

ROAD TRANSPORT OF GOODS ON LOMÉ COTONOU AXIS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the current state of the road freight transport sector in Benin, notably by evaluating the profitability of the Cotonou-Lomé corridor.

The methodological approach based on documentary research and field surveys facilitated by the cards plunge the study into the heart of a high-risk activity that was once profitable.

The analysis of the results shows the mandatory nature for today's carriers in view of the various complaints on their part and the change of activity of several carriers.

This study shows that goods transport on the Cotonou Hillacondji axis has a high flow and according to 67% of the population it is linked to the Dangoté truck. It should be noted that nearly 15% of road infrastructure is still defective, 70% of the rolling stock is obsolete, the non-compliance with the rules of distribution of freight and 64% of the rate of freight exported to Togo. It is in the general interest of all to liberalize and energize the sector for its survival. However, the sector remains a high-interest rate market that this study aims to evolve simultaneously; institutions, procedures and techniques to provide truck incentives and greater profits to boost the economy.

Keywords: Corridor, road freight transport, profitability

1. Introduction:

The transportation sector makes a significant contribution to the country's economic growth and poverty reduction. This sector, by offering a network of developed infrastructures and efficient and dynamic transport services, contributes to the competitiveness of Benin's economy, to its regional integration and to increased mobility. In fact, Benin is a coastal country in West Africa with a coastline of 125 km. Because of this geographical position, it plays an important role in serving the countries of the hinterland (MTPT, 2015). Like developing countries, Benin is looking for the marks of a prosperous and efficient economy. However, a successful economy is an economy that increases the well-being of its citizens without increasing its external indebtedness. The performance of the economy depends on the performance of these private and public enterprises (Tossou, 2005). Faced with this situation, the African states have found it necessary to orchestrate clusters to better face the challenges of the world economy and by dedicating themselves to it were born several organizations including ECOWAS (Bellego, 1980). One of the measures taken to respond to the development problems of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), especially Benin, is the promotion of the transport sector, as it considerably reduces the transport time of people, goods and facilitates exchange of ideas (Dezert, 2008). The transport sector is a leading integrating project (GUIDADO, 2009).

To continue to play this role, it must integrate and adapt to the new evolution of the world economy, at the risk of suffering an evolution detrimental to its survival and development. In

other words, the competitiveness of a product on a market depends essentially on a mastery of the integrated logistics chain of transport that takes into account the institutional, legal, administrative, technical, operational, commercial, financial and statistical aspects (Bordeless, 2012).

Thus, to better appreciate the obstacles related to the transport of goods from Cotonou to Lomé, it is necessary to identify the obstacles to the fluidity of transport, to define the efficient conduct of freight-sharing, transit, transport and propose concrete and sufficiently operational actions that can significantly improve this activity.

2- Geographical setting

The Cotonou-Lomé study area of the Abidjan-Lagos corridor is located between 6 ° 14 'and 6 ° 26' north latitude and then between 1 ° 38 'and 2 ° 24' east longitude. This axis crosses the departments of Littoral, Atlantic and Mono. Since the transport sector plays a key role in West Africa's development (generating 6% of the region's GDP), the ECOWAS and UEMOA member states have decided to improve the competitiveness of the main corridors. of West Africa, tools of solidarity towards the landlocked member countries and factors of development of inter-regional trade.

The Abidjan-Lagos Corridor materializes this vision. Long of 1022 km, it crosses the five countries that are: Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria. The Cotonou-Lomé axis, which is the subject of the study is 152 km long, has for a while offered a good level of practicability and, in the freight transport sector, a certain ease in operations. Figure 1 presents the framework of the study.

