Global Gateway

Delivering Impact

Partnerships Advancing African Economic Integration

Highlights from the
Team Europe - Technical Assistance Facility to Support the AfCFTA

EU-TAF
Phase I -**2022 - 2025**

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Highlights of the Achievements of the Team Europe Initiative -Technical Assistance Facility to Support the AfCFTA

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Table of Contents

A Message from the European Union Delegation 4

Where Partnership Meets Progress: Perspective from the AfCFTA Secretariat 6

About the Progreamme 10

Our Results at a Glance.....11

A Team Europe Approach: Insight from a Financing Partner 13

Areas of Intervention: Advancing Africa's Collective Growth 15

The AfCFTA Secretariat 16

African Union Commission 19

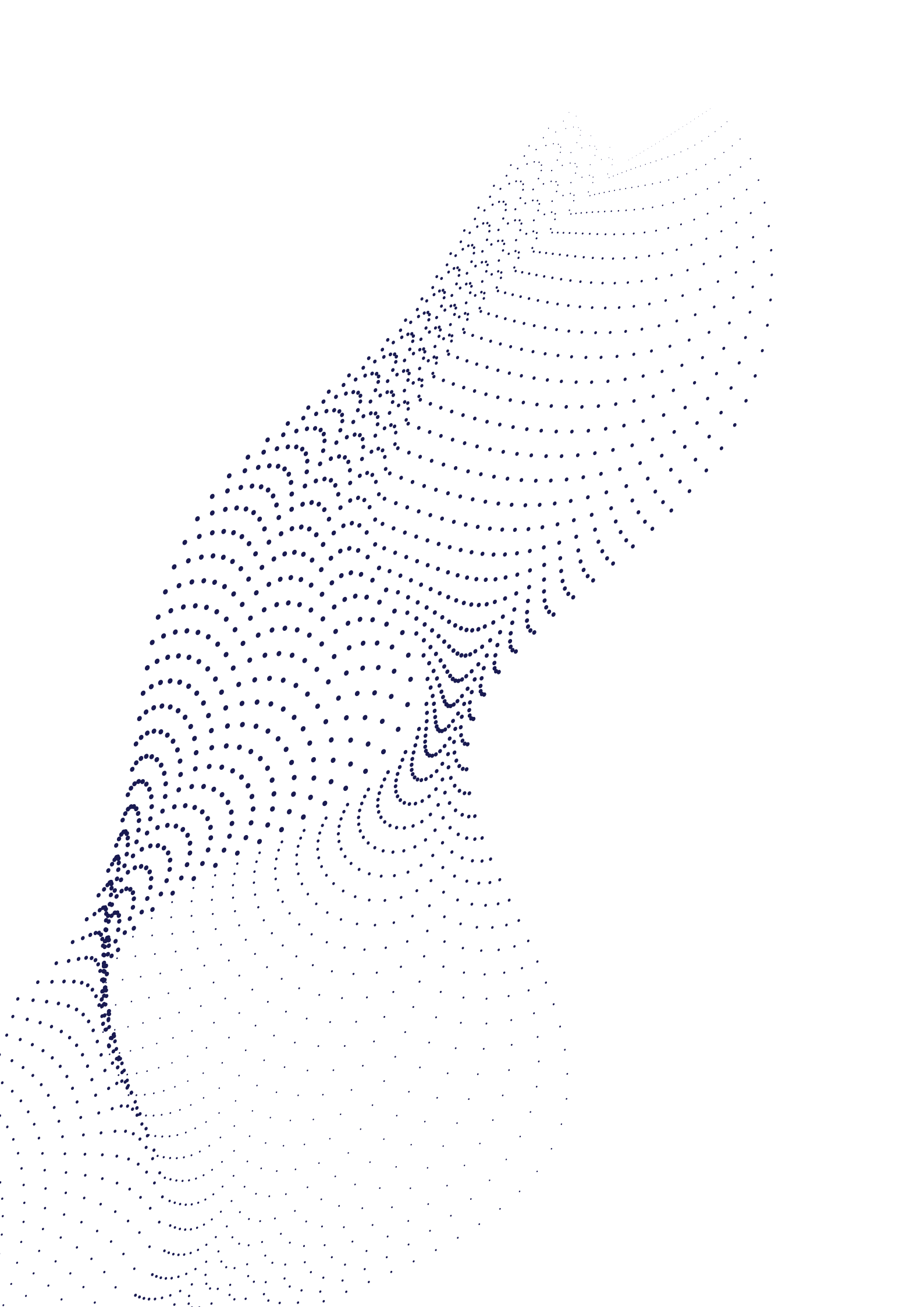
Supporting the African Mining Vision 24

Building Ridgnal Bridges for Continental Trade 26

Turning Policy to Business Opportunities: Supporting the private Sector 28

Advancing National Readiness, One Cpimtry at a Time 32

Looking Ahead 37



A MESSAGE FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION DELEGATION

Gianluca Azzoni

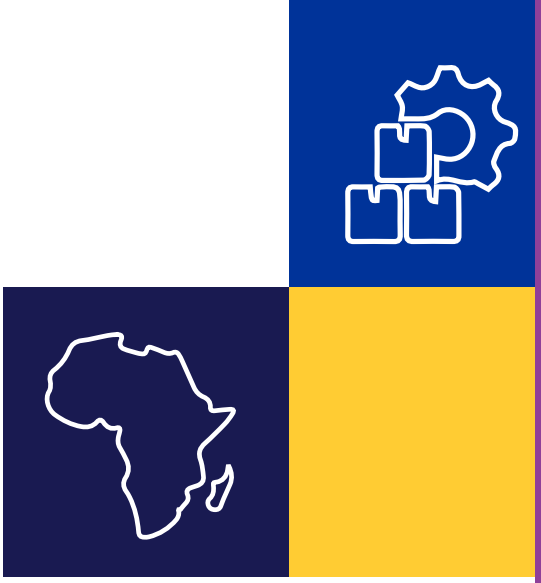
Head of Policy and Cooperation
European Union Delegation to the African Union

Strategic Partnerships and Negotiation: The Engine to Drive African Economic Integration

Since 2020, the European Union has worked closely with the African Union to support the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). This initiative holds great potential for the continent's economic growth. Through the Team Europe approach, we have combined the efforts of the European Union, its Member States, development finanancial institutions and the private sector to provide focused support to this key project.

