

**IMPACT OF EUROPEAN UNION'S SPECIAL TRADE AGREEMENT WITH AFRICA
ON INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA**

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Abstract

This paper examined the impact of special trade agreements between the European Union and Africa on West African integration. Regional integration is assumed to be driven by domestic factors. However, integration is not achieved in a vacuum. External variables ranging from historical and geopolitical factors to economic and ideological factors influence the integration of regional groupings such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on the African continent. The data for this article was obtained from both primary and secondary sources with an oral interview, which provided quantitative data for analysis. The research was based on the theory of neo-functionalism. Among other things, it was noted that the European Union had a checkered history of relations with Africa, and trade was one of the most lasting. Commercial relations between the two continents were governed by several agreements. However, it is very valuable for the integration of the continent that African countries have been strategic in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) trade agreements this century. The study found that the poor status of ECOWAS members, due to both endogenous and exogenous factors, remains the region's biggest challenge to adequately benefit from the EU-AU Special Trade Agreements. It is recommended, among other things, that ECOWAS as a body should undertake economic reforms at the national level of its members and consciously try to improve the infrastructural development of the region. High dependence on foreign financing can only be overcome through determined efforts to improve the overall political and economic investment environment.

Keyword: Integration, Regionalism, Trade, Cooperation, European Union, ECOWAS

Introduction

Countries engage in international trade to satisfy each other's needs and promote economic integration for national development. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is increasingly intertwined with regional integration in today's world system. Integration in various forms and dimensions is increasing. In Europe, cross-border trade and investment have been encouraged mainly by European Union integration. But Europe, Africa and other regions of the world approach integration in politically, socially, economically and culturally different ways. Trade policy describes both as Free Trade Areas (FTA) and Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs). The intermingling of these two trajectories means that the future of regional economic integration in developing countries is currently influenced by global negotiations and other forms of regional integration, especially in developed societies. The European Union (EU) has been committed to integration of African countries since the beginning. Initially, relations with African countries were based on the colonial heritage of several founding countries of the European Community (EC). The advantages of establishing these relations were based on the strong cultural and colonial ties between the colonies and the European Community (EC) countries, as well as the economic importance of these colonies to the economies of several member states. In addition to the economic benefits of these colonies, France sought to create a "sphere of influence" for itself as an alternative to Soviet and American power (Richard, Dee, Gali and McGuire, 2003).

One way to ensure the continuation of these relations was to establish special commercial relations with the colonies. One of the most important external objectives defined in the Treaty of Rome was the continuation of cooperation with the (then) colonial territories. During the Treaty of Rome, development thought was dominated by the idea that economic growth in developing countries could be achieved through the creation of preferential trade agreements (Shams, 2003). The fourth title of the Treaty of Rome ensured continuous cooperation with the colonies of the member states of the European Community (EC). No wonder ECOWAS members are still tied to European powers even decades after gaining political independence. Progress on integration in West Africa is not satisfactory; it is worth investigating why this is so. Political unification of the sixteen West African countries alone would worsen or increase the imbalance between them. Only within a larger and more unified market will each participating country have optimal opportunities to develop its own national economy (Nye, 1971).

Despite the similarities between the peoples of the sub-region, the hope for connection between them has remained elusive. West Africa is the region with the most similar peoples on the African continent. People have a similar story; similar colonial and imperial powers, similar oppression by neo-colonial agents, not too different challenges of development in visible and leadership deficits, high unemployment rate and endless poverty. Integration efforts, as it is done in the European Union (EU), are necessary to solve the common problem of the region. Many African policy makers, business representatives and non-governmental organizations focused on Western development argue that the EPA is too broad and intrusive for African countries. Some further argue that the accompanying trade liberalization would harm African development. As a continent dominated by underdeveloped countries, the purpose of the trade agreement concluded with Africa and the European Union is, among other things, to remove intercontinental trade barriers, although the quality of trade is not equal, and to strengthen the integration of Western countries especially with the African sub-region.

