



MINISTRY OF TRADE, INDUSTRY And SMEs
PROMOTION



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



ACTIVITY REPORT

2022

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT OF THE AfCFTA-NC

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	03
PRESENTATION OF THE AfCFTA-NC.	04
1. STRATEGIC AND DECISION-MAKING COUNCIL (SDMC)	05
2. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (TC).	05
3. EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT (ES)	05
IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY.	06
1. AXIS: NATIONAL OWNERSHIP OF THE AGREEMENT BY STAKEHOLDERS	08
2. AXIS: PROMOTING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN TRADE	21
3. AXIS: DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING PROACTIVE TRADE SECTOR	28
4. AXIS: ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF PRODUCERS AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THEIR PRODUCTS	31
5. AXE: STREAMLINING OF THE INSTITUTIONAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR TRADE PROMOTION AND APPLICATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE AGREEMENT	34
NATIONAL MEETINGS	36
CÔTE D'IVOIRE: A MODEL FOR AfCFTA IMPLEMENTATION	42
SUMMARY OF BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION	46
CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS	49
OUTLOOK	51



INTRODUCTION

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a trade and economic area covering 54 African states. It was established on 21 March 2018 by the Agreement establishing the AfCFTA. This is the most important trade agreement in the world since the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO). To date, 46 countries have ratified the Agreement to become States Parties and make the AfCFTA part of their national legal and institutional systems. On the strength of the quality of the legal instruments governing it, the AfCFTA entered its operational phase on 1 January 2021.

With a view to testing the operational, institutional, legal and commercial environment, the AfCFTA General Secretariat launched phase 1 of the "Guided Trade Initiative (GTI)" on 7 October 2022. This initiative has enabled seven (7) States Parties (Ghana, Rwanda, Cameroon, Kenya, Mauritius, Egypt and Tanzania) to start trading at preferential rates.

It should be pointed out that the date on which trade begins commits the States Parties to implementing the Agreement in accordance with the points already agreed during the negotiations. For the AfCFTA-NC, which is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement in Côte d'Ivoire, this means that decisions must be taken at national level to enable each stakeholder to take ownership of the Agreement in order to make it easier to put it into operation and derive greater benefit from it. The AfCFTA-NC has therefore rightly drawn up a national strategy based on six (6) axes:

- ✓ **Axe 1:** Greater ownership of the content of the Agreement by all stakeholders;
- ✓ **Axe 2:** Streamlining of the institutional and regulatory framework for trade promotion and effective application of the provisions of the Agreement. Streamlining of the institutional and regulatory framework for trade promotion and effective application of the provisions of the Agreement.
- ✓ **Axe 3:** Strengthening the reference framework for public strategies with a view to improving the competitiveness of the industry;
- ✓ **Axe 4:** developing and implementing proactive trade sector strategies.;
- ✓ **Axe 5:** Enhancing the capacity of producers and improving the quality of their products.;
- ✓ **Axe 6:** Promoting the participation of women and young people in trade.

During the 2022 financial year, the AfCFTA-NC executed its action plan relating to the implementation of four (4) axes of its national strategy. The purpose of the present report is to highlight the priority actions carried out by the AfCFTA National Committee during 2022.

PRESENTATION OF THE AfCFTA-NC



2022 ACTIVITY REPORT

The African Continental Free Trade Area National Committee is a national body created by Decree No. 2018-514 of 30 May 2018, under the authority of the Prime Minister, Head of Government. It coordinates and monitors the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement in Côte d'Ivoire. It also acts as an interface between Côte d'Ivoire and the Secretariat General of the African Continental Free Trade Area in Accra. Its missions are to:

- ✓ Promote the Agreement at the national level
- ✓ Contribute to the development of national strategies;
- ✓ Deal with issues relating to the negotiations and implementation of the Agreement;
- ✓ Contribute to strengthening national expertise on the AfCFTA;
- ✓ Gather proposals from national actors to improve their participation in the Agreement;
- ✓ Make recommendations to the Government on matters relating to the implementation of the Agreement;
- ✓ Ensure the effective implementation of the measures taken by the Government under the Agreement.

The AfCFTA-NC is made up of 3 bodies: the Strategic and Decision-Making Council (SDMC), the Technical Committee (TC) and the Executive Secretariat (ES).



1. STRATEGIC AND DECISION-MAKING COUNCIL (SDMC)

The SDMC is the AfCFTA-NC's policy and decision-making body. Its role is to deliberate on all decisions submitted to it by the Technical Committee, and it takes the final decision. This body is chaired by the Prime Minister, Head of Government, Mr. Patrick ACHI. The SDMC is established with several ministers and members of the Ivorian Government as well as the presidents of confederations, federations and umbrella organisations of the private sector.

2. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (TC)

Chaired by Souleymane DIARRASSOUBA, Minister of Trade, Industry and SME Promotion, the Technical Committee is the AfCFTA-NC's technical coordination body. Its main task is to support the AfCFTA experts and negotiators in Côte d'Ivoire by discussing issues relating to the implementation of the Agreement.

3. EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT (ES)

The Executive Secretariat is the AfCFTA-NC's technical, administrative, and financial management body. Its responsibilities include preparing periodic reports on the activities of the AfCFTA-NC; drawing up and implementing the AfCFTA-NC's annual action plan with the related budget; publicising, by any means, the decisions taken by the Government as part of the implementation of the Agreement; coordinating the activities of the Technical Working Groups (TWGs); and preparing technical documents for the SDMC and TC meetings.





IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

Comité National de la Zone de Libre Echange Continentale Africaine
Côte d'Ivoire

The table below illustrates the state of deployment of each Axis, taking into account the objectives and targets set visés.

STRATEGIC AXES	OBJECTIVES	TARGETS	STATUS
National ownership of the AfCFTA Agreement by stakeholders	Ensuring national stakeholders' understanding of the agreement and encouraging them to take ownership of it in order to derive maximum benefit.	The private sector, public and semi-public administration	In progress since 2020.
Promoting the participation of women and young people in trade.	Developing public initiatives to improve access to finance for women and young people. Strengthening women's and young people's organisations and associations in particular. helping to formalise informal activities.	Women, Young people	In progress since 2021
The development and Implementation of proactive trade sector strategies	To promote the Côte d'Ivoire brand and destination. To encourage the development of trade with African countries. To promote commercial information for traders and provide them with the necessary assistance.	Manufacturers (including SMEs/VSBs), first-time exporters	Currently being rolled-out with the support of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) since 2021.
Streamlining of the institutional and regulatory framework for trade promotion and effective application of the provisions of the agreement	Ensure the coordination of AfCFTA-NC activities with national and community-level bodies, and ensure that the private sector is better represented on the AfCFTA-NC	Private sector, SMEs/VSBs	In progress since 2022
Strengthening the reference framework for public strategies with a view to improving the competitiveness of sectors	Strengthening the reference framework for public strategies and the competitiveness of the sector.	Private sector, SMEs/VSBs	In progress since 2022
Enhancing the capacity of producers (in particular VSB, SME and SMIs) and improving the quality of their products	Increase the professionalism of stakeholder groups; Increase the responsibility of umbrella organisations in strategies for enhancing the capacity of SMEs/VSBs/SMIs sector.	Private sector, SMEs/VSBs/ SMIs	Underway through specific capacity-building activities



IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

Axis: National Ownership of the Agreement by Stakeholders

Comité National de la Zone de Libre Echange Continentale Africaine

Côte d'Ivoire

NATIONAL ROADSHOWS TO PROMOTE THE AGREEMENT

Their main objectives were to:

- ✓ Present the Agreement, its annexes and protocols, and the opportunities, issues, and challenges for public and semi-public administrations
- ✓ Create AfCFTA Ambassadors
- ✓ Raise the level of understanding of national stakeholders and gather their opinions and needs
- ✓ Create a synergy of action and understanding between the AfCFTA-NC and the various national actors for the optimum implementation of the Agreement.