The AfCFTA offers significant opportunities for Africa and Europe, Africa's most important trade and investment partner. Economic collaboration has been essential to the European Union's own integration, so we are eager to be part of Africa's journey. The AfCFTA Secretariat has been at the forefront of advancing this important agenda, and the EU has contributed by sharing resources, tools, and expertise at the continental, regional, and national levels.

Our efforts have helped ensure that the AfCFTA framework, what I like to call the toolbox, includes essential protocols for trade in goods and services, with particular attention to women and youth inclusion. As we move from negotiations to practical action, our priority is to ensure that the benefits of the AfCFTA reach every corner of the continent. Customs and tax offices at the national level are being equipped to use these new tools, while institutions at the regional and continental levels are ready to fully engage with the opportunities this historic trade agreement brings.



Africa's internal trade is already increasing, and I am certain that this will continue, fostering economic growth and job creation across the continent. By working with the AfCFTA Secretariat, the African Union Commission, and other African Union bodies, we are helping to ensure this economic shift takes hold.

The EU is a reliable trade and investment partner for Africa. The stable, rules-based trade framework that the EU offers is more crucial than ever at a time of geopolitical volatility. Through our network of trade agreements across Africa and most generous preference schemes, we are working hand in hand to diversify trade, foster industrialisation across Africa, and attract Foreign Direct Investment that can transform economies.

Our commitment to Africa's economic development remains steadfast. The foundations laid in this first phase will guide further progress, and I look forward to witnessing the positive outcomes that will unfold as the AfCFTA continues to advance trade and create new opportunities for all.

The Team Europe

By pooling their resources, the EU, its Member States, and their development organisations come together under a single strategic framework, the Global Gateway. Team Europe Initiatives provide more coordinated, coherent, and effective technical assistance than any single partner could achieve alone.

"Through this programme, we are supporting the AfCFTA at every level, ensuring the tools are in place so that Africa's internal trade can grow. This is about creating new opportunities for young people, businesses and countries across the continent."

WHERE PARTNERSHIP MEETS PROGRESS

Perspective from the AfCFTA Secretariat

Dr. Tsotesi Makong
Director of Coordination and Programmes
AfCFTA Secretariat

The contribution of the EU-TAF programme to the AfCFTA Secretariat has been strategic and transformative, significantly strengthening our capacity to advance Africa's economic integration through trade. Its flexibility allows the Secretariat to respond swiftly to Member States' demands, making it agile and responsive during negotiations.

The interventions, have been crucial in enabling the Secretariat to steer complex negotiations and establish the foundation for effective implementation. It has also strengthened our institutional capacity in planning, reporting, and stakeholder coordination, enabling tailored support to Member States, Regional Economic Communities, and the private sector. This collaboration exemplifies how partnership can translate the AfCFTA vision into measurable progress.

The Facility's assistance has been instrumental in advancing negotiations of key Protocols and developing practical tools, such as the Non-Tariff Barriers (NTB) Online Reporting Mechanism, which helps traders and governments identify and address trade obstacles in real time. EU-TAF's contribution to analytical work, including sectoral studies on Trade in Services, supports evidence-based policymaking. Logistical and coordination support for high-level meetings that inform decision-making, as well as continent-wide workshops, has strengthened ownership, awareness, and inclusivity. Notably, support under EU-TAF contributed to the adoption of a unique Protocol on Digital Trade. These efforts ensure our collective work is well-informed, participatory, and impactful.

> *"This collaboration demonstrates the strength of partnership in turning the AfCFTA vision into tangible progress. The implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement will consolidate investments made so far, benefiting not only African countries but also European investors operating on the African continent"*

As the AfCFTA transitions to full implementation, it requires not only policy frameworks but also practical tools, institutional readiness, and human capacity at all levels. EU-TAF's demand-driven approach is especially valuable as it enables the AfCFTA Secretariat to respond to emerging priorities. During the initial phase of the programme, the Secretariat, in collaboration with Member States and partners, has established frameworks to channel support toward achieving tangible results. National Implementation Committees provide a structured, accountable mechanism for overseeing national-level implementation.

The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) facilitate regional coordination. Numerous such frameworks, covering sectors such as trade, women, youth, and digital trade, are essential vehicles for implementing the AfCFTA's work programmes. Continued partnership is vital to sustain momentum, ensure stakeholder coherence, and realise the AfCFTA's vision of a unified, prosperous African market. The implementation phase will consolidate investments so far, benefiting African countries, businesses, and European investors in Africa.

We value this collaboration and look forward to building on it. The EU and its Member States' ongoing support is crucial, especially in safeguarding the multilateral trading system. Close coordination with the Project Management Unit within the Secretariat has ensured smooth daily operations. Together, these efforts reflect the partnership spirit driving the AfCFTA's progress and Africa's broader integration.

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

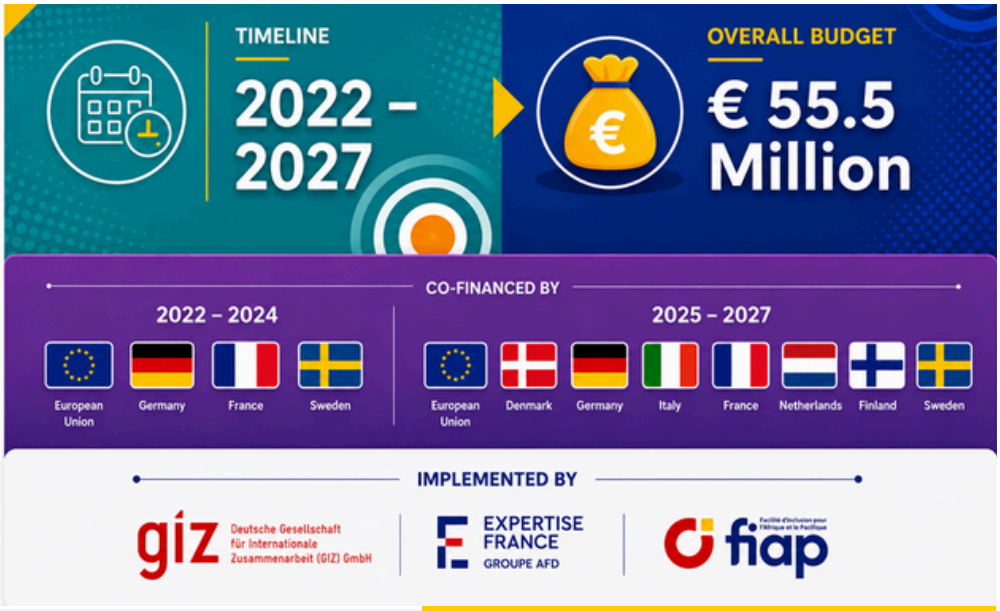
Small steps on a long journey to meaningful impact

The AfCFTA is the world's largest free trade area by membership uniting 1.4 billion people across 54 countries under a shared framework for a single continental market. Its potential to reshape Africa's economic landscape, generate jobs, and promote sustainable growth is well documented. Translating that potential into practice, however, requires long-term commitment, strong institutions, and coordinated support.