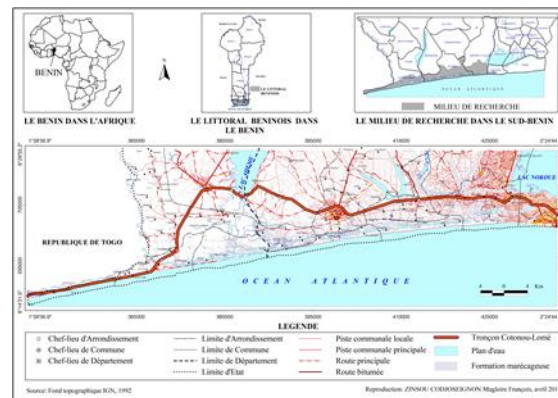


Figure 1: Cotonou-Lomé Corridor

Source: To better appreciate the realities of the study area, a good methodological approach must be put in place.

3. Material and methods

The methodological approach adopted in this study is based on the collection of data and information, their processing and analysis of the results.

3.1 data collection

Several types of data were used to conduct this study. It's about:

- Statistics of the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Analysis (INSAE) on the evolution of the global quantities of exports and imports in tonnes of 2010 in 2018;
- survey data from the National Council of Loaders of Benin (CNCB) on illegal collections in 2018,
- customs statistics relating to the transport of goods,
- port statistics on the volume of traffic at the port from 2000 to 2018
- cartographic and photographic data of the environment;
- data from socio-geographical surveys.

The research techniques used in this study provided the data necessary to explain the phenomena observed in the field. Depending on the specificities of the information sought, techniques have been varied. These include desk research, semi-structured interviewing, direct field observations, and field survey questionnaire.

Direct observation made it possible to understand the impact of infrastructures on the socio-economic life as well as the state of practicability of the latter. During field visits, snapshots of the environmental phenomena studied are taken to illustrate these facts. As for the semi-structured individual interview, it is carried out by means of an interview guide with the executives of the Ministry in charge of transport and the actors of the sector. During these interviews, issues related to the transport of goods and the development of road infrastructure were discussed. In addition, it was through the questionnaire survey that people's perceptions were collected on the state of road infrastructure, the links they establish between road and development.

To achieve this, a sample has been created. Through the reasoned choice technique, the actors have been identified on the basis of the following criteria:

- to be a driver,
- truck owner,
- practice the profession for at least 5 years,
- have been the victim of road harassment,
- be executives of the departmental direction of public transport,
- to be agents of the financial and economic service of the town hall of Grand Popo,
- to be agents of the Abidjan Lagos Corridor Organization (ALCO)
- to be agents of the customs,
- be on the axis for 10 years.

Indeed to know the corridor, it must have been used for at least the last five years. The table below shows the distribution of people auditioned.

Table I: Distribution of interviewees

Structures	Numbers	frequencies (%)
Autonomous Port of Cotonou	75	27
Transit company	35	13
Consignment company	20	7
Handling company	30	11
Customs	50	18
CNCB	45	17
Local Authority and ALCO	20	7
Total	275	100

Source: Field Survey, 2018

3.2 Data processing and analysis

Processing started with verification, coding and preliminary transformations. As a result, the survey and data collection forms were carefully reviewed manually. To successfully complete this stage of the research, data processing software such as the Excel spreadsheet and word were used; the first to reproduce graphs and tables inherent to the work and the second for word processing. The realization of the figures facilitated the correct interpretation of the results.

The social and economic impacts related to road networks on the Cotonou Lomé axis are noted through Leopold's matrix (1971). It focuses on the identification, evaluation and analysis of impacts:

- the identification of impacts is carried out in two parts: the social aspect and the economic aspect;
- the impact assessment was carried out against the impact indicators selected for this study;
- The impact analysis is made in a global and specific way through the grouping of positive and negative impacts.

At the end of all the analyzes carried out, results were obtained.

