ANAPRI

AGRA
Sustainably Growing Africa's Food Systems

ANAPRI in collaboration with AGRA is organising a

WEBINAR

on Agricultural Trade Restrictions in Sub-Saharan Africa

Rapid Evidence and Feedback from Policy Dialogues

Date: **13th May, 2026**

Time: **2:00 - 3:30pm CAT**

Venue: **Zoom**

Register via https://www.anapri.net/regionaltradewebinar

Enquiries: info@anapri.net

Strengthening Agricultural Trade Integration in Africa

Lessons from Six Countries (Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya, Ghana)

Introduction

Africa's agricultural trade problem is not a lack of demand; it is weak predictability, high transaction costs and fragmented regional coordination

- ANAPRI has undertaken several studies, e.g., PPVC deep dives, where agricultural trade has emerged as a common theme that needs urgent policy reform for value chain transformation
- African governments have, over the past two years, imposed restrictions on agricultural trade driven by protectionism for local producers, domestic consumers' interests, & retaliation, despite regional trade agreements & AfCFTA
- Costs arising from these policy measures on the continent is estimated at USD 9 billion
- Agricultural Trade confidence is undermined by **unpredictable restrictions** and **high transaction costs**
- ANAPRI undertook policy dialogues in six countries to generate data & evidence on the impact of agricultural trade restrictions

Markets integrate; policies fragment

Common constraints across six countries:

- Ad hoc export/import restrictions
- Non-tariff barriers (NTBs)
- Weak market intelligence & food balance data
- Poor logistics and high corridor costs
- Limited trade finance and weak standards systems

Trade confidence is undermined by **unpredictable restrictions** and **high transaction costs**

Markets integrate; policies fragment

Six countries, one shared governance challenge

- **Zambia:** export uncertainty, delayed permits, market distortions
- **Uganda:** logistics + NTBs + rising compliance requirements
- **Tanzania:** overlapping regulations, levies, and sudden restrictions
- **Malawi:** "stop-go" maize regime → informalization + retaliation
- **Kenya:** SPS disputes + levies; restrictions raise consumer prices
- **Ghana:** global exports structured, but regional food trade fragmented

Key Message 1: Food Security & Open Trade Must Work Together

Food security is often used to justify restrictions—but abrupt closures backfire

Abrupt bans can:

- Depress farmgate prices
- Reduce private investment
- Raise consumer prices
- Trigger retaliation and informal trade

Deficits/surpluses don't respect borders → national-only responses create regional volatility

Food security should be protected through data, reserves and targeted safety nets, not abrupt market closures

Key Message 2: NTBs Are Now the Central Constraint

Real barriers today are NTBs, not tariffs

Permits, repeated testing, inspections, delays, roadblocks, levies, informal payments

NTBs persist despite regional commitments

Results: higher costs, delays, reduced formal trade

Policy action package:

Set **resolution timelines**

Publish a **public NTB dashboard**

Enable **escalation** and accountability for repeat offenders

Key Message 3: Market Intelligence Is a Public Good

No data → panic policy

Weak data on:

- stocks, production forecasts, deficits
- prices, informal flows, corridor performance

Without credible data:

- Governments act defensively
- Traders speculate
- Regional trust erodes

The continent has a market intelligence gap…

cannot coordinate food trade effectively without sharing credible data…

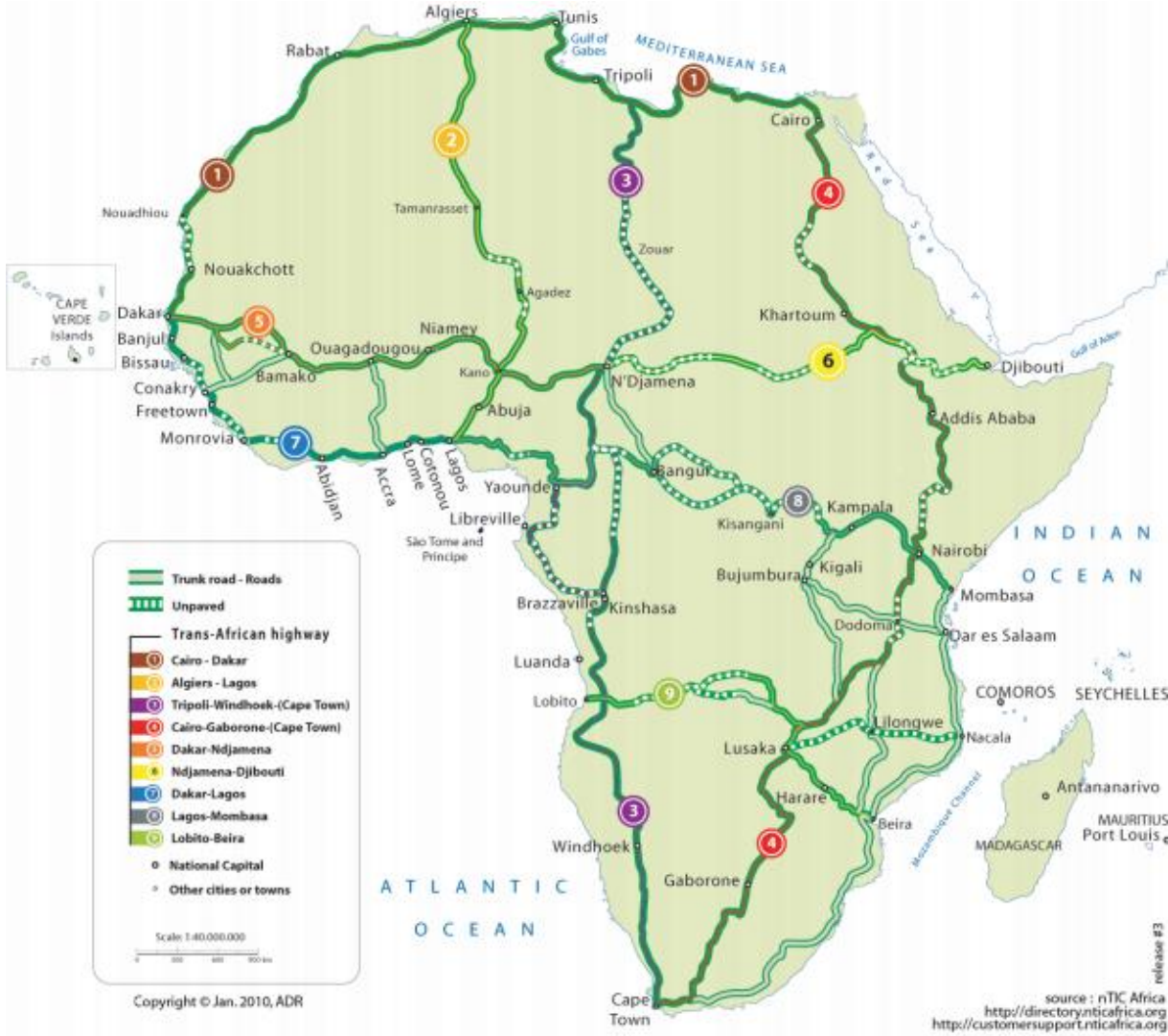
Key Message 4: Shift from Customs Reform to Corridor Reform

Trade costs emerge across the full corridor

Beyond customs: transport, storage, cold chain, labs, levies, roadblocks, border inefficiencies

Commodity-specific needs:

- cereals → storage/grading/low-cost transport
- horticulture → cold chain + fast clearance
- livestock/dairy → veterinary + SPS systems



Key Message 5: Standards/SPS and Traceability are Trade Infrastructure

Standards can enable trade—or become disguised protectionism

Repeated testing and non-recognition of certificates raise costs and disputes

Capacity constraints: labs, accreditation, risk-based inspection systems

Global markets are tightening traceability rules (e.g., sustainability/deforestation compliance)

Policy action package:

Mutual recognition of certificates

Expand accredited laboratories

Interoperable digital SPS systems

Risk-based inspections and scientific justification

Key Messages 6–7: Finance + Inclusion of Informal Cross-Border Trade

Trade cannot scale without finance, and without making formal trade easier

Finance is constrained because risk is **policy-induced**

Informal trade grows when formal trade is costly/unpredictable

Women are heavily represented in the small-scale food trade

Policy actions:

Regional trade finance instruments (guarantees, SME facilities, warehouse receipt finance)

Link warehouse receipts/commodity exchanges regionally

Expand simplified trade regimes + small trader desks and transparent fees

Call to Action: A Continental Agricultural Trade Compact

From fragmented national responses to coordinated implementation
Priority commitments for AU/AfCFTA/RECs:

Rules-based restrictions (transparent triggers + notification)

Regional food balance + early warning systems

Enforceable NTB mechanisms (timelines, dashboards, escalation)

Interoperable digital trade systems

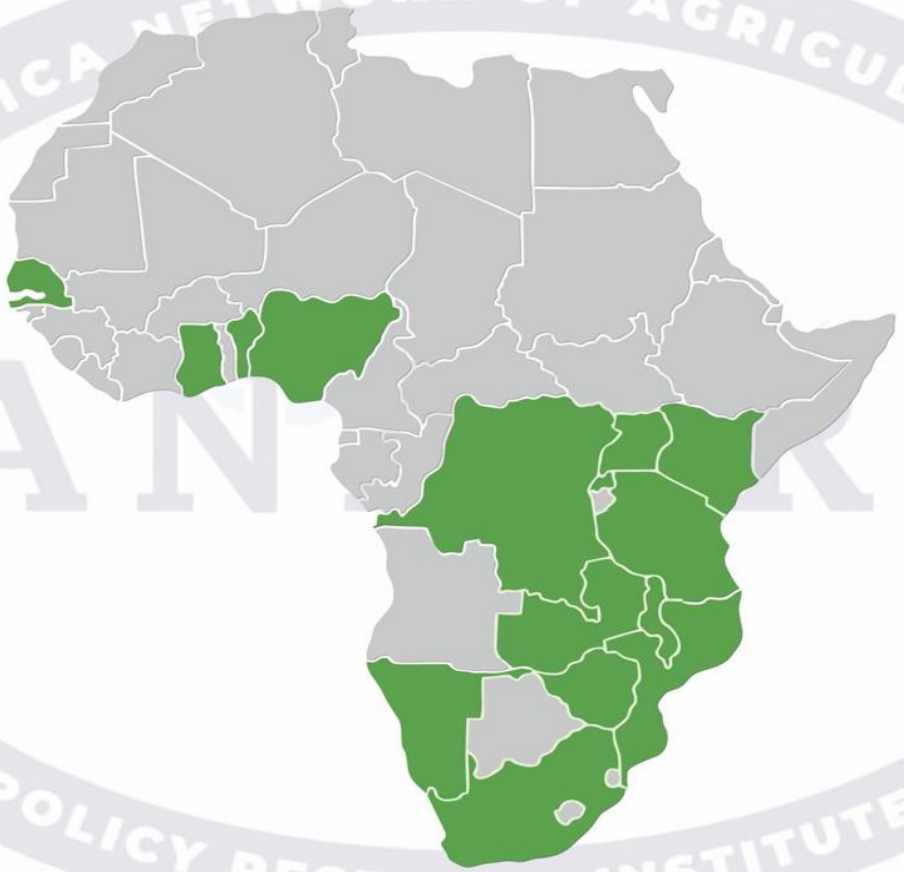
Harmonized SPS/standards + traceability

Corridor-based investments

Regional trade finance + structured markets

Institutionalized public–private dialogue

Africa Network of Agricultural Policy Research Institutes



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Links

ANAPRI Social Media Handles

www.anapri.net

Regional Synthesis Brief Blog

https://www.anapri.net/africas-food-markets-are-already-regional-our-policies-need-to-catch-up/

Agribridge Policy Brief

https://www.welthungerhilfe.org/what-we-do/focus-areas/food-systems-hungry-for-change/agribridge

Thank you