

2. Which Actions Do You Undertake to Warn About Counterfeits?

As shown in Table 6 below, to the question: “What Do You Do, Personally, When You Find Counterfeit Electrical Products?”, the answers (summarized below in English) are a reason for hope. Indeed, with very few exceptions (Uganda, Republic of the Congo, and DRC), respondents were far from renouncing to take action. Either they refused to buy or they returned the counterfeit goods to the sellers. Their first reaction (of protest), they said, was to inform people around them of the bad quality of the products they had just bought. This means that if the proper structures are in place, they could easily take legal actions or file complaints about counterfeit/defective material.

Table 6
*Respondent's Actions
When Confronted With
a Counterfeit Product*

Countries	Answers from the Respondents
	English Speaking African Countries
Ghana	Respondents say, they will report to the police, to the Ghana Standards Bureau or to the Ghana Fire Service.
Kenya	Most “Officials” said, they will inform the manufacturer so that “he” can lodge the complaint with the Anti-Counterfeit Agency. Other people said, however, they do not take legal action.
Nigeria	They will call the helpline of the Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON)
Tanzania	They will report to the police and/or to the brand owner so that the counterfeit products are seized and destroyed.
Uganda	Most people say they “do nothing” and use them. Even if they know these counterfeit products are of a lesser quality (...). They do it, mostly for price reasons.
	French Speaking African Countries
Cameroon	Most of the respondents say, they just throw the counterfeit product away; and inform those around. But they also regret that there's no structure where to file formal complaints about counterfeit/defective material.
Congo Brazzaville	Respondents say that they buy counterfeits because they're “cheap”. They do so even if they have to change the products every few months.
DRC	For most respondents, there's “nothing to be done” other than dealing with it.
Guinea	They will refuse to buy and will inform people around. But most of the respondents do not know how to file a formal complaint or where.
Ivory Coast	Most respondents say they will deal directly with the seller/retailers, and not with the authorities.
Senegal	They will return the counterfeit products to the seller, whether it's a shop or a wholesale retailer

3. What to Do Next to Increase the Level of Awareness?

1.1: National Campaigns to Counter Electrical Counterfeiting

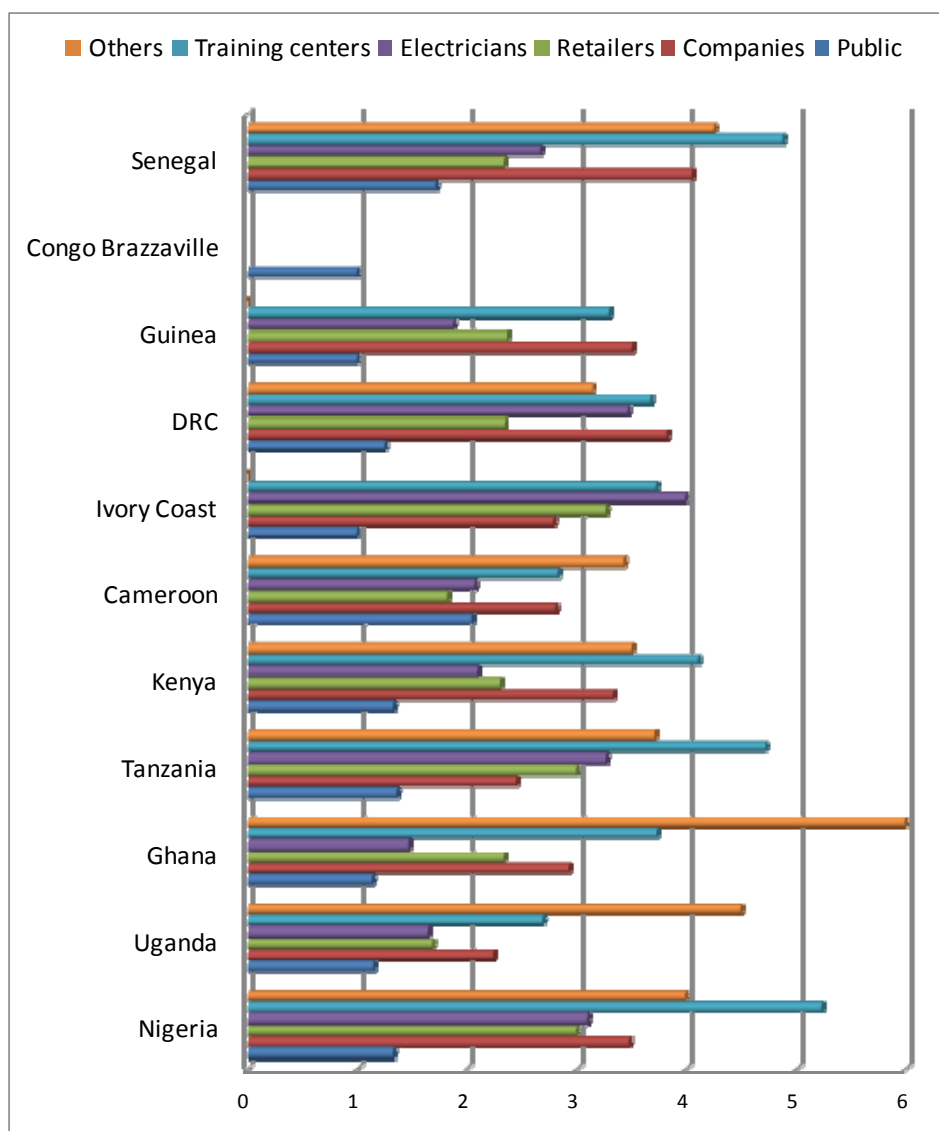
Respondents were asked to name national or international campaigns in their countries aiming at raising awareness among the public regarding counterfeiting. They did it mostly in the countries where the acknowledgement for such campaigns was higher. Actions taken by official bodies to increase the level of information not only for the general public, but for custom or police were also taken into consideration. However, in order to stop the ever increasing selling of electrical “fakes” on African markets, a bigger involvement of the companies that manufacture electrical goods is required.

