



# Informal Cross-Border Trade and Regional Integration in ECOWAS: A Nigerian Perspective

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## Abstract

Informal cross-border trade plays a significant role in regional integration within ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), particularly in Nigeria where it contributes to economic growth and employment. A qualitative study based on secondary data analysis and expert interviews with stakeholders involved in cross-border trade across ECOWAS member states. This study underscores the significance of formalizing informal cross-border trade practices to enhance regional economic cooperation within ECOWAS. Policy recommendations focus on improving infrastructure connectivity, harmonizing regulatory frameworks, and fostering business environment reforms. Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for upgrading informal border crossings, streamline customs procedures, provide training programmes for traders, and promote e-commerce solutions to facilitate cross-border trade more efficiently.

**Keywords:** *Sub-Saharan, cross-border, informal sector, regionalism, integration theory, migration studies, development economics*

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