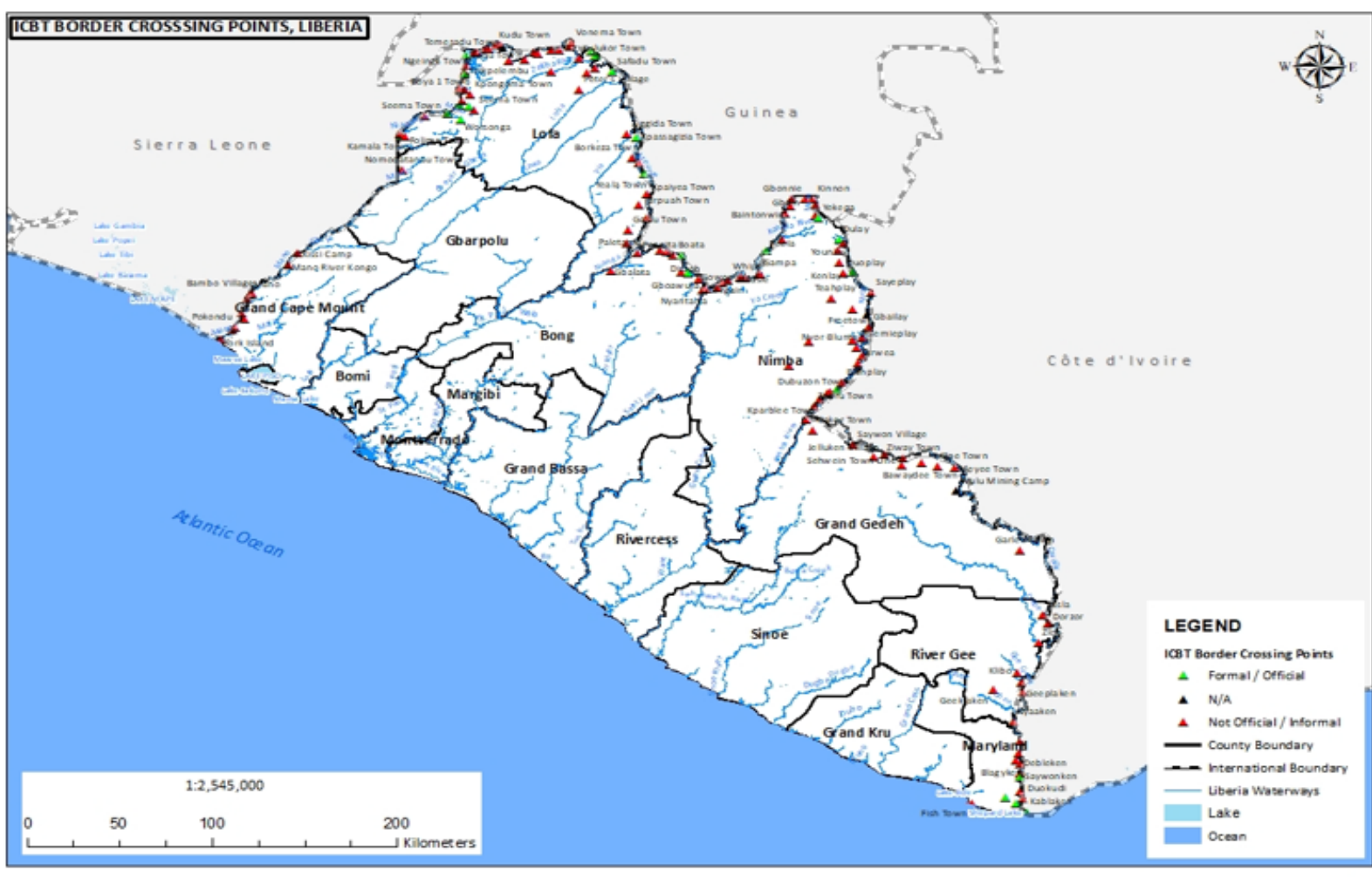# LIBERIA INFORMAL CROSS BORDER TRADE

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SURVEY REPORT

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Preface

The Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) is pleased to present the inaugural **Informal Cross-Border Trade (ICBT) Survey Report**, a groundbreaking statistical endeavor that seeks to illuminate a vital yet often overlooked segment of the Liberian economy. For decades, informal cross-border trade has sustained the livelihoods of countless Liberians—especially women and smallholder traders—while contributing meaningfully to household income, regional food security, and cross-border commerce. Yet, the scale, value, and dynamics of this trade have remained statistically invisible, excluded from national accounts, trade balances, and economic planning.

This report marks a pivotal step toward bridging that data gap. Conducted under the Harmonizing and Improving Statistics in West Africa (HISWA) Project, the ICBT Survey was meticulously designed and implemented by LISGIS with invaluable support from national and regional stakeholders. The survey captured real-time data on unrecorded trade flows across 197 border points along Liberia's frontiers with Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire. It sheds light on the nature, volume, direction, and value of informal trade activities and offers nuanced insights into gender participation, commodity structures, and seasonal trade patterns.

The findings in this report are more than statistics—they are a reflection of lived economic realities and a call to integrate the informal trade into the national development narrative. The report also provides critical evidence for policy formulation in areas such as trade facilitation, customs modernization, poverty alleviation, and regional integration. It contributes to Liberia's efforts to meet its obligations under the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), while also advancing the country's commitment to data-driven governance.

LISGIS expresses its deepest gratitude to the field enumerators, border communities, institutional partners, and members of the Technical Committee whose tireless contributions made this survey possible. Special acknowledgment is extended to the Liberia Revenue Authority, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Central Bank of Liberia, Liberia Immigration Service and the ECOWAS Commission for their technical support and strategic cooperation throughout the process.

This report stands as a testament to Liberia's commitment to statistical excellence, regional collaboration, and inclusive economic development. It is our hope that the evidence presented herein will inspire action, inform reform, and deepen appreciation for the indispensable role that informal trade plays in the socio-economic fabric of Liberia.

Mr. Richard F. Ngafuan
Director General
Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS)

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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Meaning
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
BIVAC	Bureau Veritas Inspection, Valuation, Assessment and Control
CBL	Central Bank of Liberia
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
HISWA	Harmonizing and Improving Statistics in West Africa
HS Codes	Harmonized System Codes
ICBT	Informal Cross-Border Trade
LIS	Liberia Immigration Service
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services
LPRC	Liberia Petroleum Refinery Corporation
LRA	Liberia Revenue Authority
MME	Ministry of Mines and Energy
MOCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industry
SGS	Société Générale de Surveillance
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
FOB	Free On Board
CIF	Cost Insurance and Freight
BOT	Balance Of Trade
ICBT	Informal Cross-Border Trade

Executive Summary

The Informal Cross-Border Trade (ICBT) Survey, conducted by the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) with support from the Harmonizing and Improving Statistics in West Africa (HISWA) Project, represents Liberia's effort to measure the scope and dynamics of unrecorded trade across its borders. Informal trade, though undocumented in official systems, has long served as a lifeline for border communities in facilitating food security, income generation, and regional integration. Yet, its absence from national trade statistics has hindered effective policy formulation, and economic planning.

The ICBT Survey was designed to fill this data gap. Using a quantitative methods approach, LISGIS deployed trained enumerators across 197 identified informal border points to document the flow of goods entering and exiting the country outside the formal customs regime. Data was collected daily between 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM over a month period, employing digital tools and structured questionnaires to ensure quality and accuracy.

A purposive sampling approach was adopted. The border points were pre-identified based on prior mapping exercises, local knowledge, and institutional collaboration with the Liberia Revenue Authority and other border agencies. Sample size was driven by the observed intensity of informal transactions at these points rather than statistical randomization, aligning with international best practices for trade enumeration in high-mobility environments.

The survey captured data on a wide array of commodities—including agricultural products, textiles, petroleum products, manufactured goods, and livestock. Transactions were valued using internationally accepted FOB and CIF methods for exports and imports respectively. Disaggregation by sex, mode of transport, country of origin/destination, and time of transaction enabled a multidimensional analysis of informal trade patterns. The findings confirm that women dominate informal trade across most border points, and that small-scale trade, though fragmented, aggregates into volumes of significant economic value.

Key findings include:

- A substantial volume of informal exports and imports, often eclipsing formal trade in some border corridors;
- High concentration of female traders, particularly in agricultural and household commodities;
- Predominance of trade with Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone, aligned with cultural and geographic proximities;
- Evidence of price discrepancies and unrecorded tax leakages due to informal routing;
- Seasonal shifts in traded commodities, with perishables dominating during the dry season.

The report recommends enhancing Liberia's trade data architecture by institutionalizing ICBT surveys on a regular basis, integrating informal trade data into national database, and designing gender-sensitive trade interventions. It further calls for capacity building of customs personnel, wider coverage of customs points, expanded use of digital data tools, and regional coordination mechanisms to harmonize methodologies and shared best practices.

The ICBT Survey is not merely a statistical exercise, it is a governance tool. It reflects Liberia's commitment to inclusive growth, economic transparency, and regional integration. By quantifying the invisible, the country takes a bold step toward evidence-based trade governance that reflects the lived realities of its citizens.

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the Informal Cross Border Trade (ICBT) Survey, providing a comprehensive overview of its background, rationale, objectives, institutional structure, scope, methodological underpinnings, and the organization of the report. The ICBT Survey represents a critical step in Liberia's pursuit of comprehensive trade statistics by capturing unrecorded trade flows across its borders. These flows have long supported livelihoods, facilitated regional integration, and contributed to the national economy, yet remain underrepresented in official data. The chapter sets the stage for understanding the strategic importance of informal trade in national development and highlights the pressing need for its integration into mainstream statistical frameworks.

1.1 Background and Context

Informal cross-border trade (ICBT) constitutes a significant component of Liberia's economic activity, particularly among border communities. It involves the exchange of goods and services across national boundaries outside the formal regulatory and customs frameworks (Afrika & Ajumbo, 2012). For many Liberians, especially women and small-scale traders, ICBT serves as a principal source of livelihood, employment, and food security. The informal nature of these transactions makes them dynamic and responsive to market needs but also renders them largely invisible to formal trade statistics.

Despite its widespread presence, ICBT remains statistically elusive. Transactions are typically unregistered, bypassing customs systems and formal documentation. Consequently, official trade figures often fail to capture the full magnitude of cross-border economic exchanges, undermining the reliability of Liberia's national accounts, foreign trade statistics, and balance of payments data (Golub, 2015). This invisibility impairs policymakers' ability to make evidence-based decisions that enhance trade efficiency, promote regional integration, and reduce poverty.

In many rural and semi-urban areas, ICBT represents more than a livelihood strategy—it is a means of survival. For traders facing exclusion from formal employment or commercial networks, informal trade offers a relatively accessible pathway to income generation. Goods traded informally range from agricultural produce and foodstuffs to textiles, electronics, and fuel, demonstrating the sector's diversity and economic relevance (World Bank, 2020).

The absence of reliable statistics not only weakens national planning but also diminishes Liberia's negotiating power in regional forums.

In recognition of these challenges, the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), with support from the Harmonizing and Improving Statistics in West Africa (HISWA) Project, initiated the ICBT

Survey. This initiative aims to quantify the volume, value, and composition of goods traded informally at selected border points and to analyze trade patterns, trader characteristics, and trade dynamics.

The ICBT Survey marks a strategic investment in statistical development and trade governance. It positions Liberia to strengthen its trade data ecosystem, enhance fiscal policy, and support marginalized trading populations through informed policy formulation. It also affirms Liberia's commitment to evidence-based development planning and regional collaboration. The success of the ICBT Survey is a testament to the country's willingness to expand the boundaries of its statistical capacity and embrace inclusive economic metrics.

