



Ministry of trade and industry



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

# ACTIVITY REPORT

# 2023

Executive Secretariat of the AfCFTA-NC

Cocody - Deux Plateaux / Carrefour Las Palmas - Tel: +225 27 22 59 98 05 / Cel: +225 07 78 29 18 10

Website: <https://www.cnzlecaf.gouv.ci> - Email: [secretariat@cnzlecaf.gouv.ci](mailto:secretariat@cnzlecaf.gouv.ci)



# T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>PPRESENTATION OF THE AFCFTA-NC .....</b>	<b>05</b>
1. STRATEGIC AND DECISION-MAKING COUNCIL (SDMC).....	06
2. TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (TC).....	06
3. EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT (ES) .....	06
<b>IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY .....</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>AXIS 1 : NATIONAL OWNERSHIP OF THE AGREEMENT BY STAKEHOLDERS.....</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>AXIS 2: PROMOTING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE     IN TRADE .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>AXIS 3: DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING PROACTIVE TRADE SECTOR     STRATEGIES.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>AXIS 4: ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF PRODUCERS AND IMPROVING     THE QUALITY OF THEIR PRODUCTS.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>AXIS 5: STREAMLINING THE INSTITUTIONAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK     FOR TRADE PROMOTION AND EFFECTIVE APPLICATION OF THE PROVISIONS     OF THE AGREEMENT.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>CÔTE D'IVOIRE: AN EXAMPLE TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION     OF THE AFCFTA.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>CHALLENGES / RECOMMENDATIONS / OUTLOOK.....</b>	<b>38</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The year 2023 has been declared the "Year of Accelerated Implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement" by the African Union. This theme calls for greater commitment from the States parties to make the AfCFTA operational.

With this commitment, the African Heads of State are demonstrating their determination to translate intra-African trade under the preferences of the AfCFTA into concrete action.

Under the leadership of the President of the Republic, His Excellency, Mr. Alassane OUATTARA, champion of Agenda 2063, Côte d'Ivoire has taken the technical, operational, legislative and regulatory steps needed to make the AfCFTA operational and has taken steps to strengthen the commitment of stakeholders.

In line with the Ivorian government's objective of making 2023 the year of youth, the AfCFTA-NC has set about implementing an action plan in harmony with these two guidelines

It is in this context that the AfCFTA-NC has deployed activities this year compared with the different axes of the national strategy for the implementation of the AfCFTA in Côte d'Ivoire. These activities involved all the stakeholders in the Agreement, in particular the private sector, women and especially young people.

The aim of this deployment was to strengthen their capabilities with a view to gaining a foothold in foreign markets.

Emphasis has been placed on five (5) of the six (6) axes of the national strategy for implementing the AfCFTA, namely:

- ✓ Axis: National ownership of the content of the Agreement by the stakeholders
- ✓ Axis: Promotion of the participation of women and young people in trade.
- ✓ Axis: Upgrading of producers and products.
- ✓ Axis: Development and implementation of proactive sectoral trade strategies.
- ✓ Axis: Streamlining of the institutional and regulatory framework for trade promotion and effective application of the provisions of the Agreement.
- ✓ Axis: Reinforcing the reference framework for public strategies and improving competitiveness

This present report highlights the state of implementation status of the national strategy. It briefly presents some twenty activities and achievements in 2023, while highlighting the challenges, recommendations for successful implementation, and outlook for 2024.

## PRESENTATION OF THE AFCFTA-NC

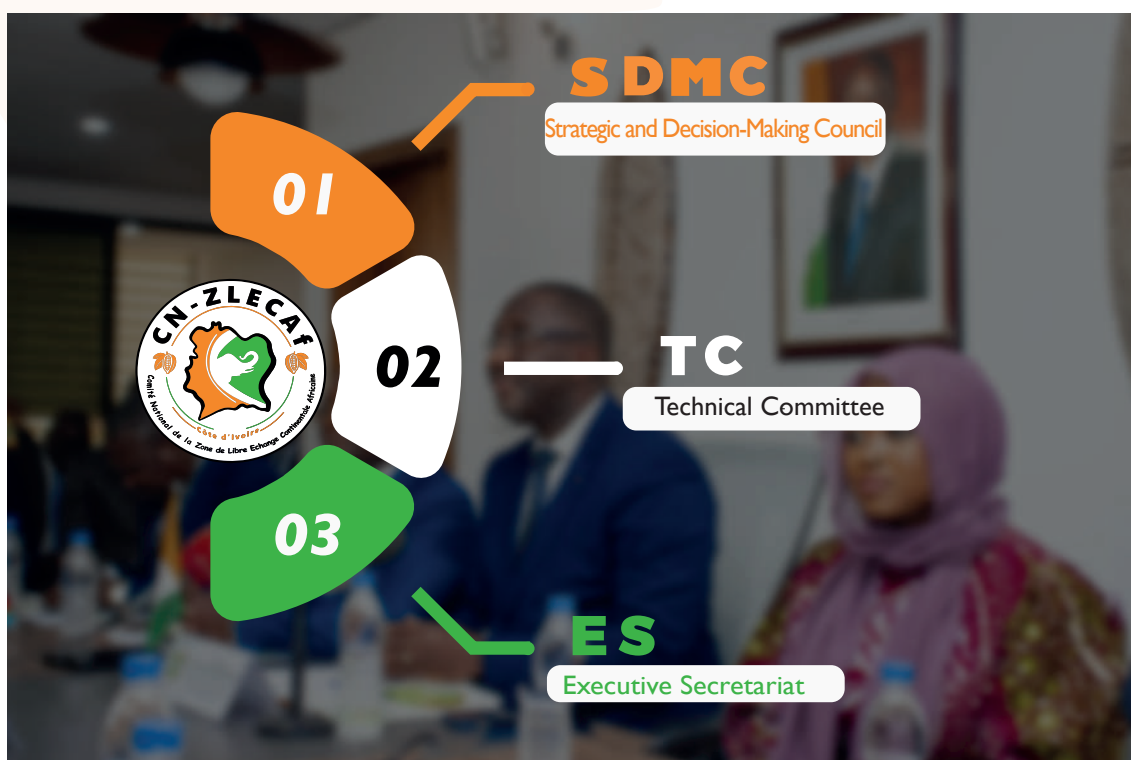
The AfCFTA-NC is a national body set up by decree No. 2018-514 of 30 May 2018, under the authority of the Prime Minister, Head of Government, to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement in Côte d'Ivoire.

