



# Informal Cross-Border Trade Dynamics within ECOWAS: A Comparative Analysis in Chad

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## Abstract

Informal cross-border trade dynamics are crucial for regional integration in West Africa, particularly within ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States). Chad's participation in these networks is significant but understudied. The research employs a comparative analysis of existing literature, government reports, and interviews with local traders in Chad. Data triangulation was used to validate findings across different sources. Informal cross-border trade between Chad and ECOWAS countries shows a significant proportion (35%) of Chad's total exports and imports are conducted through informal channels, highlighting the importance of these networks despite formal regulations. Chad's role in regional integration is complex, with both facilitators and challenges evident. The study underscores the need for targeted policies that address regulatory gaps and enhance cross-border trade efficiency. Policy recommendations include strengthening border management systems to reduce barriers while promoting inclusive growth strategies sensitive to informal traders' needs.

**Keywords:** *African geography, regional integration, cross-border trade, informal economy, market dynamics, commodity circulation, socio-economic networks*

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