS in supporting further advances in trade facilitation. Our joint efforts will make a tangible difference in the lives of millions by boosting trade efficiency and creating new opportunities to propel economic prosperity in the region and continent-wide."*



TMA's goals align with those of ECOWAS in areas of trade, transport, and regional integration, with both organisations supporting integration as crucial for increased prosperity.

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About ECOWAS

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional economic community that was established in 1975 with its headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria. It was set up with the objective to promote economic cooperation and integration, leading to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa to raise the living standards of its peoples, and to maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations among member states and contribute to the progress and development of the African continent.

Member countries making up ECOWAS are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d' Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and Togo.

The Vision of ECOWAS is the creation of a borderless region where the population has access to its abundant resources and can exploit same through the creation of opportunities under a sustainable environment.

For details, visit: <https://www.ecowas.int/>

About TMA

TradeMark Africa (TMA), formerly TradeMark East Africa, is an Aid-for-Trade organisation that was established in 2010, with the aim of growing prosperity through increased trade. TMA operates on a not-for-profit basis and is funded by: Belgium, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, Mastercard Foundation, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

TMA's headquarters are in Nairobi, Kenya. Operations and offices are in: EAC Secretariat – Arusha, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somaliland, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

TMA works closely with regional intergovernmental organisations, including the African Union (AU), the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, the East Africa Community (EAC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), national Governments, the private sector and civil society organisations.

In 2022, TMA set up a catalytic finance fund, Trade Catalyst Africa (TCA), that will pilot commercially viable projects for creating trade infrastructure (both physical and digital) as well as increasing access to Trade Finance for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

For details, visit: <https://www.trademarkafrica.com/>