Through the Team Europe Technical Assistance Facility (EU-TAF), the European Union and its Member States have provided targeted, demand-driven support to the AfCFTA Secretariat, the African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities, and national Governments since 2022. The programme is designed so that assistance is responsive to real-time priorites rather than pre - determened plans.

This publication documents the results of that partnership over three years: negotiations advanced, institutions strengthened, officials trained, and businesses equipped to trade under the new continental framework.

KEY PROGRAMME FACTS



OUR MISSION

Boost African economic integrtation through realisation of the AfCFTA

OUR APPPROACH

Deliver tailored technical assistance on a demand-driven approach with hands-on coordination through a project management unit that is embedded within the AfCFTA Secretariat.

OUR RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Driving ACFTA implementation through collaboration, capacity building and results that matter.

5
STRATEGIES
National ACFTA implementation strategies developed.

6
COORDINATION MECHANISMS
National and regional coordination mechanisms supported.

900+
TRAINED
Government officials, private sector representatives, and trade practitioners trained on AfCFTA implementation.

50+
OUTPUTS
Development of policies, strategies, studies, and regulatory frameworks.

40
NTBs MAPPED
Regulatory non-tariff barriers mapped across 9 ECCAS countries.

4,700+
PEOPLE REACHED
Outreach through workshops and exchange formats at continental, regional, and national levels.

6 RECs
Direct technical assistance to Regional Economic Communities.

165,000+
PEOPLE REACHED
Individuals reached through targeted communication and awareness initiatives.

7 PROTOCOLS
Supported negotiations, preparations, development, and adoption/annexes across all seven ACFTA Protocols.

716
SMES TRAINED
Small and medium enterprises engaged through programme activities.

80+
EXPERTS MOBLIZED
Mobilised technical, legal, and policy expertise to deliver programme outputs.

Delivering Technical Assistance

tailored to Partners' needs

A TEAM EUROPE APPROACH: INSIGHT FROM A FINANCING PARTNER

FUAD FARAH
First Secretary, Regional Programme Manager, Economic Integration & Trade
Embassy of Sweden
Addis Ababa

Sweden's involvement in the EU-TAF is a reflection of the deep commitment to Africa's economic integration and trade development.

Sweden has been dedicated to encouraging collaboration that moves beyond individual interventions, creating collective progress. At the core of this collaboration is the shared belief that Africa's future lies in the strength of intra-African trade and regional integration. Our efforts, in alignment with our African partners, are focused on building a rules-based free market that will not only benefit Africa but also open opportunities for international partners.
In the past two decades, Sweden has contributed significantly to capacity building across Africa, training over 12,000 public officials in areas such as trade law, policy, and negotiations. This has equipped government officials and private sector representatives with the skills needed to navigate complex trade agreements, like the AfCFTA. Through our partnerships, such as the one with the Trade Policy Centre in in Africa in Tanzania, we are laying a foundation for stronger governance and more effective trade systems across the continent.

Beyond formal trade structures, Sweden is also commited to ensure informal traders, particularly women are not left behind. By simplifying trade regimes and providing targeted capacity-building programmes, we are opening new pathways for these traders to thrive in a more structured, supportive environment. In this regard, the adoption of the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade has been a significant milestone, and we remain dedicated to seeing it fully realised in practice.

In the past two decades, Sweden has contributed significantly to capacity building across Africa, training over 12,000 public officials in areas such as trade law, policy, and negotiations.

Looking ahead, our interventions through the EU-TAF and the larger Team Europe Intitaitive supporting African Economic Integration will continue to focus on two important areas: scaling up trade facilitation and investing in infrastructure. As we continue on this journey, our guiding principle remains clear: we are here to support African-led strategies. By working in partnership with African institutions, and as part of Team Europe, we aim to contribute to a continent where trade flows freely, economies are strengthened, and opportunities are shared. Our continued commitment from the initial stages of the EU-TAF reflects our confidence in the collaboration and our determination to see Africa's economic potential fully realised.
We look forward to the continued progress, knowing that the collective impact of our efforts will shape a more prosperous, connected Africa.

Empowering businesses and entrepreneurs through capacity-building programmes that ensure readiness for cross-border trade.

Supporting targeted initiatives that equip SMEs, women, and youth with the tools and resources to thrive under AfCFTA.

Building effective communication channels to raise awareness of AfCFTA benefits and encourage broader participation.

Mobilising technical assistance to address specific challenges and deliver impactful interventions for economic integration.

Working alongside governments and institutions to promote inclusive trade policies, fostering market access and advancing intra-African trade.

“A river is filled by many streams.”
AFRICAN PROVERB

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Advancing Africa’s Collective Economic Transformation

Since 2022,EU-TAF has provided targeted,demand-driven support to the AfCFTA Secretariat across three core areas: advancing negotitations on the protocols, developing practical tools needed for implementation, and strengthening theSecretariat’s own institutional capacity.

AfCFTA Secretariat

The AfCFTA Secretariat is advancing one of the most ambitious negotiating agendas. EU-TAF has been part of that journey with support that has included institutional strengthening, throgh moblising technical experts and conducting analytical studies across the full breadth of that agenda: Rules of Origin, Trade in Services, the Investment Protocol, Competition Policy frameworks, Dispute Settlement mechanisms, the Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade, Protocol on Digital Trade, and Intellectual Property Rights. This body of work has reinforced the Secretariat's own efforts, ensuring each Protocol is grounded in evidence and is technically robust as Africa moves from negotiation to implementation.