1.2   Objectives of the Survey

1.2.1   General Objective

The overarching goal of the ICBT Survey is to generate reliable, timely, and disaggregated data on informal cross-border trade between Liberia and its neighboring countries. This data is essential for improving the coverage of international merchandise trade statistics and for informing economic policy, planning, and regional cooperation.

1.2.2   Specific Objectives

- Identify the nature and composition of goods transacted under informal cross border trade;
- Determine the direction of trade flows by country of origin and destination;
- Estimate the volume and value of informal cross-border trade;
- Compare recorded and unrecorded trade flows and compute informal cross-border trade;
- Provide monthly, quarterly, and annual estimates of ICBT for integration into trade and national accounts statistics;
- Understand gender participation in informal trade activities and the challenges faced by women traders;

1.3   Scope and Coverage

The ICBT Survey covers major border points where informal or unrecorded trade by customs is prevalent, in eight border counties, at the entry and exit points. This included trade across formal customs border crossings that is not recorded by customs, as well as trade at border points where customs officers were absent.

Liberia's borders with Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire, data were captures on both inflows and outflows of goods using inform and informal points. These include a wide array of commodities such as agricultural produce (e.g.,

rice, cassava, plantains), livestock, beverages, textiles, household items, petroleum products, and manufactured goods. The classification of goods during the survey period follows the Harmonized System (HS).

Only physical goods were included in the survey's scope. Services and digital trade transactions were explicitly excluded due to methodological and verification limitations. Furthermore, the survey excluded transactions already captured through formal customs declarations or centralized trade documentation. Traders operating under licenses or large-scale commercial traders using formal points also were not the focus of this survey, which aimed to highlight informal, small-scale activities.

The data collection was carried out for a period of one month. Data collection was scheduled to cover a diverse range of trading periods, including weekdays, weekends, and market days to reflect the full rhythm of informal cross border trade. Enumeration teams spent time engaging with community leaders and market authorities to ensure cooperation and secure safe, ethical data collection.

1.4 Institutional Framework and Stakeholder Involvement

LISGIS led the implementation of the ICBT Survey through its Division of Economic Statistics, particularly the Foreign Trade Statistics Section. The planning and execution were supervised by the Principal Statistician for Foreign Trade, with strategic guidance from the Director of Economic Statistics and the Director General. LISGIS's leadership role reinforces the institutionalization of ICBT data collection as a regular component of Liberia national's statistical development.

A multi-agency Technical Committee supports the process, providing technical oversight, validation, and coordination. This committee includes representatives from:

- LISGIS (Statistician General's Office, Economic Statistics Division);
- Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA);
- Central Bank of Liberia (CBL);
- Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI);
- Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME);
- Forestry Development Authority (FDA);
- Liberia Immigration Service (LIS);
- ECOWAS Trade Directorate (providing technical support and regional alignment).

1.5 Justification and Policy Relevance

Capturing the magnitude of ICBT is imperative for robust economic planning and trade governance. Informal cross border trade activities, though individually small, aggregate into substantial volumes that influence national trade balances and fiscal health. The exclusion of such transactions distorts economic indicators, leading to underestimation of GDP, trade performance, and external sector dynamics. Policymakers require nuanced data to craft targeted policies that accommodate both formal and informal economic systems.

Informal Cross-Border Trade (ICBT) plays a vital role in enhancing food availability, generating rural income, and facilitating access to affordable goods across national borders. These functions are particularly important in contexts characterized by constrained formal employment opportunities and limited market integration for smallholders and microenterprises (Afrika & Ajumbo, 2012).

From a policy perspective, the ICBT Survey will help identify border locations where duty leakages and smuggling activities are most prevalent, providing an evidence base for improved customs deployment and risk management. The survey also strengthens Liberia's compliance with regional and international trade protocols by improving the granularity, coverage, and reliability of cross-border trade statistics (World Bank, 2020). Furthermore, the ICBT Survey will inform the design of trade corridors, and strategies to progressively integrate informal cross-border traders into formal. These policy gains are particularly significant given the dominant role of women in Informal Cross-Border Trade across West Africa.

In Liberia, female traders constitute majority of the informal cross-border traders operating informally. Data generated from the ICBT Survey will support the design of targeted interventions to address their specific challenges.

1.6 Structure of the Report

The ICBT Survey Report comprises four chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction – Provides background, rationale, objectives, scope, institutional arrangements, and methodology;
- Chapter 2: Methodology – Expands on sampling strategy, tools, training protocols, logistics, and data quality mechanisms;
- Chapter 3: Data Analysis and Key Findings – Presents statistical insights on trade flows, commodities, trader demographics, and economic value;

2 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodological framework adopted for the Informal Cross-Border Trade (ICBT) Survey in Liberia. It covers the research design, scope of the survey, sample size determination, trade system and valuation methods, selection of survey points, data collection techniques, training of enumerators, data processing and analysis, validation of findings, and limitations encountered.

2.1 Research Design

The ICBT data collection methodology for Liberia was developed in line with internationally recognized practices for measuring informal cross-border trade within the ECOWAS sub-region. The approach primarily employed a quantitative-based framework designed to measure the scale, composition, and movement of informal trade flows across Liberia's land borders.

The methodology entailed systematic identification, mapping, and verification of active border crossing points where informal trade activities are most prevalent. At these locations, trained field officers conducted direct enumeration of trade transactions, capturing data on quantities, estimated values, and trade direction at points of entry and exit. This enabled the measurement of trade volumes and values that are typically excluded from formal administrative records.

To support comprehensive analysis, collected data were classified using key analytical variables, including commodity group, trader sex, mode of transport, trade frequency, and country of origin or destination. This classification framework enhances the understanding of structural patterns and trader participation within informal trade networks.

The data collection process was aligned with the General Trade System (GTS) as prescribed in the *International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS 2010)* framework, ensuring consistency with international statistical standards while accommodating the operational realities of informal trading environments.

Prior to field implementation, pre-field visits were carried out at some data collection points and stakeholder engagements were conducted to adapt the methodology to Liberia's specific border conditions, and security considerations. These preparatory activities strengthened the relevance and reliability of the data collection exercise. Furthermore, the cross-sectional framework facilitated coverage of multiple

counties simultaneously, optimizing time and resources.

2.2 Sample Size Determination

The sample for the ICBT Survey was purposively determined based on observed informal trade activity at identified border locations. Since the universe of informal trade is not fixed or fully documented, probability-based sampling was not feasible. Instead, LISGIS relied on prior mapping, field reconnaissance, and consultations with border officials to identify high-traffic ICBT points.

A total of 197 border locations were purposively selected across Liberia's borders with Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire. These included footpaths, trails, informal market zones, and lightly monitored customs corridors. Within these points, trade observations were guided by the volume of recorded informal transactions. Enumerators documented every qualifying trade exchange during active hours at each location, effectively generating a census of observable ICBT transactions within the survey period. The final number of captured trade events reflects the totality of valid informal transactions observed—not a pre-fixed numerical sample size, but a dynamic enumeration outcome informed by field realities.

2.3 Methodological Overview

The ICBT Survey adopted quantitative methods approach. The methodology drew upon the ICBT Guidelines and was customized to the Liberian context in consultation with technical experts and stakeholders.

Enumerators were stationed at both designated official and unofficial border crossing points. Using digital tablets equipped with CSEntry, they recorded real-time transactions, noting the type of commodity, volume, value, trader profile (e.g., sex, nationality), and direction of movement. Observation was complemented by short interviews with traders to capture nuances in pricing, origin, and purpose of the goods.

The survey used a point-based time-bound enumeration technique. Each observation point was monitored over a fixed number of hours per day, across multiple days of the week. This structure allowed for standardization while capturing temporal variations. Weekends, local market days, and holidays were deliberately included to ensure representativeness.

Enumerators underwent intensive training on ethical protocols, HS code interpretation, digital tool usage, and communication with often wary traders.

Quality assurance mechanisms were rigorous. Field supervisors conducted spot-checks, reviewed data submissions daily, and provided on-site corrections. Daily synchronization of data ensured centralized oversight. At headquarters, a technical team cleaned and validated the data using STATA, applying filters

to correct errors, remove duplicates, and harmonize coding.

The final dataset permitted multidimensional analysis. Variables were disaggregated by location, gender, commodity type, direction of trade, and value band. This granularity offers a powerful tool for trade diagnostics, cross-border planning, and socio-economic analysis. It also enhances Liberia's capacity to engage in data-driven diplomacy and to meet international reporting standards.

2.4 Scope of the Survey

The ICBT Survey was designed to provide comprehensive and reliable data on unrecorded trade flows occurring at informal border crossings between Liberia and its neighboring countries—Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire. The survey focused on capturing both imports and exports that are not recorded in official trade statistics.

Data collection was conducted at 197 informal trade points identified along the country's borders. These points were selected based on their significance in facilitating cross-border trade and the volume of trade activities observed. The survey focused on key commodities commonly traded informally, including agricultural products, manufactured goods, textiles, and essential consumer goods. Data collection was carried out daily from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, allowing enumerators to document trade flows during peak trading hours. Night-time trade activities were not covered due to security risks and logistical constraints.

To ensure data accuracy, enumerators were tasked with directly observing and monitoring trade activities at these border points. They recorded information on the type, quantity, estimated value, country of origin or destination, and mode of transport of goods crossing the border. Where available, invoices and receipts were used to determine the value of the commodities. In cases where traders did not provide official documentation, values were obtained through direct inquiries. Goods were weighed where necessary to verify their volumes and cross-check reported figures.

2.5 Trade System and Valuation

The survey adopted the General Trade System (GTS) for compiling International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS). Under this system, all goods are recorded at the customs frontier, whether they are formally declared or not. Given that informal trade often bypasses official customs controls, the survey ensured that all merchandise entering or leaving the country in small or large quantities—but not recorded by customs—was documented.

Trade valuation followed standard international principles. Informal exports were valued using the Free-on-Board (FOB) method, which accounts for the price of goods at the point of

departure from Liberia, excluding shipping and insurance costs. Imports, on the other hand, were valued using the Cost, Insurance, and Freight (CIF) method, which includes transportation and insurance costs up to the destination point.

Traders were required to provide pricing information, and where invoices, receipts, or price tags were available, these documents were used to establish trade values. In cases where documentation was absent, prices were obtained directly from traders through interviews. Large consignments were valued based on wholesale prices, while smaller transactions were assigned retail prices. In instances where volumes could not be verified, enumerators relied on weight measurements to estimate quantities.

Goods passing through formal border posts but not declared to customs were also recorded, ensuring that the trade was captured. However, transit goods, smuggled goods, and transactions occurring outside the official survey hours were excluded from the dataset.

2.6   Selection of ICBT Points

The selection of informal trade points was a collaborative effort involving the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS), the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA), and the Liberia Immigration Service (LIS). The 197 trade points identified for the survey were mapped and categorized by county, district, and clan to ensure effective coverage. These locations were identified based on historical trade patterns, observations from prior field studies, and recommendations from local trade associations.

During the survey period, additional informal crossing points were discovered and incorporated into the data collection framework. These emerging trade hubs were added to ensure the survey reflected the dynamic nature of informal trade, although resource constraints prevented complete coverage of all new locations.

2.7   Data Collection Techniques

Data collection relied on structured questionnaires, direct observation, and digital data capture techniques. Enumerators conducted interviews with traders and transporters, verified invoices where available, and recorded transactions based on real-time observations. Digital tools were used for efficient data entry and transmission to the LISGIS database.