It also acts as an interface between Côte d'Ivoire and the General Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area, based in Accra.

The missions of the AfCFTA-NC include the following:

- ✓ Promote the Agreement at national level.
- ✓ Contribute to the development of national strategies.
- ✓ Deal with issues related 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 three (3) bodies: the Strategic and Decision-Making Council (SDMC), the Technical Committee (TC) and the Executive Secretariat (ES).





**Mr. Robert Beugré MAMBE**  
Mr. Robert Beugré MAMBE

## Strategic and Decision-Making Council (SDMC)

### Missions

- ✓ Decide on the negotiating strategies and measures needed to implement the Agreement.
- ✓ Ensure that the orientations of the President concerning the Agreement are implemented.
- ✓ Ensure the effective implementation of the measures and actions decided by the Government.
- ✓ Take all decisions necessary for the operation of the AfCF-TA-NC.

## Technical Committee (TC)

### Missions

- ✓ Discuss issues relating to the implementation of the Agreement.
- ✓ Contribute to the definition of strategic orientations and actions to be carried out in favour of the AfCFTA.
- ✓ To propose to the Strategic and Decision-Making Council any measure essential to the implementation of the AfCFTA.
- ✓ Submit to the Council, in the form of conclusions the deliberations and recommendations resulting from its meetings, for its opinion and decision.
- ✓ Define and implement information to strengthen national expertise on the AfCFTA



**Dr. Souleymane DIARRASSOUBA**  
Minister of Trade and Industry

## Executive Secretary (ES)

### Missions

- ✓ Produce a periodic report on the activities of the AfCFTA-NC.
- ✓ Draw up and implement the AfCFTA-NC's annual action plan and the related budgets.
- ✓ Implement the decisions of the Technical Committee .
- ✓ Prepare technical documents for SDMC and TC meetings.
- ✓ Coordinate the activities of the technical working groups.
- ✓ Disseminate the decisions taken by the Government as part of the implementation of the Agreement.
- ✓ Coordinate the implementation of activities related to the Agreement



**Mrs. Fatoumata Fofana BOUNDY**  
Executive Secretary

# IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

**Axis: National Ownership of the Agreement by Stakeholders**

## AFCFTA AWARENESS-BUILDING WORKSHOPS HELD IN-PERSON AND ONLINE

Over the course of 2023, the National Committee's Executive Secretariat initiated various information and awareness-raising activities for stakeholders. The main aim of these activities was to:

- ✓ Present the Agreement, its annexes and protocols, and the opportunities, issues and challenges facing public and semi-public administrations.
- ✓ Set up a network of 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 to ensure optimum implementation of the Agreement.

These activities are aimed at stakeholders from the public and private sectors and civil society. A total of five (5) workshops, four (4) face-to-face and one (1) virtual, were held for stakeholders in various locations. These included

- ✓ one (1) workshop to raise awareness of the AfCFTA Agreement and its operational tools among transport sector actors,
- ✓ one (1) virtual awareness-raising workshop for Côte d'Ivoire's diplomatic representations in Africa,
- ✓ three (3) awareness-raising days for women exporters in three different towns in Côte d'Ivoire.

### Raising Awareness of Transport Sector Actors on the AfCFTA Agreement :

Forty-seven (47) members of the High Council of Road Transport Employers (HCPETR-CI) attended an awareness-raising day held on 12 September 2023 at the Hôtel Palm Club in Cocody. The aim of the event was to promote the AfCFTA Agreement and its operational implementation tools.

The specific aim was to inform carriers about the opportunities offered by the AfCFTA and the potential challenges to be met in order to make the most of this new Agreement, which establishes the largest market in the world.

The meeting also established an opportunity to present the Terms of Reference for the private sector's AfCFTA strategy to transport service stakeholders. The meeting ended with important recommendations concerning the challenges facing transport operators.



## Raising awareness among diplomatic representations :

On 19 December 2023 a virtual workshop was held with the participation of Côte d'Ivoire's diplomatic representations in Algeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique, South Africa and Ethiopia, during which two presentations were made. One on the content of the Agreement and the other on the preliminary results of the proactive trade sector strategy on the sub-regional markets (ECOWAS, SADC, UMA, ECCAS and COMESA) in the context of the implementation of the AfCFTA. The aim of this activity was to encourage Côte d'Ivoire's diplomatic representations in Africa to take ownership of the AfCFTA Agreement and to create, with them, a framework for collaboration to ensure synergy in initiatives to support the private sector as part of the conquest of the AfCFTA market.

A number of relevant suggestions emerged from the fruitful discussions, including the following:

- ✓ Training actors along the production chains
- ✓ Identifying solutions to eliminate visa requirements among member states
- ✓ Lifting restrictions and facilitating trade on key markets for Côte d'Ivoire
- ✓ Establishing a permanent framework for dialogue between the CN-ZLECAf and diplomatic representations to gain insights into target market realities and support decision-making at the highest level of government