In this regard, it is warned that regional trade agreements can negatively affect the trade of both members and non-members by diverting more trade from non-members than would be generated between members (Freund and Ornelas, 2010). The main reasons for the unsatisfactory performance of inter-African regional trade agreements are the absence of complementary products, high foreign trade barriers, the reluctance of countries to import expensive commodities when there are alternatively cheaper products. Imports from member states, the reluctance of governments to cede sovereignty over their macroeconomic policies, the lack of strong and sustainable political commitment, and the reluctance of governments to accept the unequal distribution of gains and losses from regional trade agreements no doubt hamper integration (Lyakurwa, 2007).

The more trade agreements between the European Union and West African nations expand, the weaker the level of West African integration. The need to integrate the region to promote development has become imperative. Socio-cultural differences did not lead to anti-developmental variables in more complex societies, therefore West African countries could not integrate their economies, but the division of the region nevertheless put pressure on economic integration. Against the above background, this paper tries to find answers to the following questions: What are the trade relations of the European Union with Africa in the context of specific trade agreements such as the Lomé Convention? How have special trade agreements between the European Union and Africa affected the integration of West Africa?

Methodology

This paper made use of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. This selected research design helped to generate efficient data as it permits the acceptable reliance on both interviews and library materials. Key Informant Interview (KII) sessions were conducted in ECOWAS administrative headquarters in Nigeria and that of African Union with respondents opinions supported with secondary materials that were sourced from journals, textbooks, bulletins, newspapers, reports and other documents. They were subjected to contents analysis for adoption in this paper.

Conceptual Clarification

Regional integration is a contested concept. There are various definitions available, from the shortest and selective to the longest and most comprehensive. De Lombaerde and van Langenhove (2007) define regional integration as a global phenomenon of regional systems that increases the interaction between their components and creates new organizational forms that operate together with traditional state-led organizational forms at the national level. In addition, van Ginkel (2003) describes regional integration as a process in which countries in a certain region increase their level of interaction in economic, security, political, as well as social and cultural issues. Regional integration between countries can take place on three levels. Coordination is the lowest level of economic cooperation. It usually involves voluntary harmonization of national policies and investment in specific economic sectors. Harmonization is a higher level of cooperation and usually involves the harmonization of national legislation or the adoption of common legislation.

In the views of De Lombaerde and van Langenhove (2007), at this level all legislation continues to be national and all policies and instruments are monitored and implemented nationally,

although they can be agreed regionally. Integration is the highest level of economic cooperation. In regionally integrated markets, part of the traditional decision-making power of nation-states has been transferred to the regional level, and regional rules and decisions replace national legislation. In addition, at least some economic policies are formulated at the regional level. Integration can therefore refer both to the process as a whole and to a certain level of developed cooperation.

Regional integration increases trade between member states; expand their markets and production capacity (economies of scale) and enable them to develop common laws and regulations that improve the institutional strength of the region (Alves, Draper, & Khumalo, 2009). Balassa (1961), one of the leading integration theorists, defined economic integration as both a process and a state of affairs. Seen as a process, it involves measures aimed at eliminating discrimination between two or more economic entities belonging to different sovereign states. As a situation, it can be characterized by the absence of various (both monetary and non-monetary) barriers between independent sovereign economies. Overturf assumes a more general definition, according to which economic integration would mean the greatest possible division of labor, the greatest possible mobility of factors and the least possible discrimination within a group. The transition to this state can occur through various forms or degrees of integration, including international trade integration, factor integration and political integration. (Overturf, 1986:1)

The term regional integration has only been used quite recently to describe the integration of separate economies into larger groupings. As such, its use in practice seems to refer to either the state of integration or the process of achieving that state, and more than sometimes both. For example, an agreement on international trade policy is a form of cooperation, while the removal of trade barriers is an act of economic integration. Integration removes discrimination from the region. Kahnert (1969), on the other hand, defines regional integration as a process of gradual elimination of national border discrimination. This definition is really broad because it combines regional integration with international relations.

Allen (1963) argues that each researcher understands regional integration differently. Therefore, according to him, one of the main contributions of Balassa is that he defines integration and shows its difference from cooperation. Integration is the limitation of discrimination, while cooperation only reduces its negative effects. Regional integration means closer economic ties between geographically close countries mainly through Special Trade Agreements (STA).

