



PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

MINISTRY OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY



AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA
NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE



ACTIVITY REPORT

2020

Executive Secretariat of the AfCFTA-NC
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1 - INTRODUCTION

On 21 March 2018, in Kigali, Rwanda, the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the African Union, meeting at an extraordinary summit, signed an historic Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The Agreement, the negotiation process for which was launched in June 2015, is aimed primarily at creating a single market for goods, services and the free movement of people, in order to strengthen the economic integration of the African continent, in line with the pan-African vision of an "integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa" as set out in Agenda 2063.

The implementation of the AfCFTA should lead to the liberalisation of the market for goods and services in Africa, the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, and the establishment of a mechanism for settling trade disputes between States.

Côte d'Ivoire is one of the countries that have, from the outset, expressed their support for the establishment of this free trade area. Faithful to its policy of opening up and its vision of an integrated Africa, the country has constantly taken initiatives to play its full part in the success of this continental project. Thus, the Ivorian Government has set up a National Committee for the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA-NC) by Decree No. 2018-514 of 30 May 2018 on the creation, powers, organisation and operation of the AfCFTA National Committee. Further to this expression of interest, the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire adopted on 31 October 2018 the law ratifying the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Agenda 2063



THE AFRICAN WE WANT



2- PRESENTATION OF THE AfCFTA-NC

Created by Decree No. 2018-514 of 30 May 2018, under the authority of the Prime Minister, Head of Government, the AfCFTA National Committee coordinates and monitors the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement in Côte d'Ivoire.

It is the national body which acts as an interface between Côte d'Ivoire and the AfCFTA Secretariat in Accra and is responsible for:

- **Promoting the Agreement at the national level;**
- **Contributing to the development of national strategies ;**
- **Dealing with issues relating to negotiations and implementation ;**
- **Contributing to strengthening national expertise on the AfCFTA;**
- **Gathering proposals from national actors to improve their participation in the Agreement ;**
- **Making recommendations to the Government on matters relating to the implementation of the Agreement;**
- **Ensuring the effective implementation of the measures taken by the Government under the Agreement ;**



3- BODIES AND FUNCTIONING OF THE AFCFTA-NC

01

SDMC

Strategic and Decision-Making Council

02

TC

Technical Committee

03

ES

Executive Secretariat



3-1. Strategic and Decision-Making Council (SDMC)

Under the terms of Article 4 of Decree no. 2018-514 of 30 May 2018, the SDMC is the AfCFTA-NC's policy and decision-making body. As such, it deliberates on all decisions submitted to it by the Technical Committee and makes final decisions. The decree stipulates that this body, chaired by the Prime Minister, meets when convened by the Prime Minister as often as necessary, and at least once every six months.

3-2. Technical Committee (TC)

Article 8 of the decree stipulates that the TC is the technical coordination body of the AfCFTA-NC. Its main task is to support the Ivorian AfCFTA experts and negotiators by discussing issues relating to the implementation of the Agreement.

The TC is chaired by the Minister for Trade, who is responsible for convening its meetings at least once a month



3-3. Executive Secretariat (ES)

The Executive Secretariat is the AfCFTA-NC's technical, administrative and financial management body. It is responsible for :

- Preparing a periodic report on the activities of the National Committee of the African Continental Free Trade Area
- Drawing up and implementing the AfCFTA-NC's annual action plan with the related budgets
- Implementing the decisions of the Technical Committee ;
- Preparing technical documents for SDMC and TC meetings;
- Coordinating the activities of the technical working groups;
- Publicizing, by any means, the decisions taken by the Government within the framework of the implementation of the Agreement
- Coordinating the implementation of activities related to the Agreement



4- NEW HEADQUARTERS OF THE AfCFTA-NC



Partial furnishing and equipping of the AfCFTA-NC's office.

The rental of a one-story villa for the headquarters of the AfCFTA-NC, located in Deux-Plateaux Vallons neighborhood.





5- RAISING AWARENESS AND TRAINING OF ECONOMIC OPERATORS

TRAINING ON THE ONLINE TOOL FOR REMOVING NON-TARIFF BARRIERS FROM 17 SEPTEMBER TO 06 OCTOBER 2020

This training focused on the use of the online tool for monitoring and eliminating Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs), designed to support the implementation of the AfCFTA.

The objective was to train private sector stakeholders and relay points on the procedure for notifying, monitoring, and resolving NTBs, ensuring coordination between the National Monitoring Committee on Trade Barriers (CNSOC) and the NTB focal points.