7
Protocols supported

25
Servics schedules adoptd

8
IPR Annexes adopted

1 **Rules of Origin (RoO)** are the technical backbone of **Trade in Goods**. Product-specific rules are essential to ensure that African producers can truly benefit from reduced tariffs and expanded market access. EU-TAF mobilised experts, who contributed directly to these negotiations, providing the technical rigour needed to progress. Negotiations advanced significantly, with almost all tariff lines concluded except for the remaining apparel and textile lines, and Member States are increasingly able to apply preferential treatment to qualifying goods. Additionally, EU TAF has contributed to strengthening the capacity of some state parties on the AfCFTA RoO.

2 The AfCFTA Protocol on **Trade in Services** is key to opening Africa's growing services economy. The EU-TAF has supported negotiations, review, and adoption of 25 schedules of commitments. It helped develop regulatory frameworks for sectors like financial, communications, transport, and tourism, helping unlock the Agreement's potential. Support for mutual recognition agreement (MRA) guidelines aims to streamline recognition of professionals and qualifications across borders. As part of the Team Europe Initiative, EU-TAF provided technical support to advance key legal frameworks for Trade in Services.

3 The **AfCFTA Protocol on Competition** ensures the enlarged continental market operates on fair and consistent terms, preventing anti-competitive practices. EU-TAF supported the adoption of the Protocol and key institutional frameworks, including the Competition Tribunal and Competition Network, helping to establish the foundations of a fair and transparent continental market. The programme also supported measures that strengthen the capacities of competition authorities in Angola, Cabo Verde, and Mozambique, supporting effective the journey to effective implementation.

4 The **AfCFTA Protocol on Investment** lays the foundation for a more predictable and business-friendly investment climate across Africa. EU-TAF's technical support contributed to the negotiations, helping build a framework that balances investor protections with national development priorities. Following the successful adoption of the protol the EU-TAF continued supporting steps toward implementation such as gap analysis studies, that asses legal compatibility and the development of structured reform roadmaps to align national investment frameworks with the protocol's oblications.

5

Dispute Settlement mechanisms give the AfCFTA enforceability and credibility. Without aclear, accessible process for resolving trade disputes, commitments risk remaining on paper.

The EU-TAF has been supporting capacity-building initiatives on the AfCFTA Dispute Settlement Mechanism targeting government officials, trade experts, legal officers, the private sector, and state party representatives. The support is helping build adispute settlement system. The work is ongoing to operationalise its institutions and proceduressothat traders and governments have a functional mechanism to rely on.

6

The AfCFTA **Protocol on Digital Trade** is helping shape Africa's digital future by creating common rules and standards for cross-border digital commerce. With technical support from EU-TAF, the Protocol and its eight annexes were successfully adopted, positioning the AfCFTA among the world's leading trade agreements on digital trade. EU-TAF also supported countries to assess regulatory gaps, strengthen capacity, and develop action plans to align national frameworks with the Protocol and unlock new opportunities in the digital economy.

7

The AfCFTA **Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade** is breaking new ground by making the inclusion of women and young entrepreneurs a legally binding part of Africa's single market. With support from EU-TAF, the Protocol was adopted and implementation efforts are underway, including the development of national action plans and targeted support programmes. A major milestone was the adoption of regulations that will provide preferential market access for small-scale cross-border transactions, helping more women and youth participate in continental trade.

8

Intellectual Prodperty Rights underpin the innovation, creativity, and knowledge economy on which Africa's future growth depends. Establishing clear continental IP frameworks gives creators, innovators, and businesses the confidence to invest, develop, and trade across borders. EU-TAF supported the negotiations and adoption of 8 IPR annexes on trademarks, copyrights and related rights, patents, utility models, industrial designs, plant variety protection, geographical indications, and traditional knowledge, traditional cultural expressions, and genetic resources.

Non-Tariff Barriers: From Reporting to Resolution

Non-tariff barriers (NTBs), such as administrative delays, regulatory inconsistencies, and border inefficiencies, can be as restrictive as tariffs and are often more challenging to address. To ensure NTBs are identified and resolved effectively, the AfCFTA Secretariat developed an online reporting mechanism enabling traders to report barriers in real time. National focal points coordinate the resolution of reported NTBs. To ensure the mechanism's effectiveness, the AfCFTA Secretariat has been building the capacities of the national monitoring committees.

The EU-TAF has supported this process, from developing the online mechanism to delivering trainings. Complementing this owe have supported ECCAS Secretar to map 40 regulatory NTBs across nine memberstates, providing a structured baseline for targeted reform.

Institutional Strengthening of the AfCFTA Secretariat

As the custodian of the AfCFTA Agreement, the Secretariat has the mandate to coordinate negotiations and steer implementation. To support this work, the EU-TAF collaborated with the AfCFTA Secretariat to strengthen internal systems across strategic planning, progress monitoring, and reporting. Targeted capacity-building programmes better equipped Secretariat staff to respond to evolving needs as the AfCFTA transitions from negotiation to full implementation. Cross-directorate coordination mechanisms were also strengthened, enabling the Secretariat's directorates and thematic portfolios to work more coherently toward shared objectives.

The collaboration extended to supporting Member States preparation of AfCFTA implementation commitments. Through policy advisory services, technical workshops, and capacity-building initiatives tailored to national readiness levels, significant advancements have been delivered. Key achievements include the establishment of National Implementation Committees in several countries, which are formal coordination mechanisms that provide accountable, structured oversight of AfCFTA commitments at the national level and serve as the interface between the Secretariat and national government ministries.

African Union Commission

In addition to the AfCFTA Secretariat, the African Union Commission's Department of Economic Development, Trade, Tourism, Industry and Minerals (ETTIM) is a key continental partner. Its two directorates, the Directorate of Economic Development, Integration and Trade (EDIT) and the Directorate of Industry, Minerals, Entrepreneurship and Tourism (IMET), address the broader continental frameworks that underpin and complement the AfCFTA, such as the Agenda 2063 and the African Economic Community. EU-TAF has supported both directorates.