Eurostep (2000) defines regional integration as overcoming the political, physical, economic and social barriers that separate countries from their neighbors through common agreement and cooperation in the management of common resources and common national goals. In simple terms, regional integration means the integration of parts or units into a whole or the creation of interdependence. It can also represent a situation where countries depend on each other for whatever they want. However, integration can be said to exist when units come together to achieve goals that they cannot achieve independently. It is a mutually beneficial combination of economic policies.

Theoretical Framework

This research is situated within the Neofunctionalist theory of integration. Neofunctionalism's intellectual roots lie in functionalism. The key work in the functionalist tradition is David

Mitrany's *A Working Peace System* published in 1943. As its name and original publishing year imply, Mitrany's book was also trying to track the conditions which would ensure the avoidance of military conflicts in the international system. In a sense, functionalism challenges the state-centric worldview, and is concerned with whether nation-states are the optimal form (most functional) of an organisation to fulfill human needs. According to Ben Rosamond, functionalist reasoning sees states as an impediment to the functional organisation of human activity:

To regard the state as given, was to impose an unnecessary inflexibility when it came to thinking about how the requirements of human beings could best be served. Thus, it followed that some needs would be best served by ignoring the conventions of national territories (Rosamond, 2000, 33).

However, no other theoretical approach has affected both the process and study of regional integration as much as neofunctionalism. Ironically, it first emerged in a very specific conjuncture of certain historical events and the development of integration theory, and in a sense it was only an attempt to attach more theoretical rigor to the thinking of the founding fathers of European integration. Neofunctionalist reasoning was first formulated in the Schuman declaration and in a sense the origin of this model was in politics as was the case with federalism. The relevance of neofunctionalist theory, is that it provides the basis for an enhanced integration of the West African sub-region through the instrumentality of ECOWAS. The EU-Africa special trade agreements serve as a complicating external variable, the impact of which needs to be investigated in terms of how it help to enhance or hinder integration among the nations in the region. The theoretical concept of neofunctionalism is still important for all integration schemes. The spill-over effect of interconnectivity and interdependence describes the situation when the actual deepening of regional integration process occurs in West Africa. The neofunctionalist assumption that there is some sort of in-built logic in the process, which continuously leads to new spill-overs, will be tested in this research. Integration goes beyond agreement, it also involve an understanding between two hitherto different entities that decided to draw strengths from their differences to enhance their relationships.

European Union-African Special Trade Agreement

The European Union (EU) over the years has used special trade agreements as a key strategy in assisting the developing world catch up with trends in global trade and to reduce poverty. For over 40 years preferential trade agreements have remained one of the main components of development assistance that the EU has been offering to developing countries. Currently the objective of the EU's preferential arrangement is to assist developing countries to generate revenue through international trade so as to be able to reduce poverty (Makame, 2012). The genesis of the EU's trade partnership with Africa can be traced back to the signing of the Yaoundé Convention I in 1962 between the then European Economic Commission (EEC) member states and 17 African countries and Madagascar. Being the first partnership agreement in history, the Yaoundé Convention I granted preferential trade arrangements such as duty free access of specified goods from the 17 Africa countries and Madagascar into the European market. The agreement was renewed by the Yaoundé Convention II in 1969 and it lasted until 1975 when it was replaced by the Lomé Convention (UNCTAD, 2013).

The Lomé Convention signed in the first quarter of 1975 was between 9 European Community (EC) member states and 46 developing countries from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific formally known as the ACP countries. It provided duty free access to the European Community market for agricultural and mineral exports from the African countries. In addition, preferential access based on a quota system was agreed for products which were in competition with European Community agricultural produce such as sugar and beef. With respect to aid and investment the European Community committed £3 billion to the ACP countries. The Lomé Convention which was renegotiated three times under the Lomé Conventions II, III and IV and which was in force for 25 years resulted in about £30 billion of aid and investment to ACP countries apart from the trade preferences. By the time the Lomé Conventions were replaced in 2000 the number of ACP countries participating had increased from 46 under the Lomé I Convention to 70 countries. The signing of the Cotonou agreement between the then 15 EU member countries and 77 ACP countries in 2000 was in response to the complexity and continuing incompatibility of the Lomé Conventions with GATT and WTO provisions, and the inability of the Lomé Conventions to produce the economic benefits that was expected (UNCTAD, 2013).

