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# Transit Corridors: Linking economies through trade facilitation

Raúl Torres  
Development Division  
WTO

# Initial considerations

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The report is currently at an advanced draft stage and has benefitted from comments by the LLDCs; comments from Members are welcome and will be incorporated ahead of final circulation.

Send comments to [raul.torres@wto.org](mailto:raul.torres@wto.org)

## Key Message

**Transit corridors are the most efficient vehicle for implementing trade facilitation measures for LLDCs.**



**They operationalize the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) by:**

Reducing trade costs

Streamlining border processes

Increasing reliability for LLDC traders

# Why Transit Corridors Matter

## **LLDCs encounter distinct obstacles:**

- Trade costs that are 1.4 times greater than those of coastal economies (UNCTAD, 2019).
- Reliance on ineffective transit processes, infrastructural deficiencies, and regulatory inconsistencies.

## **Transit corridors mitigate these obstacles by:**

- Connecting various jurisdictions through streamlined procedures.
- Establishing institutional frameworks (customs, logistics, regional cooperation).

# Key Findings from the Report

## 1. Corridors implement the TFA and a new generation of TF measures :

- Corridors are not just physical routes – they are institutional systems for LLDCs to trade competitively.
- TFA provides the framework, and corridors operationalize TF on the ground.
- Measures such as pre-arrival processing, risk-based inspections, single windows and electronic documentation are currently being executed.

## 2. Top-performing corridors combine:

- Legal integration through binding agreements.
- Institutional coordination via established bodies.
- Digital innovation through data-sharing platforms.

## 3. Quantifiable improvements:

- Transit times have decreased by **20–40%** across various corridors (2020–2022).

# Digital Systems Driving Efficiency

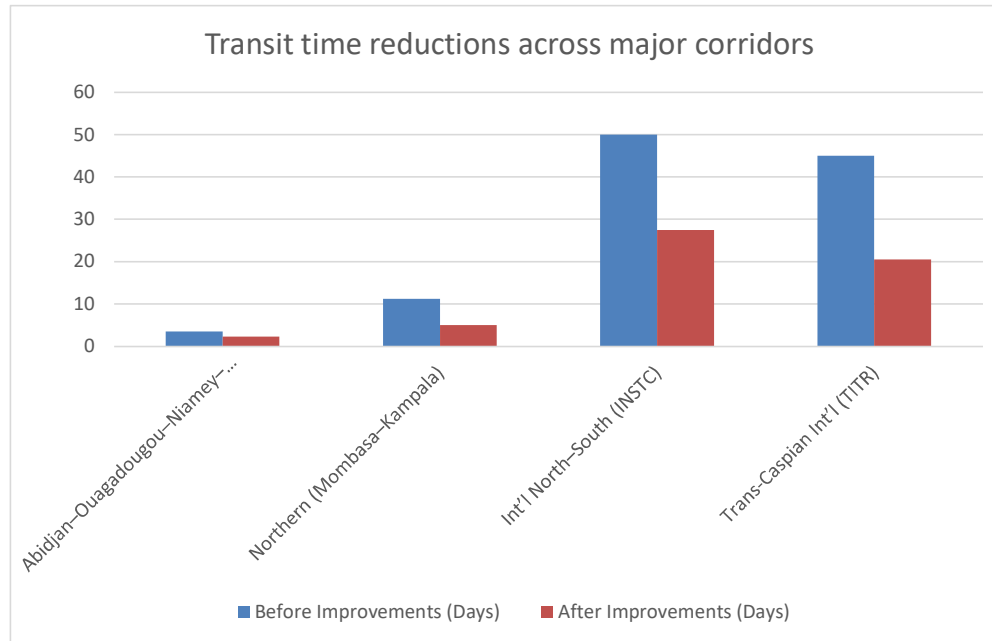
- **Common Tools Across Corridors:**

- Electronic single windows (such as EAC's RADDEx system).
- GPS-enabled cargo tracking (for example, Northern Corridor's ECTS).
- Corridor performance dashboards (providing real-time data on congestion points).
- Automated regional transit systems (for example West Africa's SIGMAT based on ASYCUDA)
- Corridor data exchanges (for example SPECA in Central Asia)

- **Obstacles:**

- Insufficient cross-border interoperability.
- Gaps in infrastructure (including electricity and internet access).
- Data gaps

# Performance Gains: Evidence from Corridors



## NORTHERN CORRIDOR (E. AFRICA)

**11 → 5 days**

Mombasa–Kampala (2011–2022)

## TITR (TRANS-CASPIAN)

**45 → 20 days**

+176% container traffic in 2024

## DOUALA-N'DJAMENA CORRIDOR

**40 → 81 % roads in good or fair condition**

Container shipping costs reduced by >7% (2012–2022).

# Corridor Mapping

Annex to the report

Encompasses **20 corridors** throughout Africa, Asia, and Eurasia.

These corridors include **various LLDCs and transit nations** with diverse legal and institutional frameworks.

**Transport modes** identified:

- Road, rail, inland waterways, and intermodal terminals.
- Maritime access points designated for landlocked nations.

**Trade facilitation initiatives:**

- One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs).
- Electronic cargo tracking and digital customs processes.
- Risk-based inspections alongside regional transit assurances.
- Mechanisms for the exchange of transit-related data.

The mapping emphasizes **coordinated operational efforts among countries**, rather than merely indicating where legislative reforms have taken place.