Enumerators were assigned to border points for periods ranging from five to six days, depending on the trade activity at each location. They recorded details on the nature, volume, and value of traded goods, the mode of transport, and the origin or destination of commodities.

To ensure accuracy, all goods leaving or entering the country were weighed where possible, and traders were asked to confirm pricing details. Enumerators uploaded collected

data daily to the LISGIS central database using CSEntry software. Data validation checks were conducted in real-time to identify and correct potential inconsistencies.

2.8 Training of Trainers and Enumerators

A total of 96 field staff were recruited for the survey, including 72 enumerators, 24 supervisors, and 12 monitors/facilitators. Prior to deployment, all personnel underwent comprehensive training on the concepts, methodology, and data collection techniques of the ICBT survey.

The training covered key areas such as the use of survey instruments, estimation of traded quantities and values, and trade classification methods. Special emphasis was placed on handling inconsistencies in trader responses, conducting price verification, and ensuring adherence to international trade standards.

To reinforce theoretical training, participants engaged in simulation exercises, allowing them to practice using the data collection tools in realistic field scenarios before being assigned to their respective locations.

2.9 Data Processing and Analysis

Following data collection, processing and analysis were conducted based on international trade standards and methodologies. The ICBT data was downloaded from the CSWeb and exported to SPSS and STATA for cleaning and statistical analysis.

Data validation involved identifying and correcting errors, ensuring consistency across trade records, and adjusting figures where necessary. Comparative analyses were conducted to assess the relationship between recorded and unrecorded trade flows, providing deeper insights into the volume and economic significance of informal trade cross border.

The results were structured into tables, charts, and analytical indicators, ensuring that the findings aligned with internationally recognized trade reporting frameworks.

2.10 Validation of Results and Findings

Upon completion of the data analysis, a technical validation process was undertaken. The Technical Committee, comprising representatives from trade-related institutions, conducted a thorough review of the results. A stakeholder workshop was organized to present the findings, allowing experts to provide feedback and recommendations.

The feedback from these validation exercises was incorporated into the final survey report, ensuring the credibility and reliability of the findings.

2.11 Limitations of the Survey

Despite its rigorous methodology, the ICBT survey encountered several challenges. One of the major limitations was the exclusion of night-time trade activities, which may have resulted in underestimation of actual trade volumes. This limitation was necessary due to security concerns and logistical constraints in conducting data collection during the night.

Another challenge was the incomplete coverage of newly identified trade points. Due to resource constraints, enumerators were unable to visit all emerging informal crossings. Additionally, some listed trade points were found to be non-operational, meaning no data was collected from those locations.

The survey also faced logistical and transportation difficulties, especially in remote areas with poor road infrastructure. Enumerators struggled to access certain border points, affecting the completeness of the dataset. In some cases, traders refused to disclose price information, requiring reliance on market price estimations.

Despite these challenges, the survey remains a landmark effort in quantifying informal trade in Liberia, and its findings will contribute significantly to policy formulation and economic planning.

Other Challenges:

- The total data collection period of 26 days was inadequate to fully capture the diversity and volume of informal cross-border trade activities across all designated ICBT points nationwide.

Gaps in Data Reporting:

- Incomplete trader cooperation: Some traders withheld pricing information, affecting data accuracy.

Mitigation Measures:

Future surveys should consider increased field deployment duration and night-time data collection strategies to address these gaps.

3 SURVEY RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the Informal Cross-Border Trade (ICBT) Survey conducted in Liberia in December 2024. It provides a comprehensive quantitative assessment of unrecorded trade flows—highlighting trade values, comparative analyses with formal trade, trade balances, directionality, commodity structures, and modes of transport across ICBT points. The analysis addresses a persistent gap in Liberia's trade statistics by illuminating informal trade patterns historically

excluded from official accounts—patterns that are vital for informed economic planning, revenue mobilization, and regional integration (World Bank, 2020; FAO, 2021). In addition, this chapter explores the demographic composition of traders—including gender and age—as well as the frequency of transactions at major border crossings in all ICBT points (8 Counties bordering 3 Countries), and the nationalities of participating traders. These elements are crucial for designing inclusive trade policies and for contextualizing the demographic and spatial dimensions of informal trade (ILO, 2020; Brenton & Gamberoni, 2013). Informal cross-border trade constitutes a critical component of Liberia's economic fabric. It facilitates the movement of essential goods, provides livelihood opportunities for small-scale traders, and fosters regional commercial ties. Across the African continent, ICBT accounts for approximately 43% of livelihoods and represents up to 40% of intra-African trade volumes (African Development Bank, 2012). Despite its importance, the absence of ICBT data in formal trade reporting contributes to substantial underestimation of national trade flows (African Development Bank, 2012; ECOWAS, 2012). This chapter brings these dynamics to the forefront by analyzing trade volumes, estimated values, commodity classifications, and logistical pathways.

The survey establishes a national ICBT trade value benchmark for December 2024, serving as a pivotal reference for ongoing policy dialogue. It compares informal and formal trade flows, assesses import-export balances within both systems, and evaluates the informal sector's contribution to Liberia's net trade position—a phenomenon also observed across the West African subregion (Garlińska-Bielawska, 2022). Additionally, this chapter investigates trade directionality, mapping the flow of goods between Liberia and its neighboring countries. Within the ECOWAS zone, cross-border exchanges are frequently shaped by geographical proximity, shared ethnic affiliations, and market-driven arbitrage (Garlińska-Bielawska, 2022). Disaggregated analyses at the county and crossing-point levels underscore regional concentrations of informal trade activity.

The composition of traded commodities is another area of focus. Identifying the most frequently exchanged goods sheds light on food security dynamics, supply chain vulnerabilities, and revenue implications. The analysis further considers transport modes—including foot travel, motorcycles, motor vehicles, boats, and carts—and their role in shaping accessibility, mobility, and logistical efficiency.

In conclusion, the findings presented in this chapter provide invaluable evidence to support national planning and trade governance. Integrating informal trade into Liberia's economic reporting frameworks is essential for enhancing statistical completeness, optimizing fiscal strategies, and promoting inclusive growth.

3.1 Social and Demographic Profile of Informal Cross-Border Traders

The Informal Cross-Border Trade (ICBT) Survey conducted in December 2024 captured the socio-demographic characteristics of 9,150 traders operating across Liberia's major border entry points. This profile provides critical insight into the composition of the workforce engaged in informal trade, with direct implications for gender-responsive policymaking, targeted capacity-building, employment generation, and regional development planning. Understanding who participates in ICBT helps to tailor interventions that strengthen livelihoods, improve regional integration strategies, and support inclusive economic growth.

3.1.1 Gender Distribution

The gender distribution among ICBT traders is nearly balanced, with males constituting 50.1% (n = 4,584) and females 49.9% (n = 4,566) of the surveyed population. This near parity mirrors

regional patterns in Sub-Saharan Africa, where women frequently dominate informal market systems, particularly in sectors like foodstuffs and small-scale agriculture (Brenton & Gamberoni, 2013). The data underscore that informal trade in Liberia is not a gender-skewed occupation but rather a shared economic strategy across sexes. This gender equity highlights the importance of implementing supportive measures that equally benefit both male and female traders.

Figure 1: Gender Distribution of Traders and Transporters
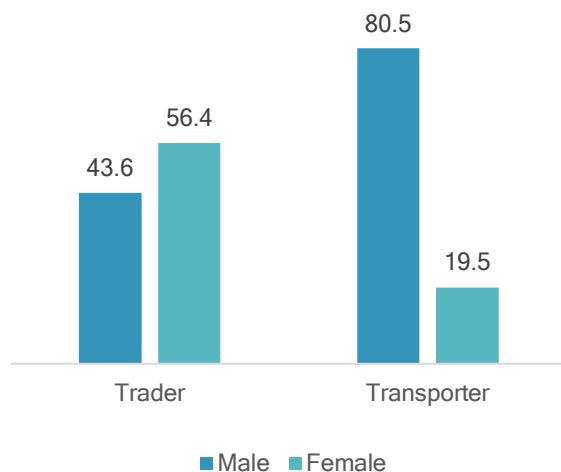
Source: LISGIS ICBT Survey, 2024

3.1.2   Age Structure

An analysis of the age structure shows that the majority of informal cross border traders are within the economically productive age bracket of 25–44 years. Specifically, 32.2% fall between the ages of 25 and 34, while 35.3% are aged 35–44. This concentration around prime working

years reflects the income-generating nature of informal cross border trade. Adolescents and young adults (15–24) constitute 10.7%, which suggests some youth participation though they may face hurdles such as access to start-up capital or movement restrictions. Traders aged 45–54 make up 17.2%, followed by smaller percentages in older age groups: 55–64 (3.7%), 65–74 (0.8%), and 75+ (0.2%). These statistics confirm that informal cross border trade in Liberia is driven predominantly by those in their prime working years, a pattern consistent with broader regional trends (FAO, 2021).

3.1.3   County Level Participation

County-level representation shows a pronounced concentration in Lofa County, which accounts for 51.0% (n = 4,664) of all traders. Nimba County follows with 31.0% (n = 2,837), collectively representing over 80% of the total informal trade activity observed. These counties serve as key corridors for unrecorded trade due to their strategic proximity to Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, porous borders, and familial or ethnic connections that ease commerce (Garlińska-Bielawska, 2022). Grand Cape Mount (6.4%) and Bong (3.5%) also contribute to informal cross border trade activity, while smaller shares are recorded in Maryland (2.2%), River Gee (1.4%), and Gbarpolu (1.1%).

This uneven distribution of trader presence across Liberia's counties indicates both

opportunity and disparity. Low participation in places like River Gee, Maryland, and Gbarpolu may be due to underdeveloped transport infrastructure, weak institutional presence, or security concerns—areas requiring targeted policy interventions. Investments in cross-border infrastructure, trade facilitation measures, and inclusive trade policy frameworks could catalyze increased activity in underrepresented zones.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Traders, ICBT Survey 2024

	Count	Column N %
Trader Gender		
Male	4584	50.1
Female	4566	49.9
Total	9150	100.0
Age group		
15-24	977	10.7
25-34	2944	32.2
35-44	3227	35.3
45-54	1577	17.2
55-64	334	3.7
65-74	74	0.8
75+	17	0.2
Total	9150	100.0
County		
Bong	316	3.5
Grand Cape mount	590	6.4
Grand Gedeh	316	3.5
Lofa	4664	51.0
Maryland	197	2.2
Nimba	2837	31.0
River Gee	128	1.4
Gbarpolu	102	1.1
Total	9150	100.0

Source: LISGIS ICBT Survey, 2024

The socio-demographic landscape of informal cross-border trade in Liberia reflects a workforce that is young, gender-inclusive, and geographically clustered in a few dominant trade hubs. These insights are crucial for the design of nuanced and effective strategies to formalize, support, and enhance the ICBT sector. Such evidence-based approaches can drive national efforts to integrate informal trade into Liberia's broader economic and developmental agenda.

3.1.4 Nationality of Informal Cross Border Traders

The nationality breakdown of informal cross-border traders reveals that the vast majority are Liberian nationals, comprising 70.2% (n = 6,419) of the total survey population. This strong domestic presence underscores the pivotal role that ICBT plays in sustaining livelihoods within Liberia, particularly across rural and peri-urban communities along the country's borders, where formal employment opportunities remain limited or inconsistent. The heavy participation of Liberians in informal trade activities reflects the economic reliance on trade-driven self-employment and microenterprise development.