European Union's Trade Agreements and Integration of West Africa

Some of the benefits of integration between the EU and Africa and the wider ACP countries have been identified. Are there risks in the EU's West African integration Special Trade Agreements (STAs)? This question was asked to the respondents. No matter how great the Special Trade Agreements (STAs) between the European and African continents seem, the European STA agenda poses certain threats to African development in general and to West African integration in particular. It is widely recognized that STAs introduced by Europe pose a serious threat to the people and economy of West Africa. Evidence suggests that West African governments face a huge loss of revenue because they receive a significant portion of their tax revenue from tariffs on imports from Europe, a major trading partner. This was noted by many international and national institutions in the region. Bayeka of the African Union office in Abuja (Oral interview, 2022), a report on trade data shows, for example, that import tariffs accounted for 15 percent of government revenues in African countries and 34 percent in other Less Developed Countries. Africa.

The statement echoed an estimate by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) that tax revenues from international trade accounted for an average of 30.5 percent of total income in sub-Saharan Africa over the past decade. The UK's Institute for Development Studies (IDS) also estimated that under a baseline scenario of 80% liberalization, three-quarters of ACP countries could lose 55% of EU tariff revenue, while over a third could lose up to 60% or even more loss of this important source of revenue would force further cuts to the already low levels of spending on crucial social welfare needs such as education, health, food security, and providing access to water and sanitation. Bayeka of the African Union office in Abuja (Oral interview, 2022), expressed his fears over loss of government revenues that would result from tariff elimination:

The biggest fear of the EU's special trade agreements with Africa, such as the integration of the West African sub-region, is the impact on tax revenues of trade liberalization through EPAs. Many countries rely heavily on customs duties for government

revenue. The prospect of declining government revenues, coupled with falling commodity prices and massive external debt, places a heavy burden on these countries and threatens to further impede their ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Sub-Saharan Africa faces chronic supply shortages; just as developing countries as a group continue to depend on the export of goods to the markets of developed countries to generate the foreign currency necessary for importing developed products, which are one of the biggest obstacles to the integration of the region.

Regionalism can always distract Africa from the main objective of its trade policy, creating a liberal trade system to support poverty reduction and growth strategies. The global trend of regionalism is harming African countries. Regionalism created "center and party" trade relations between countries, with large economies as "centers" and small economies as "parties." Ad-regionalism further strengthens such relationships, which benefit the hub disproportionately more than the surface due to different rules of origin, product exclusion, non-trade issues, and decentralization of trade and investment (WTO, 2011). Due to their small economies, African countries have always been a talking point in their commercial relations with industrialized countries, especially with Western European countries. The same study by the World Bank shows that if all developing countries entered into a bilateral free trade agreement with only all the major centers such as Canada, the EU, Japan and the United States, Australia and New Zealand, sub-Saharan Africa would lose out over \$3 billion (in 2015, or 0.7 percent of the region's income (1.2 percent for non-South African Customs Union countries). In fact, African countries are likely to lose even more in such a race against bilateralism.

Currently, not all major economies want to sign regional trade agreements with Africa. One of the main challenges of the regional economic integration process in West Africa is the alignment and convergence of the two regional integration initiatives, ECOWAS and WAEMU, so that the former ECOWAS grouping can emerge as a single regional body. Therefore, an inter-institutional consultation process was launched in 2000 and a number of technical and political meetings were held to promote coordination and synergy between these programs. This process of convergence is currently taking place, especially in macroeconomic policy, for which a multilateral monitoring mechanism was established for the entire ECOWAS region, based on the institutional liberalization of UEMO. To create a West African Single Market, ECOWAS and WAEMU have embarked on a multi-faceted harmonization process that includes trade liberalization, rules and procedures for proof of origin, customs concessions, approval procedures and tax loss compensation mechanisms.

In relation to international trade negotiations, in addition to their regional economic integration processes, West African countries also participate in international trade negotiations. All countries except Liberia are members of the World Trade Organization and thus participate in ongoing multilateral negotiations under the Doha Development Round. They also signed the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, which requires a partnership agreement with the EU before the end of 2007. These three processes aim to converge and complement each other and aim to promote the gradual and harmonious integration of the West African region to the global economy.

