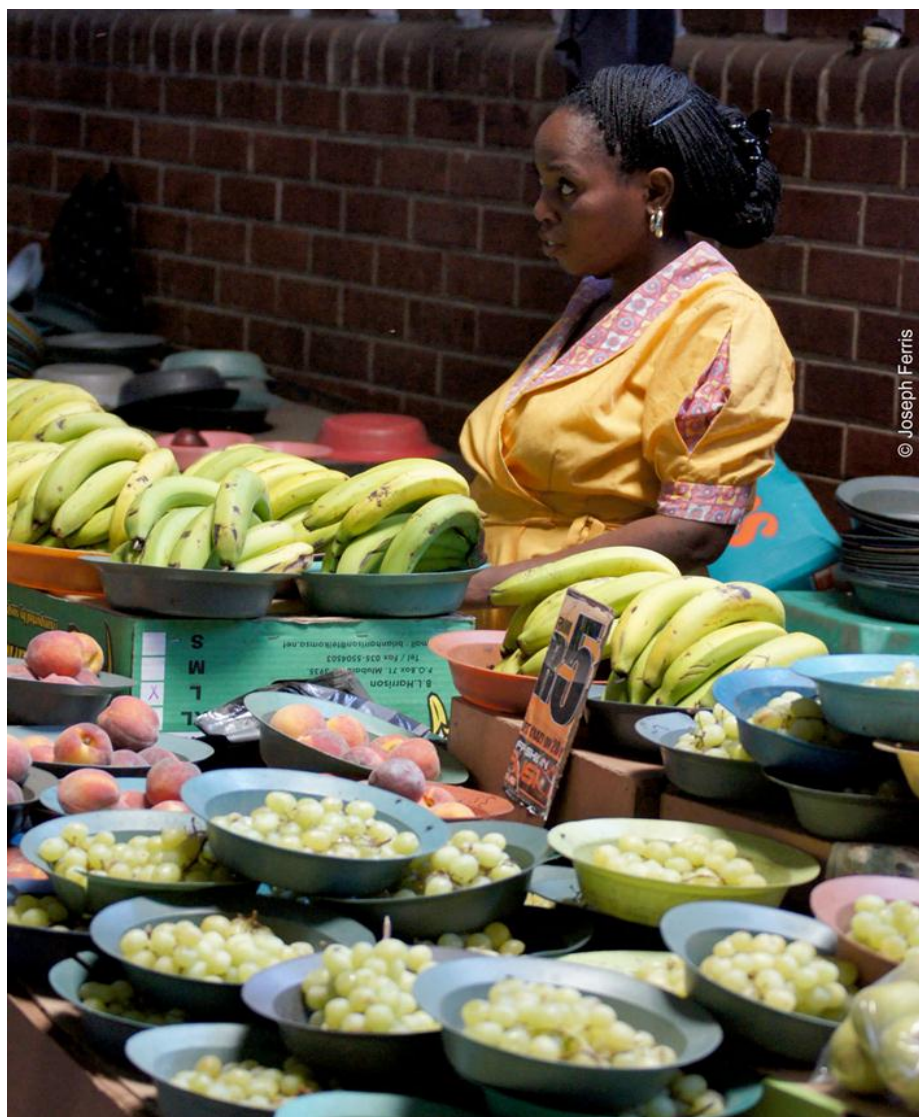


TRADE FACILITATION: WOMEN INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADERS

FACILITATING FORMAL EXPORTS IN EAST AFRICA



TRADE FACILITATION:

FACILITATING EXPORTS BY WOMEN IN FORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADE

Informal cross-border trade involves imports and exports of legitimately produced goods and services, which directly or indirectly escape the regulatory framework for taxation and other government procedures. As such, informal cross-border trade often goes incorrectly or totally unrecorded in official national statistics.

The trend is a growing concern for many governments, not only in terms of lost revenue but also border security and the welfare of communities living around border areas. Causes of the practice range from complicated customs formalities and product regulations to weak law enforcement at the borders.

