

INTRA-AFRICAN TRADE FAIR
11-17 DECEMBER 2018
Cairo, Egypt

Informal Cross Border Trade: What Do We Know?

Saturday, December 16
11:30-13:00

Session description

Anecdotal evidence indicates that informal cross border trade (ICBT) may account for over half of total intra-African trade. It however remains difficult to provide exact magnitudes of ICBT due to its unrecorded nature. In fact, official trade statistics typically only capture formal trade. Some estimates exist for ICBT in Africa, but these are few, and are usually incomplete in terms of commodity coverage or location of data collection points. ICBT data for services is even less available than for goods. Missing ICBT data leads to unreliable intra-African and intra-REC trade statistics which may adversely affect the effective formulation, implementation and monitoring of domestic, regional and continental trade policies. For example, informal cross border traders address vital issues of food security, job creation and income generation - particularly for women - but are typically neglected in trade agreements and policies. The session will discuss various initiatives that have emerged to track ICBT, and what these initiatives tell us about the magnitude, nature and challenges of informal cross border trade. In addition, it will provide a platform for exchanging ideas on how to improve and expand data collection and analysis on ICBT at the national, regional and continental levels.

The questions this session seeks to address are:

- What best practice and lessons can be learned from existing initiatives on ICBT data collection?
- What innovative data collection instruments are available to enhance data collection on informal cross border trade?
- In an ideal world, what information and indicators would we want to capture on ICBT?
- What important policy and research questions would periodic and reliable data on ICBT help to answer?
- Who are the important stakeholders that should be involved in the design and roll-out of ICBT data collection projects?
- How can existing and future ICBT initiatives be integrated into African governments' institutional and structures for sustainable results and impact?

Session format

The session will be chaired by David Luke, Coordinator of African Trade Policy Centre, ECA

Session concept note - DRAFT

- Daniel Asare-Kyei, Ag. Chief Executive Officer, esoko
- Gerald Makau Masila, Executive Director, East African Grain Council
- Azuka Oko, Technical Advisor, Nigerian Shippers Council
- Judith Fessehaie, Programme Officer, Women and Trade Programme, International Trade Centre
- Wale Ogunkola, Professor, Ibadan University