A total of 250 economic actors participated in these training sessions.

SAN-PEDRO 17 SEPTEMBER 2020



TRAINING ON THE ONLINE TOOL FOR ELIMINATING NTBs

General presentation on the AfCFTA :

The purpose of this presentation, which was an introduction to the impact of NTBs on trade integration in Africa, was to define the AfCFTA, presenting the context, the state of negotiations, the situational analysis at national and continental level, and the level of accession by States.

It has determined the different levels of tariff dismantling and liberalisation for products covered by the AfCFTA



BOUAKE 28 SEPTEMBER 2020



TRAINING ON THE ONLINE TOOL FOR ELIMINATING NTBs

Presentation on Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) and their different categories

The purpose of the meeting was to define Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) and to instruct participants in their classification.



KORHOGO 29 SEPTEMBER 2020



WWW.TRADEBARRIERS.AFRICA

Practical Simulations:

This presentation, which was intended to be practical, established the crucial point of these training sessions.

First, there was a general presentation of the platform, then to show the whole process from reporting an NTB to resolving it.

Finally, for the practical phase, the trainers carried out simulations with all the participants, to help them get to grips with the tool.



ABIDJAN 06 OCTOBER 2020



Overall, economic operators attended the various workshops. This tool comes at just the right time for the elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) with a view to boosting the growth of intra-African trade.



The implementation of this mechanism aims to improve transparency in the identification, monitoring and reduction of the time taken to settle NTBs.

Through this tool, private sector actors, in particular micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, have the opportunity to get government institutions to resolve the cross-border difficulties they continually face. However, it needs to be widely disseminated in all regions of the country, with the integration of several modules.



- Two meetings of the Thematic Working Group (TWG) on intellectual property rights were held. These gave rise to exchanges between national experts with a view to defining Côte d'Ivoire's international position on intellectual property rights issues and formulating members' capacity-building needs in this area.

6-NATIONAL MEETINGS

- A working session was held between an Apex-ci mission and the AfCFTA-NC Executive Secretariat to establish a framework for collaboration on a training programme aimed at micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, with a view to increasing their competitiveness and creating the best conditions for access to the intra-African market of 1.2 billion people, as called for by the national strategy drawn up at national level;
- Lastly, an AfCFTA-NC review meeting was held on 17 December 2020 at the Prime Minister's Office, with the aim of taking stock of the activities carried out by the Committee since it was set up, including an update on the state of progress of the AfCFTA negotiations and preparations at national level for the implementation of the agreement.



7- REGIONAL MEETINGS

Côte d'Ivoire has attended several face-to-face and virtual meetings as part of the ongoing AfCFTA negotiations and capacity-building programmes.

At UEMOA level

A virtual training workshop for Member States on Bilateral Investment Treaties was organized under the theme : "The future AfCFTA Investment Protocol and Global Reforms of the International Investment Regime: Stakes and Priorities for the UEMOA Space" on 12 and 13 November 2020. The aim of this workshop is to provide useful information and knowledge to executives from UEMOA Member States on the reform processes of the international investment scheme and to initiate discussions on strategies for more effective State-level engagement.

At ECOWAS level

ECOWAS online meeting on the harmonisation of service offers. It focused on the harmonisation of ECOWAS offers, and the correction and consolidation of member countries' offers.

4th ECOWAS Regional Meeting on the Draft Ecowas Common Schedule of Specific Commitments, from 26 to 28 November 2020 in Accra, Ghana with a view to initiating the process of preparing the corresponding draft requests on the Schedule of Specific Commitments; for engagement with other State Parties in the 5 priority sectors under the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Services.



8- CONTINENTAL MEETINGS

At AU level

11 Meetings have been orga-

Meeting of the Joint Bureaux of the African Ministers of Trade (AMOT) and the AfCFTA Council of Ministers (COM) on 07 May 2020.

Meeting of the AfCFTA-FNI18 Negotiating Forum (14-16 July 2020).

Meeting of AfCFTA Senior Trade Officials held on 28 July 2020.

19th Meeting of the Negotiating Forum from 24 to 28 August 2020.

Participation of Côte d'Ivoire in the virtual meeting of the 1st Technical Working Group (TWG) on intellectual property rights, from 11 to 13 November 2020, with the appointment of national focal points.

Preparatory meetings for the start of trade under the AfCFTA, from 13 to 20 November 2020 in Accra.