Measuring Integration: The African Synthesised Regional Integration Index (ASRII)

Credible measurement of integration progress is essential for evidence-based policymaking. A review of the previous AMRII instrument identified the need for a more comprehensive, up-to-date tool. With EU-TAF support, the EDIT Directorate developed the African Synthesised Regional Integration Index (ASRII), a composite index that consolidates multiple dimensions of regional integration, including progress on AfCFTA implementation, into a single, validated instrument.

Developed through a rigorous consultative process involving the eight AU-recognised Regional Economic Communities, specialised experts, and development partners, ASRII provides African policymakers with a credible, data-driven baseline from which to measure and communicate progress in integration towards the African Economic Community and the Agenda 2063.

In July 2025, the African Integration Report 2025 has been published based on the ASRII methodology. Going forward, the African Union Commission has been mandated by Heads of States to monitor and communicate progress in bi-annual African Integration Reports. EU-TAF will continue supporting this process, including through facilitating joint data collection by the African Union Commission and Regional Economic Communities via a digital platform.

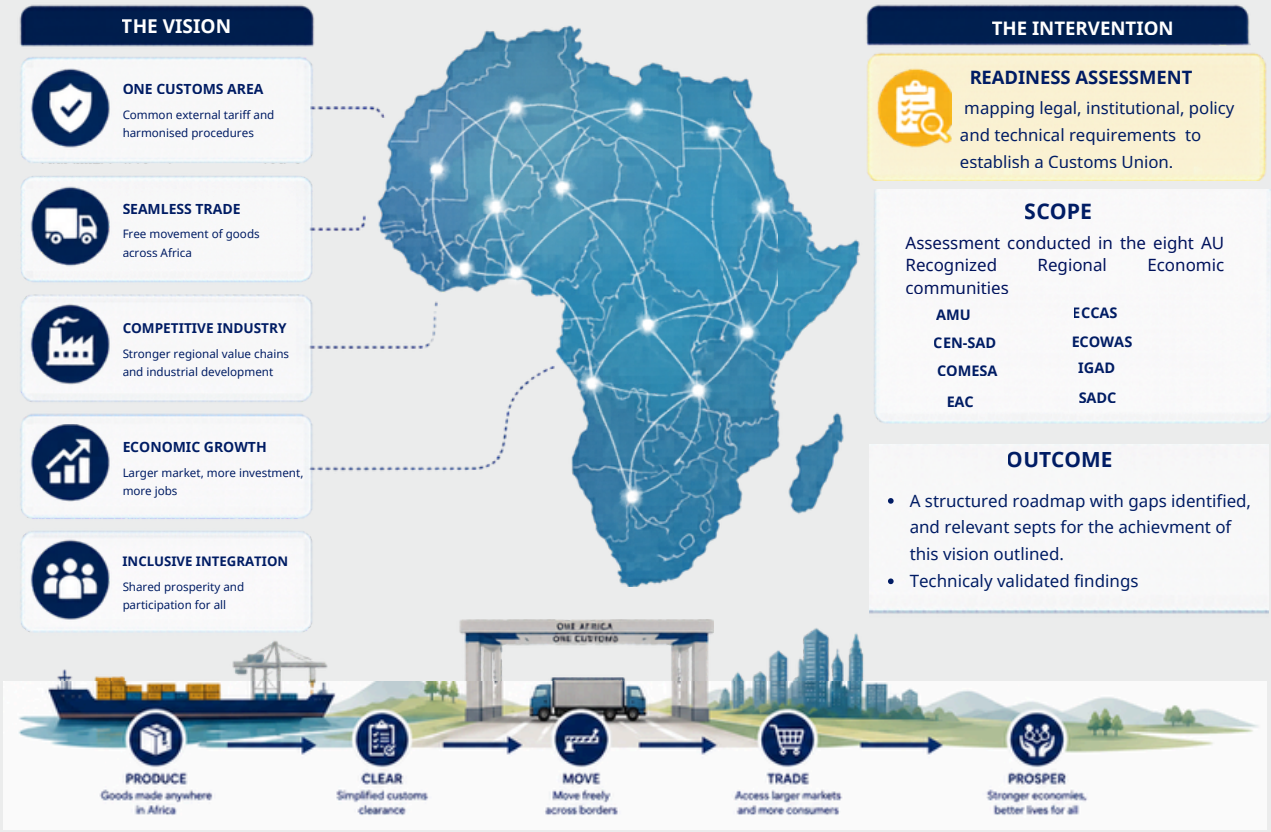
A continental strategy to diversify exports

Increasing African trade requires expanding the range and volume of what African countries produce and export. EU-TAF mobilised experts to deliver a continental export diversification strategy led by the EDIT Directorate. This strategy covers intra-African trade, regional value chains, private-sector market access, and exports to global markets. The strategy provides Member States and the Commission with a shared continental framework for prioritising productive capacity and targeting market opportunities.

Assessing Readiness for an African Customs Union and Common Market

The long-horizon commitments enshrined in the Abuja Treaty, most notably the establishment of an African Customs Union and the eventual realisation of a fully functional Common Market, represent transformative milestones in Africa's continental integration journey. Achieving these ambitions demands not only political will but also sustained, systematic, and technically grounded preparation across the continent's diverse economic and institutional landscapes.

Recognising this imperative, the EU-TAF has supported the EDIT directorate to conduct a comprehensive readiness assessment, designed to map the full spectrum of legal, institutional, and technical requirements necessary for the progressive establishment of a Customs Union spanning all eight AU-recognised Regional Economic Communities (RECs).
The study outlined the gaps and sequencing needed to progress toward these commitments. Its findings were technically validated in 2025 providing the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities a structured roadmap for the next phase of integration.



Connecting African Entrepreneurs to the Continental Market

The AfCFTA's potential will only be realised if Africa's MSMEs, which account for over 80% of businesses on the continent, can access, navigate, and benefit from the enlarged market. The AU-ETTIM has been working to build SMEs' capacity to trade across borders. Since its launch in 2022, the EU-TAF has supported initiatives such as the Enterprise Africa Network (EAN), a platform for SMEs and start-ups to develop skills, access training, and build continental connections to help achieve this goal. Through expert and resource mobilisation for three continental SME Forums, which provided training in SME financing, facilitated connections between businesses and potential buyers and suppliers, and built cross-border networks, the programme supported the initiatives under the IMET directorate.