1.2: Who Should Be the Main Target?

When asked if they think it is a good idea to organize a campaign on “How to Counter Electrical Counterfeiting” in their country, respondents to the survey said “Yes” at an overwhelmingly majority of nearly 95%. The respondents thought such a campaign could be very useful in order to “raise public awareness”, “limit the nefarious effects of electrical counterfeit”, and “save human lives”. Few voices rose, however, to say that such a campaign will have no purpose since the people are still too poor in Africa. And, therefore, they will continue to buy counterfeit electrical goods because they are cheap!

As Figure 15 below shows, in Cameroon, Ghana, and Uganda respondents chose, -as their first choice-, a target that was not listed among the five possible, but concerned “Others”. “Training Centers” which, here, means essentially “vocational centers”, were also mentioned as being among the first targets in almost all the countries of the survey except in Ivory Coast, DRC, and Guinea. Interestingly enough, “Public” was chosen the least as a possible target. In other words, respondents to the survey did not believe that a campaign of information and raising awareness against electrical counterfeiting should be addressed to a large public in general, but that “Companies” were a much better target to this end in Africa. This was especially true in the group of English speaking countries (almost all countries) in addition to Senegal. In Ivory Coast, respondent emphasized more “Electricians” who are, after all, the first concerned by the sale of electrical counterfeits in Africa. Indeed, more focused targets as “Training centers” were thought to be a better choice for such a campaign in order to be able to explain the technical complexity of counterfeit electrical products, the genuine and the fake.

Figure 15
 Main Targets
 For a National
 Campaign
 to Raise Awareness
 (in Grades)



Question: In the following list, who is (or should be) the main target for a campaign?

Method: Average grade of all valid answers given by respondents to identified target group for a National Campaign to Raise Awareness broken down by countries of the survey.

Who are the “Others”

A big majority of respondents to the survey chose “Others” as either their first target for a campaign of information on electrical counterfeiting (Cameroon, Ghana, and Uganda); or it was selected as the second most important target (Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya, DRC, and Senegal). In the 28 answers out of 432 in the English speaking countries, these “others” were mainly “contractors”, “individuals”, “media” and “custom”. In the 21 answers out of 549 in the French speaking countries, they were mainly “public administration” and “media”. The necessity to add the media to the list of possible target for a campaign of information on electrical counterfeiting seems quite obvious. However, to add “street” vendors (individuals) and “officials” (public administration, custom, etc.) in addition to contractors means that, for the respondents to the survey, those categories are the ones to be mostly in need for information and conscience awareness campaigns concerning the (bad) consequences of electrical counterfeiting on the people safety, and on the economy.