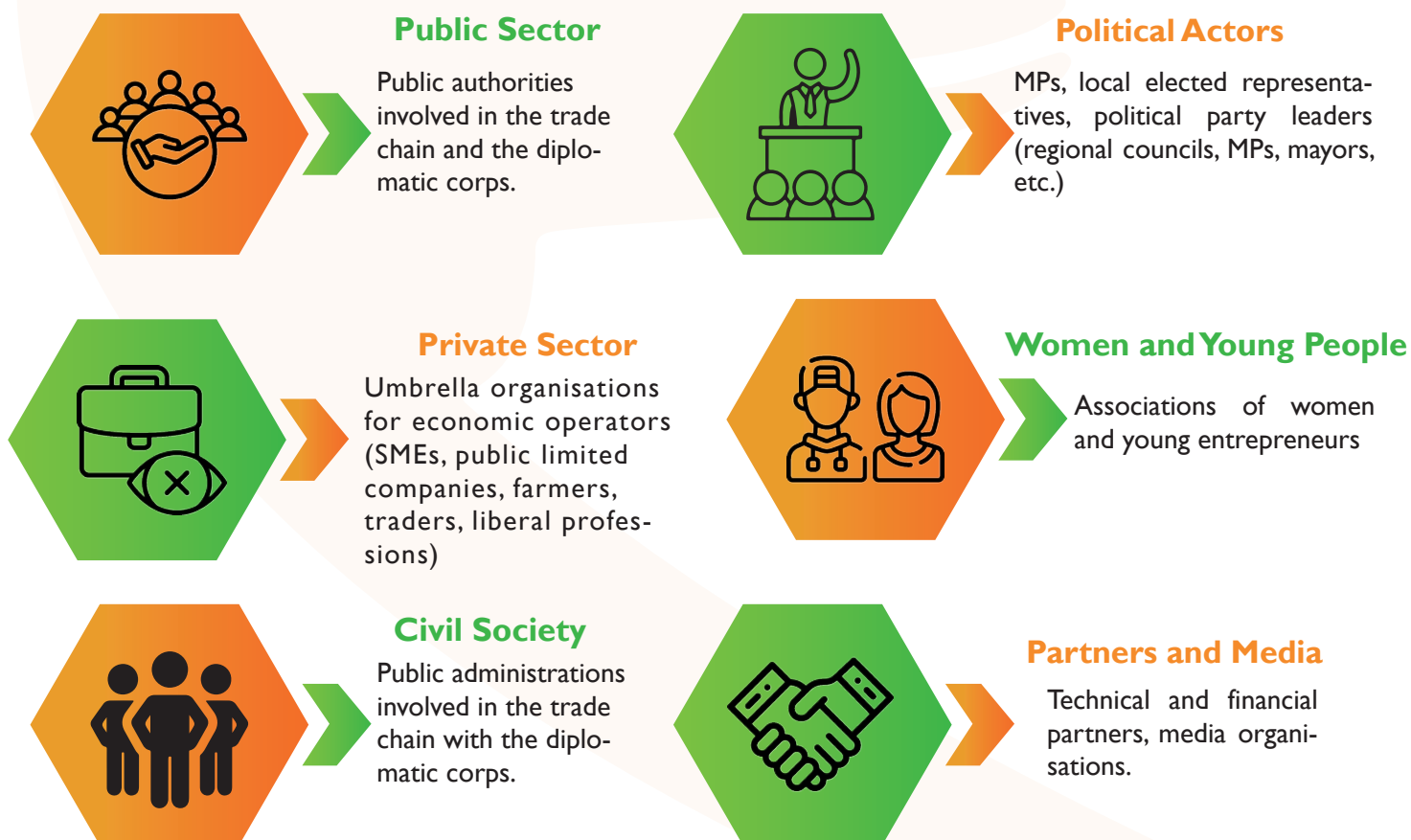
## IMPLEMENTING THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The AfCFTA-NC is striving to deploy its communication strategy in order to raise awareness about the AfCFTA Agreement among stakeholders. Considering the low rate of people informed about the AfCFTA despite communication efforts, it seemed appropriate to focus on mass awareness through communication channels, as well as outreach activities. To this end, the deployment of the AfCFTA-NC's communication strategy was structured around three (3) areas:

- 1) Media communication
- 2) Digital communication
- 3) Non-media communication.

The aim was to inform and raise awareness among all economic and social actors about the Agreement and its content, to promote the axes of the Agreement that are beneficial to each party, and to invite all stakeholders to become fully involved in and take full ownership of the AfCFTA.

### The main targets of this strategy are:





## DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

In terms of digital communication, the National Committee updates its website daily with content including articles, news, photos and videos relating to the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement at national and continental level. The AfCFTA National Committee is making efficient use of its official pages on social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube) to relay relevant information on the AfCFTA and raise awareness among target audiences.

Online information sites such as Abidjan.Net are also used as a means of transmitting information on the situational analysis of the AfCFTA Agreement at national and continental level. According to the statistics received, some 4,774 people have been made aware of the Agreement via Abidjan.net.