SMEs connected through the African Women in Processing (AWIP) programme and the Youth Start- Up Programme received support to participate in the Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF) in 2023 and 2025. At the 2023 IATF in Cairo, the AWIP Pavilion showcased, in addition to exhibitions, the AWIP Forum and key training sessions. The EAN fellowship programme has prepared entrepreneurs for the Intra- African Trade Fair (IATF) 2025, which took place in Algiers.

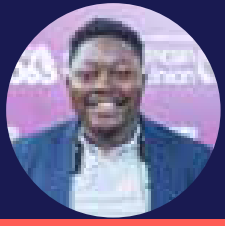
The entrepreneurs were ready for investment and scaling after a one-year fellowship, as demonstrated by the deals secured during IATF. A good example is General Biotech, a Cameroonian firm supported via the MSME Forum and part of the EAN fellowship programme, which took part in a one-year programme aimed at boosting export readiness and growth, and secured a USD 1 million deal from the Algerian government-owned company to produce and distribute solar-powered baby incubators.

We got a lot of trade deals by participating at the AWIP Exhibition at the Intra-African Trade Fair. We also got trained by the African Union on strategies to boost our sales stream. Through the African Union Commission and the AWIP Initiative, we have been assisted to gain access into new markets that we ordinarily wont be able to access.

Rosie Kayitesi
Founder of
Kashlash Limited
Rwanda

We signed a partnership agreement with Condor, one of Algeria's leading manufacturing companies to cover research and development support, inancing and commercialization of our neo-natal innovation in Algeria. The importance of the African Union MSME Programmes is clear and impactful to those of us who have participated.

Stephen Mouafo Foguieng
Founder of
General Biotech
Cameroon



RON OSMAN OMAR
Director, Industry Minerals Entrepreneurship & Tourism African Union, ETTIM Department

EMPOWERING AFRICAN SMES FROM LOCAL MARKETS TO THE GLOBAL STAGE

Across Africa, small and medium enterprises are the backbone of economic growth. The EU-TAF's targeted, practical support is helping them punch above their weight.
A standout initiative has been the African Women in Processing programme (AWIP), which brought women entrepreneurs from across the continent to the Intra-African Trade Fair in Niamey. Showcasing products spanning agribusiness, fashion, and minerals, these entrepreneurs didn't just participate; they won. The initiative opened doors to broader markets and tangible new opportunities for women-led businesses that had long been overlooked.

Equally significant is the Enterprise Africa Network (EAN), an initiative equipping SMEs with technical support, market intelligence, and direct connections to financial institutions, including Afreximbank. The goal is straightforward: ensure African businesses have what they need to grow, compete, and thrive not just regionally, but also globally.

Looking ahead, momentum is building. The first cohort of the EAN fellows, comprising 50 SMEs focused on youth- and women-led enterprises, participated in the 2025 Intra-African Trade Fair. SMEs have been prepared for the trade fair through training in intellectual property rights and financial literacy, ensuring these businesses arrive export-ready. The next frontier for us is to support SMEs through special economic zones, encouraging clustering and business collaboration.

"The work is clear: build the market, ready the products, and ensure no entrepreneur is left behind.

Agend 2063 The Africa We Want

Supporting the African Mining Vision

These assessments are crucial to identify intervention areas, the findings that show us where the gaps are, and this is a crucial step forward to achieving what we call, Minerals for Development.

Dr. Marit Kitaw
Former Interim Director
AMDC

The African Mining Vision (AMV) envisions a mining sector that catalyses broad-based economic growth, social equity, and environmental stewardship. The African Minerals Development Centre (AMDC) is an AU specialised agency mandated to support African nations in harnessing their mineral wealth, including the green minerals critical to the global energy transition.

To establish a continental baseline of mineral governance, the AMDC has been conduting country-level assesments of mineral policy frameworks and governance structures. EU-TAF has been supporting these assesments by mobilising experts who work alongside national stakeholders, including poicy makers, academics and representatives of artisnal miners, in nine countries across two rounds:
Ghana , Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Morocco, Zambia, and Cameroon in the first round; and Algeria, Madagascar, and Uganda in the second round.

Each assessment identifies governance strengths, gaps and pathways for improving how mineral walth is managed and deployed for national deveopment.

“You cannot climb a baobab tree with one hand.”

AFRICAN PROVERB

Building Regional Bridges for Continental Trade

The AfCFTA explicitly recognises RECs as the building blocs of African economic integration, positioning them as the primary vehicles through which continental trade commitments are translated into regional and national action. It is within this framework that EU-TAF's direct technical assistance to six RECs between 2022 and 2025 takes on particular significance — each engagement carefully tailored to their specific AfCFTA implementation priorities. From strategy development and reviews to capacity-building programmes and technical advisory work, EU-TAF supported initiatives designed to align regional trade frameworks with the AfCFTA's continental objectives, strengthening the very institutions upon which the success of Africa's integration agenda depends.

01

The East African Community -EAC

- Update Regional AfCFTA Implementation strategy to include phase II topics.
- Establishment of the AfCFTA Implementation unit and a document repository
- ToT on Rules of Origin for Customs officials and private sector
- Regional consultations on AU commodity Strategy

02

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa - COMESA

Development of a policy and analytical framework for extending simplified Trade Regiome to services with special focus on women and youth dominated sectors

03

Economic Community of West African States - ECOWAS

- Alignment of competition law, ECOWAS Investment Code and Trade in Goods Frameworks with the AfCFTA
- Capacity building on competition policy

04

Inter - Governmental Authority on Development - IGAD

- Training manual on Customs and Border Management
- Senitisation and ToT on domestication of IGAD regional trade policy in alignment with the AfCFTA
- Integration of cross border trade in security governance

05

Economic Community of Central African States - ECCAS

- Mapping of regulatory and procedural trade barriers in 9 countries
- Establishment of ECCAS Sub - Committee on Trade Facilitation and NTBs
- NTB Elimination action plan

06

South African Development Community - SADC

- .Development of regional AfCFTA coordination plan
- Development of regional AfCFTA implementation plan

Turning Policy into Business Opportunities

Supporting the Private Sector

Active participation of the private sector is crucial for the AfCFTA to succeed. Raising awareness of the agreement's opportunities and equipping business support organisations with the tools to assist their members are essential to implementation. EU-TAF collaborated with four regional and continental private sector organisations, providing direct support for their AfCFTA engagement programmes.