With a view to continuing to promote the AfCFTA Agreement among stakeholders, and in accordance with its action plan for 2022, the AfCFTA-NC undertook awareness-raising and information roadshows on the AfCFTA at national level from January to December 2022. The issues, opportunities and challenges presented by the Agreement for Africa in general, and for Côte d'Ivoire in particular, were highlighted during these various activities. It should also be emphasised that the various targets of these roadshows are:

Public Sector

Les administrations
Public and semi-
public
administrations
involved in the trade
chain

Private Sector

Umbrella
organisations bringing
together economic
operators (SMEs/SMLs,
PLCs, farmers,
traders)

The AfCFTA-NC has made Axis 1 a priority, because despite all the initiatives undertaken to publicise the Agreement, some stakeholders are still unfamiliar with it, even though effective implementation requires knowledge of its content. For this reason, the AfCFTA-NC has stepped up its efforts to raise awareness among stakeholders at national level of the issues, opportunities and challenges presented by the Agreement. Through these outreach activities, the AfCFTA National Committee is working to provide structures with a compendium of texts, on the one hand, to encourage the public administration to take ownership of the Agreement and, on the other, to support entrepreneurs and show the private sector its key role in the success of this continental project under Agenda 2063, the Africa we want.

NATIONAL ROADSHOW FOR OWNERSHIP OF THE AGREEMENT BY PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS

Economic diplomacy is one of the main instruments of Côte d'Ivoire's external action and aims to encourage the internationalisation of Ivorian companies and to attract productive foreign investment with a view to creating activities and jobs. Its role is therefore to contribute, alongside other official bodies, to strengthening and consolidating an open and competitive economy in order to increase exports, foreign investment and tourism, with a view to improving access to finance.

On 23 March 2022, a team from the National Committee for the African Continental Free Trade Area visited the General Directorate of Economic Diplomacy at the Ministry of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and the Diaspora in order to present : the various opportunities offered by the AfCFTA Agreement; the stakes and challenges for Côte d'Ivoire; and the state of its implementation at both national and continental level.

The presentation, which was well appreciated, prompted a number of questions regarding the operationalisation of the Agreement, the measures taken to ensure its success, the question of a common currency and the concerns about the inability of certain national champions to expand internationally, but above all the resounding failure of initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Over and above all these concerns, it should be noted that Côte d'Ivoire, like other countries, remains aware of the challenges to be met. This area has the potential to increase employment and income opportunities, helping to expanding possibilities for all Africans. Nevertheless, its successful implementation will be paramount, and it will be necessary for this pan-African vision to federate the actions of all stakeholders. It is with this in mind that economic diplomacy is working in synergy with the AfCFTA-NC Executive Secretariat to gather information for the development of "country profiles" to help conquer foreign markets.

In the same vein, the Directorate General of Economic Diplomacy has undertaken to create a formal framework for collaboration and to extend the framework for economic diplomacy/private sector dialogue with the AfCFTA-NC.

As a result of the various wishes expressed, joint projects have been identified with the aim of strengthening Côte d'Ivoire's commercial presence in other African countries and attracting investors.



After diplomacy, awareness-raising and information sessions on the AfCFTA were held at the Ministry of Planning and Development and the Ministry for Women, the Family and Children, with the aim of promoting the Agreement in these public administrations.



AfCFTA AGREEMENT PRESENTED TO FIVE (5) BORDER POSTS IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

A border post is a supervised crossing point at a frontier between two countries. To this end, establishments are set up on entering or leaving the customs territory by customs, law enforcement agencies and others for economic, security or health reasons, etc.

As a result, there can be no African Continental Free Trade Area, full of ambition and hope for the people of Africa, without the cooperation and involvement of the stakeholders at these posts. It is with good reason that the AfCFTA-NC has included awareness-raising roadshows at six border posts as one of its priority actions for 2022. Initiated by the AfCFTA-NC, in collaboration with the National Border Commission of Côte d'Ivoire (CNFCI), for the benefit of law enforcement agencies, customs, gendarmerie, police, water and forestry services and private entities, these roadshows aimed to popularise the legal instruments of the AfCFTA Agreement in order to create the necessary collaboration and involvement of border post stakeholders in its implementation.

They were briefed on the history of the AfCFTA, its general objectives, its implementation instruments and the situational analysis since the ratification of the agreement, the government's commitment and the missions of the AfCFTA-NC. The AfCFTA experts visited five localities in 2022, namely Noé on 19 August, Pogo / Laleraba on 30 August, Gbeleban on 2 September and Prolo on 13 September, out of the six border posts scheduled for this activity. It should be noted that all these stages were chaired by the prefectural authorities.

With the hope that the message of the AfCFTA, addressed to the two hundred and thirty (230) agents of the border posts, will give the expected results for the trade and the economy of our country. It is worth highlighting that these activities will be extended to other border posts and will address a wide range of themes.





