

There are no translations available.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) launched in March 2019 a project for monitoring cargo moving in transit in the region by tracking it electronically from the customs office of departure to the office of destination. Initially nicknamed “ALISA” and subsequently renamed “SIGMAT” (Système Interconnecté de Gestion des Marchandises en Transit), such a system aims at interconnecting the ECOWAS member States through the integration into their customs IT management systems of a specific “SIGMAT module” allowing the electronic exchange of advance information on the movement of transit goods along some key trade corridors in the region. Its implementation is supported by partners such as UNCTAD, the European Union, the World Bank and the German Cooperation (GIZ). Other Regional Economic Communities in Africa have developed so far electronic cargo tracking systems for monitoring the movement of transit goods over their territory. This is the case for instance of the East African Community (EAC) Regional Electronic Cargo and Drivers Tracking System (RECDTS) and the Tripartite (EAC/COMESA/SADC) [Corridor Trip Monitoring System](#) (CTMS).

SIGMAT replaces the paper-based transit documents previously exchanged between the customs offices of departure, arrival and transit in the ECOWAS region with a system of electronic messages for transit declarations, similarly to the European Union’s New Computerised Transit System (NCTS), to which this system is inspired. Cargo information, including data on customs seals and identification marks, is shared in advance among all the customs offices involved in the transit procedure.

Piloted in Cote d’Ivoire (where it has been recently extended to [railway transport with Burkina Faso](#)), in [Senegal and Mali](#) along the Dakar-Bamako Corridor and in course of extension to Gambia, Ghana and Nigeria, the operationalisation starts now in Benin and Togo where pilot tests were previously carried out.

To celebrate the interconnection of Togo and Benin Customs through the interfacing of their respective SIGMAT modules, a [ceremony](#) was organised on Tuesday, 20 September at the border post of Sanvee-Condji / Hilla-Condji. The interoperability between the two customs administrations will facilitate and secure the movement of goods in transit through the trade corridors in the region by providing accurate digital information to customs officers in each State where such cargo moves. This new interconnection is expected to make the movement of goods in transit between the two countries more fluid and secure, also minimising the risk of fraud.