Figure 2: Nationality of Traders
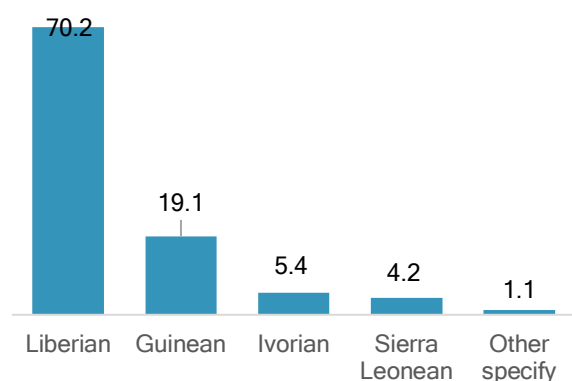
Source: LISGIS ICBT Survey, 2024

However, the data also illustrate the highly transnational nature of informal cross border trade occurring along Liberia's frontiers. Guinean traders account for 19.1% of participants, while Ivorian and Sierra Leonean nationals represent 5.4% and 4.2%, respectively. This configuration reflects the fluid and interactive nature of West Africa's borders, where socio-cultural, linguistic, and economic networks frequently override rigid geopolitical demarcations. Such dynamics are emblematic of long-standing intercommunity exchange systems that predate colonial-era borders and continue to define commercial mobility across the subregion.

Notably, a smaller group 1.1% of the total sample falls under the category labeled 'Other specified,' signifying the participation of traders

from countries beyond Liberia's immediate neighbors. Within this group (n = 101), a striking 85.1% (n = 86) identify as Burkinabe nationals. This finding is particularly significant given Burkina Faso's lack of a contiguous border with Liberia. It suggests the existence of trade corridors linking Sahelian economies to coastal markets via complex re-export chains and shared commercial interest zones.

Additionally, Ghanaian nationals constitute the second largest contingent within the 'Other specified' group, accounting for 8.9% (n = 9), followed by a single trader from Mali. Though modest in number, these participants reinforce the breadth of West Africa's informal trade networks. The presence of non-bordering nationals within Liberia's ICBT landscape highlights both the commercial magnetism of Liberian border markets and the operational influence of sub-regional frameworks such as the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment.

These findings have far-reaching policy implications. They underscore the necessity for Liberia to deepen its participation in regional trade facilitation dialogues, especially within ECOWAS and under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) framework. Policies aimed at simplifying border crossing

procedures, harmonizing customs regimes, and supporting the legal mobility of traders must reflect the lived realities of cross-border actors. The rich cross-national representation among informal traders in Liberia affirms the urgency of coherent, inclusive, and forward-looking trade governance in the region.

3.2 Commodity Distribution ICBT Transactions

The Informal Cross Border Trade (ICBT) Survey conducted by the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) provides an empirical window into the dynamics of unrecorded commodity flows across Liberia's borders. Drawing from 9,150 trade observations collected between 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM daily at 197 informal crossing points, this chapter analyzes the frequency distribution of commodities transacted. Emphasis is placed on the top 10 most frequently traded commodities, which collectively constitute the backbone of Liberia's informal cross-border trade landscape.

3.2.1 Top 10 Commodities Trade Informally

The ten most commonly traded commodities ranked by frequency are presented in Table 1. Together, these categories account for 66.5% of all informal trade transactions recorded during the survey period.

Table 2: Top 10 Commodities Traded Informally Across Liberia's Borders (N = 5,824)

Commodity Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Fruit, nuts, citrus peel	1,097	12.0
Fats and oils	820	9.0
Beverages, spirits, vinegar	732	8.0
Cocoa and preparations	710	7.8
Cereals	659	7.2
Fish and crustaceans	493	5.4
Vegetables, roots, tubers	403	4.4
Coffee, tea, spices	350	3.8
Oil seeds, grains, fruits	297	3.2
Live animals	263	2.9

Source: LISGIS ICBT Survey, 2024

3.2.2 Analysis of Key Commodities

Fruit, Nuts, and Citrus Peel

The category "fruit, nuts, citrus peel" (HS Codes 0801–0814) accounted for the highest share of trade events (12%). These products ranging from plantains and bananas to kola nuts are highly perishable and seasonally driven. Their dominance reflects high regional demand, short-cycle trade loops, and the absence of cold chain infrastructure (International Trade Centre [ITC], 2021). Informal routes allow traders to quickly offload perishable stock without delays associated with formal customs procedures.

Implication: Investment in agro-logistics, particularly cold storage and trans-border aggregation centers, could enhance the value

chain while preserving food quality and reducing losses (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2022).

Fats and Oils

Ranking second (9.0%), the fats and oils category is led by palm oil—Liberia's most ubiquitously consumed edible oil. Traded in jerry cans and drums, palm oil movements are typically small-scale and woman-led. The informality arises from limited market standardization, rudimentary packaging, and border transaction costs. These structural inefficiencies discourage formalization, particularly among women producers operating on low margins.

Implication: Formalization efforts must be gender-sensitive, leveraging cooperatives and regional standards harmonization to ease border transactions (African Union Commission, 2021).

Beverages, Spirits, and Vinegar

Accounting for 8.0% of informal flows, alcoholic beverages and soft drinks are imported predominantly from Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. Due to high excise duties and weak enforcement, the beverage market has become dualized—split between licensed importers and informal entrants. Informal beverage flows are high-volume and low-regulation, frequently tied to social consumption and local hospitality enterprises.

Implication: Governments should explore a tax reform that balances revenue needs with small trader compliance thresholds, enabling voluntary transition into formal trade channels (World Bank, 2020).

Cocoa and Preparations

With 710 observations (7.8%), cocoa beans and derivatives underscore Liberia's position in the regional cocoa corridor. Most cocoa is informally exported to Côte d'Ivoire, bypassing traceability systems and depriving Liberian producers of access to certification-linked premiums. The informal routing also limits national foreign exchange earnings from this high-value commodity.

Implication: The establishment of a certified traceability framework would enhance cocoa sector integrity and unlock premium markets under the EU's anti-deforestation regulation (European Commission, 2023).

Cereals

Cereals (7.2%) form a critical buffer in the regional food supply chain. Informal rice and maize flows mirror regional food price disparities and seasonal yield variations. Cross-border cereal trade increases during lean seasons, compensating for localized deficits. The high informality rate reflects weak

institutional presence at minor border crossings and the small size of cereal consignments.

Implication: National food security strategies should account for informal cereal movements in their vulnerability assessments and early warning systems (ECOWAS, 2019).

Fish and Crustaceans

Fish products (5.4%), particularly dried and smoked fish, are exchanged extensively in Liberia's borderland markets. These goods are light, high-value, and easily concealed, making them ideal for informal transport. The informality is exacerbated by weak fisheries governance, absence of standardized handling procedures, and long value chains dominated by women.

Implication: Investment in cross-border fisheries infrastructure (drying racks, sanitary transport, regional branding) could improve both market access and public health outcomes (FAO, 2022).

Vegetables, Roots, and Tubers

Vegetable flows such as cassava, yam, peppers accounted for 4.4% of observed trade. They are typically traded in small quantities by borderland farmers, often within community-level barter or rotating credit arrangements. Their inclusion in informal trade underlines the hybrid nature of border economies, where formal currency use is intermittent and transactional trust networks dominate.

Implication: Policymakers must recognize the hybrid barter-cash economies at play, and align regional trade facilitation tools with the realities of border community livelihoods (African Development Bank [AfDB], 2021).

Coffee, Tea, and Spices

Coffee and traditional spices made up 3.8% of the total transactions. The data point to a surviving legacy of smallholder coffee cultivation, especially in Lofa and Nimba counties. However, informal exportation prevents traceability, quality certification, and revenue capture at the national level.

Implication: Reviving coffee cooperatives with market-linked training and export support would reduce leakages and elevate Liberia's standing in regional specialty coffee circuits.

Oil Seeds, Grains, and Fruits

This category accounted for 3.2% of all trade observations. Groundnuts and sesame seeds are commonly exchanged between farming households and petty traders. Their informality is a symptom of under-aggregation and low access to certified warehousing or bulk market intermediaries.

Implication: National agricultural extension strategies should prioritize aggregation mechanisms and standardized warehousing for oilseeds, paired with price support mechanisms.

Live Animals

Finally, the live animals' category (2.9%) is dominated by the informal movement of goats, sheep, and poultry. Trade spikes during religious holidays and community festivals, underscoring cultural drivers of informal movement. The absence of veterinary inspection and sanitary clearance for these goods poses zoonotic risk to both traders and consumers.

Implication: Cross-border harmonization of veterinary protocols and mobile animal health units are vital for mitigating epidemiological risk without disrupting trade.
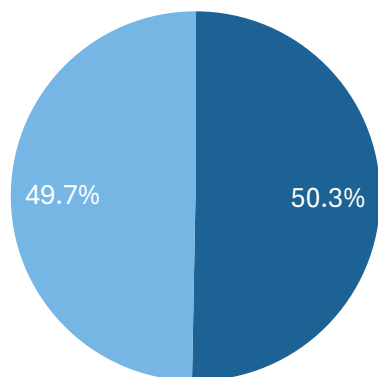
3.3 Direction of Informal Cross Border Trade Flows

The ICBT Survey recorded an almost even distribution between informal exports (50.3%) and informal imports (49.7%), suggesting a relatively balanced pattern of cross-border exchange. This equilibrium in trade flow reflects the bi-directional vibrancy of Liberia's border economy and the interdependence of trading communities across national boundaries.

Figure 3: Percent Distribution of Informal Cross Border Trade Flows

Source: LISGIS ICBT Survey, 2024

A total of 4,604 transactions were recorded as exports, while 4,546 were imports, out of a combined dataset of 9,150 transactions. The marginal lead in exports (58 cases more than imports) may be attributable to Liberia's comparative advantage in certain goods, such as agricultural produce, charcoal, cassava, palm oil, smoked fish, and livestock, which are commonly transported to neighboring countries with higher demand.

The near parity of trade direction has several important policy implications:

- **Customs Resource Allocation**: It challenges traditional assumptions that informal cross border trade is predominantly import-driven, thus calling for balanced customs surveillance strategies at both exit and entry points.

- **Trade Corridors Planning**: Infrastructure planning (e.g., road access, inspection zones, warehousing) must be symmetrical to facilitate outbound and inbound flows.

- **Revenue and Compliance Policies**: The data signals potential for duty leakages in both directions, underscoring

the need for risk-based inspection models and informal trader engagement at both ends of the trade chain.

- **Food Security and Household Income**: Exports in the informal sector are often seasonal and agriculturally based, representing an essential income stream for rural producers, while imports may include manufactured goods that sustain affordable household consumption.

This balance also aligns with the principles of regional integration, as espoused under the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), where reciprocal trade benefits are crucial to stability and cooperation.

3.4 Informal Cross Border Trade Value by Flow Type

The December 2024 ICBT Survey in Liberia reveals a stark imbalance: informal imports dominate, totaling USD 3,033,442.60 (M = 667.42), while informal exports amount to USD 1,075,708.16 (M = 233.65), bringing the total informal cross border trade value to USD 4,109,150.76 (M = 449.14).

Table 3: Value of Informal Trade Flow by Type

	Estimated value in USD	
Flow Type		Total Value
Export	$	1,075,708.16
Import	$	3,033,442.60
Total	$	4,109,150.76

This trend mirrors broader African patterns, where imports via informal channels often outweigh exports, driven by demand for manufactured goods and consumer products. The African Development Bank (2012) noted that informal trade sustains about 43% of Africa's population and plays crucial roles in food security and rural incomes. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2022) reported that informal cross-border trade accounts for 7–16% of total intra-African trade, and up to 30–72% between neighboring countries.