SOME IMAGES FROM THE ROADSHOW



UANGOLODOUGOU



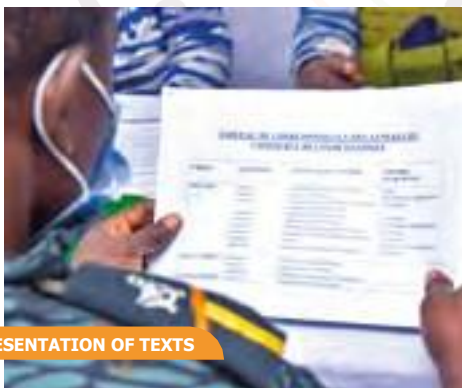
QUESTIONS/ANSWERS



BÉLÉBAN - ODIÉNNÉ



NOÉ



PRESENTATION OF TEXTS



ABOU



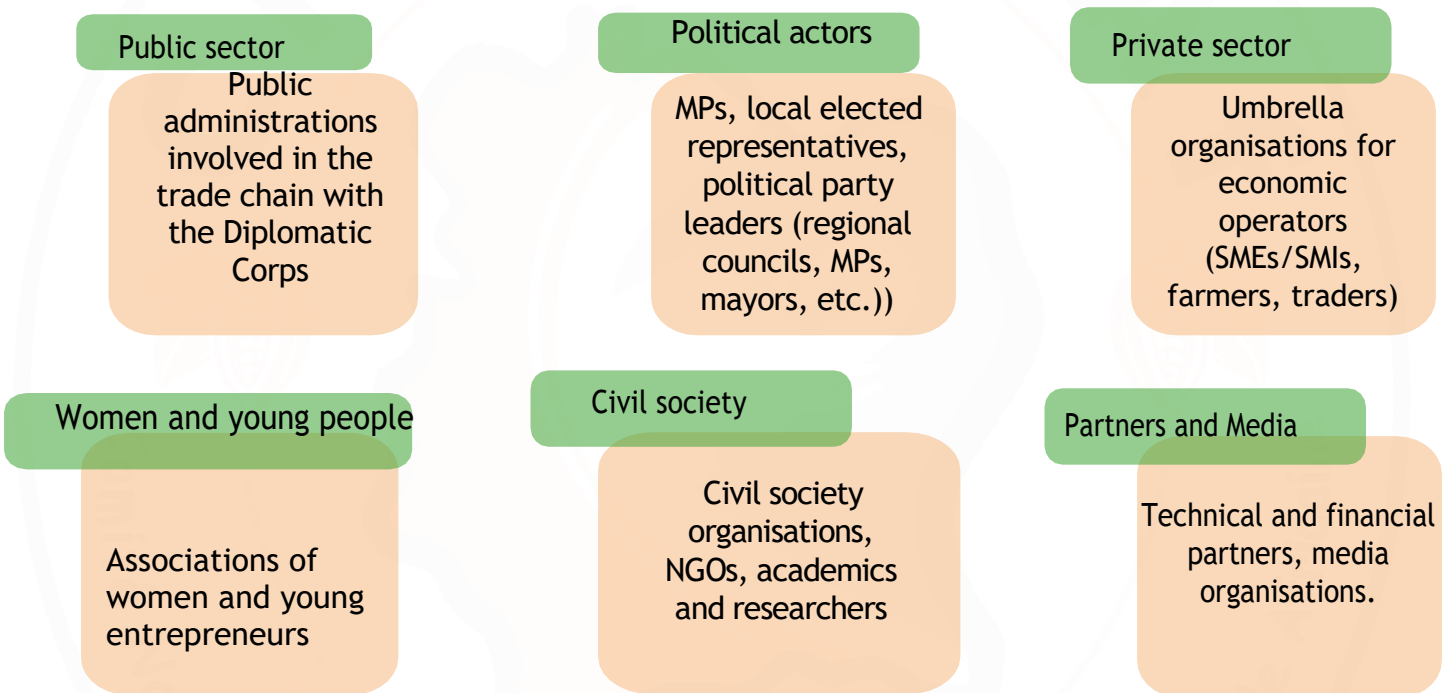
GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON AfCFTA

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

To raise the profile of its activities, the AfCFTA-NC has made communication a priority. To this end, it has put in place a strategy with the following specific communication objectives:

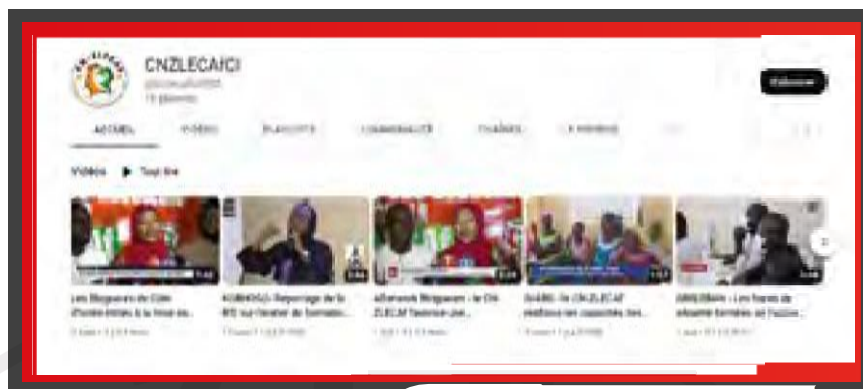
- ✓ Inform and raise awareness of the Agreement and its content among all actors in the economy and society;
- ✓ Promote the axes of the Agreement, beneficial to each party;
- ✓ Invite all stakeholders to be heavily involved in and take full ownership of the AfCFTA Agreement.

This strategy takes account of the following targets:



The AfCFTA National Committee has put in place a digital communications strategy to promote the Agreement. This includes the creation of a dedicated website, which is regularly updated with photos, videos and documents on the AfCFTA. The Committee has also created official accounts and pages on social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube) to relay relevant information according to a defined calendar and editorial line.

In addition to these communication channels, the Committee has published information on online platforms such as Abidjan.net. In 2022, digital communication via Abidjan.net had informed 2,497 people, according to the statistics received. Thanks to this effective digital communication strategy, the AfCFTA National Committee is able to disseminate important information about the Agreement quickly and in a targeted manner, with a view to reaching a wider audience.



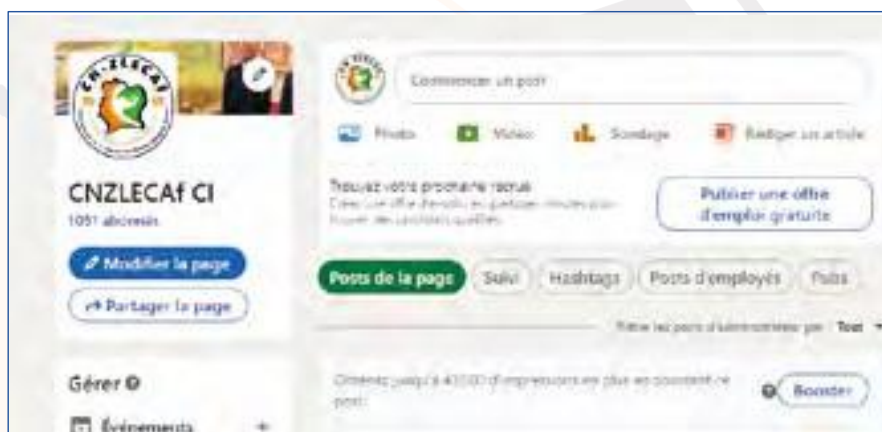
 **Youtube**
CNZLECAF CI

Number of subscribers: 19



 **Twitter**
@CNZLECAF CI

Number of followers: 292



 **LinkedIn**
CNZLECAF CI

Number of followers: 1051



 **Facebook**
@CNZLECAF

Number of followers: 2914



To strengthen communication on its missions, the National Committee, through the production of audiovisual content (institutional films, short videos...), has deployed an institutional campaign taking into account communication through mass media such as television, radio, press and internet. Non-media communication is also taken into account, including direct marketing, participation in events compared with trade and the AfCFTA, and the production of communication media.





