CASE STUDY
Clearing the Corridors of Commerce

Initiative is mobilizing truckers to reduce harassment and delays

A road transport team registers truckers and information on bribes and delays they've experienced while transporting goods through West Africa.

Photo: West Africa Trade Hub

Transport specialist Kossi Dahoui, who does outreach to truckers in West Africa for a transport improvement initiative, said, "Truckers will be standing around waiting, and we say, 'You have problems on the roads, and you have been complaining. Please come sit down and listen.'"

Challenge

On an average day at the border between Togo and Ghana, truck after truck lines the side of the road with containers full of commercial goods. Once freed from often burdensome border procedures, eastbound truckers will face more delays at the border with Benin less than 50 miles later. In addition, truckers will face even more stops in between borders. Each stop can add hours to the journey and cost the truckers, as they often have to pay a bribe to pass. These delays and inefficiencies contribute to making West African road transport among the most expensive and least efficient in the world, adding significant costs to goods exported from the region.

Initiative

USAID is supporting the Economic Community of West African States and the West African Economic and Monetary Union with their program to increase the efficiency of regional road corridors. USAID's West Africa Trade Hub aims to inform truckers and their associations on new laws that cover safety standards for trucks, cargo and drivers, and on legal stops where trucks should be inspected. The transport team also recruits truckers' assistance in setting up an information system that records data on bribes and delays. Their participation will generate regular reports on average time and money spent at specific points along the roads, which will be offered to journalists in the region in order to galvanize public support against these costly practices.

Results

The program has successfully engaged truckers in collecting data on bribes and delays along three primary trade corridors in West Africa. Meetings with drivers allow the Trade Hub to give the drivers feedback on the data they have collected. The reports that the data generate have raised awareness of the problem of road transport corruption across the region. The extent of the problem is compellingly illustrated in a map of all of the checkpoints along the roads, which West African heads of state see at high-level regional meetings.