Main findings of the survey as far as counterfeit electrical products and brands are concerned

Concerning the main “products” and “brands” of electrical counterfeits that one may find in Africa:

- Cables, breakers, sockets, switches, extension cords, lamps, bulbs, electrical wires, fuses, and contactors are the ten most counterfeit electrical products in Africa (in that order).
- Legrand, Hager, General Electric, Schneider Electric and ABB were identified (in that order) as being the most counterfeit brands in Africa among seventeen widely known brands. Furthermore, the electrical items considered as being the most counterfeit in Africa belong to: ABB, Hager, Legrand, Siemens, and Schneider Electric or to more specific brand like Ingelec (in that order).

Concerning the capacity of the African professionals and other categories to recognize counterfeit electrical products:

- All the categories of respondents (and not only “Electricians” and “Retailers”, but also “Officials and “Others”) said they are “knowledgeable” about counterfeit electrical products. But asked for more technical training and vulgarization on how to recognize counterfeit items “at first sight”.
- “Poor performance” was the first criteria chosen by the respondents to explain how they recognize electrical counterfeits followed by “shape”, “price” and “packaging”. “Actions taken by the authorities” were also mentioned as an important factor of raising awareness that there are counterfeits for sale on the markets.
- Even though African “Electricians” and “Retailers” said they know how to recognize “simple” counterfeit electrical products, they want manufacturers of “big brands” who produce more complicated electrical products to teach them how to distinguish “fake” from “genuine”.

Concerning the scope of counterfeiting, and the damages that counterfeit electrical goods may occasion on the economy as well as on the health and safety of the people:

- French speaking African countries sampled in the survey estimated that the scope of counterfeiting in their economies was at a higher level than their counterparts in the English speaking countries, except for Ghana. Respondents in Guinea, DRC, Cameroon, Congo B, Ivory Coast or Senegal, in the French group, were the ones to say (in that order) that the use and/or the selling of counterfeit electrical goods is the most widespread.
- They also all pointed out that the main consequence of using counterfeit electrical products in Africa is economical. The fire outbreaks and/or corporal harms like electrocution, accidents and death came in second position. Therefore, they said fearing more the loss of properties and competitiveness that may result from fire outbreaks than electrocution, accidents or even death.

Unlike what was thought before, there are African countries which manufacture electrical counterfeit products or make “re-assembling” of spare parts locally:

- Tanzania, Nigeria and Ivory Coast are the biggest counterfeiters for such an illicit production of electrical counterfeit items made in Africa. This mainly concerns: extension cords, electrical receptacles, wire and cables, circuit breakers and control switches.
- Tanzania, Kenya and Senegal. While considered as a champion for domestic manufactured or re-assembled counterfeit electrical goods, Nigeria is far behind when it comes to refurbishing already used products.
- These “homemade” counterfeit electrical goods are being sold mainly in local markets, as well as in specific shops. “Street vendors”, however, are seen as being a main source of distribution for those lower quality goods both in English and French speaking African countries.

Concerning the countries of origin for all those counterfeit electrical items:

- China remains the main source of electrical counterfeit goods entering Africa (75% of the answers) followed by the rest of Asian countries. African as well as Middle Eastern countries were also mentioned as countries of origin, at a much bigger proportion than European countries or Maghreb. South American countries were the least quoted.
- The English speaking group emphasized more Asian countries in addition to China as the main sources of imported counterfeit electrical goods to Africa; while respondents in the French speaking group pointed out more African countries in addition to China.

The case of Nigeria and Malaysia could be singled out:

- Imported counterfeit goods in Nigeria were said to come mainly from Asian countries and, in no cases, from any other African country. In addition to China, Malaysia, and to a lesser degree Japan and Hong Kong, were said to be the main providers. Dubai, also, was seen as an important source of transiting electrical counterfeit goods before they enter Nigeria.
- After China, Malaysia turned out to be the most often quoted country of origin for the imported counterfeit electrical goods entering Africa. Estimates for the volumes of electrical counterfeit goods exported to Africa coming from Malaysia were said to be as big as those coming from China.
- Outside China and the rest of Asian countries, the surveys established that Lebanon, Nigeria and Dubai, in that order, were the three “bigger” providers of counterfeit electrical goods to Africa.

The other African transiting countries are:

- In Africa, main target countries to re-export counterfeit electrical goods are to be found in the vicinity. Countries like Ivory Coast or Uganda also became targets of their neighbors in turn.
- Ghana and Tanzania, in the English speaking group, Guinea, Republic of the Congo and DRC, in the French speaking group, were said to be the most important for the volume of counterfeit goods transiting through their territory.