# Performance, Impact, and the Data Challenge

**Performance indicators at the corridor level** include:

- Overall **transit time**
- **Traffic volume** (including tonnage and container movements)
- **Trade value** within the corridor (annual projections)

**Economic effects :**

- Job creation
- Increased GDP

**HOWEVER:**

Data is often **fragmented, inconsistent, or outdated**, particularly concerning performance.

- National statistics seldom capture the complete **journey through the corridor**
- There is a lack of standardized reporting mechanisms across borders.

This mapping highlights the necessity for **consistent, corridor-level data gathering** to inform implementation and investment strategies.

# Northern Corridor (East Africa)



**Countries:** Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan

Main trade route linking **Port of Mombasa** to inland LLDCs in East and Central Africa

**Modes of transport:** Primarily road and rail, with inland container depots and dry ports

## Trade Facilitation Measures:

- **One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs)** (e.g., Busia, Malaba)
- **Electronic cargo tracking** (Regional Electronic Cargo Tracking System – RECTS)
- **Single Customs Territory (SCT)** across East African Community
- **Regional bond scheme** and streamlined clearance

## Performance and impact:

- Transit time: **Mombasa to Kampala reduced from 11 to ~5 days**
- **Advance clearance and pre-arrival processing** integrated
- Corridor handles **millions of tonnes in regional trade annually**

The Northern Corridor shows how **regional institutions and joint implementation mechanisms** can drive measurable improvements in trade facilitation.



## African Northern Corridor Empowering Trade Across Northern Africa



### Overview

The Northern Corridor is a vital multimodal trade route in East and Central Africa, facilitating the movement of goods between the Port of Mombasa in Kenya and the landlocked countries of Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It encompasses road networks, railways, inland waterways, and pipelines, playing a crucial role in regional trade and economic integration.

### Countries and Modes of Transport

- Kenya: Roads, railways, seaports, pipelines.
- Uganda: Roads, railways, inland waterways.
- Rwanda: Roads.
- Burundi: Roads.
- South Sudan: Roads.
- Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): Roads, inland waterways.

### References

- Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority (NCTTCA) Reports.
- World Bank Trade and Transport Studies.
- UNECA Corridor Analysis Reports.
- East African Community (EAC) Development Plans.

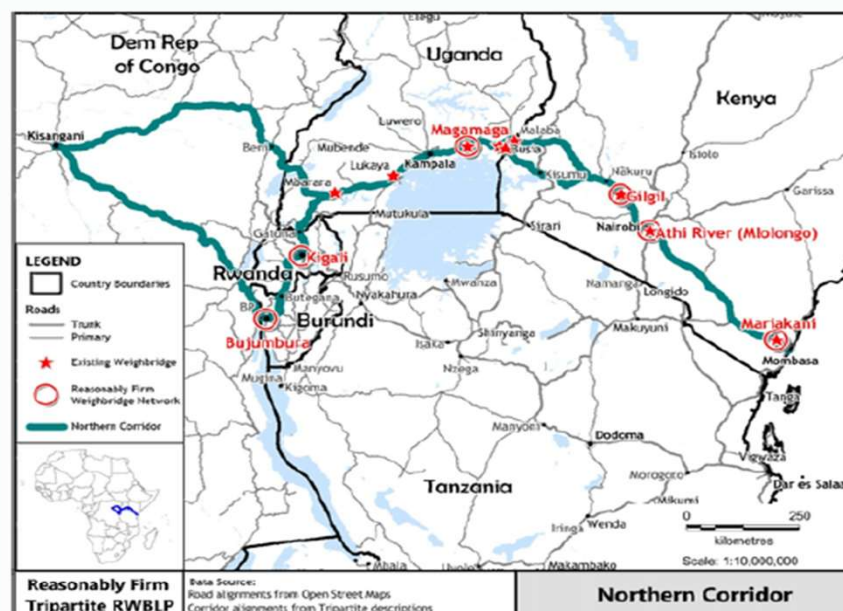
### Trade Facilitation Measures Implemented:

- Data Sharing
- Mutual Recognition
- Joint Inspection
- Regional Transit Guarantees
- One-Stop Border Posts
- Digitalised Customs
- Seals
- Tracking
- Single Window.

### Contact Info

- Managing Agency: Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority (NCTTCA)
- Website: [www.ttcanc.org](http://www.ttcanc.org)
- Email: [tcca@ttcanc.org](mailto:tcca@ttcanc.org)
- Phone: +254 733 532485 / +254 729 923574

## Africa



### Trade Volume

- In 2022, the Port of Mombasa handled over 34 million tons of cargo, with a substantial percentage destined for or originating from the landlocked countries served by the corridor.

### Average Transit Times:

- As of 2022, the average transit time from Mombasa to Kampala was approximately 5 days, down from 11 days in 2011.

### Economic Impact

- Supports thousands of jobs in logistics, trade, and related sectors across the member countries.

# Corridor Priorities



## Go digital, end paper:

e-Customs, risk-based inspections, GPS cargo tracking and standards-based seamless data exchange and interoperability cut time and cost.



## Fix the basics first:

Reliable power & internet along the route so digital tools actually work.



## Align the rules:

One transit guarantee, one fee schedule, one axle-load standard—across every border.



## Map what matters:

An accessible corridor mapping approach to spotlight gaps and show investors where reforms pay off.



## Partner for impact:

Combine multilateral finance with private-sector know-how to upgrade hard infrastructure and soft procedures.



**Result: faster, cheaper, more predictable trade routes that unlock LLDC export growth.**



# Thank You

Questions and comments:

[raul.torres@wto.org](mailto:raul.torres@wto.org)