According to Mohammed (oral interview, 2021) identified that West African countries could not find a strong currency like the European Euro. Undoubtedly, several efforts have been made to reduce and eliminate the challenges presented by the large number of currencies used in West African countries, especially the creation of the West African Currency Area. The monetary belt could not solve the problem either. Kyari (oral interview, 2021) said:

The biggest fight against establishing the West African Monetary Zone is the relatively low level of intra-regional trade between member states, an especially daunting challenge when you consider that most of the zone's members do not share a common border with more than one other zone member. The relatively low level of trade is also a product of the decrepit transportation and communication links between member states; transport trucks face potentially hundreds of roadblocks on the main coastal trade roads between Nigeria and Ghana alone.

Findings

The following observations were made in this study based on the opinions of the respondents through the interview sessions. There is no doubt that integration is an important factor in explaining the economic performance of the European Union. Unlike the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), where all countries joined at the same time to create an economic union, the current agreement of the European Union was started by only six countries, while others joined at different stages of history. Regional integration in the EU appears to be the best model of regional integration arrangement (RIA) in the world, despite the challenge of BREXIT, with members showing a strong commitment to the Union. Trade between the economies of individual European Union countries increased significantly when each country joined the European Union.

The importance of the EU to ECOWAS is obvious. The EU remains West Africa's most important trading partner. However, other regions of the world have become equally prominent in West Africa's foreign trade profile. The EU's dominance of ECOWAS exports to the rest of the world between 1999 and 2015 reflects so many factors. The structure of ECOWAS imports also shows the importance of the EU to the trade position of West Africa. More than 30 percent of ECOWAS' imports come from the EU, regardless of the various trade preferences that ECOWAS received under Lome I-IV and the classification of products by activities of the EU's Everything But Arms (EBA) initiatives. The increase in the importance of North America (consisting of the United States and Canada) can also be explained by the fact that the United States introduced the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which benefits some ECOWAS countries.

The European Union promotes regional integration in Africa in its own way, mainly through trade agreements. In recent years, its focus has been on Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Since 2002, the EU has been attracting its ACP partners to participate in these negotiations. The EU argued that the negotiations would strengthen regional integration in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. By replacing the existing specific trade agreements with free trade mechanisms through the later Yaoundé Conventions,

the Lomé Agreements and the Cotonou Agreement of 2000, the EU would comply with the rules of the WTO. At the same time, the EU insisted that relations with Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific should be based on equality and true partnership.

Until 2008, provisional agreements were concluded with several African, Caribbean and Pacific sub-regions and individual countries or groups of countries. EU officials were more suspicious of the proliferation of EPAs than anyone else. The EU was looking for new foundations for its relations with countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

The origins of these relations come from the original Treaties of Rome, which established the European Economic Community in 1957. The Treaties of Rome gave a five-year trial period to the commercial and financial sectors of France, Belgium and the overseas territories. Netherlands. The most visible immediate effect was the availability of new outlets for African tropical fruits in Europe. In the long term, infrastructure improvements in the Southern Hemisphere were influenced by the Development Fund created by the Treaties of Rome. That was the beginning of European development policy. In 1963, relations between the European Economic Communities and the 18 related African countries and Madagascar were renewed with the Yaoundé Agreement, named after the capital of Cameroon where the agreement was signed. It provided trade benefits and economic aid to Africa. The search for a new beginning between the current European Community and many of its former colonies was increasingly linked to the struggle for a new world economic order. In response to the continuing demands of the Southern Hemisphere, the European Community offered a comprehensive partnership program and preferential treatment to Europe's most desperate former colonies.

In 1975, the European Community and 6 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries signed the Convention of Lomé. New treaties of Lomé were signed every five years. The Treaty of Lomé IV, signed in 1990, involved 77 countries. Unlike the I-III Lomé Congress, the previous Lomé Congress lasted ten years and included an interim summary. This included 638 million people in the southern hemisphere. The Lomé Agreements included innovations and improvements in North-South relations. First, trade was basically on a non-reciprocal basis. The partner countries of the European Community, known as ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) countries, were exempted from the GATT multi-fiber agreement, which imposed restrictions on textile exports from developing countries to industrialized markets. When GATT was replaced by the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1993, this principle was under increasing pressure from countries and regions not participating in this non-reciprocal trade privilege. In addition, in the spirit of partnership and cooperation, the European Community has unilaterally exempted certain ACP products from customs and import duties. The most innovative part of the Lomé Convention was the raw material stabilization mechanism: the EC established a fund that provides stabilization capital to the raw materials of partner countries if their raw material prices fall below a certain limit or due to a too bad harvest. This STABEX system represented a transfer of resources to the budgets of the ACP countries.