Facebook  
@CNZLECAF

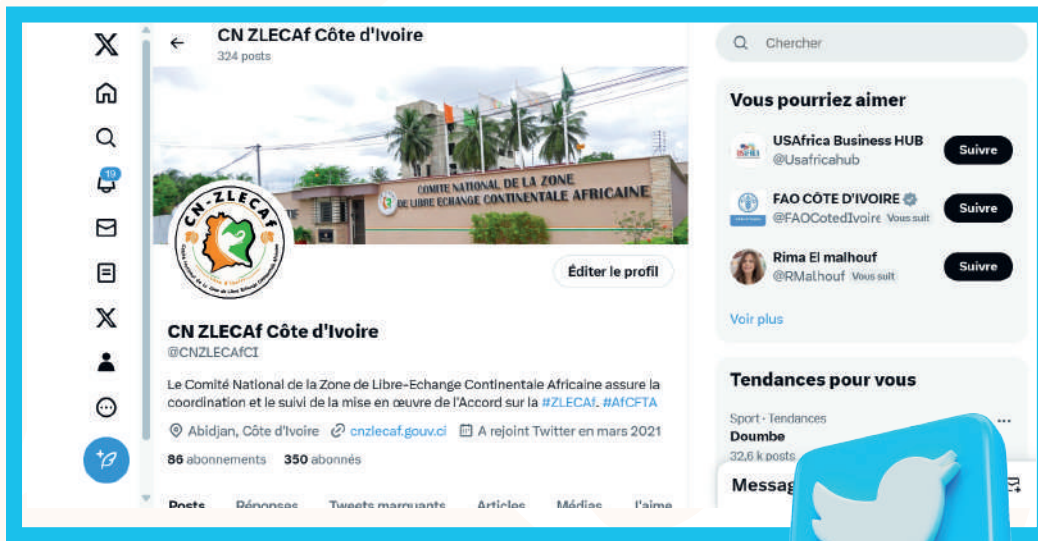
Number of followers: 3488



Youtube  
CNZLECAFci

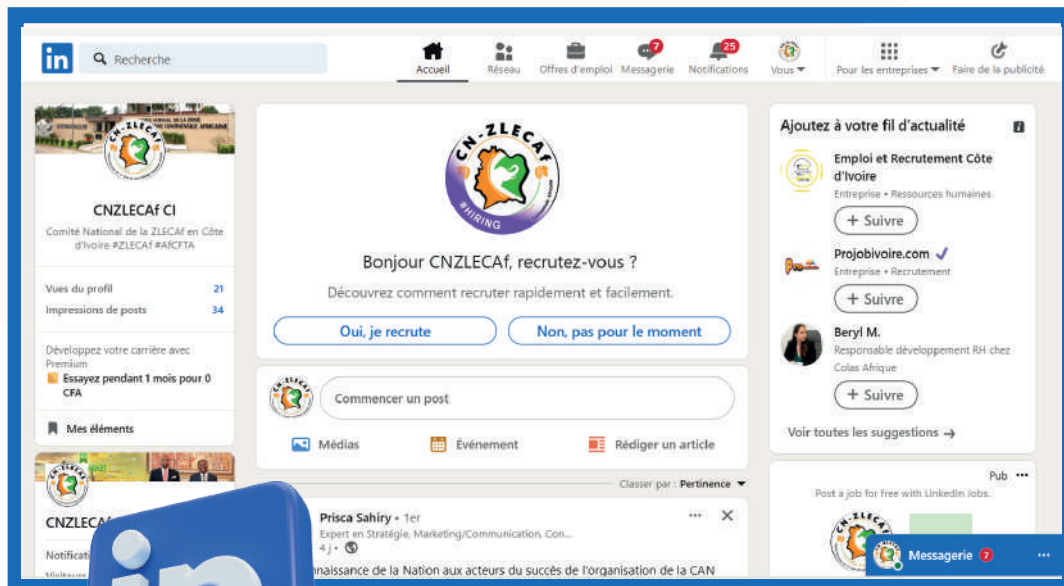
Number of subscribers: 23





Twitter  
@CNZLECAFci

Number of followers: 350



LinkedIn  
CN ZLECAFci

Number of followers: 974

## NON-MEDIA COMMUNICATION

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. In order to facilitate its various outreach activities, the AfCFTA-NC has designed and printed a number of communication tools and media, namely institutional brochures, kakemonos, notepads, etc. These media are commonly used as part of its institutional meetings, awareness-raising sessions, and participation in panels.



### ONE MARKET

In addition, the Executive Secretariat of the AfCFTA-NC has designed a newsletter called ONE-MARKET. This newsletter is a communication tool designed to provide trade stakeholders with information on the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement at continental and national levels. The newsletter has several sections, including "Focus," "Panorama," "Ori'djidi," "Added Value," and "Agenda." These sections include information on the AfCFTA-NC's situational analysis at national and continental levels, the promotion of national champions, and the UNECA's outlook for future activities.

One Market is distributed by mail or courier to the public administration, private sector actors in Côte d'Ivoire (umbrella organisations bringing together operators in all segments of economic activity: SMEs/SMIs, large companies, farmers, traders, the liberal professions, civil society organisations) and the general public.

### EVENTS

Over the course of 2023, the AfCFTA-NC took part in various activities on topics compared with the AfCFTA, with the aim of raising awareness of the Agreement among stakeholders. Examples of these activities include the following:

- ✓ On Saturday, 04 November 2023, the 14th Africa Food and Nutrition Security Day (JASAN), initiated by the African Network of Young Researchers (RAJeC), Côte d'Ivoire section, was celebrated in Abidjan. Under the central theme of "Accelerating the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement in the context of CAADP (Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme) commitments for safer and healthier diets," the AfCFTA-NC took part in the event. It was an opportunity to raise awareness of the AfCFTA among 150 young people.

- ✓ The 5th edition of the Ivoirian Crafts Market (MIVA) was held from 7 to 11 November 2023 at the Parc des Expositions in Abidjan. The event was organised around a number of panels, including one on the theme of "Crafts and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)." This panel provided an opportunity for the AfCFTA-NC team to highlight the opportunities offered by the AfCFTA Agreement for the crafts sector, both in terms of exports and collaboration with craftspeople from other African countries. The panel provided an opportunity to discuss the potential benefits for craftspeople and craft communities of implementing the AfCFTA and to highlight examples of good practice in regional integration in the crafts sector from other African countries. The event was attended by some 125 stakeholders from the crafts sector.



- ✓ The AfCFTA-NC took part on 17 and 18 November 2023 as a panelist and exhibitor at the second edition of the Abidjan Mobile Phone Exhibition (in French: Salon des Téléphonies Mobiles d'Abidjan), organised by Wali Création, Proche Media, and FAFEDE. The theme of this year's event was "Youth and employability, digitisation of the administration, AfCFTA ecosystem: pillars of African growth," and the aim was to promote telephony technologies made in Africa, in particular mobile phones, accessories, mobile applications, websites, and digital transformations. The AfCFTA National Committee led two panels on the general theme of the show and the sub-theme "AfCFTA integrated market: AfCFTA-compatible applications, myth or reality." This event saw the participation of 30 exhibitors including the AfCFTA-NC, 500 visitors, 22 speakers and panellists with the holding of 4 masterclasses and 6 conferences and panels.

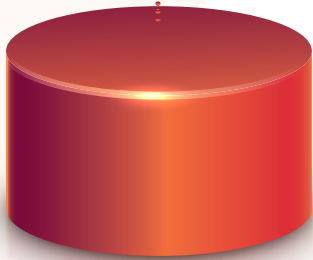


Below is a diagram of the number of people reached in 2023 :

**2005436**

People sensitized

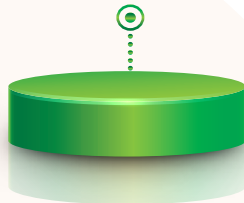
Mass media communication  
(TV, radio, press, writing)



**1500**

People sensitized

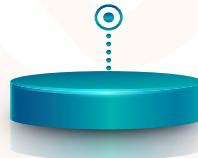
AfCFTA University Days



**315**

People sensitized

National roadshow  
to promote  
the Agreement



**200**

People sensitized

National consultation  
of women and  
young people



**30**

People sensitized

Capacity building  
for SME exporters  
and Trade Support  
Institutions



## IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

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

## NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON WOMEN IN TRADE

As part of the project to support implementation of the AfCFTA, the AfCFTA National Committee organised a national consultation day for women traders in the town of San Pedro on 13 July 2023. The aim of this activity was to carry out a participatory diagnosis of their needs in order to draw up proposals for support measures for their cross-border commercial activities. The meeting, organised in collaboration with the Ministry for Women, the Family and Children, with technical support from the German Development Agency (GIZ), was attended by 87 participants, including exporters and traders from a number of women's organisations in the town, working either individually or through associations.