The 12th Meeting of Senior Trade Officials of the African Continental Free Trade Area was held on 15, 24 and 25 September 2020.

11th Meeting of the African Continental Free Trade Area at the level of African Ministers of Trade (AMOT), 30 September 2020.

Training session from 16 to 18 November 2020 with the AUC and the European Union.

Second meeting of the Committee on Trade in Goods, the Sub-Committee on Trade Facilitation and the Fifth Meeting of Senior Trade Officials from 02-04 December 2020 in Accra.

The 13th virtual session of the Summit of Heads of State and Government on 05 December 2020.



9- COMMUNICATION



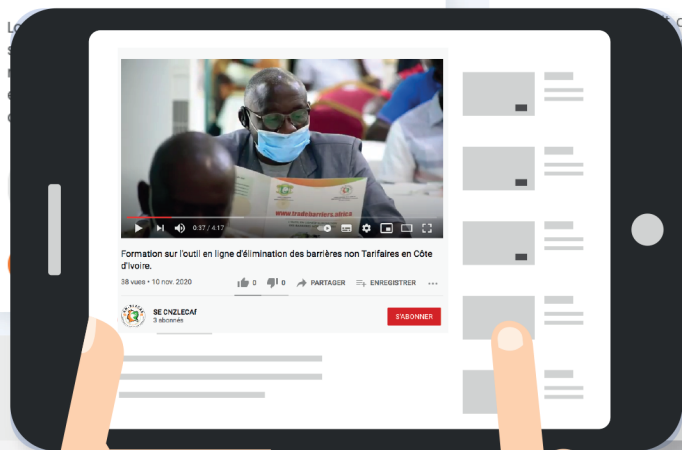
ACCUEIL PRESENTATION ACTI...

Renforcer l'expertise

Contribuer au renforcement de l'expertise nationale de la ZLECAF

Mot de bienvenue

Comité National de la ZLECAF



To raise its profile, the AfCFTA-NC is equipped with:

- A communication strategy
- A website at www.cnzlecaf.gouv.ci
- A YouTube channel "SE CNZLECAF"



10- SUMMARY OF BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

In accordance with Article 15 of Decree No. 2018-514 of 30 May 2018 on the creation, powers, organisation and operation of the AfCFTA National Committee, the Executive Secretariat is the technical, administrative and financial management body of the AfCFTA National Committee. To allow it to carry out its tasks effectively, the State of Côte d'Ivoire has allocated to it a budget of two hundred and forty-eight million five hundred thousand francs (248,500,000 CFA Francs) for 2020.

This budget was used to finance, on the one hand, the ordinary costs associated with the installation and partial equipping of the Executive Secretariat and its operating expenses, and, on the other hand, to finance the actions arising from the national strategy for the implementation of the AfCFTA mentioned under the activities carried out.