The import-heavy orientation of Liberia's informal cross border trade has important policy ramifications. High informal import values represent substantial lost customs revenue and potential foreign exchange leakage, undermining macroeconomic stability and trade policy objectives. Additionally, the influx of low-cost informal imports can suppress local production, particularly in agriculture and light industry, echoing observed challenges within

ECOWAS markets (Trade Union ICBT Advocacy in Africa, 2025).

Addressing this imbalance will require targeted interventions. Strengthening border data systems aligns with AU/UNECA guidelines, enhancing inclusion in national accounts and

INFORMAL CROSS BORDER TRADE EXPORTS BY COUNTRY OF DESTINATION
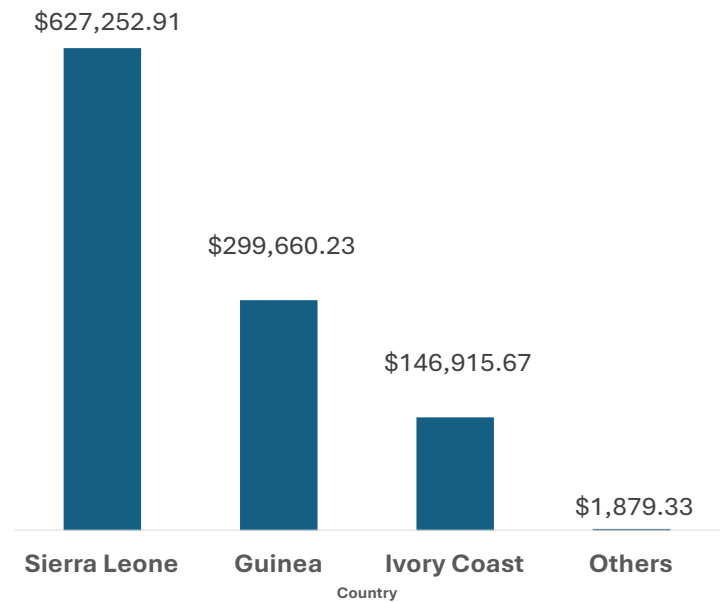
balance of payments. Upgrading border infrastructure and simplifying informal trade regimes can support both regulation and livelihoods. Furthermore, interventions to support informal exporters, primarily agricultural actors through aggregation, value addition, and formalization pathways will be essential.

3.5 Liberia's ICBT Exports by Destination

Informal cross-border trade (ICBT) constitutes a component of Liberia's economic landscape, particularly in its transactions with neighboring ECOWAS countries. From

INFORMAL BORDER TRADE IMPORTS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
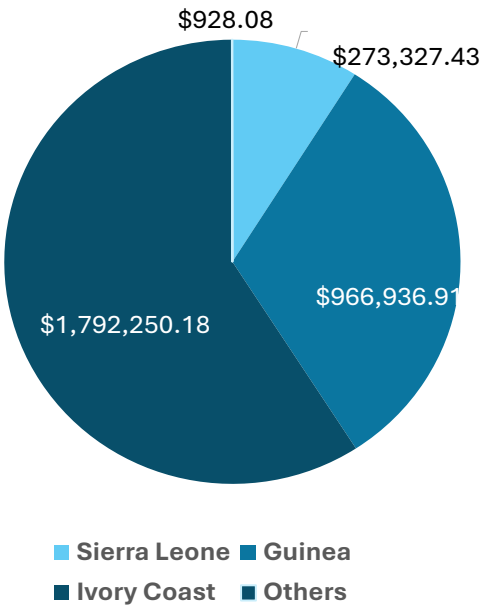
Over a 26 days period from November to December 2024, Liberia's estimated total informal export flows reached approximately USD 1,075,708.16.

Informal cross-border trade (ICBT) between Liberia and Sierra Leone continues to serve as a vital, albeit under documented, channel of economic interaction. The data reveal that the total informal exports from Liberia to Sierra Leone between November and December, 2024 were valued at USD 627,252.91, accounting for

an estimated 58.3% of Liberia's informal exports to neighboring countries (LISGIS, 2024).

Conversely, Sierra Leone's *Informal Cross ICBT Survey Report 2024* recorded informal imports from Liberia totaling NLe 545,534 (Statistics Sierra Leone, 2024). Applying the official exchange rate of NLe 20.00 to USD 1.00 as published by the Bank of Sierra Leone in July 2024, this figure converts to approximately USD 27,276.70. This presents a sharp asymmetry—Liberia reports exporting goods worth over USD 627,000, while Sierra Leone records receiving under USD 30,000 in corresponding imports.

This significant discrepancy may result from differences in border enumeration intensity, timing of data capture, or reporting accuracy. Liberia's survey, for instance, employed Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) and conducted weekly price and quantity monitoring, especially at high-traffic border points like Bo Waterside, Gbarma, and Jendema. Sierra Leone's data, though methodologically aligned with ECOWAS recommendations, may reflect under coverage of border posts, reliance on monthly rather than continuous surveillance, or challenges with informal trader disclosure (Statistics Sierra Leone, 2024).

Guinea ranked as the second-largest destination, receiving informal exports valued at USD 299,660.23, representing 27.9 percent of the total. This is reflective of robust trade activity in Liberia's northern corridor, particularly in Lofa and Nimba Counties, where small-scale traders engage in cross-border commerce driven by proximity and community-based networks. Ivory Coast received an estimated USD 146,915.67 (13.7 percent), with goods typically channeled through the Toe Town and Buutuo border posts. These exports likely consist of a mix of agricultural produce, manufactured household items, and fast-moving consumer goods. A small residual category labeled "Other of the commodity" accounted for USD 1,879.33 (0.2 percent).

The data reveal a pronounced concentration of trade within the Mano River Union corridor, as Sierra Leone and Guinea together account for more than 86 percent of Liberia's informal exports. This geographic pattern highlights the need for focused investment in border infrastructure and the harmonization of customs and trade facilitation mechanisms along these routes. From a policy standpoint, the findings underscore the significance of informal trade in supporting livelihoods, particularly for women and youth engaged in petty trading. However, they also point to a major gap in revenue collection, as a substantial volume of trade flows

remains outside the formal regulatory and taxation systems.

Integrating these trade flows into national accounts would enhance Liberia's economic resilience, improve border governance, and promote inclusive development in line with the ARREST Agenda. Doing so requires innovative approaches that encourage the formalization of small traders, improved data systems to track informal flows, and strengthened bilateral cooperation with neighboring states. As such, the ICBT data serve as both a diagnostic tool and a strategic input for informed policy design in Liberia's evolving trade ecosystem.

3.6 Liberia's ICBT Imports by Country of Origin

Based on data collected during the Informal Cross Border Trade (ICBT) Survey conducted by the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) between November and December 2024, Liberia's informal import structure reveals a regionally concentrated pattern dominated by three neighboring countries Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. The total value of informal imports into Liberia during the reference period was USD 3,033,442.60. Among these, Côte d'Ivoire accounted for USD 1,792,250.18 or approximately 59.1% of all informal imports. Guinea followed with USD 966,936.91, making

up 31.9%, while Sierra Leone contributed USD 273,327.43, representing 9% of the total. Imports from other unspecified sources amounted to just USD 928.08, indicating a negligible share.

The data confirm Côte d'Ivoire's position as Liberia's most significant source of informal imports. This reflects strong cross-border trade ties facilitated by road connectivity, dense market networks, and proximity to high-volume border points such as Loguatuo and Toe Town. Goods from Côte d'Ivoire likely include beverages, processed foods, household electronics, and second-hand goods, which are popular among informal traders and consumers across southeastern Liberia.

Guinea plays a prominent role as Liberia's second-largest informal trading partner. The volume of informal imports from Guinea is particularly pronounced in counties along the northern corridor, including Lofa, Bong, and Nimba. Trade activities across these borders are often reinforced by ethnic ties and informal trust systems. The flow of goods from Guinea to Liberia may include locally produced food staples, cooking oil, textiles, fuel, and artisanal goods.

Sierra Leone, though bordering western Liberia, plays a comparatively modest role in

Liberia's informal import economy. Imports from Sierra Leone during the study period totalled USD 273,327.43, 9% of the total informal import value. Interestingly, this figure falls well below Liberia's informal export volume to Sierra Leone, which exceeded USD 627,000 during the same period. The resulting trade surplus in Liberia's favor underscores asymmetries in natural export competitiveness reflected in the data .

3.7 Top 10 Informal Export Commodities

Informal Cross Border Trade (ICBT) Survey, conducted between November and December 2024, reveal that Liberia's informal exports are dominated by food and agricultural products, with modest participation from processed goods and household items. The total export value of the top 10 commodities stands at USD 984,240.19, which accounts for a substantial portion of the country's overall informal export portfolio.

At the apex of the export list is meat and edible meat offal of poultry, commanding a value of USD 457,675.54. This category alone represents nearly half of the top 10 export value, suggesting a strong demand for poultry products in neighboring countries particularly Sierra Leone and Guinea where Liberia enjoys logistical

proximity and relatively competitive prices. This high trade volume underscores the role of cross-border livestock and frozen meat supply chains in Liberia's informal economy.

Cocoa and preparations, valued at USD 162,441.92, occupy the second position. This reflects Liberia's untapped potential in agro-export commodities and the growing demand for cocoa-derived products in both formal and informal regional markets. Cocoa's ranking in the export basket points to emerging opportunities for smallholder farmers, particularly in Nimba and Bong counties, to scale up value-added processing and regional sales.

Following closely are fruit, nuts, and citrus peel, with export earnings of USD 104,796.97. This category encompasses seasonal produce, including oranges, bananas, and kola nuts, often traded by women and youth-led cooperatives along the Guinea and Ivory Coast borders. These goods are typically transported in small volumes but high frequencies, reinforcing the informal sector's role in rural livelihoods and food security.

Fats and oils rank fourth, with exports valued at USD 76,194.77. This likely includes palm oil, a staple in both domestic and regional cuisines. The widespread informal trade of palm oil

through southeastern corridors into Côte d'Ivoire and northern corridors into Guinea reveals Liberia's comparative advantage in low-cost edible oil production.

Other notable products include beverages and spirits (USD 61,853.88), mineral fuels and oils (USD 42,946.54), and fish and crustaceans (USD 24,624.54). These figures suggest the existence of active cross-border trade in manufactured and semi-processed goods, particularly alcoholic beverages and petroleum products, which are often purchased in Liberia for resale in neighboring towns where tax burdens are higher or supply chains weaker.

Table 4: Top 10 Informal Export Commodities

Commodity	Export Value (USD)
Meat and edible meat offal of poultry	$ 457,675.54
Cocoa and preparations	$ 162,441.92
Fruit, nuts, citrus peel	$ 104,796.97
Fats and oils	$ 76,194.77
Beverages, spirits, vinegar	$ 61,853.88
Mineral fuels, oils	$ 42,946.54
Fish and crustaceans, molluscs, etc.	$ 24,624.54
Cereals	$ 21,364.84
Soap and washing agents	$ 16,984.95
Coffee, tea, spices	$ 15,357.24

Source: LISGIS ICBT Survey, 2024

The inclusion of cereals (USD 21,364.84), soap and washing agents (USD 16,984.95), and coffee, tea, and spices (USD 15,357.24) points to diversified informal trade baskets. These commodities highlight the ability of Liberian microenterprises to tap into niche household needs and serve markets underserved by formal retail chains.