The consultation aimed to facilitate understanding of the fundamentals of the AfCFTA Agreement and its implications, to present the opportunities offered by the AfCFTA Agreement, to identify the constraints and challenges to market access for women entrepreneurs and to formulate relevant proposals for better integration of women into intra-African trade under the AfCFTA. The day's discussions centred on three sessions, namely: identifying the constraints and needs of women in the exercise of their commercial activities, sharing experiences and recommendations to facilitate and accelerate the involvement of women in cross-border trade, and current initiatives to highlight the role of women in the implementation of the AfCFTA. The discussions were very constructive and provided an opportunity to compare and share experiences and opportunities for women exporters.

Key outcomes from this national consultation include the following:

- ✓ Increased understanding of the fundamentals of the AfCFTA Agreement and its implications.
- ✓ Greater awareness of the opportunities offered by the AfCFTA to women exporters.
- ✓ Identification of the main constraints and challenges to market access. and
- ✓ Development of actionable recommendations to improve the integration of women into intra-African trade.

The participants put forward several recommendations, including:

- ✓ Organizing additional capacity-building sessions on the opportunities provided by the AfCFTA.
- ✓ Raising awareness of tax regulations among women traders.
- ✓ Reducing the costs of air transport, customs duties, and taxes.
- ✓ Providing training in e-commerce and intellectual property protection for their products.
- ✓ Disseminating information about government funding opportunities. and
- ✓ Delivering training on product certification and fostering connections with the local private sector committee.



## NATIONAL CONSULTATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN TRADE

In addition to the consultation of women in trade, the AfCFTA-NC, in collaboration with GIZ, organised a national consultation of young people in trade on 8 November 2023 in the town of Man. The general objective of this consultation was to gather the needs, concerns and recommendations of young people with a view to including them in the protocol on women and young people in trade currently being negotiated. It was a crucial opportunity for young economic operators involved in cross-border trade to be made aware of the Agreement and its opportunities, with a view to ensuring that they take effective ownership of it, which is essential if they are to benefit from it. This national consultation of young people involved in cross-border trade was organised for young exporters, industrialists, producers, processors, traders, financiers, investors and economic operators. Fifty-eight (58) participants actually took part in this consultation.

The approach adopted was based on a participatory approach built around the collection of essentially qualitative data. Through the sharing of experiences, opportunities and advice, the discussions made it possible to identify the needs, challenges and limitations, as well as the opportunities available to young entrepreneurs in terms of both entrepreneurship and cross-border trade. These exchanges also made it possible to assess the level of knowledge of the measures put in place to help young exporters build their production capacities for export, to identify the experiences and successes that mark the path of young entrepreneurs as well as the constraints and needs that affect the participation of young entrepreneurs in the AfCFTA and, in order to gather potential solutions to empower youth-owned businesses and stimulate their participation in the new integrated market of the AfCFTA.

Among the recommendations for overcoming the obstacles and facilitating the involvement of young people in the AfCFTA Agreement are the following:

- ✓ Set up training and awareness-raising sessions for young entrepreneurs on the advantages and opportunities offered to them by the AfCFTA in order to raise awareness about their activities and help them reach external markets with the right and appropriate tools.
- ✓ Encourage young entrepreneurs to enroll and take part in learning and training programmes tailored to their needs.
- ✓ Advocate to financial institutions to influence the reduction of interest rates on loans requested by SMEs and micro-enterprises.



## UNIVERSITY DAYS ON AfCFTA

The year 2023 was declared the "Year of Youth" by His Excellency, Mr. Alassane OUATTARA, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, to promote youth entrepreneurship and encourage their integration into the workforce.

Driven by this vision and as part of the implementation of axis six (6) of the national strategy—focused on promoting the participation of women and young people in trade—the AfCFTA-NC launched a series of activities titled "University Days on the AfCFTA." The initiative aimed to inform students and raise their awareness about the AfCFTA and the opportunities it offers.

Under the theme "Youth Entrepreneurship to Conquer the AfCFTA Market," these activities took place in the towns of Grand-Bassam, Abidjan, Man, and San Pedro. The universities visited as part of the initiative included the International University of Grand-Bassam (UIGB), the International Private University of Abidjan (UIPA), the Polytechnic University of Man (UPM), and the Polytechnic University of San Pedro (USP).

Organised with the support of Côte d'Ivoire PME (CIPME) and Youth Employment Agency (in French: Agence Emplois Jeunes), the educational days sought to encourage students to explore entrepreneurship as a way to unlock the extraordinary opportunities offered by the AfCFTA Agreement. In total, over 1,500 students participated, gaining insights into how entrepreneurship can enable them to fully capitalise on the Agreement's benefits.



International University of Grand-Bassam



International Private University of Abidjan



Polytechnic University of San Pedro



Polytechnic University of Man



## IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

### **Axis: Developing and Implementing Proactive Trade Sector Strategies**

## WORKSHOP TO VALIDATE THE MARKET STUDIES FOR CÔTE D'IVOIRE'S PROACTIVE TRADE SECTOR STRATEGY

Côte d'Ivoire is a key player in West Africa, where it has always been one of the countries with the highest share of intra-regional trade.

In the context of the African trade agenda, Côte d'Ivoire plans to play a leading role, and plans to fully take on its role as an open country committed to economic and trade integration.

