



Brief #4: Non-Recognition of Mutual Equivalence of Veterinary, Sanitary, and Phytosanitary Certificates

What is the Policy?

Countries routinely issue sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) certificates to show that animals and plants have been inspected and are free of diseases that could affect public health. Specifically:

- Phytosanitary certificates cover plants
- Veterinary certificates are necessary for trade in live animals
- Sanitary certificates are for meat

To facilitate regional trade, ECOWAS countries have signed bilateral technical agreements establishing *recognition of mutual equivalence* with regard to SPS certificates, which means that each country agrees to accept the certificates issued by its neighbors. Thus, SPS certificates issued by the country of origin are officially valid throughout the region.

What is the gap between policy and reality?

Across the ECOWAS region, agriculture and livestock officials at the borders require traders to obtain duplicate phytosanitary and veterinary certificates. Although SPS certificates are supposed to be valid throughout the region, when traders arrive at the border, authorities in the importing country regularly insist on issuing a national certificate, or else ask for a side payment or “gift” to put their national stamp on the original document even though SPS certificates are supposed to be issued free of charge. The non-recognition of mutual equivalence of SPS certificates affects every shipment, adding costs in terms of time and money.

Here is an example of a certificate issued in Benin for goods that originated in Ghana:

REPUBLIQUE DU BENIN
 MINISTERE DE L'AGRICULTURE, DE
 L'ELEVAGE ET DE LA PECHE
 Co. R. P. A. MONO / COUFFO
 DIRECTION DE LA REGLEMENTATION
 ET DU CONTROLE
 POSTE DE CONTROLE VETERINAIRE DE H/couffo



CERTIFICAT DE SALUBRITE N° 000352 / 20.11
 Relatif aux denrées alimentaires destinées à la consommation humaine
 LOI N° 84-003 DU 15 MARS 1984

I / - IDENTIFICATION DES DENREES
 Nature des pièces: Pain de jour
 Nature de l'emballage: Cartons
 Nombre des pièces ou des unités d'emballage: 2000 Pain de jour
 Poids net: _____
 Température: _____

II / - PROVENANCE DES DENREES
 Pays et lieu de provenance: GHANA
 Société / Autres Etablissement: _____ KUMASI
 Nom et adresse de l'expéditeur: _____

III / - DESTINATION DES DENREES
 Pays et lieu de destination: COTONOU - BENIN
 Moyen de transport: TAXI
 Nom et adresse du destinataire: _____

IV / - ATTESTATION DE SALUBRITE
 Je soussigné CONOUNGO Philippe
 certifie avoir procédé à un examen physique de jour des denrées désignées ci-dessus.
 Déclare par conséquent que, eu égard aux diverses inscriptions et vu les conditions de
 transport, les denrées objet du présent certificat sont propres à la consommation.

V / - OBSERVATIONS
Pain de jour propre pour
l'élevage et celui de vente de bœufs.
 Fait à H/couffo le 29 Novembre 11
 SIGNATURE ET CACHET




Co. R. P. A. — MONO / COUFFO B. P. 31 LOKOSSA — TEL. 41-11-20

What are the costs and who pays?

The non-recognition of mutual equivalence of SPS certificates affects every shipment, adding costs in terms of time and money. For example:

- Some cereals traders pay up to \$20 extra at each border crossing for the duplicate document on cereals shipments, wasting 10-30 minutes waiting for these documents to be prepared.
- Along the Techiman, Ghana/Kantchari, Burkina Faso corridor, maize traders report the following costs per truck: 9 GhC (\$4.6) in Ghana and 12,000 FCFA (\$24) in Burkina Faso.
- For trade in millet and sorghum, trucks are charged 1,000 FCFA (\$2) in Koutiala, Dakar, and between 2,000 and 3,000 FCFA (\$4 and \$6) in Diboli, Mali.
- At the Zégoua border crossing, traders bringing cattle from Mali into Côte d'Ivoire report paying 250 FCFA per head, or 10,000-12,000 FCFA (\$20-\$24) per truck.

- For a shipment of onions from Niger transiting Burkina Faso for sale in the Agbogloboshie market in Ghana, the trader must obtain three phytosanitary certificates, at a total additional cost of \$40 per trip, with extra time delays.

The table below summarizes country-specific costs in 2012 associated with obtaining SPS certificates.

Cost of Obtaining Phytosanitary Certificate

	Cost per truck of 10 metric tons
Benin	\$20
Burkina Faso	\$16
Côte d'Ivoire	\$20
Ghana	\$7.5
Mali	\$20
Niger	\$16
Senegal	\$20
Togo	\$20

Source: USAID ATP/E-ATP 2012

Ultimately consumers end up paying more. Eliminating duplication would also free up SPS authorities' time, perhaps allowing them to do a better job of inspecting the products crossing the border.