Overall, the structure of Liberia's informal export economy reflects a blend of agricultural abundance, processing gaps, and regional demand dynamics. The dominance of food-related exports signals the country's potential for agribusiness development, while the inclusion of basic manufactured goods suggests room for formalization and domestic industrialization.

For policymakers, these findings present an urgent call to action. Strengthening value chain infrastructure, expanding access to finance for informal traders, and establishing decentralized border aggregation hubs could boost export volumes and improve earnings. Moreover, aligning informal trade policies with the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) and the AfCFTA protocols would enable Liberia to transition from fragmented informal exchanges to structured, revenue-generating regional trade participation between the two countries. It also suggests potential

underreporting or gaps in Sierra Leone's outbound trade monitoring systems.

The contribution of "Others"—comprising non-unidentified trade sources—was statistically insignificant. At under USD 1,000, such imports do not materially impact the structure or composition of Liberia's informal trade landscape.

This data underscores Liberia's reliance on informal trade networks operating within the Mano River Union basin. The heavy skew toward Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea highlights the importance of cross-border market integration and the porous nature of border enforcement. The findings also point to vulnerabilities in trade formalization, customs revenue collection, and product quality assurance.

For Liberia, these insights demand a strategic policy response. Strengthening bilateral data sharing mechanisms, investing in real-time border surveillance systems, and enhancing informal trader registration and support schemes could improve the credibility and utility of cross-border trade data. Integrating informal trade statistics into Liberia's broader macroeconomic planning frameworks is also crucial for aligning with the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) and the national ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development.

3.8 Liberia's Top 10 Informal Import Commodities

The informal import landscape of Liberia, as revealed by the 2024 ICBT Survey, paints a compelling picture of consumer demand, cross-border arbitrage, and the invisible scaffolding that undergirds household economies in borderland communities. The combined import value of the top ten informal commodities is estimated at approximately USD 2.65 million, representing a broad range of food products, agricultural commodities, manufactured goods, and essential consumer items. In contrast to the exports, profile was largely characterized by domestically sourced primary products. Whereas the informal import structure is driven mainly by goods that support immediate consumption, cross-border aggregation, and onward trade activities.

Cocoa beans emerge as the leading commodity within the informal import portfolio, with a recorded value of USD 1,628,832.38, accounting for over 61 percent of the total value of the top ten informal imports. This cocoa represents raw cocoa beans, imported primarily for aggregation and subsequent export through formal channels as Liberian cocoa, rather than processed cocoa or cocoa preparations.

The prominence of cocoa beans on both the import and export sides reflects Liberia's role as a transit and consolidation corridor within the

Mano River Union cocoa trade. Informal traders import cocoa beans largely from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone, and channel them through Liberia's border networks for onward movement, blending, or resale. This dynamic trade highlights cross-border arbitrage practices driven by price differentials, proximity to borders, and flexible informal trading arrangements, rather than domestic cocoa processing activities.

Cocoa

This pattern underscores the importance of informal trade routes in facilitating regional commodity flows and suggests that a portion of cocoa exported as Liberian origin may, in practice, consist of re-exported cocoa beans entering the country through informal channels.

Footwear (USD 287,294.80) and rubber and related articles (USD 246,175.31) rank second

and third, respectively. These goods are often smuggled or carried across borders in bulk by traders seeking to avoid formal customs duties. The high demand for affordable imported footwear and rubber products, such as soles, tires, and mats, reflects the growing reliance of Liberian consumers on low-cost Asian or sub-regional manufacturing redistributed through informal trade corridors. Their presence in the informal economy also signals a broader weakness in domestic industrial production and price competitiveness.

The inclusion of vegetables, roots, and tubers (USD 147,677.87) and vehicles (USD 143,540.43) introduce a dual narrative of subsistence and mobility. While food inflows reflect seasonal shortages and interdependence with regional agricultural systems, the vehicle imports—primarily used motorcycles and spare parts—highlight the transportation needs of rural and peri-urban Liberia, where roads are poor and public transit is sparse. Informally traded vehicles are often dismantled, repurposed, or sold in parts, indicating a vibrant second-hand trade ecosystem.

Table 5: Top 10 Informal Import Commodities

Commodity		Import Value (USD)
Cocoa	$	1,628,832.38
Footwear	$	287,294.80
Rubber and articles	$	246,175.31
Vegetables, roots, tubers	$	147,677.87
Vehicles	$	143,540.43
Live animals	$	112,690.83
Fats and oils	$	61,980.90
Misc. manufactured articles	$	12,207.14
Oil seeds, grains, fruits	$	11,345.50
Beverages, spirits, vinegar	$	1,293.66
Total	$	2,653,038.82

Source: LISGIS ICBT Survey, 2024

Live animals (USD 112,690.83) continue to form a staple of the informal cross border trade system, driven by cultural practices and ceremonial consumption. Animal trade along the Guinea and Sierra Leone frontiers is often underpinned by kinship-based barter systems and seasonal livestock migration patterns (FAO, 2021). This trade supports both household protein access and market diversity, particularly during festive periods and market-day surges.

Lower on the list are fats and oils (USD 61,980.90)**,** primarily imported vegetable oil and margarine, alongside miscellaneous manufactured articles (USD 12,207.14) and oil seeds, grains, and fruits (USD 11,345.50)**.** These commodities enter Liberia through low-volume, high-frequency informal routes, often bypassing regulatory scrutiny. Their entry into informal circuits underscores persistent supply chain bottlenecks in domestic production, as well as an unmet demand for nutritional and household diversity.

At the bottom of the list, though not to be dismissed, are beverages, spirits, and vinegar (USD 1,293.66)**.** The modest value here belies a larger undercurrent: many of these goods enter through informal channels not because of scarcity but due to tax arbitrage, as excise duties on alcohol and branded imports make formal channels less attractive to micro-retailers operating at the margins.

Collectively, this commodity profile reveals an import basket rooted in necessity, scarcity, and informality. It reflects Liberia's continued dependence on neighboring economies for processed goods and capital equipment, while also demonstrating the remarkable adaptability of small-scale traders in circumventing logistical, fiscal, and bureaucratic barriers.

3.9 Informal Border Point by County

The Informal Cross-Border Trade (ICBT) Survey conducted in December 2024 mapped a total of 129 informal border points across eight counties in Liberia. The distribution of these border points reveals considerable geographic

variation, shaped by proximity to international borders, terrain accessibility, and historical trade corridors.

- Lofa County recorded the highest number of informal border points, with 42 locations identified. This is consistent with Lofa's extensive land border shared with both Sierra Leone and Guinea, coupled with its established reputation as a vibrant corridor for agricultural and artisanal trade.

- Nimba County followed closely with 39 informal border points. Nimba's large territorial expanse and its multiple crossing routes into Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire contribute to its dense network of trading nodes.

- Maryland County ranked third, hosting 14 border points. Its southeastern location along the Ivorian frontier and active fisheries and agricultural trade help explain this concentration.

- Grand Gedeh and Grand Cape Mount recorded 11 and 9 border points respectively. These counties serve as moderate trade gateways, largely facilitating flows of forest products, foodstuffs, and livestock.

- Bong County accounted for ten border points, reflecting moderate trade engagement along its stretch of shared border with Guinea.

- River Gee reported eight border points, while Gbarpolu County had the least, with only one informal crossing recorded, Nomodatanau Town.

3.10 Trade Flows at Top 20 Informal Border Points by Trade Value (USD)

The 2024 ICBT Survey provides a granular view of Liberia's informal trade corridors, revealing both the volume and geographic distribution of economic activity across border points. The top 20 informal border points alone account for USD 3.52 million in trade value—comprising USD 852,712 in exports and USD 2.67 million in imports—highlighting the scale and asymmetry of informal cross-border commerce. While trade is dispersed across several counties, the southeastern region dominates, reflecting Liberia's integration with Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea through non-formalized trading networks.

Dewoblee Town (Nimba County) emerges as Liberia's foremost informal trade hub, registering USD 642,342 in total trade—nearly all of it from imports (USD 641,518). This overwhelming import skew suggests that Dewoblee functions as a regional re-distribution center, potentially dealing in fuel, building materials, and consumables from Ivorian or

Guinean markets. Its infrastructure and proximity to key inland roads may amplify its strategic significance.

Nomodatanau Town (Gbarpolu County) ranks second with USD 613,663 in trade value, remarkable for its export dominance (USD 438,435). This suggests its role as a high-volume agricultural and livestock exit point, reinforcing the relevance of Gbarpolu's forest-fringed settlements in sustaining trade flows into Guinea or Sierra Leone. Nomodatanau's performance reflects the untapped export potential in less-infrastructure regions when informal channels operate efficiently.

Yeala Town (Lofa County) follows with USD 374,775, reflecting its centrality in informal imports (USD 316,121) of cereals, secondhand goods, and seasonal fruits. Kenlay #1 (Nimba County) and Sayquee Village (Grand Gedeh County), with USD 262,524 and USD 248,763 respectively, both record high import activity, serving as decentralized retail feeder points for their communities and surrounding regions. Their border dynamics likely exploit low-tax arbitrage conditions and porous terrain.

Dizzah (Bong County), Sorlormba Town (Lofa County), and Kparblee Town (Nimba County) register between USD 160,000 and 190,000, underscoring Bong and Lofa counties'

importance in feeding rural trade belts with livestock and fast-moving consumer goods. While Dizzah and Kparblee lean heavily on imports, Sorlormba's balanced trade profile hints at a growing diversification of trader activities (see Appendix 1).

In the central tier, Gbuyee (Nimba County) and Tiahplazealay (Nimba County) recorded USD 133,608 and USD 102,318 respectively. These border points serve both as collection centers for agricultural exports and entry points for daily-use items, functioning under minimal regulatory oversight. Their consistent use by micro-traders reveals how geographic accessibility and relational trade trust supersede formal infrastructure in driving trade flows (Meagher, 2018).

Further down the list, Worsonga Town (Lofa County) stands out as an export-heavy node (USD 77,559) despite its overall rank. Similarly, Mendicorma Town (Lofa County) and York Island (Grand Cape Mount County) reflect trade duality—serving both outbound and inbound movements. Tobogizizu Town (Lofa County), a modest trade point at USD 61,957, operates on a balanced trade profile and may be sensitive to seasonal variations, particularly in kola nut and grain movement.

Other contributors include Duoplay Town (Nimba County), Zodru Town (Nimba County), and Kpassagizia (Lofa County), with total trade values ranging between USD 39,000 and 56,000. Notably, Zodru Town records only imports, indicative of a local dependence on informal trade for essential supplies in the absence of formal wholesale infrastructure.

The lowest-ranking border points, including Buehlay New Town (Nimba County) and Gbamalo Town (Lofa County), still play critical localized roles. Their small volumes (USD 38,530 and USD 38,161, respectively) may mask their importance in facilitating subsistence trade and female-led micro-trade, especially in remote communities with limited access to centralized markets.

The county-level distribution of trade reveals Lofa and Nimba as the epicenters of informal cross border trade, together hosting more than half of the top 20 border points. Their performance highlights the importance of geographic proximity to Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as the persistence of community-managed cross-border networks. These nodes represent natural entry points for future trade formalization and policy intervention.

3.11 Official vs. Unofficial Border Crossings in Liberia's Informal Cross Border Trade

The presence or absence of customs officers at a border crossing is a defining feature of the formalization of cross-border trade. Official border points facilitate regulation, revenue collection, and safety, while unofficial crossings, though vital for livelihoods, pose challenges in enforcement, taxation, and data collection (World Bank, 2020). This analysis examines the distribution of official vs. unofficial crossing points across eight border counties in Liberia, offering insights into the structural gaps in trade governance.