One of the ways of achieving this ambition is to "develop and implement the implementation of proactive trade sector strategies," as set out in the fourth strategic axis of the implementation of the AfCFTA agreement. The Executive Secretariat of the AfCFTA National Committee, with the support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and in collaboration with the UNDP, has commissioned a study entitled "Proactive Trade Sector Strategy."

The aim of the study is to provide support and assistance to Ivorian SMEs to help them make the most of this vast continental free trade area. Specifically, it involved analysing sub-regional markets in order to identify the best opportunities for the ten (10) priority Ivorian products and services in the 53 market segments established by the five (5) Regional Economic Communities (RECs). These are the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU).

This study has gone through several phases in its development:

1. Launch workshop which took place in August 2021.

2. Review of the scoping report organised on 02 November 2022.
3. Review of the summary report on priority products held on 28 November 2022.
4. Workshop for the review of the preliminary reports on 07 November 2023.
5. Validation workshop held from 28 to 29 November 2023.

This market study, begun in 2021 by a consortium of regional experts, was completed on 28 and 29 November 2023 at a debriefing and validation workshop held at the "Espace Latriille Events" venue located in the 2 Plateaux neighborhood of Cocody in Abidjan. The final workshop was attended by some sixty participants, including members of the AfCFTA-NC Technical Committee, trade support institutions, private sector umbrella organisations, exporting SMEs, and representatives of research centres. It helped to identify the RECs for which Côte d'Ivoire products are prized, and to inform economic operators of the markets in which Côte d'Ivoire has a comparative advantage. This study will be passed on to the export support institutions, so that they can provide the support exporters need to conquer the vast African market.



## IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

**Axis: Enhancing the Capacity of Producers and Improving the Quality of their Products**

## CAPACITY BUILDING FOR EXPORTING SMES

Over the course of a week of exchanges, some thirty exporting Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) had the opportunity to build their capacity on technical barriers to trade, analysis & market access tools and consumer preferences, through a workshop held from 2 to 6 October 2023, at the Grand Hôtel in Abidjan Plateau. To this end, various experts in the fields of trade, export and digital marketing gave interactive presentations based on innovative technical tools that local producers can use to prepare themselves as effectively as possible. By the end of the workshop, the local producers had acquired knowledge of analysis and market access tools to enable them to package their products in line with packaging and export standards and procedures, thereby facilitating their entry into the market. Beneficiaries were able to familiarise themselves with issues relating to e-commerce, technical regulations and, above all, consumer preferences, with the aim of being able to offer a real comparative advantage. This activity was organised in collaboration with the German Cooperation through GIZ.



## IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY

### **Axis: Streamlining the Institutional and Regulatory Framework for Trade Promotion and Effective Application of the Provisions of the Agreement**

## NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS

### Consultative Meeting to Prepare the Council of Ministers

A consultative preparatory meeting for the second meeting of the AfCFTA Council of Ministers was held on the premises of the AfCFTA-NC on Tuesday 7 February 2023. The purpose of the meeting was to enable the experts in charge of negotiations on the Rules of Origin and the draft regulation on Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to take stock of the negotiations, present the points outstanding and identify the points of interest in order to facilitate the formulation of Côte d'Ivoire's position. The meeting was attended by the stakeholders of the National Committee, namely the Ivorian private sector and the public administration. The national experts in charge of negotiations on rules of origin and SEZs gave AfCFTA-NC members an insight into the situational analysis at continental level. Suggestions were made through constructive exchanges, and participants defined the national position on the points outstanding in the negotiations.



### Capacity Building for the TWG on Investments

A capacity-building and awareness-raising workshop on the AfCFTA-NC protocol on investment was held from 24 to 28 July 2023 at the International Hotel in Grand Bassam on the initiative of the AfCFTA-NC with support from GIZ. The event brought together people from the public and private sectors and stakeholders in Côte d'Ivoire. It also served as a channel for discussion on the production of a national study on the handling of investment-related issues and, in particular, on the new governance introduced by the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment. The idea was to provide targeted technical support to the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire to ensure better implementation of the new AfCFTA Protocol on investment, in a way that would reflect the Ivorian government's priorities, particularly as regards sustainable development. The workshop brought together some fifteen people from the public and private sectors. The workshop made a number of recommendations, namely:



- ✓ Communicating investment data.
- ✓ Aligning formalization initiatives.
- ✓ Promoting national investors without causing prejudice to foreign ones.
- ✓ Adopting innovative solutions to help actors transition out of the informal system.
- ✓ Supporting national champions in entering AfCFTA markets.
  
- ✓ Monitoring payment transfers to curb the erosion of the taxable base.
- ✓ Improving internal processes to mobilize more resources.

## National Consultation on Digital Trade

The national consultation on e-commerce under the framework of the AfCFTA was held on Thursday, 3 August 2023, at the TIAMA Hotel in Abidjan's Plateau commune. The event aimed to engage key national stakeholders and officially launch the process of developing a national strategy and enhancing the institutional and regulatory framework for e-commerce in Côte d'Ivoire. This consultation was marked by the presence of Mr. Souleymane DIARRASSOUBA, Minister of Trade and Industry, Chairman of the Technical Committee of the AfCFTA-NC National Committee of Côte d'Ivoire (AfCFTA-NC). It provided an opportunity to review the commitments and challenges of the stakeholders involved in e-commerce in Côte d'Ivoire, and to examine draft 2.0 of the AfCFTA protocol on digital trade.

This was an opportunity to learn more about the national issues and challenges involved in e-commerce development policy in Côte d'Ivoire, with contributions from major stakeholders such as the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Communication and the Digital Economy and the General Directorate of Taxes.

During this activity, 2.0 version of the draft protocol on digital trade and its critical analysis were presented to the participants. The discussions that followed served to improve and validate the critical analysis of the provisions of the protocol. The meeting unanimously agreed on the urgent need to draw up a national e-commerce strategy, with a view to contributing to our country's socio-economic development.