4. Results

4.1 Results obtained

4.1.2 Typology of goods of road transport

Imports on the Cotonou-Lomé axis concern all consumer goods and especially Community products (ECOWAS products) from Nigeria dumped on the port of Cotonou by cabotage companies for the other Community market (UEMOA). In fact, Benin is the gateway to products of Nigerian origin throughout the UEMOA market. Building materials made of cement, rebars as well as galvanized sheet and tiles are also worth mentioning. Imports on the Cotonou-Lomé axis also concern no less important products such as textiles, chemicals (fertilizers, fatty acids, sulfur, etc.) and other goods such as footwear, cosmetics, spare parts of used vehicles of recent manufacture, etc. Table II summarizes the major groups of goods transported in 2014.

Table II: Imports of goods

LARGE GROUPS OF IMPORTED GOODS	TONNAGES
Clinker, Gypsum, Dairy and Limestone	641.804
Construction materials	381.034
Cereals and similar	475.895
Foodstuffs	1.197.870
Vegetable oils, Oilseeds, Products	16.965
Lubricant and Bituminous	22.262
Fertilizers, Insecticides	40.717
Equipment	303.497
Used Vehicles and Spare Parts	555.888
suffer	41.554
Various + Textile fibers	956.886
TOTAL IMPORTS 2011	5.667.998

Source: Cotonou Port Authority, 2014

The analysis in Table II shows that foodstuffs rank first in road transport on the Cotonou -Lomé corridor.

4.1.3 Trend in road transport prices

The availability of trucks and freight dictated by agricultural calendars plays an important role in the cost of transportation. The fragility of agreements and regulations creates additional costs that influence the profitability of transport. Table III shows the fee schedule for freight transportation. It provides information on the different freight rates based on the nature, weight and destination previously observed by importers and carriers or drivers.

Table III: Fee schedule for the transport of goods

DISTANCE (in km) Enter COTO-NOU (BENIGN) &	FOOD AND OTHER PRODUCTS (in thousand / TC)		CEREALS AND FERTILIZERS (in thousand / TC)		CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS (in thousand / TC)	
	Darkness	Dark	TMI	Dark	TMI	Dark
YES-DAH (42)	350	370	330	360	350	370
COME (65)	400	450	390	440	400	450
GRAND POPO (80)	470	500	430	490	490	520
CLOUDBERRY-CONDJI (100)	500	540	480	530	500	540
OLD-DRAFO (120)	550	600	520	590	550	600
LOME (152)	600	650	580	640	650	680

Source: PETRANS-BENIN and COCETRAC BENIN, 2015

TMi: Minimal rate

TMa: Maximum rate

TC: 40 feet container

The quantitative and qualitative data that formed the basis of the analysis proved that the road freight transport sector is undermined and destroyed by:

- the existence of several unions in the field; which are deemed not credible because of how they manage the sector;
- the non-observance of axle load rules, a situation somewhat corrected by the regime of the break in Benin,
- the differences observed in transport prices on all goods;
- the lowering of the transport price. For example, the ton of rice transported on Lomé with the same truck has gone from 18,000 CFA to 15,000 CFA, a drop of 3,000 CFA francs.

It appears after analysis that the bad behavior of carriers and their representatives, the non-conformity of prices, the non-compliance of Community measures by the public authorities, are the main causes that make the sector less attractive.

4.14 Transportation on the road

On the Cotonou - Lomé road, the precariousness of the road network between the various villages in the country makes commercial transactions very difficult. Road transport is provided by the informal sector with two main modes of travel (Houinsou, 2013). Taxis for cars between villages on the one hand and from inside to outside the study area on the other. Large aircraft transport commercial products and inputs as agricultural campaigns approach and after harvest to markets or possibly factories. Then, the taxis-motorcycles for the inter-urban displacements or in direction of the rural districts not far from the urban center (plate 1).



Plate 1: Transactions of goods by automobiles and taxi motorcycles

Shooting: ZINSOU CODJOEIGNON, October 2018

It presents the transportation of goods from parking lots to the interior of the country for local consumption. Non-transit vehicles are often responsible for supplying local markets for their consumption. More than 80% of the population recognize this form of supply used by local merchants.