AfCFTA PRESENTED TO BLOGGERS

The AfCFTA-NC organised an afterwork dedicated to bloggers in Côte d'Ivoire on 18 August 2022 at the Movenpick Hôtel Abidjan. The main aim of this event was to present the AfCFTA Agreement to bloggers and to encourage them to relay information to the relevant stakeholders. The event brought together around fifty (50) bloggers from the National Bloggers' Union of Côte d'Ivoire (UNBCI) and the Bloggers' Association of Côte d'Ivoire (ABCI)), as well as influencers. A panel discussion was moderated by entrepreneurs on the theme: "How can digital technology contribute to the more effective implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement?" The forum provided an opportunity for representatives of the various bloggers' associations to reiterate their commitment to supporting the Committee in promoting and publicising the Agreement among stakeholders. More than 14 articles, photos and videos were shared with stakeholders on social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Tiktok) during and after the afterwork. More than 16,000 people were impacted by the bloggers' contributions on social media. 13,062 people reacted via the Tiktok network, following the sharing of a video on the missions of the Executive Secretariat. One of the key recommendations of the event was the creation of a core group of AfCFTA ambassadors made up of influencers and bloggers to raise the profile of the AfCFTA-NC and support its communications strategy.





OUR NEWSLETTER, ONE MARKET



ONE MARKET is a newsletter designed by the AfCFTA-NC Executive Secretariat to inform trade stakeholders about the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement at national and continental level. It contains several sections:

Focus This section highlights a key news item related to the AfCFTA. The centerpiece of the latest newsletter issue is an article on the Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF), which will take place in Côte d'Ivoire in November 2023.

Agenda - A chronological listing of upcoming AfCFTA activities at both national and continental levels.

Panorama - A summary of the various activities conducted by the AfCFTA-NC, focusing on initiatives that involved interaction across the continent. Each activity will be presented in the form of an article to ensure a comprehensive understanding.

Added value - A dedicated section featuring interviews with stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Agreement in Côte d'Ivoire. These interviews aim to capture their perspectives on the Agreement's implementation within their respective ministries, organizations, or platforms. This section will shed light on the actual impact of the AfCFTA on Côte d'Ivoire's economic and social landscape, while also highlighting the challenges faced by each party.

Oridjidi - (The Real Deal) - This section will spotlight national champions by showcasing the unique Ivorian products they bring to market. It will also serve as a platform to promote innovative products made across Africa.

The newsletter is distributed via email or postal mail and is intended for public administration, private sector stakeholders in Côte d'Ivoire (including umbrella organizations representing operators across all economic sectors—SMEs/SMIs, large companies, farmers, traders, professionals, and civil society organizations), as well as the general public.



EVENTS

The AfCFTA-NC took part in activities on topics compared with the AfCFTA, with the aim of raising awareness of the Agreement among stakeholders. These activities included, for example:

✓ The first Women's Forum of the association Women in Logistics and Transport Côte d'Ivoire (WILAT CI). The forum was held on 23 April 2022 in Abidjan. Its main theme was: "The AfCFTA and women entrepreneurs in Côte D'Ivoire: what expectations?" Some 125 women from the logistics and transport sectors in Côte d'Ivoire attended the event.

✓ The Inaugural AfCFTA Conference organised by DELOITTE CÔTE D'IVOIRE on 9 November 2022. This event brought together around 50 private sector actors and economic operators. The main theme was: "AfCFTA: Embracing Opportunities and Overcoming Challenges - Are You Ready?" The aim of the conference was to inform the Ivorian private sector and economic actors about the challenges and opportunities of the AfCFTA. It was also an opportunity to encourage the private sector to be more competitive in order to take advantage of the AfCFTA.

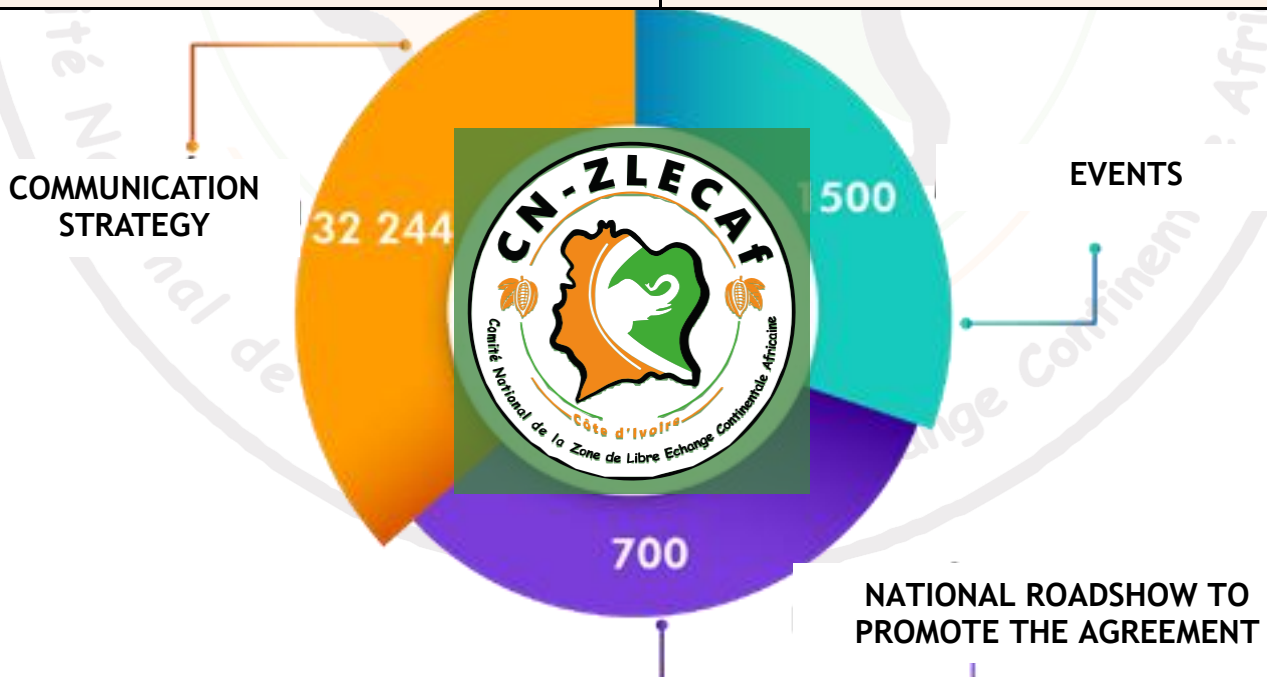
These activities include the first "industry festival", the SME Leaders and Strategists forum, the international trade fair for women's empowerment and innovation (SAPAIF), etc.