## Meeting of the Thematic Working Group (TWG) on Digital Trade

After the national consultation, it was the turn of the Thematic Working Group (TWG) on digital trade to review the draft protocol 2.0 on investments. On Thursday 31 August 2023, a meeting of the Thematic Working Group on Digital Trade was held in the room called "Salle des élus" (or in English: "Hall of the Elected") of the Côte d'Ivoire Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI-CI). The aim of this working session was to share and consolidate the observations and proposals made by the members of the TWG following the consultant's analysis of the draft 2.0 protocol. The session was held as a prelude to the continental negotiations aimed at examining draft 2.0 and finalising the AfCFTA protocol on digital trade, with a view to its submission to the senior officials in charge of trade and its subsequent approval by the Council of Ministers.



### Meeting of the Thematic Working Group (TWG) on the Dispute Settlement Body

The National Legal Documentation Center (CNDJ) in Cocody hosted the first meeting of the Thematic Working Group (TWG) on the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) on Thursday, 9 November 2023. The session was attended by around ten members of the DSB TWG. Its primary purpose was to debrief participants on the ten meetings previously organized by the General Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in Accra concerning the DSB protocol.

Axes highlighted during the debriefing included:

- ✓ Drawing up rules of procedure for the SDMC and a code of conduct for the Appellate Body;
- ✓ Establishing working procedures for the Special Groups;
- ✓ Reviewing the draft directive on the operation of the Appellate Body (OA) and the remuneration of its members; and
- ✓ Developing strategic guidelines for operationalizing the Dispute Resolution Mechanism.

Regarding the operationalization of the Dispute Resolution Mechanism, members of the Thematic Working Group proposed that the National Committee create a pool of experts (including lawyers and economists) specializing in the AfCFTA. This would enable Côte d'Ivoire's private sector to maximize the benefits of the Agreement.

The meeting also served to inform participants about the legal framework, governance structures, and key components of the protocol, focusing on the rules and procedures related to dispute resolution between States Parties.



## STATUTORY MEETINGS OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

In accordance with the decree setting up the AfCFTA-NC, the members of the Technical Committee held twelve (12) meetings. The various meetings had specific objectives, as described in the table below:

Order	Date	Mode	Objectives	Participants
<b>First meeting</b>	6 April	In-person at Noom Hôtel Abidjan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State of play at regional and continental level</li> <li>- Guided Trade Initiative</li> <li>- State of play of AfCFTA implementation at national level</li> <li>- Presentation of the 2023 action plan and recommendations</li> </ul>	33
<b>Second meeting</b>	27 June	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reassess the 2023 action plan, taking into account the various observations made at the previous meeting on 6 April 2023</li> <li>- Conduct a situational analysis of the AfCFTA at continental level.</li> </ul>	34
<b>Third meeting</b>	7 July	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adoption of the minutes of the Technical Committee meeting of 6 April 2023</li> <li>- Report on the proceedings of the Technical Committee meeting of 6 April 2023</li> <li>- Items from statutory meetings</li> <li>- Preparation for the Strategic and Decision-Making Council meeting</li> <li>- Update on first-half activities</li> <li>- Update on negotiations and validation of positions</li> </ul>	33
<b>Fourth meeting</b>	28 July	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adoption of the meeting summary of the Technical Committee meeting of 7 July 2023</li> <li>- Update on actions stemming from the Technical Committee meeting of 6 April and 7 July 2023</li> <li>- Agenda of Technical Committee meetings</li> <li>- Presentation of the draft 2024 budget</li> <li>- Update on negotiations and validation of positions</li> </ul>	36
<b>Fifth meeting</b>	17 August	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adoption of the meeting summary of the Technical Committee meeting of 28 July 2023</li> <li>- Progress report on due diligence</li> <li>- Status of negotiations</li> <li>- Initiatives and studies in progress</li> </ul>	31
<b>Sixth meeting</b>	1st September	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adoption of the meeting summary of the Technical Committee meeting of 17 August 2023</li> <li>- Private sector strategy</li> </ul>	35

<b>Seventh meeting</b>	14 September	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adoption of the minutes of the Technical Committee meeting of 1 September 2023</li> <li>- Validation of the study on the impact of the Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) and the identification of capacity-building needs in the context of the AfCFTA</li> <li>- Progress report on the negotiations on Trade in Goods</li> <li>- Progress report on the private sector strategy.</li> </ul>	33
<b>Eighth meeting</b>	4 October	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adoption of the minutes of the meeting of 14 September 2023</li> <li>- Progress report on the development of the private sector strategy</li> <li>- Reflections on the organisation of the Strategic and Decision-Making Council meeting</li> </ul>	30
<b>Ninth meeting</b>	31 October	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reflections on the organisation of the Strategic and Decision-Making Council (SDMC) meeting</li> <li>- Situational Analysis in the negotiations on trade in services</li> </ul>	27
<b>Tenth meeting</b>	13 December	In-person meeting at the General Confederation of Enterprises of Côte d'Ivoire (CGECI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reflections on the organisation of the Strategic and Decision-Making Council (SDMC) meeting</li> <li>- State of play in the negotiations on trade in services</li> </ul>	45
<b>Eleventh meeting</b>	21 December	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reflections on the organisation of the Strategic and Decision-Making Council (SDMC) meeting</li> <li>- Adoption of the strategy review</li> </ul>	28
<b>Twelfth meeting</b>	28 December	Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of AfCFTA-NC activities in 2023</li> </ul>	24



## CÔTE D'IVOIRE: AN EXAMPLE TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFCFTA

## MADAGASCAR'S PRIVATE SECTOR ADOPTS THE CÔTE D'IVOIRE MODEL

Eva Razafimandimby, Executive Director of the Group of Free Trade Companies and Partners and the former Trade Minister of Madagascar were in Côte d'Ivoire from 19 to 21 June 2023 as part of an exchange visit. The purpose of the trip was to enable members of Madagascar's private sector to draw inspiration from Côte d'Ivoire's practices in implementing the AfCFTA Agreement. To this end, several working sessions were held with public administration bodies such as the Office of the Minister for Trade and Industry, the General Directorate of Foreign Trade, the Executive Secretariat of the AfCFTA-NC, the Centre for the Promotion of Investment in Côte d'Ivoire (CEPICI), the Single Window for Foreign Trade (GUCE) and Ivorian Customs. These various visits provided an opportunity to shed light on the situational analysis of the AfCFTA at national level, the inclusion of stakeholders and the measures put in place by Côte d'Ivoire to allow a degree of investment flexibility to boost the private sector, which plays a key role in the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement.