3.11.1 Distribution of Official Border Crossings

Nationally, only 34.1% of border crossings were classified as official—i.e., having a customs presence—while the remaining 65.9% were unofficial. This imbalance reveals a strong dependence on unregulated entry and exit points, with implications for trade monitoring, health security, and illicit flows.

County-Level Observations

Maryland County led with 59.9% of crossings being official. Its proximity to Côte d'Ivoire and existing customs installations in Pleebo and Harper may explain this relative formalization.

This high percentage is an outlier in the national pattern and suggests potential for replication in other counties through investment in border infrastructure and enforcement capacity.

Lofa County, a major trade hub with Guinea, reported 38.8% official crossings. Though lower than Maryland, it is still above the national average, thanks to customs presence in Foya and Voinjama, key nodes for agricultural and livestock trade.

Table 6: Distribution of Observed Official and Unofficial Border Points by County

	Is this crossing point official			
	Yes	No	Total	
County	Row N %	Row N %	Count	Row N %
Bong	21.8	78.2	316	100.0
Grand Capemount	21.2	78.8	590	100.0
Grand Gedeh	13.6	86.4	316	100.0
Lofa	38.8	61.2	4664	100.0
Maryland	59.9	40.1	197	100.0
Nimba	33.1	66.9	2837	100.0
River Gee	10.9	89.1	128	100.0
Gbarpolu	0.0	100.0	102	100.0
Total	34.1	65.9	9150	100.0

Source: LISGIS ICBT Survey, 2024

Nimba followed with 33.1% official crossings, likely tied to its busy commercial routes at Ganta and Loguatuo. These crossings handle substantial volumes of both formal and informal trade (AfDB, 2021).

At the bottom of the scale, Gbarpolu County recorded 0% official crossings, with all trade occurring at unofficial points. Similarly, River Gee (10.9%) and Grand Gedeh (13.6%) had overwhelmingly unofficial flows, despite their active cross-border movement with Côte d'Ivoire.

Grand Cape Mount and Bong, with 21.2% and 21.8% official crossings respectively, show substantial gaps despite being high-traffic counties for trade with Sierra Leone and Guinea.

3.11.2 Implications for Trade Facilitation and Security

Revenue Leakage and Data Gaps

The dominance of unofficial crossings implies significant loss of customs revenue, reduced control over commodity flows, and weakened data fidelity in national trade statistics.

Public Health and Security Risks

Unregulated crossings complicate disease surveillance, border policing, and human trafficking prevention—a risk made more acute by porous borders in post-conflict regions (IOM, 2022).

Need for Border Infrastructure

The data calls for scaling up border post formalization, starting with semi-permanent customs outposts in counties like Gbarpolu and River Gee. It also underscores the need for

community-based surveillance, especially in remote trade corridors.

3.12 Presence of Security Agencies at Official Border Points in Liberia

Effective border governance requires more than customs officers. It relies on a coordinated security presence including immigration (LIS), police (LNP), anti-drug enforcement (DEA), and sometimes military units (AFL). This analysis explores the distribution of these security actors at official border points across eight counties in Liberia. Given that multiple agencies can co-exist at the same post, this is treated as multiple response data—meaning row percentages may exceed 100% and must be interpreted individually.

3.12.1 Overall Trends

The Liberia Immigration Service (LIS) had the most widespread presence, with Grand Gedeh (98.9%), Grand Capemount (77.6%), River Gee (64.0%), and Nimba (53.4%) reporting significant deployment. LIS is evidently the core non-customs agency in formal border operations—consistent with its legal mandate to manage migratory flows and monitor cross-border movement (Government of Liberia, 2022).

Figure 4: Percentage Distribution of Observed Border Points with Security Officers
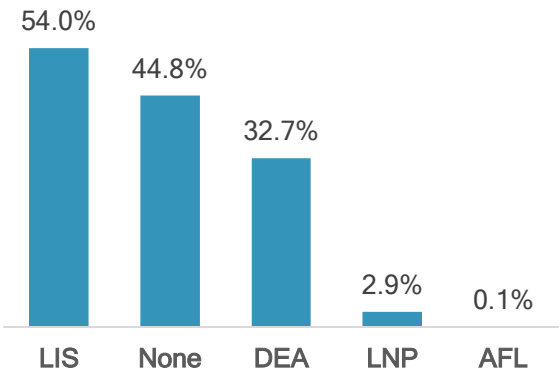
The Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency (LDEA) recorded presence in six counties, but was particularly dominant in Grand Gedeh (98.5%) and Lofa (44.9%), both high-volume trade corridors near the Ivorian and Guinean borders. DEA presence in these regions may reflect rising concerns over drug trafficking and contraband trade, especially in areas with limited customs control (UNODC, 2021).

The Liberia National Police (LNP) had minimal representation, with highest occurrences in Grand Gedeh (9.5%) and Grand Capemount (3.2%). This limited involvement may reflect resource constraints or a reliance on LIS and local authorities for routine law enforcement at the borders.

The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) had a marginal presence, not exceeding 0.4% in any county. This confirms the government's policy to use military force at borders only during

special operations, emergency interventions, or joint patrols, and not for routine customs or immigration roles (Ministry of Defense, 2022).

3.12.2 County-Level Observations

Grand Gedeh is the only county where all four security agencies (LIS, LNP, LDEA, AFL) were reported. It had near-universal presence of LIS (98.9%) and LDEA (98.5%), suggesting the county serves as a strategic enforcement zone, likely due to its porous Ivorian border.

Grand Capemount had a strong LIS presence (77.6%) and modest DEA footprint (26.3%), but minimal LNP and AFL coverage. River Gee reflected a dual-character border: high LIS presence (64.0%) but complete absence of all other security agencies, likely due to resource allocation gaps.

Counties like Bong and Maryland had security presence in fewer than 15% of official crossings for all agencies.

Alarmingly, the category "None"—indicating border points with no reported presence of LIS, LNP, DEA, or AFL—was highest in Bong (86.4%), Maryland (86.1%), and Lofa (45.7%). These figures suggest that "official" status alone does not guarantee holistic border security, and may point to vulnerabilities in national security coverage.

3.13 Means and Modes of Transport in Liberia's Informal Cross Border Trade

The transportation dynamics within informal cross-border trade (ICBT) reveal significant insights into the operational realities of traders and the infrastructural landscape of Liberia. Transport means and modes are not just logistical tools—they are economic indicators of accessibility, cost-efficiency, infrastructure, and vulnerability (UNCTAD, 2020). This analysis disaggregates transport statistics from the ICBT Survey to highlight usage patterns and inform trade facilitation policy.

3.13.1 Means of Transport

The data indicate that Boat/Canoe/Ferry was the most widely used means of transport, accounting for 53.8% of all ICBT transactions. This was particularly dominant in imports (60.1%), reflecting Liberia's reliance on riverine and creek-based ICBT corridors, especially in counties like Grand Cape Mount.

Motorbikes followed as the second-most utilized means, comprising 31.7% of total usage, and notably 37.0% of exports. This suggests that for cross-border exports—often small-volume and time-sensitive—motorbikes provide a fast and flexible option for navigating challenging terrains and informal crossings.

Head carriage was the third most common mode, representing 10.1% overall, indicative of human-portable trade volumes, especially in isolated border communities with no motorable access.

The least utilized transport means included bicycles (0.3%), push-push or wheelbarrow (0.1%), and tricycles (0.1%). These reflect hyper-local movements or "last-meter" deliveries within border zones rather than long-distance trade.

The stark difference between motorized and non-motorized transport speaks to both economic constraints and infrastructure gaps. Traders appear to choose transport that minimizes cost while maximizing flexibility, even if it implies exposure to higher physical risk or longer travel times (World Bank, 2022).

3.13.2 Mode of Transport

When aggregated by mode of transport, the data show that River/Creek-based trade (56.6%) surpasses Road-based trade (43.4%). This trend intensifies for imports, where 60.9% relied on waterways, compared to only 39.1% via roads. In contrast, exports were almost evenly split, with 47.6% going via roads and 52.4% via rivers.

This pattern reflects Liberia's hydro-geographic advantage—a vast network of rivers, estuaries, and creeks that penetrate inland markets and facilitate cross-border connections with neighboring Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire.

Infrastructure Implications

The heavy reliance on water transport signals a critical need for investment in dock facilities, canoe safety, and motorized ferry services to ensure that informal traders—many of whom are women—can engage in trade safely and efficiently (UN Women, 2021). On the other hand, road transport development remains vital for exports, particularly motorbike-enabled movement which thrives on road access.

4 CONCLUSION

The 2024 Informal Cross Border Trade (ICBT) Survey provides compelling evidence that Liberia's border economy is both vibrant and structurally informal, shaped by geography, limited infrastructure, gendered trade dynamics, and institutional gaps. The findings demonstrate that informal cross-border transactions are not only widespread but also critical to household livelihoods and food security in bordering counties such as Lofa, Nimba, and Grand Gedeh.

Transport analysis revealed that informal trade is heavily reliant on riverine modes (56.6%) and non-motorized means such as head carriage and motorbikes—particularly in counties with poor road infrastructure. The dominance of boat/canoe/ferry transport (53.8%) underscores the logistical challenges traders face, and the urgent need to enhance both terrestrial and maritime transport access.

In terms of border regulation, 65.9% of surveyed crossing points are unofficial, and even among official crossings, non-customs security

presence is highly inconsistent. Although the Liberia Immigration Service (LIS) appears at most official posts, the DEA, LNP, and AFL are nearly absent in many counties, including Bong and Maryland—revealing a fragmented security apparatus and revenue leakages.

Gender analysis highlighted that women account for the majority of traders at many crossing points, particularly in agricultural and processed food commodities. However, women face disproportionate risks linked to extortion, unsafe transport, and lack of facilities, further exacerbated by low levels of awareness of ECOWAS trade protocols.

Taken together, the report emphasizes that informal trade is a survivalist economy driven by necessity but underpinned by systemic regulatory and institutional weaknesses. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-sectoral approach that formalizes trade, secures borders, empowers traders—especially women—and integrates ICBT into Liberia's broader development policy frameworks, including the ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development.

5 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Transport and Infrastructure Development

- Expand all-weather feeder roads and construct rural trade corridors, especially in Lofa, Grand Gedeh, and River Gee, where traders rely heavily on motorbikes, canoes, and head carriage due to lack of vehicle access.

- Establish secure docking points and loading areas along major rivers and creeks, enhancing the safety and capacity of riverine trade—which accounts for over 56% of movement in the sector.

5.2 Formalization of Border Crossings

- Prioritize the designation and upgrading of unofficial high-traffic points into official crossings in Nimba, Bong, and Grand Cape Mount, ensuring the presence of customs, immigration, and basic infrastructure such as storage units and shelters.

- Enforce a national standard for official border posts, mandating minimum staff presence (customs, LIS, LNP) and digital recordkeeping to enable traceability and compliance.

5.3 Inter-agency Coordination and Security

- Deploy a unified border operations model, assigning shared operational mandates among LIS, LNP, DEA, and AFL.

- Establish Border Security Coordination Committees chaired by local government superintendents and inclusive of all border-operating agencies and community leaders to ensure real-time reporting and oversight.

5.4 Gender-Responsive Trade Policies

- Develop a National Cross-Border Women's Trade Empowerment Strategy, offering micro-credit, legal protection, and designated "safe zones" at markets and crossing points for women traders.