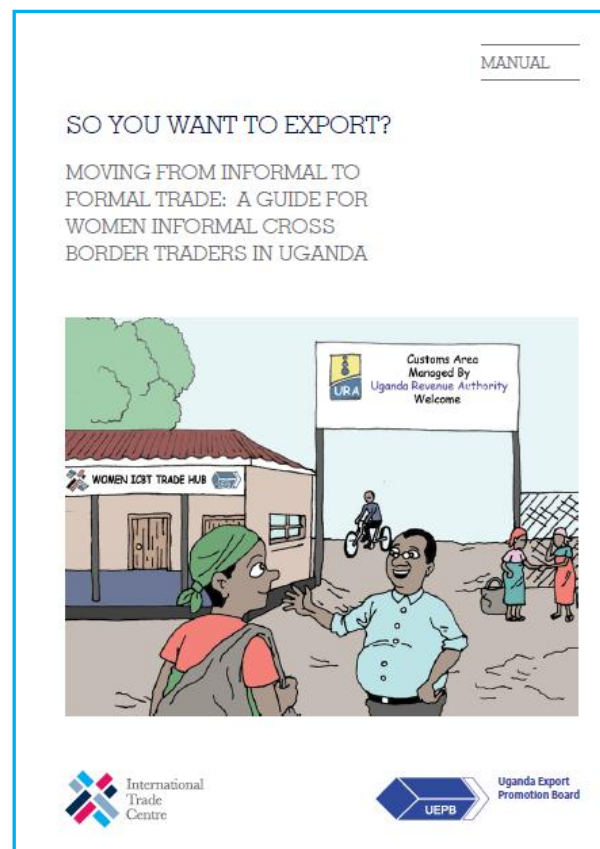
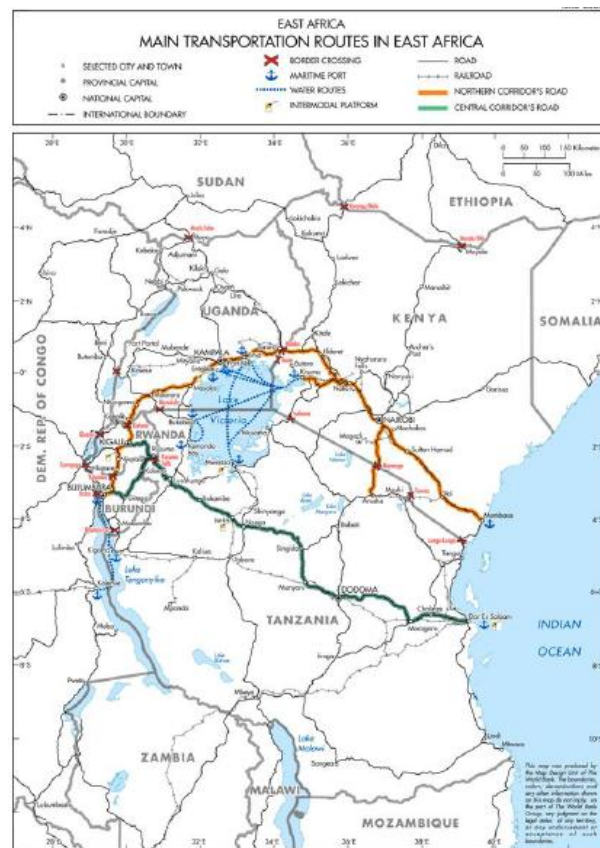
THE RESPONSE

The second phase of an ITC trade facilitation project for women informal cross-border traders (ICBTs) and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) will build the capacity of women cross-border traders to comply with border formalities in the East African Community (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda) plus South Sudan. Phase II will facilitate access to business services including access to finance and promote the formalisation of ICBTs regionally. The project seeks to enhance the capacity of women ICBTs to increase exports to neighbouring countries by reducing and eliminating trade facilitation impediments at key borders.

This phase follows the successful implementation of Phase I of a similar trade facilitation project for women ICBTs in Uganda. Phase I resulted in several important outcomes of immediate benefit to some 200 women ICBTs.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- A tested methodology for implementing trade facilitation, gender and informal economy programmes
- Training manuals to improve women's capacity to comply with customs and border processes
- A guide on formal cross-border trade & how to transition from informal to formal status
- Establishment of one capacity trade hub at the Mutukula border
- One stop window processing to fast track women ICBTs through borders
- Formation of four women ICBT associations at the borders
- Guidelines for setting up & sustaining Women ICBT trade associations
- Women ICBT communications & networking strategy



TRADE FACILITATION – PHASE II

Phase II builds on the results of the Uganda pilot, replicating the experience and applying lessons learned throughout the East African Community plus South Sudan. Technical assistance will be provided to women ICBTs, border agencies and other national and regional partners, such as the East African Community Secretariat, to increase compliance and facilitate access to finance and other business services to expand women ICBT/MSME exports. Further, Phase II promotes the formalisation of ICBTs and includes a strong regional dimension.

The project will be implemented in six countries at designated border areas where women ICBTs operate.



One of the project's key objectives will be to incorporate integrity reforms for women ICBTs in trade facilitation instruments such as the World Customs Organisation Revised Arusha Declaration. A gender sensitive Integrity Action Plan by customs and border authorities will remove some of the barriers to formal status, including harassment and informal payments, faced by informal women operators. This will create a more enabling environment by increasing public trust and confidence in transparent cross-border formalities and contribute to voluntary compliance.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Inter-institutional coordination and capacity of trade facilitation agencies and TSIs in the EAC are strengthened to support women ICBTs/MSMEs leading to increased trust in transparent, streamlined cross border formalities and increased voluntary compliance.
- Women ICBTs/MSMEs in EAC meet cross border formalities and overcome non-tariff measures through customised trade facilitation services and support to facilitate their transition to the formal economy.

EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Over 700 women ICBTs/MSMEs are assisted and can comply with trade facilitation formalities
- At least 200 women ICBTs are assisted to formalise and transition to MSME status
- Transparent, streamlined, fast track ICBT and MSME cross-border clearance system
- Capacity trade hubs/help desks at designated border points
- EAC gender sensitive Integrity Action Plan which references standards of professionalism
- Establishment of ICBT associations at the border areas
- Women ICBT and MSME trade facilitation and trade logistics toolkits

FUNDS TO BE MOBILISED

ITC is seeking from interested donors US\$ 1.3 million to fund Phase II of this project (2012-2014).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT



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