



## BORDERLESS 2015 CONFERENCE REGIONAL TRADE AND FOOD SECURITY

### CONCEPT NOTE

Borderless Alliance is a private association established in 2011 with the objective to catalyze the efforts of the West African private sector and its partners to offer and promote concrete improvements to free movement of persons and goods. The Alliance advocates for policy changes at national and regional levels, to improve the business environment. It also works to promote best practices among its members.

To date, the Alliance has seventy-eight (78) member companies from different sectors (transport and logistics, manufacturing services, trade associations, etc.) working with public institutions and civil society organizations in West Africa for the elimination of trade barriers.

The annual conference is the main platform for public-private dialogue and high-level advocacy created by the Alliance to bring together the different stakeholders around themes related to trade facilitation and transport, for better economic integration of West Africa.

### **Borderless 2015**

Borderless 2015 is a platform for dialogue between stakeholders on policies and appropriate strategies that will open the doors to greater business opportunities in the region, to harmonize trade policies, reduce commercial transaction costs and unlocking the economic potential –especially in agriculture, which attracts investment to create jobs and hence, wealth for the people of the region.

Like in previous editions, dozens of companies and leading professional organizations in the private sector involved in the areas of transport, agribusiness, trade and logistics, and representatives of regional economic communities, governments and partners in the region will converge in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, for the **4th annual Conference** of Borderless Alliance. Under the auspice of the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, Borderless 2015 Conference will be held from **19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015** at the **Golf Hotel** under the theme: "**Regional Trade and Food Security**".

West Africa has abundant natural and human resources yet remains one of the poorest regions in the world. Accounting for approximately 35 percent of the region's GDP and 60% of the active labor force, the agricultural sector is key to achieving food security and broad-based economic growth across West Africa. Agricultural productivity is constrained by poor linkages between farmers and markets, the vulnerability of the agricultural businesses, limited access to affordable and reliable high quality seeds and fertilizer, and lack of information on new agricultural technologies and best practices.

In addition, the commercialization of agricultural products is fraught with many difficulties; among these include: the persistence of non-tariff barriers related to free movement of agricultural products despite the existence of various ECOWAS protocols relative to the free

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movement of goods and services including agricultural products, lack of access to markets due to poor state of road infrastructure and lack of market information.

The conference will feature two days of experience-based knowledge sharing, scheduled interaction, networking opportunities and evidence-based advocacy methodologies to produce recommendations to achieve these objectives.

On the sidelines of the conference, Borderless Alliance members will hold the General Assembly and review past activities and the financial status of the Alliance and advise the Executive Committee and the Executive Secretariat on the implementation of its 2013-2017 strategic plan.

### Why Participate in Borderless 2015?

- Get to know the realities of the business environment in West Africa, and find ways to reduce the costs of doing business, including those related to transport;
- Understand the impact of national and regional trade policies on business in West Africa and how to use these policies to increase trade in general and agricultural trade in particular;
- Understand the strategic development initiated by governments in the region, policy makers and development partners, to promote agricultural production and food security;
- Meet business executives, ministers and government officials from Cote d'Ivoire and other parts of the region
- Network with potential partners and investors
- Learn more about the success stories of Borderless Alliance

### Format and Program

The opening ceremony of Borderless 2015 will take place in the evening of May 19, 2015 in the presence of government officials of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, other high profile representatives of the Regional Economic Communities and development partners who are involved with trade facilitation, transport, formulation and implementation of agricultural policies, production, processing and marketing in the region

Borderless 2015 will consist of a series of thematic workshops all centered on promoting regional trade as a means of ensuring food security. The workshops will give the opportunity to private and public sector experts, development partners and international institutions to examine the new trends in trade, transport and investments in West Africa. It will also be the forum to identify the root causes of common barriers and how to effectively remove those





barriers to increase intra-regional trade and attain food security considering the economic potential of the region.

## Organizers

The Borderless Alliance (BA) Secretariat and the Cote d'Ivoire National Committee of Borderless and its host institutional partner - the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI-CI) - are the principal organizers of Borderless 2015.

## Logistics

Borderless Alliance will be pleased to offer assistance to any participant before, during and after the conference. The Alliance is informing participants that:

- Simultaneous translation (French/English) will be provided during the proceedings of the conference;
- All conference materials will be available in French and English;
- Information on the conference will be regularly updated on the website of the Alliance;
- A meet and greet service at the airport and onward transfer to hotels will be provided by the organizers.

## Conference Registration and Sponsorship

The conference offers sponsorship opportunities for companies (members and non-members) seeking to promote their products and services to stakeholders from across the region. For more information contact the Secretariat or Mr. Noel Kossonou on the following:

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