

## IMPROVING THE AGRI-FOOD TRADE ENVIRONMENT

# TOGO

## Optimising phytosanitary procedures to boost trade



### THE CHALLENGE

Around nine million people live in Togo, a small, narrow country barely 71 miles wide but with significant regional importance. Agriculture is central to the economy, supporting more than 60% of the working population of around nine million people, and contributing over 40% of GDP.

The deep seaport at Lomé, the country's capital, is a vital transit centre and regional hub for goods flowing to inland, landlocked countries in regional West Africa, predominantly neighbouring Burkina Faso, but also Mali and Niger.

The main cash crops – soybeans, cassava, maize, yam, cotton, palm oil, rice, peanut, and coffee – generate significant foreign exchange inflows even though around two-thirds of highly fertile, arable land remaining unsown.

Food exporters must overcome many obstacles to trade, including the time and costs of obtaining and transferring paper phytosanitary certificates, conveying to importing countries that produce is free of harmful pests and diseases.

After making multiple trips to government offices to apply and pay for certificates, traders might expect to wait several days for issuance. These physical documents would then pass through many hands before reaching their destination, leaving them open to error, loss, or fraud. If rejected at their destination, the paperwork would be sent back for correction, incurring additional storage and demurrage charges for exporters, and even spoilage.

### SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT

The project will help Togo implement the following articles of the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement, which requires countries to expedite the movement, release, and clearance of goods:

**Article 7.1** Pre-arrival processing

**Article 7.9** Perishable goods

**Article 10.1** Formalities and documentation requirements



## WHAT WE DID

The Alliance, through implementing partner GIZ, and in partnership with the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), supported Togo in adopting the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) ePhyto Solution, enabling the issuance and exchange of electronic phytosanitary certificates, or ePhytos, quickly, accurately and at low cost.

The Alliance catalysed public private partnership – collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture, through the Direction de la Protection des Vegetaux (DPV), the country's National Plant Protection Office (NPPO) responsible for phytosanitary oversight – the Public Treasury, global and local businesses, and their representative organisations, in transitioning from paper-based, manual procedures.

This targeted, time-bound project entailed technical and change management initiatives, including configuration of the IPPC Generic National System (GeNS) platform to enable ePhyto issuance and exchange, provision of IT equipment, extensive training of DPV staff as well as importers and exporters, and an awareness-raising campaign, providing information on the benefits of the new system and inviting businesses to use it.

Technical integration also included introducing eSignature for European Union-bound exports, along with ePayment capabilities.

As with every Alliance project, this initiative was sensitised to the needs of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), many of them women-owned or led, acknowledging the additional obstacles they face in navigating export procedures.

This project marks the tenth collaboration with countries worldwide in implementing the IPPC ePhyto Solution, five of these in sub-Saharan Africa alone.

## THE IMPACTS

This project contributes towards achieving the objectives of the Togo Government Roadmap 2025, which aims to digitalise at least 20 key public services. During implementation, the Ministry of Agriculture became the first ministry to collaborate with the Public Treasury in introducing ePayment for services.

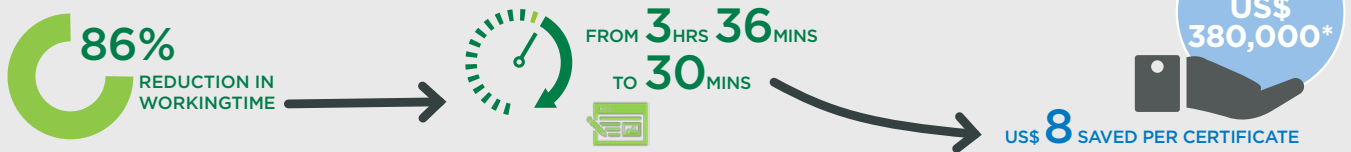
Transitioning from paper certificates to ePhytos should also bring measurable economic benefits and improve food security, producing time and cost savings for traders, reducing the administrative burden on both public and private sectors, and boosting the country's competitiveness.

Beyond time and cost savings, adoption of the IPPC ePhyto Solution:

- enables the seamless exchange of phytosanitary certificates
- frees up DPV inspectors to focus on other priorities
- improves operational control procedures at borders
- mitigates opportunities for documentary falsification
- increases food security through quicker border clearance for imports
- reduces barriers to trade, particularly for MSMEs and women-owned businesses.

The introduction also gears the country up to take full advantage of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the Abidjan-Lagos corridor and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Togo joins Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Senegal in adopting ePhyto exchange, regarded as a crucial precursor to closer regional integration of agricultural value chains.

### PROJECTED TIME AND COST SAVING FOR PRIVATE SECTOR (ANNUAL)



*\*Total savings expected upon completion of all project activities, based on an estimated total number of 11,739 phytosanitary certificates (DPV, 2022) and includes potential savings from replacing certificates, which happens in 5% of the cases*

## WHO WE ARE

The Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation is a public-private partnership for trade-led growth, supporting governments in developing and least-developed countries in implementing the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement. Alliance projects cut through red tape and end costly delays at borders by bringing together governments and businesses of all sizes as equal partners to deliver targeted trade reforms. The Alliance is led by the Center for International Private Enterprise, the International Chamber of Commerce, and the World Economic Forum, in cooperation with Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). It is funded by the governments of the United States, Canada, Germany, and Denmark.

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