

Apart from tariffs, there are many measures that national governments can use to limit imports, in some cases not particularly easy to detect. Among these measures there are import quotas, import licenses, discriminatory taxes or excessive document requirements applied on imports, complex or discriminatory rules of origin, extensive use of trade remedies (ex. antidumping), or the unjustified and/or improper use of health, safety regulations or quality standards to discriminate against imported products and make particularly hard their access to the national market.

Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs), in particular, refer to those restrictions resulting from prohibitions, conditions, or specific market requirements that make importation or exportation of products particularly difficult and/or costly.

With tariff liberalisation largely achieved even in Africa, the elimination of various NTBs still remains a challenge for the Continent, as it contributes to the high cost of doing business in African nations and inhibits regional and continental trade. This is why some Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have developed Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) monitoring mechanisms that give traders to opportunity to report NTBs in order to get them eliminated.

In the EAC, National Monitoring Committees on Non-Tariff Barriers to Trade (NMC) have been established in all EAC countries in order to enhance the smooth movement of goods and services and reduce import and export time across the Region. NMCs have the responsibility of identifying, monitoring and facilitating the elimination of NTBs by using web and SMS platforms where economic operators can report a NTB. Example of such platforms are the ones developed in [Kenya](#) and in [Uganda](#) .

In the Eastern and Southern Africa Region, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have developed [www.tradebarriers.org](http://www.tradebarriers.org) , an online and freely accessible NTBs reporting, monitoring and eliminating mechanism that enables stakeholders to report and monitor the resolution of barriers encountered during the conduct of their business within the 3 regions.

Recently, the African Union in collaboration with UNCTAD developed a similar [mechanism](#) at Continental level for identifying and removing NTBs to trade in Africa, which is operational since

13 January 2020.

In West Africa, WAEMU (better known with its French acronym, UEMOA) with the support of USAID's West Africa Trade Hub established in 2006 an "Observatory of Abnormal Practices", (Observatoire des Pratiques Anormales) to monitor harassment practices along the main West African corridors. The Observatory publishes periodic reports describing the outcomes of the monitoring activity regarding these corridors. The latest available report covers the period [April -June 2017](#)

. This instrument, however, is not a full-fledged NTBs-monitoring mechanism as it only collects data on the number of checkpoints, illicit payments made to the control authorities and delays caused by these practices.