In the same vein, Mrs. Razafimandimby noted, during a working session with the General Confederation of Enterprises of Côte d'Ivoire (CGECI), the involvement of the private sector in the implementation of the AfCFTA. A visit to the Akoupé-Zeudj cement plant industrial zone, led by the team from the Industrial Infrastructure Management and Development Corporation (SOGEDI), was an opportunity for the guest to appreciate the efforts made by the Ivorian government to industrialise and set up several industrial zones for the benefit of economic operators.



## VISIT BY A DELEGATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO TO CÔTE D'IVOIRE

A delegation led by the Minister for Trade of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) visited the AfCFTA National Committee on the sidelines of the 9th edition of the Makutano Business Forum, Central Africa's leading business network. The delegation, headed by Mr. Jean-Luc BUSA, DRC Minister for Foreign Trade, was received by the Minister for Trade and Industry, Dr Souleymane DIARASSOUBA, on the premises of the AfCFTA National Committee (AfCFTA-NC). Following a presentation on the implementation status of the AfCFTA in Côte d'Ivoire, Minister DIARRASSOUBA, who is also Chairman of the AfCFTA-NC Technical Committee, discussed with his counterpart the strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries within the framework of the AfCFTA.

Discussions focused on Côte d'Ivoire's best practices in terms of setting up a National Committee and implementing the AfCFTA Agreement. At the end of the discussions, it was agreed that a team from the DRC would be sent on a mission in the near future to accelerate the increase in the level of trade and investment between the two countries, with a view to promoting the achievement of results linked to the implementation of actions relating to the African Union's Agenda 2063.





## Summary of Budget Implementation

## BUDGET DETAILS

The Executive Secretariat of the AfCFTA National Committee (Executive Secretary of the AfCFTA-NC), the Committee's technical, administrative and financial management body, has received a credit transfer of two hundred and forty-eight million five hundred thousand CFA francs (248,500,000) for the 2023 financial year, in accordance with the Decree establishing the Committee, broken down as follows:

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

### STAFF COSTS

The sum of 20,000,000 was used by the Executive Secretariat to hire :

- ✓ A communications manager.
- ✓ A technical services manager.
- ✓ A communications officer for 12 months.
- ✓ A communications officer for three (3) months.
- ✓ A driver for 12 months.
- ✓ A driver for three (3) months.

### CAPITAL EXPENDITURE :

The Executive Secretariat of the AfCFTA-NC is investing to achieve the objectives assigned to it. These include :

- ✓ One (1) 4x4 Toyota Hilux for missions outside of the main city.
- ✓ Two (2) Berlins Dzire Suzuki to make it easier for 12 agents to travel to meetings and do their daily work.
- ✓ Four (4) desktop computers.
- ✓ Two (2) laptop computers.
- ✓ One (1) computer monitor.
- ✓ One (1) universal videoconferencing system.
- ✓ One (1) set of audiovisual equipment for the communications department.
- ✓ One (1) 6-horsepower air-conditioning unit.
- ✓ One (1) microwave oven.
- ✓ Four (4) office chairs.
- ✓ One (1) 8-seater table for the refectory.

The total amount of these investments is fifty-seven million, nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine CFA francs (57,999,999 CFA Francs).

## EXPENDITURE ON GOODS AND SERVICES

This allocation is earmarked for fixed costs with funding for a number of activities to implement the action plan.

### Fixed Costs

The total fixed costs of the Executive Secretariat amount to fifty-seven million four hundred and twenty-nine thousand and seventeen CFA francs (57,429,07 CFA Francs).

### Financing of a Number of Activities to Implement the Action Plan

A total of twenty (20) activities were carried out for 3,347 participants for a total amount of one hundred and thirteen million sixty-nine thousand seven hundred and seventy CFA francs (113,069,770).

## EXPENDITURE TABLE

Type of expenditure	Endowments	Commitments issued	Paid commitments	Implementation rate
Capital expenditure (Investments)	58 000 000	57 999 999	57 998 700	99.99%
Staff costs	20 000 000	20 000 000	20 000 000	100%
Purchasing of goods and services	170 500 000	170 498 787	170 498 787	99.99%
<b>Total</b>	<b>248 500 000</b>	<b>248 498 786</b>	<b>248 498 786</b>	<b>99.99%</b>



## Challenges / Recommendations / Outlook

## CHALLENGES

The challenges include:

Lack of formal commitment from stakeholders.

Delays in the release of financial resources for the start of activities outlined in the annual action plan.

Pending signature of draft ordinances and decrees for the operationalisation of the AfCFTA at the national level.

Absence of a financial evaluation of the AfCFTA-NC's national strategy.

Inadequate budget allocated for the running costs of the National Committee, slowing down the roll-out of the implementation strategy.

High turnover of staff due to salary and working conditions, hampering the effectiveness of project management.

Outdated database of Ivorian companies, particularly those exporting or with high export potential, run by women and young people.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the above challenges, the following measures are recommended:

Timely provision of financial resources to enable the rapid start-up of activities outlined in the annual action plan.

Speedy enactment of ordinances and decrees required for the operationalisation of the AfCFTA.

Financial evaluation of the national strategy for implementing the AfCFTA-NC, with the allocation of a related budget.

Increased budget allocation to cover the operating expenses of the AfCFTA-NC.

Capacity building for the Executive Secretariat of the AfCFTA-NC team.

Creation of an updated database of exporting companies or companies with high export potential.

## OUTLOOK

The key objectives for 2024 include:

Reviewing and conducting a budgetary evaluation of the national strategy for implementing the Agreement.

Securing the signature of implementing decrees and ordinances.

Mobilising necessary resources.

Implementing an intensive communication strategy targeted at various stakeholder groups.

Establishing a Certificate of Origin system and ensuring Côte d'Ivoire's participation in the second stage of the Guided Trade Initiative.



Executive Secretariat of the AfCFTA-NC  
Cocody - Deux Plateaux / Carrefour Las Palmas  
Tel: +225 27 22 59 98 05 / Cel: +225 07 78 29 18 10