

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 the 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 also by using web and SMS platforms where economic operators can report a NTB. Example of such platforms are the ones developed in [Kenya](#), [Rwanda](#) and in [Uganda](#), while South Sudan, Burundi and Tanzania have not yet developed such platforms.

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 [Tradebarriers](#), 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 used to publish 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, was not a full-fledged NTBs-monitoring mechanism as it only collected data on the number of checkpoints, illicit payments made to the control authorities and delays caused by these practices. Recently, UEMOA developed the

[Alert to Trade Obstacles](#)

mechanism, a NTB monitoring system where traders can report obstacles to trade encountered when exporting or importing products so that the competent authorities can take the necessary corrective measures. The obstacles reported via the platform can be visualised on-line. The portal also allows traders registered to the system to receive email personalised alerts on obstacles for the type of products and markets they are interested in.

Another trade barriers monitoring systems adopted in West Africa has been developed by Borderless alliance and is available [here](#) . Also in this case the platform allows traders to visualise all the active complaints, including the one already solved, while the

[Institute for the Sahel](#)

of the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) has developed since 2013 a mechanism for monitoring trade flows of certain agro-pastoral products (cereals, peas and livestock) along the main corridors in the Sahel region and West Africa, which includes a database of road harassment practices in the movement of such products that are documented in periodic reports. Such barriers are also summarised in periodic

[bulletins](#)

published by CILSS and describing levels of intra-regional trade in agricultural and livestock products in the Sahel and West Africa.