Below is an estimate of the number of people informed:

Activities	Number of people sensitized
National roadshow to promote the Agreement	700
Communication strategy	32 244
Events	1500





IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

Axis: Promoting the Participation of Women and Young People in Trade



The full implementation of the AfCFTA will contribute to the structural transformation of Africa and reshape the continent's markets and economies. However, no matter how strong the foundations of the AfCFTA's objectives may be, they will remain out of reach if stakeholders are unable to fully capitalize on the opportunities the Agreement offers in terms of trade and investment. It is therefore crucial for key stakeholders, such as women and youth, to participate actively in the implementation process, ensuring they are included and benefit from the advantages of this evolving single market.



NATIONAL CONSULTATION OF WOMEN IN TRADE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE AfCFTA

The inclusion of the priorities of women traders in the new AfCFTA protocol dedicated to them, namely the Protocol on Women and Young People in Trade, led the AfCFTA-NC (AfCFTA-NC) to carry out consultations at national level to gather their needs and make recommendations with a view to including them in the protocol currently being negotiated.

It was against this backdrop that the 2nd national consultation on women in cross-border trade under the AfCFTA was organised for women exporters. This activity was organised by the AfCFTA-NC with technical support from GIZ on 24 August 2022, at the Hôtel Eléphant in Bouaké. Its specific aim was to organise exchanges with women traders in order to carry out a participatory diagnosis of their needs and draw up proposals for support measures for their cross-border trade activities.

The consultation brought together around 60 women traders belonging to women's associations or working on their own account as entrepreneurs.



The consultation was based on a participatory approach built around the collection of essentially qualitative data. This first-hand data was produced on the basis of interviews, essentially focus groups.

Presentations, discussions and group work, which established the main points of the activity, led to the identification of challenges as well as recommendations to enable women to improve their activities, get to know the AfCFTA and benefit from the opportunities it offers them. The recommendations included putting in place mechanisms to raise awareness of opportunities in the AfCFTA, improving access to information, knowledge and training, implementing support measures to access market opportunities in the AfCFTA, improving access to financial resources and services, developing measures to combat discrimination against women in the export process, etc.

The activities held in Bouaké show that women are present in several sectors of cross-border trade. Their commercial activities are carried out through associations or individual businesses. But whatever the form of their businesses, women traders face the same problems.

CONSULTATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN TRADE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE AfCFTA

In addition to the national consultation of women, the AfCFTA-NC, with technical support from GIZ, organised a national consultation of young people. This activity, relating to support for the promotion of young people's participation in trade under the AfCFTA, took place on Friday 18 November 2022 at the Azalai hotel in Abidjan Marcory.

The aim was to gather the needs, concerns and recommendations of young people with a view to including them in the new protocol on women and young people in trade currently being negotiated. The event was also an opportunity for some 58 young people involved in cross-border trade to learn about the AfCFTA.

For young entrepreneurs, the AfCFTA presents a genuine opportunity to expand their commercial activities. However, conquering international markets comes with numerous challenges. To enable young entrepreneurs to participate more effectively in the AfCFTA, it is essential to address the internal constraints they face, which include:

- ✓ Access to finance
- ✓ The instability of support structures for young entrepreneurs
- ✓ Tax pressure and corruption
- ✓ Certification problems for local products due to the high cost of bringing products up to standard



Empowering Women: Capacity-Building Workshop on Exporting in the AfCFTA

The new Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is expected to provide solutions to the promise of empowerment made to women and the challenges they face. The AfCFTA-NC organised a capacity-building workshop for 50 women from the "Diabo ville émergente" association, (whose name translates to: "Diabo, an emerging city)" on the theme of "Exporting in the AfCFTA" on 25 August 2022 in Diabo.

The aim of the workshop was to build the capacity of women producers, processors and traders who are members of the aforementioned association on issues relating to knowledge of export procedures and sales techniques under the AfCFTA, so that they can take ownership of the challenges and opportunities offered by the Agreement.

The activity consisted of presentations and discussions, during which the women were trained in export procedures, legal, financial and logistical requirements, export sales techniques and the mobilisation of internal and external resources. In addition, the Association's three major sites - the Diabo dam, the Botro lowlands and the USIFEM-CI processing plant - were visited by the AfCFTA-NC Executive Secretariat team led by the Association's President, Mrs. Rébecca YAO.

Thanks to the expertise of AfCFTA, these women from rural areas now have some knowledge of how to improve their efficiency in export sales and are aware of the opportunities to be gained from AfCFTA for their empowerment.



WOMEN AND YOUNG EXPORTERS AT THE HEART OF AfCFTA IMPLEMENTATION

The AfCFTA-NC is stepping up its activities to publicise the Agreement at national level. To this end, in collaboration with the Côte d'Ivoire Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI-CI), it organised training and awareness-raising workshops for women and young exporters on the AfCFTA in Korhogo on 11 August and in San-Pedro on 1 September 2022. The aim of these workshops was to present the content of the AfCFTA Agreement, with a view to raising awareness and training women and young exporters so that they can effectively appropriate and interact with the AfCFTA tools.

During these activities, presentations were made on the following themes: understanding the AfCFTA, ECOWAS and the AfCFTA, exporting in the AfCFTA, e-commerce and cross-border trade, exploring business opportunities in the AfCFTA and operational tools in the AfCFTA. The workshops were well attended by women traders from women's associations and cooperatives, women and young entrepreneurs. They had the following results: understanding of the structure and content of the AfCFTA Agreement by the targets, knowledge of the operational tools, as well as the challenges and opportunities of the AfCFTA, by the various participants.

Furthermore, the Ivorian government's commitment to maximizing the benefits of this project represents a significant opportunity for women and young exporters. Consequently, product certification and compliance with standards, which are key to enhanced competitiveness, are essential for Ivorian businesses.

At the conclusion of these workshops, several recommendations were made, including: the need to seek out commercial information, certify products intended for export, and intensify information and awareness campaigns about the AfCFTA.



Women Exporters and Young Exporters
KOROGHO



Women Exporters and Young Exporters
SAN PEDRO



SECOND EDITION OF AfCFTA UNIVERSITY DAY

The aim of the second edition of the AfCFTA University Day was to present the AfCFTA Agreement, its challenges and opportunities, with a view to preparing Côte d'Ivoire's young people to take full advantage of them. The day was organised on 21 December 2022 by the AfCFTA-NC in collaboration with the Réseau Estudiantin pour la Valorisation de l'Intellect et du Leadership (REVILA - Côte d'Ivoire) and the NGO Femmes au Cœur du Développement Africain (FCDA). The event provided an opportunity to promote the AfCFTA to 200 students and young entrepreneurs, and to showcase local expertise. The day was marked by presentations on the AfCFTA Agreement as well as exchanges and sharing on the theme: "AfCFTA and digital transformation: what opportunities for youth employment?" Participants were encouraged to find out more about the Agreement, to commit to its dissemination and to contribute to the operationalisation of this pan-African vision shared by our founding fathers. The AfCFTA-NC plans to organise other university days in public and private universities nationwide for young people and entrepreneurs over the course of 2023.





IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

Axis: Developing and Implementing Proactive Trade Sector Strategies



WORKSHOP ON THE REVIEW OF THE PRIORITY PRODUCTS REPORT

Côte d'Ivoire plans to play a role in driving the momentum as an open country committed to economic and trade integration as defined in its 2021-2025 NDP. One of the actions to be taken to achieve this ambition is the implementation of the National Strategy drawn up in 2019. With regard to Axis 4 of this strategy, the AfCFTA-NC, with the technical and financial support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), has commissioned a proactive trade sector study on Côte d'Ivoire's priority products in five (5) sub-regions, namely: the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). Supervised by a team of five (5) consultants, experts in each region, the strategic objective of this study is to identify market opportunities for Ivorian products and to provide exporters with concrete information on potential markets in Africa with a view to conquering them. The general planning of this study is based on five stages:

- ✓ Study launch meeting
- ✓ The scoping workshop
- ✓ The structure of the reports and summary of the Ivorian products identified
- ✓ The workshop to present the five (5) preliminary study reports on the 5 markets
- ✓ The workshop to present the consolidated report and the 5 sub-regional reports
- ✓ The debriefing seminar for the 6 reports (one consolidated report and 5 sub-regional reports)

It was against this backdrop that the workshop to review the report on priority products was held on Tuesday 29 November 2022 at the Noom Hotel, Abidjan Plateau, from 8am to 3pm. This workshop establishes phase 2 of a five-stage schedule and follows on from the scoping report review meeting on 02 November 2022.

The event brought together some fifty business leaders from different sectors, including Trade Support Institutions, actors in the transport, technology and information sectors, and agro-processors of products such as cashew nuts, coffee-cocoa, cotton, oilseeds, spices, tropical fruits and shea butter.

Its aim was to diagnose certain sectors of the National Export Strategy (NES) and other products with high export potential, with a view to defining a list of products in high demand in the five Regional economic communities (RECs). The suggested sectors include cocoa, coffee, tropical fruits, cashew nuts and by-products (cashew nuts), palm products and by-products (oilseeds), rubber and by-products (rubber trees), shea nuts and by-products, cassava and by-products, cotton-textile-clothing, ICTs and transport. The list of products selected will be announced once the questionnaires submitted to participants and stakeholders in the process have been analysed. The workshop also provided an opportunity to present the context, methodology, structure of the overall report and the final results expected from the study. These results will be made available to the Ivorian private sector, Trade Support Institutions and umbrella organisations, with concrete information on Africa's potential markets with a view to improving positioning within the AfCFTA framework. At the end of the event, it was recommended that products derived from beekeeping should be taken into account, as they help to combat climate change and contribute to safeguarding the ecosystem.





IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

AXIS: Enhancing the Capacity of Producers and Improving the Quality of their Products



EXCHANGE VISIT TO RWANDA BY THE IVORIAN DELEGATION

The AfCFTA-NC, in collaboration with GIZ, has drawn up an exchange programme designed as an interactive process between actors from the Trade Support Institutions and the private sector in Rwanda and Côte d'Ivoire. The programme is part of the 2022 operational plan for the GIZ AfCFTA support project.

It was against this backdrop that a delegation from Côte d'Ivoire, comprising eight members from Trade Support Institutions and private sector actors from the cola, cassava and spice industries, travelled to Rwanda to exchange views. The purpose of the trip was to gather and share information on the impact of the implementation of the Agreement on Export Promotion.

The trip also aimed to involve Trade Support Institutions more closely in achieving the AfCFTA's objectives, by drawing on Rwandan best practice in this area from development and investment agencies and the private sector. Over a 3-day period in Rwanda, participants had the opportunity to share experiences on trade promotion and the mechanisms to be implemented to increase export potential under the AfCFTA Agreement. To promote the harmonious, inclusive and sustainable development of Côte d'Ivoire, following the example of Rwanda, it is recommended that measures be taken to:

- ✓ Demonstrate a strong political will to drive positive change through disruptive reforms that will have a qualitative impact on the business climate.
- ✓ Greater support for economic operators and the private sector, by strengthening public-private partnerships.
- ✓ Encourage the adoption of common values, disciplines, collective and individual responsibility and good governance at all levels of economic, social and administrative life.





PRIVATE SECTOR AWARENESS-RAISING WORKSHOP ON RULES OF ORIGIN

A training and awareness-raising workshop on the rules of origin of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) for private sector companies was held on 06 September 2022. The aim of the workshop was to help prepare the private sector to comply appropriately with the new AfCFTA rules of origin requirements. This activity was enriched by presentations on modules such as:

- ✓ Overview of the Agreement, its objectives and the AfCFTA architecture
- ✓ AfCFTA Agreement, annexes and implementation status
- ✓ Rules of origin, introduction and general principles
- ✓ Rules of origin-AfCFTA
- ✓ How the private sector can benefit from the AfCFTA
- ✓ The customs dispute and complaint resolution mechanism

This workshop is part of the GIZ support project for the AfCFTA. In the same vein, another workshop on export procedures, digital marketing and packaging was organised for Trade Support Institutions and SMEs. These various activities had some 110 participants.





IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

AXIS: Streamlining the Institutional and Regulatory Framework for Promoting Trade and Effective Application of the Planned Provisions of the Agreement

With a view to enabling the AfCFTA to become operational in Côte d'Ivoire, draft decrees and ordinances have been sent to the Ministry of the Budget for the drafting of national legislation with a view to the effective start-up of trade at national level. The signing of these draft decrees and ordinances is intended to speed up the dismantling of customs duties with a view to effective implementation of the AfCFTA in Côte d'Ivoire. It will also help to reaffirm Côte d'Ivoire's commitment to intra-African trade. In addition, it seems appropriate to create harmony between the various national strategies available to Côte d'Ivoire in terms of trade commitments. Côte d'Ivoire has various national strategies for taking advantage of its international trade commitments: the national EPA strategy, the national export strategy, the national MCC strategy and the national strategies for implementing commitments within ECOWAS and UEMOA. These national strategies should be brought into line with the national AfCFTA implementation strategy.



de Côte d'Ivoire
de la Zone de Libre Echange Continentale



MEETING OF THE TWG ON FAIR COMPETITION POLICY

As a prelude to the fifth meeting of the Competition Policy Committee, which took place from 30 May to 2 June 2022 in Accra, the first meeting of the Thematic Working Group (TWG) on competition policy was held on Friday 27 May 2022 in the conference room of the Competition Commission in Cocody. The purpose of the meeting was to brief members on the current state of national competition policy, review the protocol and formulate Côte d'Ivoire's observations on the protocol. The recommendations on the draft protocol on competition policy currently being negotiated include the following:

- ✓ Distinguishing between anti-competitive practices and consumer protection law.
- ✓ Providing regulations and directives.
- ✓ Providing a directive for the operation of the central authority.
- ✓ Defining the market share threshold.
- ✓ Defining a dominant position.
- ✓ Defining the terms and conditions of abuse.
- ✓ Reviewing the translation of the protocol.
- ✓ Referring to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), if necessary, which has proven expertise in competition matters.