PACCI — Pan African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Continental)

EU-TAF strengthened PACCI's institutional capacity through mobilising experts to develop
a comprehensive outreach strategy and implement training and awareness raising measures. 20 heads of national chambers of commerce were trained on AfCFTA's benefits, with a particular focus on Rules of Origin and the AfCFTA e-Tariff Book. Selected chambers were supported in developing their own awareness-raising strategies. A Chamber Model Innovation framework was developed to enable chambers to better facilitate regional, inclusive, and sustainable trade within their membership.

EABC — East African Business Council (East Africa)

EU-TAF provided targeted technical assistance to strengthen EABC's institutional capacity, including the development of a regional policy advocacy instrument and a mapping of the EAC private sector's priority areas for AfCFTA engagement. A high-level dialogue on regional AfCFTA implementation was facilitated with the EAC, alongside awareness-raising and capacity-building for companies and private sector associations on AfCFTA digital trade and regional value chain linkages in Kenya ,Uganda, Rwanda ,Tanzania and Burundi.

RCC-UEMOA — Regional Consular Chamber (West Africa)

A series of practical training sessions was delivered for chambers that are members of the RCC-UEMOA, focusing on the practical tools that businesses need to trade under the AfCFTA: the Non-Tariff Barrier Reporting Mechanism, Rules of Origin, and the AfCFTA e-Tariff Book. Sessions were expert-led and hands-on, ensuring that chamber staff could apply the tools with their members.

CBC — COMESA Business Council: Giving the Private Sector a Stronger Voice in African Trade

Spanning 21 countries from Eswatini to Tunisia, the COMESA Business Council (CBC) exists for one purpose: to ensure the private sector is not just present in Africa's trade conversations but heard.
As the AfCFTA has reshaped the continent's trade landscape, CBC has worked to ensure businesses understand both the opportunities and the responsibilities that come with it. A critical part of that work has been reaching communities that were previously left out of the conversation, particularly Francophone member states.

For years, the absence of French-speaking capacity limited CBC's ability to engage eight Francophone countries in the region. That gap has now been closed. Through expertise mobilised by the EU- TAF, CBC has been able to successfully extend its AfCFTA training and sensitisation efforts to these business communities.

A highlight of this outreach was a workshop in Tunisia, which brought together stakeholders from Francophone countries to tackle practical AfCFTA issues; rules of origin, non-tariff barriers, and how businesses can act on new trade opportunities. The response was clear: when the conversation is accessible, businesses engage.

Building on this momentum, CBC is developing a business guide to the AfCFTA to give enterprises the tools they need to navigate the evolving trade environment independently. A series of practical training sessions was delivered for chambers that are members of the RCC- UEMOA, focusing on the practical tools that businesses need to trade under the AfCFTA: the Non- Tariff Barrier Reporting Mechanism, Rules of Origin, and the AfCFTA e-Tariff Book. Sessions were expert-led and hands-on, ensuring that chamber staff could apply the tools with their members.

To create meaningful and lasting change, the emphasis must be placed on strengthening institutions that can continue to support the private sector long after project-specific activities have concluded," .

Teddy Soobramanien,
CEO, COMESA
Business Council

Kolawole Sofola,
Director of Trade
ECOWAS Commission

ECOWAS: Strengthening Trade and Investment Cooperation

The partnership between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the EU-TAF has proven to be a valuable force in advancing regional economic cooperation and facilitating the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Kolawole Sofola, Acting Director of Trade at ECOWAS, shed light on how EU-TAF's targeted support has strengthened regional efforts to build a stable trade and investment environment.

SOLID FOUNDATIONS FOR REGIONAL PROGRESS

ECOWAS has made considerable strides towards aligning its regional investment framework with the broader Pan-African Investment Code under the AfCFTA. Our regional investment policy was already well aligned with the Pan-African framework, This alignment enabled ECOWAS to confidently enter AfCFTA negotiations, ensuring its member states were well-prepared to advance shared regional objectives. The assistance provided by EU-TAF has played a key role in ensuring this continuity. ECOWAS coordinated effectively with its member states through technical advisors' support, helping them meet their regional commitments. This technical support was a valuable resource in helping to bring national laws into line with new continental agreements.

PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The support extended by EU-TAF was not limited to policy alignment. It also addressed some of the most pressing operational challenges faced by ECOWAS during the AfCFTA negotiations. Technical advisors provided hands-on assistance across various activities, including preparation for regional negotiations and consultations. Their involvement went beyond typical advisory roles. These experts were deeply involved in all stages, from preparation to direct engagement with our stakeholders. One such example was the work undertaken with the Regional Competition Authority in Ghana. Technical advisors accompanied ECOWAS teams on the ground, ensuring the smooth integration of regional and national policies. This hands-on approach ensured the continuity of effort from policy development to on-the-ground engagement, allowing ECOWAS to focus on its priorities consistently.

A CLEAR PATH FORWARD

With adopting the ECOWAS Implementation Strategy for the AfCFTA in July 2023, ECOWAS has a structured plan to deepen regional trade cooperation. The strategy, built on five key pillars, highlights the importance of supporting national implementation strategies, boosting regional trade capacity, and empowering specific groups, such as women and youth, to participate fully in the economic benefits of the AfCFTA. Looking ahead, further engagement could benefit from more sustained funding, enabling a broader range of activities to be undertaken. This would allow ECOWAS to continue building on the achievements made so far and ensure that the region remains a strong contributor to Africa's economic growth.

A COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP

The close working relationship has been crucial in overcoming challenges and promoting trade and investment priorities in the region. The EU-TAF's responsiveness has significantly impacted our collaboration. Looking ahead, there is optimism that this partnership will continue to produce positive outcomes, benefiting regional progress and the broader objectives of the AfCFTA.

ADVANCING NATIONAL READINESS, ONE COUNTRY AT A TIME

Since 2022 the EU-TAF has supported ten African countries in advancing their readiness for AfCFTA implementation. Support was tailored to each country's stage of preparation: from readiness assessments and strategy development to legal alignment and operational training. Across all ten countries, the programme combined policy work with practical capacity-building to move countries from awareness to action.

