

The Trade Alert Obstacle Mechanism (TOAM) is an electronic tool developed by the International Trade Centre (ITC) that facilitates the identification and elimination of trade obstacles faced by companies in various West African countries that are members of the ECOWAS and WAEMU Regional Economic Communities.

The system allows businesses and private sector associations to report on an online platform the trade obstacles, non-tariff barriers and other challenges they face in their daily export and import operations so that they can be addressed and solved by the relevant government agencies.

All the complaints lodged on the system are categorised according to the type of obstacle (e.g. regulatory problem, arbitrary behaviors of officials, information/transparency issues, etc.) and are publicly accessible to allow both economic operators and policy makers to have a better understanding of the main barriers affecting trade in the territorial context where they are established, as well as the main obstacles to intra-regional trade.

The TOAM is accessible through specific regional platforms aggregating information on trade obstacles in the States member of [ECOWAS](#) and [WAEMU](#). In addition, [national websites](#) have been developed for each of the ECOWAS and WAEMU member countries that are implementing or in course of implementing the system. To date, however, not all these countries have started to use this tool for reporting trade obstacles.

The TOAM, still in course of development, will be extended to other African countries outside the ECOWAS and WAEMU regions. At the moment, [Zambia](#) and [Mauritius](#) have been included in the initiative, which has been extended also to an Asian country ([Vietnam](#)). In the case of Mauritius the TOAM website is already operational.