On June 23, 2000, a new long-term rapprochement began between the European Union and its ACP partners, including Africa: the Cotonou Agreement was signed between the EU and 15 Caribbean, 1 Pacific and all 8 sub-Saharan countries. Africa contributes 95 percent of the total population of the ACP countries and receives 80 percent of all aid provided under the Cotonou

Agreement. This agreement replaced the Lome IV Convention and is valid for twenty years. Its main features are:

- i. The Cotonou Agreement emphasizes political dialogue with a strengthened inclusion of civil society.
- ii. In terms of economic cooperation, it replaced preferential relations with the principle of reciprocity as requested by the WTO but potentially to the disadvantage of several European Union partner countries in Africa; until 2008, new regional Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) with each of the ACP regions were to be negotiated.

The ECOWAS countries are no longer exempted from the WTO multi-fiber agreements with their restrictions on textile exports from developing countries to industrialized markets. This is extremely relevant for some African countries: 58 percent of total exports from Lesotho and 39 percent of total exports from Mozambique are in textiles. Several preferential elements of the Lomé Convention favored agricultural activities in countries producing beef in West Africa and the economies of the land-locked West African countries. They have been discontinued by the Cotonou Convention.

The main reason for the fundamental shift from preferential trade arrangements to the principle of reciprocity was the ruling of the WTO Dispute Settlement body according to which the provisions of the Lomé Convention were unfair by giving preference to banana exporters in the Caribbean and in other countries with special relations to Europe.

Conclusion

Africa has a strong desire to industrialize and achieve development. But to realize this dream, the continent has to be holistic in its approaches. Regional integration in West Africa has failed many times in the past. Wrong priorities prevented success. Much has been written about the lack of "political will" without explaining what it actually means. Defending sovereignty was more important than a true commitment to growth and development as a means of a well-managed integration process. Market integration initiatives have traditionally been a hallmark of West African integration, with a strong focus on customs liberalization. Infrastructure development (especially sectoral development projects and cross-border projects) was on the agenda of regional cooperation; where, for example, the achievements of ECOWAS deserve attention. There is no firm evidence to support the claim that a preferential trade agreement creates net trade or benefits all members. Positive results depend on planning and execution. Integrated into a coherent and credible reform strategy, the success of regional trade agreements is determined by low barriers to foreign trade. Although many developing countries have reduced tariffs, they remain high in many countries and regions, and the risk of trade diversion remains significant. In particular, the Special Trade Agreements (STA) of the European Union with Africa, as stated above, promoted West African integration in many ways, especially in the economic field.

Recommendations

The paper makes the following recommendations. To achieve regional integration requires bold economic reforms that should be implemented at the domestic level. Such reforms should not focus only on improving or stabilizing the macro-environment. If political and economic reforms

should start from strengthening governance infrastructure, the importance of the rule of law and human rights, stabilizing the macro environment and creating a suitable climate for investment should be beyond these minimalist goals. Building a strong social infrastructure, particularly through improving land use, education and health systems, and addressing other constraints to economic growth at the individual and group level in the West African sub-region will strengthen integration. Persistent problems such as small markets, a narrow production base, poor infrastructure and high dependence on foreign funding can only be resolved through determined efforts to improve the general political and economic environment, which in turn would encourage investment in the region. Normative values, which include a commitment to democratization, adherence to the rule of law and respect for human rights, are necessary for further success in integration efforts. Comprehensive monitoring of agreements is crucial to ensure effective enforcement. Evaluating the effects of trade agreements requires information on the extent to which agreement provisions are implemented and how they influence the decisions of producers and consumers. Given the need for monitoring, an implementation scorecard would be useful to properly assess the performance of the contracting parties.

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