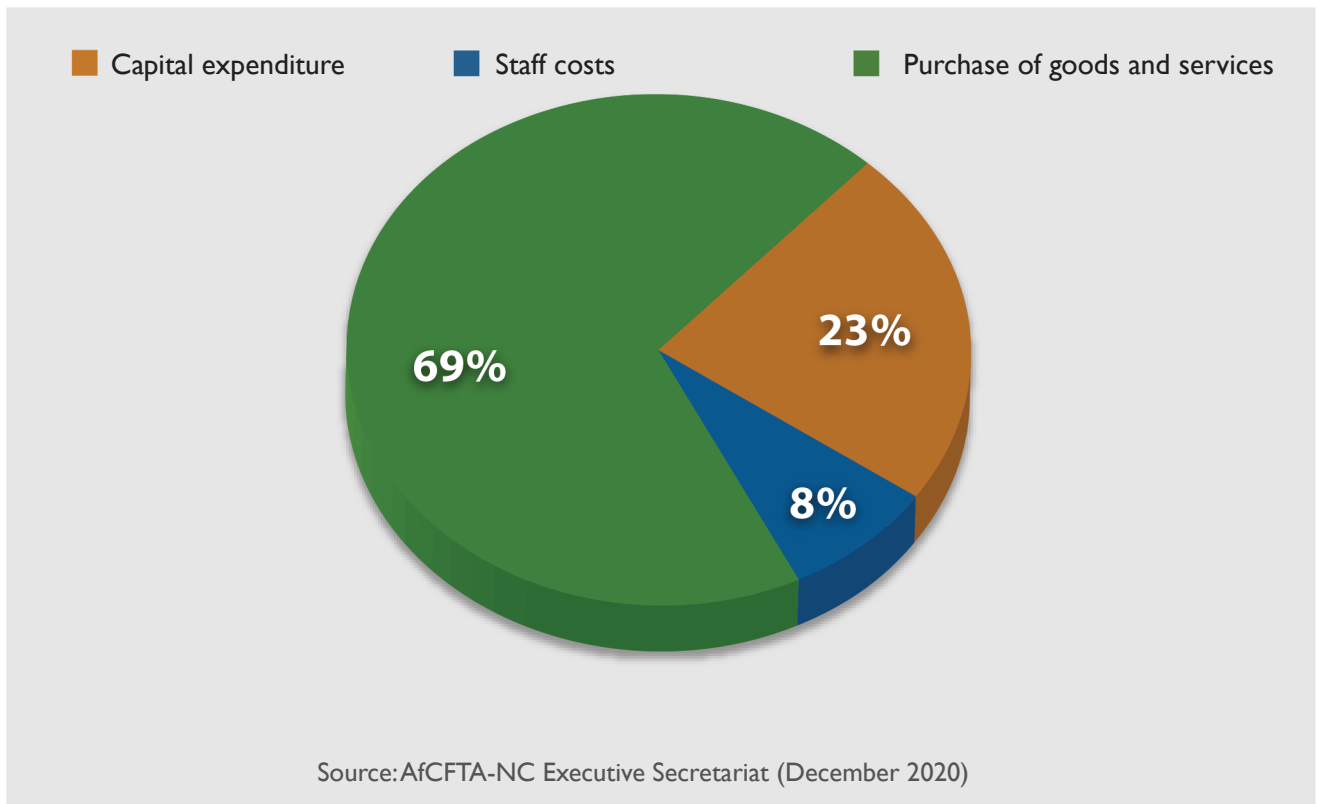
The table below shows the breakdown of funds allocated to the AfCFTA-NC and the budget utilisation rate.

Ordinary expenditure table

Type of expenditure	Endowments	Commitments issued	Commitments paid	Rates of use
Capital expenditure	58 000 000	57 977 616	57 977 616	99.96%
Staff costs	20 000 000	19 900 000	19 900 000	99.50%
Purchase of goods and services	170 500 000	170 336 837	170 336 837	99.90%
Total	248 500 000	248 214 453	248 214 453	99.88%



AfCFTA-NC 2020 BUDGET BREAKDOWN





11- CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11-1. Challenges to be overcome

In carrying out the activities of the AfCFTA-NC, the Executive Secretariat had to deal with a number of difficulties:

- The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which slowed or even halted many of the Executive Secretariat's actions. The impacts included the postponement or cancellation of planned meetings and extension campaigns, and changes to the action plan.
- The insufficient budget allocated to the National Committee's operating and investment expenses, which has led to the headquarters being partially equipped and a slowdown in the deployment of the implementation strategy.
- The two-headed handling of documents relating to the AfCFTA.

11-2. Recommendations

In view of the above challenges, it is imperative that measures be taken to optimise the Committee's work:

- Increase the 2021 budget of the AfCFTA National Committee, as requested at the budget conferences, to enable it to finalise its installation and finance its priority implementation activities
- To enable the AfCFTA-NC Executive Secretariat to fully carry out its functions as the administrative and technical management body of the National Committee, in order to make it more efficient and ensure the diligent processing of requests addressed to Côte d'Ivoire.



PERSPECTIVES

12- OUTLOOK

Despite the COVID-19 health crisis, which severely disrupted the negotiations on the outstanding issues in Phase I and the work programme for Phase II of the negotiations, the clear political will of African leaders enabled significant progress to be made in addressing the outstanding issues. This has led to the effective start of trade in goods on 01 January 2021.

At the continental level, it can be noted that 54 signatures and 34 submissions of instruments of ratification have been recorded out of a total of 55 Member States, which clearly demonstrates the sustained commitment of African States.

For the AfCFTA-NC, awareness-raising and outreach activities will continue to enable as many actors as possible to be well informed of the opportunities offered by this common market. Significant efforts have been made in 2020, and the Executive Secretariat intends to multiply them to position Côte d'Ivoire among the countries that will take full advantage of the agreement. This will be done through the four main areas of the 2021 action plan:

- 1) National ownership of the AfCFTA Agreement by stakeholders
- 2) Implementing the communication strategy
- 3) Promoting women's participation in trade
- 4) Development of proactive commercial sector strategies