MEETING OF THE TWG ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

The second meeting of the Thematic Working Group (TWG) on the Protocol on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) was held on 08 June 2022 at the Ivorian Intellectual Property Office (OIP), located on the 5th floor of the Industrie building in the Plateau commune of Abidjan. The purpose of the meeting was to analyse a draft structure and key elements of the protocol on intellectual property rights, with a view to enabling Côte d'Ivoire to give its point of view on this continental project. The meeting aimed to analyze a draft structure and key elements of the protocol on intellectual property rights, enabling Côte d'Ivoire to articulate its position on the below listed points of this continental initiative:

- ✓ Point 40: On this point, the TWG highlighted the issues on which emphasis should be placed. These are the use of flexibility, national regulation and the progressive approach (harmonisation, standardisation).
- ✓ Point 41: The third part of the proposed protocol deals with "IPR standards (standard establishment)".
- ✓ Point 44: The TWG stressed the need to keep the existing regional institutional bodies OAPI and ARIPO in operation and to develop cooperation mechanisms with these institutions. It is also necessary to cooperate with national intellectual property agencies. At the end of the discussions, the experts recommended that provisions be made for the settlement of disputes concerning intellectual property.



MEETING OF THE TWG ON E-COMMERCE

Les The members of the Thematic Working Group on e-commerce had a meeting on 02 August 2022, at the Directorate of Promotion and International Economic Cooperation (DP- CEI) of the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange views on the organisation and operation of the group, to present the current state of e-commerce in Côte d'Ivoire and to discuss possible approaches and elements to be included in the AfCFTA protocol on digital trade:

- ✓ Pooling different payment methods (bank cards, mobile money).
- ✓ Extend the Interbank Payment Group (GIM) to actors in the AfCFTA or set up an interbank system covering the entire zone, to limit the costs associated with payment on delivery.
- ✓ Set up an authority to monitor the quality of services and customer/seller commitments in e-commerce.
- ✓ Accelerating the implementation of “Port Community System (PCS) project of the Single Window for Foreign Trade (GUCE) to optimise, manage and automate the fluidity of logistics processes, simplify remote customs procedures, warehouse management and tracking of goods from import to delivery.
- ✓ Encourage e-commerce solutions designed specifically for rural areas, where a the majority of the population is unconnected and often illiterate.



MEETING OF THE TWG ON INVESTMENTS

The meeting of the Thematic Working Group (TWG) on investment took place on 27 July 2022 at the Centre for the Promotion of Investments in Côte d'Ivoire (CEPICI). The purpose of the meeting was, on the one hand, to present the points of the continental negotiations on the protocol on investment and, on the other hand, to reflect on the various points still under discussion, namely the transfer of funds, indigenous peoples, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the pan-African agency and dispute settlement. The participants made suggestions including the following:

- ✓ Strengthen efforts to raise awareness among businesses regarding the AfCFTA Agreement and its implications.
- ✓ Adapting training to current realities.
- ✓ Integrating an entrepreneurial culture into our training courses.
- ✓ Emphasis on the notion of reciprocity between Côte d'Ivoire and other countries during exchanges.
- ✓ Upgrading and training local businesses to face up to the competition and introducing a policy of positive economic discrimination.



PREPARATORY CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF THE LIBREVILLE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

In the run-up to the Libreville Council of Ministers (CDM), scheduled for 27-28 October 2022, the AfCFTA-NC had a preparatory consultative meeting on 19 October 2022. The meeting had The main objective of the meeting was to define Côte d'Ivoire's position on all outstanding issues relating to the draft Protocols on Intellectual Property Rights, Investment and Competition Policy. The meeting was chaired by the former Director General of Foreign Trade, Mr Fadiga Kaladji, and had brought together experts and key actors from the various thematic working groups concerned. The participants' various contributions made it possible to formulate the national position on the outstanding points of the protocols on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), investment and competition policy.





COTE D'IVOIRE : A MODEL FOR AFCFTA IMPLEMENTATION

EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME CÔTE D'IVOIRE-NIGER-TUNISIA

A programme of interactive exchanges between stakeholders from certain beneficiary countries, namely Niger and Tunisia, was organised to draw inspiration from the Ivorian model for implementing the AfCFTA. The aim was to share experiences on the process of institutionalising National Committees under the AfCFTA, with good practice in implementing the agreement. This activity, which took place in Abidjan from 14 to 16 March 2022, is part of the operational plan for the GIZ AfCFTA support project for 2022.

The programme was enriched by presentations, exchanges and joint reflections with a view to sharing best practices, in order to enrich the experience of the various parties in the context of the operationalisation of the Agreement in their respective countries. The delegations from Niger and Tunisia had an audience with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and SME Promotion. They also had working visits to the General Confederation of Enterprises of Côte d'Ivoire (CGECI) and to the Ivorian Customs Administration. These visits gave them a better understanding of the inclusion of stakeholders, particularly the private sector, in the implementation of the AfCFTA.

Participants were briefed on the progress made and the difficulties encountered in negotiating the various AfCFTA protocols. They praised the progress made by Côte d'Ivoire, demonstrated by the existence of a functional and inclusive framework between the public and private sectors. On the strength of this wealth of experience, the delegations announced that they would replicate the Ivorian model in their respective countries.



CÔTE D'IVOIRE SHARES BEST PRACTICES WITH A DELEGATION FROM MADAGASCAR

Madagascar's Ministry of Industrialisation, Trade and Consumer Affairs, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has initiated a business exchange mission to Abidjan from 17 to 18 November 2022.

The choice of Côte d'Ivoire is justified by its remarkable inclusive policy and its ability to federate the actions of stakeholders concerning the implementation of the AfCFTA.

The purpose of the visit was to draw inspiration from the strategies implemented by Côte d'Ivoire to ensure the effective involvement and support of the private sector in the process of ratifying the AfCFTA.

A number of key actors were visited to find out about best practice in this area. These were the AfCFTA National Committee, the General Confederation of Enterprises of Côte d'Ivoire (CGECI), the Directorate of Foreign Trade (DGCE), the Centre for the Promotion of Investments in Côte d'Ivoire (CEPICI) and the Single Window for Foreign Trade (GUCE). Discussions during the benchmarking visit focused on the challenges of market access before the advent of the AfCFTA, the removal of barriers in other countries, mechanisms to allay the fears of Madagascar's private sector, the methodology for drawing up the National Export Strategy and the issue of commercial intelligence.

In this quest for guidelines and solutions, the recommendations made to the members of the delegation, for a better understanding of these various projects, would extend to an impact study on the Malagasy economy which would highlight the losses and gains, to the presentation of the opportunities of the Agreement, to capacity-building training for private-sector actors and to the strengthening of product quality for greater competitiveness. The series of visits ended at the Single Window for Foreign Trade, with a presentation of the single transactional portal set up to facilitate trade.