4.1.5 Cross-border flows of road transport

Imports recorded by INSAE in Benin in 1997 officially amounted to 5.21 billion and 50.65 billion for what went through the informal sector. For the same period, the Federal Office of Statistics of Nigeria recorded 109.3 billion products exported to Benin (Igué, 1998), of which Benin controlled only the entry of products, covering only 5 billion F CFA. The rest went through fraudulent channels or valuable discount systems to enter the Beninese territory for the benefit of UEMOA countries including Togo.

In addition, goods coming from outside Benin remain parked in a park called a grouping park. Figure 2 shows the flow of goods transport on the Cotonou-Lomé axis.



Figure 2: Freight flow

Goods flows are moving from Cotonou to Lomé, especially with the transport of DANGOTE trucks, according to 67% of the populations. Apart from this movement, it is noted the crossing of trucks in transit and loads of products mentioned above.

4.1.6 Economic Consequences of Road Transport on the Cotonou-Lomé Axis and Prospects

One of the most important problems is the obsolescence of a large part of the truck fleet and the growing number of used vehicles, which increase operating costs and the frequency of accidents. In addition, most vehicles are not equipped with equipment that would expedite transit transport and cannot, for example, be linked to cargo tracking facilities.

It must be said that carriers are not for the most part specialists and are therefore unaware of modern and reliable methods of management. Their businesses are run haphazardly with widespread disregard for axle load regulations and other requirements.

To all these problems are added the insufficiency on the ground of qualified and specialized human resources in the field of transport. In addition, as Benin is not a producer of oil, it does not have a say in major decisions on the control and control of the price of a barrel of oil, these carriers can only suffer the multiple consequences. linked to the vertiginous rise in the price of oil. However, freight prices are generally the same for carriers from both countries, from the same community area for the same distances. In addition, taxes, harassment on the corridor and insecurity are the other difficulties encountered.

All these problems identified are detrimental to the smooth running of goods transport on the Benin-Togo corridor and it is imperative to linger over them, in order to improve somewhat the markets of Togo from the port of Cotonou. These are the motives that drove us to weigh down our study of profitability in the option of improving the international transport of goods by road, specifically on the Corridor Benin-Togo.

According to studies, between \$ 400 and \$ 500 million a year could be saved if reforms targeting the regulation of the transport sector in West Africa are implemented, for example' "the reform of the controls of the load in the West. axle, the elimination of quotas and queues and the prohibition of the transport of goods in one country by truckers from another country, subsidies for the modernization of the truck fleet and substantial reductions in points control and transit time at the border ". Governments could save between \$ 200 million and \$ 300 million in road maintenance. Transport costs per tonne/km would decrease by 20%, and transport prices would fall by 19%. Jobs lost in the informal trucking sector would be more than offset by the jobs created in trade, due to increased productivity and reduced wait times at the borders (USAID, 2010).

Conclusion

Throughout this study, we tried to provide a clear and original answer to the problems observed in the Benin-Togo corridor. Regulations on road transport in West Africa and bilateral agreements between Togo and Benin are not lacking. But the flows of goods are experiencing

their lowest rates and we have found that the various governing bodies have difficulty in enforcing legislation throughout their territory.

The situation on the ground seems not very good with a string of problems often emanating from the various links (maritime, port, land) constituting the transport chain concerned, be they carriers, importers or even the States. To alleviate all these problems on the corridor; it is urgent to study the implementation of proposals for the optimization of the transport of goods, and the quality of the service, dependent on the facilitation of the mobility of goods and people.

Finally, it is nevertheless encouraging to note that, even if many efforts remain to be provided, the Beninese and Togolese governments are becoming aware of the important role of the transport of goods in the effective hatching of their economy, this through the reconstruction work. and the big projects started. Indeed, transport is one of the key sectors that play a key role in efforts to achieve sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty, thereby leading to sustainable development in Africa. For the transport sector to truly play its role, it must be developed in a coordinated way, with the ultimate goal of establishing a system that is reliable, efficient, safe and environmentally friendly.

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