- Partner with civil society to establish mobile grievance desks at border posts for reporting harassment and corruption, particularly those affecting women.

5.5 Awareness and Protocol Harmonization

- Launch multilingual ECOWAS sensitization campaigns, especially in counties with high cross-border flows (Lofa, Nimba, Maryland), to increase trader knowledge of simplified trade regimes, rights of entry, and documentation procedures.

- Distribute simplified trade manuals and visual guides on ETLS procedures to both traders and security officials at border points.

5.6 Data and Monitoring Systems

- Institutionalize the ICBT Survey as a biennial exercise led by LISGIS in collaboration with LRA, MoCI, MFDP, LIS and border counties. This will ensure policy continuity, data-driven reforms, and budget allocation within the ARREST Agenda's monitoring framework.

- Develop a national ICBT Data Dashboard, updated quarterly, that tracks trade volumes, border traffic, gender participation, and commodity flows across counties.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Additional Tables

Table A 1: Distribution of Trade Flows by Top 20 Border Points

No	ICBT Point	Exports (USD)	Imports (USD)	Total Value (USD)
1	Dewoblee Town	824	641,518	642,342
2	Nomodatanau Town	438,435	175,228	613,663
3	Yeala Town	58,654	316,121	374,775
4	Kenlay #1	4,843	257,681	262,524
5	Sayquee Village	434	248,329	248,763
6	Dizzah	4,590	186,310	190,900
7	Sorlormba Town	70,225	116,152	186,377
8	Kparblee Town	699	162,224	162,923
9	Gbuyee	27,397	106,211	133,608
10	Tiahplazealay	315	102,003	102,318
11	Nyaaken	143	99,504	99,647
12	Worsonga Town	77,559	10,801	88,360
13	Mendicorma Town	28,893	37,279	66,172
14	York Isand	19,149	44,340	63,489
15	Tobogizizu Town	16,624	45,333	61,957
16	Duoplay Town	21,267	34,629	55,896
17	Zodru Town	-	55,206	55,206
18	Kpassagizia	8,216	30,790	39,006
19	Buehlay New Town	36,495	2,035	38,530
20	Gbamalo Town	37,949	212	38,161
	Total	**852,712**	**2,671,905**	**3,524,616**

Appendix 2 : Field Team and Composition

NO.	NAME	COUNTY	MOBILE MONEY NUMBER	POSITION
1	J. Christopher Dehtho	Grand Capemount	0886520529	Supervisor
2	Teddy B. Sackor	Grand Capemount	0881971761	Supervisor
3	Cecil Montgomery	Grand Capemount	0888594800	Supervisor
4	Mambu Golafale	Gbarpolu	0886544395	Supervisor
5	Jallah A. Barbu II	LOFA	0881366474	Supervisor
6	AB Jallah Balyemah	LOFA	0886917076	Supervisor
7	Terrence B. Nyenpan	LOFA	0886434323	Supervisor
8	Samuel Z. Boular	LOFA	0886883554	Supervisor
9	Christopher B. Simmonds	LOFA	0886473299	Supervisor
10	Solomon Paye	LOFA	0555604566	Supervisor
11	Alvan Dyujay Solomon	LOFA	0886438887	Supervisor
12	Cooper Gbatah	LOFA	0886280336	Supervisor
13	Augusta M. Mayon	BONG	0880447189	Supervisor
14	Augustine Gbormie Gueh	BONG	0888132936	Supervisor
15	Mark Harris Barmilah	NIMBA	0886661294	Supervisor
16	Lorenzo Quiwillie	NIMBA	0881402878	Supervisor
17	Isaac Marvin Doles	NIMBA	0886553120	Supervisor
18	Gbehyee J. Wreh	NIMBA	0880952855	Supervisor
19	Emily Dolo	NIMBA	0888851888	Supervisor
20	Elizabet Tayonnoh Saywon	NIMBA	0886882705	Supervisor
21	Martenneh K. Dorley	NIMBA	0888799900	Supervisor
22	Otis Garglarn	GRAND GEDEH	0886487504	Supervisor
23	Chea Prince Chea	RIVER GEE	0881328432	Supervisor
24	T. Wleh Shad Dennis	MARYLAND	0886546105	Supervisor
xx	Total			24

NO.	NAME (ENUMERATOR)	Mobile Money Number	NO.	NAME (ENUMERATOR)	Mobile Money Number
1	Fredrick F. Wreh	0555666506	25	Forkpa D. Rufus	0881132838
2	Hamitta Moivena Dennis	0888913637	26	Maxwell Korvah	0880632555
3	Rufus Chea	0880296995	27	Bennie Momolu	0886811279
4	Alfred T. Dennis	0888737041	28	Clarence A. Zayzay	0555856612
5	Archie Davis	0888181433	29	Jutowo Dolo	0886430396
6	Munah M. Quaye	0886004331	30	Margret K. Topor	0770779166
7	Princess B. Akoi	0887478812	31	Patricia S. Seeigbeh	0886768955
8	Thomas W. Bryant	0886517802	32	T. Wilson Nyma	0886910909
9	G. Amos Joko	0886031358	33	Korpo D. Worzeyan	0886981540
10	Julisbeth Tellewoyan	0888408469	34	Haja J. Pabai	0555385921
11	Abigail K. Kamara	0555460100	35	Gabriel N. Dulkodan	0886737964
12	Buster Dennis	0881429293	36	Yah T. Konie	0886103544
13	Arantxa Faith Dundas	0888750311	37	Morlu Massaboi	0880119334
14	Emmanuel G. Ballah	0886631306	38	Lisa M. Kanneh	0886488297
15	Targan S. Gboco	0555926949	39	Sylvester F. Bandiyo	0886657433
16	Rufus Wleh	0886226620	40	Flomo B. Kpadeh	0886465198
17	Christopher W. Jimmy	0881677396	41	Adam L. Kromah	0770512435
18	Ellen P. Amara	0888150590	42	Patricia Y. Nimely	0886929353
19	Aloysius R. Tokpa	0886323037	43	Mohammed M. Swaray	0886690698
20	Regina Jaleiba	0888873005	44	J. Fred Tuazama	0886468016
21	George Gift Gibson	0880869539	45	Alexandria N. Duncan	0886365292
22	Veronica Dennis	0886892222	46	Caroline N. Hinneh	0886775228
23	Richard Lincoln	0881266363	47	Davidson S. Varlai	0880666114
24	Wilfred O. Taikerweyah	0888207624	48	Frank Mensah	0880960046

NO.	NAME (ENUMERATOR)	Mobile Money Number
49	David Sundaye Jr.	0555678561
50	Burnise Gonkerwon	0886940816
51	Lovetee J. Kreku	0886389944
52	Marina V. Manobah	0886561534
53	Amanda Tweh	0880696548
54	Darlington S. Karmon	0880134624
55	Gladys Smallwood	0886284571
56	Edwin Smith	0886664069
57	Dekontee E. Varney	0888379683
58	Blessing Siryon	0886411883
59	G. Oliver Doco	0886991514
60	Philander Nyenpan	0555718759
61	Joseph Reeves	0886649003
62	Abraham A. Kamara	0886226076
63	Walter S. Fardolo	0886669823
64	J. Baron Payleh	0886930620
65	Stanley Debleh	0886460275
66	Pinky Kulah	0881485349
67	Boakai Sonii	0555263686
68	John H. Gleekeh	0886482938
69	Varmah A. Swaray	0886531284
70	Prince A. Jacobs	0886290517
71	Gloria Adu	0886443478
72	Cyrus Miller	0555332400

NO.	NAME	MOBILE #
1	Joyce Nyenpan Ngafuan	0886556342
2	Jenekai B. Manobah	0886900452
3	Jessica Kayee	0881759187
4	Patrick Nyoun	0886909830
5	Chuchu Mason	0886523467
6	Derrick G. Paye	0880466086
7	Esther Garbo Wreh	0886603258
8	Moses B. Z Mulbah	0886912309
9	Andrew Tellewoyan	0886633149
10	Caroline M. Dennis	0886173361
11	Mantue Reeves	0886173361
12	Abraham V. Sheriff	0881237929

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INFORMAL CROSS BORDER TRADE SURVEY 2024

QUESTIONNAIRE

County	
District	
Clan	
Location of ICBT Point	

Name of ICBT Point	
GPS Points	
Enumerator's Name	
Supervisor's Name	

Q1	Q1a	Q1b	Q1c	Q1d	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q8a
Respondent's Code 1.Trader 2.Transporter 3.Others (Specify) if 2 or 3, skip to Q1c	Gender 1.Male 2.Female	Age (years) Skip to Q2	Trader's Gender 1.Male 2.Female	Trader's Age (years)	Trader's Nationality	Flow Type 1. Export 2. Import	HS Code (6 digits)	Item Name (Label)	Total Quantity/Item	Unit of Measurement	Weight of Measurement per Quantity/Item	Weight in Kg per Quantity/Item (if Q7 is Kg, Let Q8=Q8a; if Q7 is not Kg, then convert Q8 to Kg

Q8b	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16
Volume (to be automated: imputed as (Q6*Q8a)	Estimated Unit Cost per Quantity or Value of Total Quantity	Is Q9 Unit Cost per Quantity or Value of Total Quantity? 1.Unit Cost 2.Value	Value (to be automated: enter value in Q9 if Q10=2 or impute (Q6*Q9) if Q10=1	Currency	Country of Destination (Export) (Ask if Q3=1) End interview	Country of Origin (Import) (Ask if Q3=2)	Means of Transport 01- Head Carriage 02- Bicycle 03- Push-Push/Wheel Barrow 04- Motor Bike 05- Tricycle /Keke 06-Boat/Canoe/Ferry 07-Car/Taxi 08- Minibus 09- Others (Specify)	Mode of Transport 1.Road 2.River 3.Sea 4.Other(Specify)
Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21				
Does this trader have any other goods (Yes=1, No =2) IF Q17=1→ Q4	Is there another trader that needs their information captured (Yes=1, No=2)	Is this crossing point official (Yes=1, No=2)	Does this crossing point have these various agencies LIS LNP DEA AFL None of the above	CAPGPS				

CODE FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

Q1. Respondent's Code	Q2. Trader's Nationality	Q4. Label	Q5. HS Code	Q7. Unit of Measurement	Q12. Currency	Q13 & Q14. Country of Destination or Origin	Q15. Means of Transport	Q16. Mode of Transport
1.Trader 2.Transporter 3.Others (Specify)	SL-Sierra Leonean GN – Guinean CI– Ivorian LR—Liberian Others-(Specify)	Item Name (Maintain as provided in the excel sheet)	(6 Digits) Any selection in Q4 should display the corresponding code	1.50-Kg bags 2.Kilo (3 butter cups) 3.Litres 4.Metres 5.Numbers 6.Dozens 7.Pairs 8.Pieces 9.Bars 10.Rolls 11.Sets 12.Tins 13.Gallons 14.5gallon container 15.Drums 16.Bags 17.Crates 18.Cartons 19.Sachets	1.Leone 2.Liberian Dollar 3.Guinea Franc 4.CFA 5.USD 6.Others (Specify)	SL -Sierra Leone GN - Guinea CI– Ivory Coast Others (Specify)	01-Head Carriage 02-Bicycle 03-Push-Push/Wheel Barrow 04-Motor Bike 05-Tricycle /Keke 06-Boat/Canoe/Ferry 07-Car/Taxi 08-Minibus 09-Others (Specify)	1.Road 2.River 3.Sea 4.Other(Specify)

				20.Bottles 21.Bale/Bundle 22.Kenjah 23.Others (Specify)				