Main target countries in Africa and from Africa for re-exporting imported goods:

- Cameroon and DRC are targets for themselves. This is because counterfeit electrical goods entering in the country are being re-exported to other linguistic enclaves (English speaking Cameroon) or other federal provinces, as Kivu in DRC.
- Angola, Sierra Leone, and Liberia are main targets for re-exported counterfeit electric goods coming from the French speaking countries of the survey.
- Malawi and Ivory Coast are mainly targeted by the English group.
- Others are targeted by both groups with similar levels of re-exports, except for Burkina Faso and Benin, which receive more re-exports coming from Ghana or Kenya (Burkina Faso) and from Cameroon (Benin) than the opposite.

Likewise, the survey established that twenty six African countries are main targets for re-exported domestically/locally produced electrical counterfeit goods:

- Among them, Guinea, Niger and Ghana are largely ahead followed by Cameroon, Sudan and Uganda.
- Republic of the Congo is the only African country of the survey supposedly using the quasi totality of its homemade production of electrical fakes with no re-export at all
- Nigeria has many target countries in Africa, but is itself the target country of no other African country.
- Nigeria is estimated to re-export half of its domestically/locally produced counterfeit electrical products to other African countries.

Conclusion

For the first time in Africa, an assessment of the situation regarding counterfeiting of electrical products is available. The most counterfeit products, their consequences on the economy and people's lives, their market share, their supply flows whether they are imported or produced locally and their main clients are henceforth identified.

This picture of reality based on the direct field experience of interviewees from different socio professional categories and perspectives was the necessary first step to any initiative aiming at fighting more broadly against counterfeiting of electrical products.

Based on these results, the first conclusion is that **counterfeiting of most common electrical products is widely spread in all African countries, representing 40% to 80% of their markets**. At such a scale, as interviewees of the survey stated, the **negative economical impact is the first consequence** both for the countries (considering the impediment for development, costs of damages or lack of revenues from taxes...) and manufacturers (considering the unbeatable competition counterfeiting represents or the weakening of market prices).

However, **the situation is well apprehended by all stakeholders of the sector** as all professionals have been struggling against counterfeiting for a very long time, from origin to distribution, the networks are known; impacts are well identified and professionals are mainly calling for two major shifts.

The first one is expected from authorities through **reinforcement of legal protections and actions against counterfeiters**. For example, we registered many **calls for stiffer borders controls**, especially when imports come from countries identified in this survey as supplying more than 60 % of counterfeits. They also wish to see **more repression against counterfeiters** (through increased seizures, destructions or sentencing) targeting distribution network such as those identified in the survey. In some countries, **new laws against counterfeiting could also be promulgated** to reinforce the legal basis of such actions.

The second shift is expected from main manufacturers and brands of the sector. Interviewees call for a **better coordination between manufacturers to raise awareness through targeted campaigns**. And the survey has identified **three priority audience** categories:

- **Electricians, contractors and vocational centers:**
As installers or future-installers of electrical products, this audience is at the forefront to deal with counterfeiting.
- **Main end-users like companies and administrations:**
As primary "victims" of counterfeits, they are also a priority audience for such campaigns.
- **Media:**
Training and teaching media about the role and importance of electrical components in people's daily life seems obvious as they are the most capable of vulgarizing and diffusing the information to the greater number.

Whether professionals may buy counterfeits because of a lack of awareness on their dangers or insufficient knowledge about how to recognize them or which are the right distribution networks, such campaigns seem indeed necessary.

Their objective would be to demonstrate that financial losses caused by malfunctioning counterfeits will always be greater than the price of a genuine electrical component. Not to mention legal responsibilities that one could face in the case of corporal damages caused by counterfeits that they have willingly or unwillingly bought or installed.

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Useful links on Electrical Counterfeiting:

- On Google : <http://bit.ly/16Z96kz>
- On Wikipedia : http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Journ%C3%A9_mondiale_anti-contrefa%C3%A7on
- International & governmental associations:
<http://www.minefe.gouv.fr/sdfervices/rap10/100412rapunifab.p>
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<http://www.schneider-electric.com/sites/corporate/en/support/counterfeiting/counterfeiting.page>
<http://www.unodc.org/toc/en/crimes/counterfeit-goods.html>
<http://www.icc-ccs.org/news/359-counterfeit-electrical-goods-are-shocking>

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