SUMMARY OF BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

Comité National de la Zone de Libre Echange Continentale Africaine
Côte d'Ivoire

SUMMARY OF BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

The 2022 budget notification shows a credit transfer of two hundred and forty-eight million five hundred thousand (248,500,000) CFA francs allocated to the AfCFTA-NC for the 2022 financial year. This budget has been subdivided into three economic categories:

- ✓ Transfers for capital expenditure
- ✓ Transfers for purchases of goods and services
- ✓ Transfers for staff costs

With regard to capital expenditure, the Executive Secretariat of the AfCFTA-NC has the following:

- ✓ Two service vehicles, including a TOYOTA HILUX double cab to facilitate the movement of several agents to meetings that could be held simultaneously and missions within the country whose organisation could require the participation of several agents and an ALSVIN V3 to facilitate the filing and proper tracking of emails.
- ✓ Ten (10) laptops to enable staff to work away from the office.
- ✓ A kit of audiovisual equipment for the communications department to cover several activities.
- ✓ Office furniture and equipment to increase the capacity of the meeting room for meetings or workshops with more than 20 participants.
- ✓ A video projector for screenings during meetings and missions within the country.

Expenditure on the purchase of goods and services:

The part of the budget allocated to this line enabled the Executive Secretariat of the AfCFTA-NC to meet its annual fixed costs and to finance all the activities organised by its departments. These are:

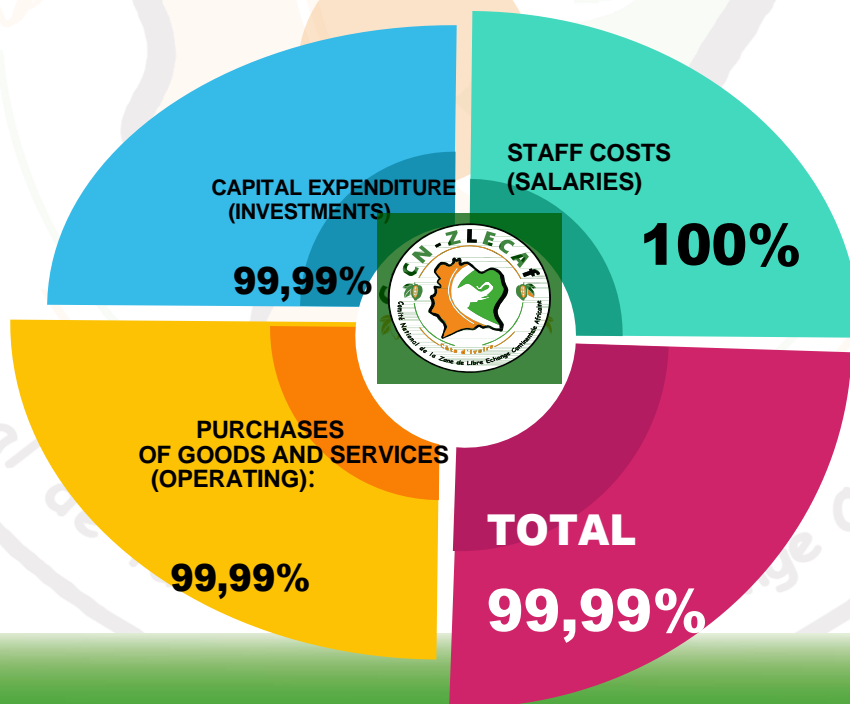
- ✓ 5 awareness-raising roadshows at 5 border crossings
- ✓ 3 training and awareness-raising workshops for women and young exporters on the AfCFTA
- ✓ 4 meetings of the Thematic Working Groups (TWG)
- ✓ 1 bloggers' afterwork on the AfCFTA
- ✓ 3 awareness-raising roadshows of public administrations
- ✓ University days
- ✓ National Consultation of Women and Young People

As regards staff costs, the Executive Secretariat of the AfCFTA-NC ensured the regular payment of staff salaries.



BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION 2022

TYPE OF EXPENDITURE	ENDOWMENTS	IMPLEMENTATION RATE
Staff costs (salaries)	20,000,000	100%
Capital expenditure (investments)	58,000,000	99.99%
Purchases of goods and services (operating)	170,500,000	99.99%
TOTAL	248,500,000	99/99%







CHALLENGES

In carrying out its activities, the AfCFTA-NC has had to face up to a number of difficulties:

- ✓ Mobilising stakeholders for the various activities
- ✓ The lack of responsiveness and promptness on the part of certain actors in the Ivorian public administration and private sector
- ✓ The lack of an up-to-date database of Ivorian businesses run by women and young people with the potential to export on a continental scale
- ✓ Financial resources have not yet been mobilised to start up activities relating to the main axes of the national strategy
- ✓ Capacity building for the Executive Secretariat of the AfCFTA-NC team
- ✓ Lack of awareness of the Agreement among stakeholders, despite communication initiatives by the National Committee
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluating the impact of awareness and information roadshows on the AfCFTA Agreement among stakeholders
- ✓ The mobility of AfCFTA-NC members assigned to new departments
- ✓ The limited impact of local actions in implementing axis 1 of the national strategy
- ✓ The deadline for transmitting draft ordinances and decrees for signature
- ✓ No financial evaluation of the AfCFTA-NC's national strategy
- ✓ Access to commercial information, knowledge and training
- ✓ The inadequacy of the budget allocated to the National Committee's operating and capital expenditure, which is slowing down the roll-out of the implementation strategy



RECOMMANDATIONS

- ✓ Strengthening awareness-raising and information activities on the AfCFTA for stakeholders.
- ✓ Facilitating the process of confirming appointment dates for awareness sessions.
- ✓ A financial evaluation study of AfCFTA-NC's national strategy.
- ✓ Implementing the mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the awareness and information roadshow on the AfCFTA Agreement among stakeholders.
- ✓ Capacity-building for women exporters on export techniques.
- ✓ Improving access to financial resources and services.
- ✓ The provision of financial resources to start up activities relating to the axes of the national strategy that have not yet been implemented.
- ✓ Capacity building for the Executive Secretariat of the AfCFTA-NC team.
- ✓ The creation of an up-to-date database of exporting companies.
- ✓ An increase in the budget allocated to the AfCFTA-NC.

OUTLOOK

The activities of the AfCFTA-NC over the coming months will be fully in line with the implementation of the six axes of the AfCFTA national strategy. The outlook for 2023 is as follows:

- ✓ The Participation of Côte d'Ivoire in the second stage of the Guided Trade Initiative
- ✓ Mobilising resources to implement the various axes of the national strategy.
- ✓ Implementing a proactive communications strategy aimed at different target audiences.
- ✓ Close collaboration with the Ivorian private sector.
- ✓ Facilitating contacts between economic operators in Africa.
- ✓ Supporting the introduction of alternative and participative financing for Ivorian SMEs.

Comité National de la Zone de Libre Echange Continentale Africaine
Côte d'Ivoire



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