COMOROS

Comoros enhanced national capacity for AfCFTA Implementation tthrough targeted training and strengthened coordination mechanisms. Active participation in continental platforms and the establishment of a national Non-Tariff Barriers Commitee improved the country's ability to address trade obstacles.

25 officials Trained

IATF Participation

NTB committee established

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Côte d'Ivoire strengthened its AfCFTA Implementation architecture, expanded opportunities for women and yout entrepreneurs, and fostered new trade and investment partnerships across the region. Economic analysis and a national products and services catalogue further enhanced visibility and competitiveness of Ivorian businesses in continetal markets.

Srronger institutions

New trade partnerships fostered

Women & Youth empowered

Product & Services Catalogue Developed

ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia strengthened its preparedness for AfCFTA implementation through targeted institutional capacity building, including the development of a national training manual for government agencies and customs authorities. These efforts contributed to major implementation milestones, including the gazetting of the country's provisional AfCFTA tariff schedule in 2025 and the successful export of its first goods under the Agreement.

- Training manual developed
- Training of Trainors
- Trading under the AfCFTA begun in 2025

GHANA

Ghana strengthened its readiness for the AfCFTA through targeted policy reforms, institutional capacity building, and private sector support. A National AfCFTA Policy Framework and Action Plan established a clear implementation roadmap, while specialised training improved export readiness for more than 100 entrepreneurs. A services trade study and a Rules of Origin Training of Trainers programme further enhanced national expertise, positioning Ghana as a regional leader in AfCFTA implementation.

- National Policy Framework developed
- 100 Entreprenuers trained
- Trade in Services Study Condcted

GUINEA

Guinea strengthened its AfCFTA implementatio readiness through targeted trade analysis and capacity building. A comprehensive export potential study identified high-growth sectors and strategic actions to enhance competitiveness and market access, while specialised training on Non-Tariff Barriers and the AfCFTA Trade Barrier Alert Mechanism equipped stakeholders to identify and address obstacles to trade.

- Identifyied Export potential
- Governance and Trade reform recomendations
- 30 Government official trained on NTB & TBAM

RWANDA

Rwanda advanced its AfCFTA agenda through stakeholder engagement, policy support, and trade research. University outreach initiatives helped build awareness among future trade leaders, while policy inputs informed the country's engagement in negotiations on the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade. A comprehensive agri-trade study also identified high-potential export opportunities and provided recommendations to strengthen Rwanda's competitiveness in regional and continental markets.

- 10 Awareness events in Universities
- Informative osition papers
- Comprehensive Agri-trade study
- Actionalbe recommendations

SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone adopted a structured, evidence-based approach to AfCFTA implementation by establishing a National Implementation Committee, aligning its export strategy with AfCFTA objectives, and conducting the first-ever AfCFTA Implementation Readiness Assessment (AFIRM). The process informed the domestication of the AfCFTA into national law, gazetted in April 2026, and created a model that has since been adopted by the AfCFTA Secretariat for rollout in nine additional countries.

- 1st AFIRM Assessment Conducted
- Export Strategy aligned
- Tariff schedule gazetted
- Model replicate regionally

UGANDA

As Uganda positions itself to benefit from Africa's single market, EU-TAF has helped turn AfCFTA commitments into action.

The programme strengthened coordination through the National Implementation Committee, supported Uganda's participation in negotiations on key AfCFTA protocols, enhanced export readiness in priority value chains, and developed Cluster Development Frameworks to guide industrial growth and competitiveness.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE

Junior experts have worked alongside experienced negotiators building a generation of trade experts

CAPACITY BUILDING

Equiip experts with knowledge enabling them to handle protocols on Digital Trade, goods and services

BUILDING ON A STRONG FOUNDATION

Uganda's path towards the AfCFTA builds on a strong regional foundation. As part of the EAC customs union, we have aligned our tariff offers with existing commitments under the EAC, COMESA, and the Tripartite Free Trade Area, ensuring that our continental obligations reinforce, rather than contradict, our regional ones.

EU-TAF has been a steady partner in that alignment, facilitating critical meetings and providing guidance through some of the more technical negotiations.

Cleopas Ndorere

Commissioner,
Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives
Uganda

> ***EU-TAF's support has been crucial in identifying these needs and proposing practical solutions to address them.***

RESEARCH. READINESS. RESULTS

Studies supported by the EU - TAF identified opportunities for Uganda under the AfCFTA. Agro-products have been identified as a priority sector under productive clustering where Uganda has high competetive advantage under the agreement shaping how Uganda approaches the market.
Equally focused on ensuring the benefits of the AfCFTA reaches producers. Mobile laboatories for quality assurance and district - level standards support bring compliance within the reach of local traders.

Looking Ahead

> **If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.**
>
> African proverb

PARTNERSHIP FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Supporting African institutions as the AfCFTA moves from policy to practice.

UNLOCKING BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Ensuring SMEs, Women and Youth benefit from the opportunities of continental market.

A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

Affirming commitment to support Africa's journey toward economic integration.

From Foundations to Transformation

The European Union, its Member States, and their development agencies have worked alongside the African Union, the AfCFTA Secretariat, Regional Economic Communities, governments, and businesses to help turn the vision of the AfCFTA into practical progress.

Together, we have supported the adoption of key AfCFTA Protocols, strengthened institutions, developed studies and regulatory tools, and helped countries and businesses prepare for the opportunities of a continental market.

Now, the focus shifts from negotiation to implementation. The priority is ensuring that the benefits of the AfCFTA reach businesses, traders, women, youth, and communities across Africa by strengthening institutions, reducing barriers to trade, and expanding economic opportunities.

The European Union and its Member States remain firmly committed to supporting this next phase. Through the Global Gateway and the Team Europe approach, we will continue to provide technical expertise, strengthen institutions, and support African-led solutions that advance regional and continental integration.

The foundations are in place. The momentum is growing. Together, we will continue building bridges between countries, connecting businesses to new markets, and creating opportunities for future generations.

Driving Trade. Delivering Together.

The European Union and It's Member States remain commited to support the AfCFTA agenda.

Global Gateway

EU - TAF

Team Europe Technical Assistance Facility to Support the AfCFTA

Co - financed By

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EXPERTISE FRANCE GROUPE AFD

fiap SISTEMAS PÚBLICOS PARA EL MUNDO