



National Strategy for Implementing the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in Côte d'Ivoire

Final Report

Post-Validation Workshop Version

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List of Organisations that took part in the scoping workshop - Sep. 2019

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List of structures met in the regions (Bouaké and San Pedro) - nov. 2019

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ATF	Agreement on Trade Facilitation
iEPA	Interim Economic Partnership Agreement
APEX-CI	Association for the Promotion of Exports of Côte d'Ivoire
BCEAO	Central Bank of West African States
SPDC	State-Private Sector Dialogue Committee
ITC	International Trade Centre
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CEPICI	Investment Promotion Center of Côte d'Ivoire
CGA	Accredited Management Centers (better known CGAs)
CGECI	General Confederation of Enterprises of Côte d'Ivoire
AfCFTA-NC	National Committee for the AfCFTA
CNE	National Export Council (<i>Conseil National d'Exportation</i>)
NCTF	National Committee on Trade Facilitation
NICC-WTO	National Interministerial Consultative Committee - WTO
NEPC	National Economic Policy Council
RTFC	Regional Trade Facilitation Committee
DGD	General Directorate of Customs
DGI	General Directorate of Taxes
NTB	Non-Tariff Barriers
FENACCI	National Federation of Trade Actors of Côte d'Ivoire
FNJ	National Youth Fund
GUCE	Single Window for Foreign Trade
TSI	Trade Support Institution
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
HDI	Human Development Index
INS	National Institute of Statistics (<i>Institut National de la Statistique</i>)
LPI	Logistics Performance Index (World Bank)
MFN Clause	Most-Favored Nation Clause
NITC	New Information and Communication Technologies
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ILO	International Labour Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
WCO	World Customs Organization
PACCIR	Trade Competitiveness and Regional Integration Support Project
ICL	Integration Community Levy
SMEs/SMIs	Small and Medium Enterprises/Industries
NDP	National Development Plan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
RTFP	Regional Trade Facilitation Program

PHC	Population and Housing Census
NES	National Export Strategy
IAT	Import Adjustment Tax
CPT	Complementary Protection Tax
TDT	Tourism Development Tax
CET	Common External Tariff
AU	African Union
EU	European Union
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area

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Executive Summary

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) undeniably represents a major economic opportunity for Côte d'Ivoire. By providing access to a market of more than 1.2 billion consumers within a framework of free trade in goods and services, the AfCFTA encourages competition, investment and innovation. It thus offers countries increased prospects for commercial growth on the continent, structural transformation, acceleration of the already sustained growth dynamic, and improved economic and social living conditions.

Côte d'Ivoire is well-positioned to benefit from this Agreement, thanks to its progress in regional integration, high-level competitiveness in certain sectors, and a diverse trade portfolio made up of a wide range of products and partners. However, several obstacles could limit the expected structural transformation forecasted for the country. These include the preponderance of the informal sector, a lack of awareness among economic operators of the benefits of the AfCFTA and other trade promotion mechanisms, the relative fragility of the political and social context, a workforce profile that is still insufficiently adapted to the needs of businesses, the multiplicity of trade support institutions with a low level of coherence and harmonisation, and various unfavourable aspects of the business climate. These include lengthy and costly cross-border trade procedures, limited access to finance, delays and high costs for electricity connections, and limited protection for minority investors.

To maximise the positive impact of the AfCFTA in Côte d'Ivoire, the implementation of the Agreement should aim to achieve the following strategic objective: (i) Encourage full ownership of the Agreement by all stakeholders; (ii) streamline the institutional and regulatory framework for promoting trade, as well as the effective application of the provisions of the Agreement; (iii) strengthen the reference framework for public strategies and improving the competitiveness of the sectors of activity; (iv) develop and implement ambitious sectoral trade strategies; (v) upgrade the capacities of producers, particularly VSEs, SMEs and SMIs, and their products; (vi) actively promote the participation of women in cross-border trade.

The successful implementation of the AfCFTA in Côte d'Ivoire, considered as the harmonious integration of the Ivorian economy into the integrated and liberalised African market, require a strong political will to carry out the reforms within the set deadlines, as well as collective ownership of the process, which must be inclusive and participatory.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Justification

With the signing of the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in March 2018 and its ratification in April 2019 by the 22nd State, Africa is poised to become a unified and integrated market. This market, which will bring together the 55 Member States of the African Union, will include more than 1.2 billion consumers with a combined GDP of more than 2.5 billion US dollars. The AfCFTA will thus become, in terms of the number of member countries, the largest free trade area in the world since the creation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 1995.¹

Through the liberalisation of trade in goods and services (by gradually removing tariff and non-tariff barriers), more efficient customs procedures, trade and transit facilitation, and the harmonisation of economic policies, the Agreement could: (i) increase intra-African trade, which to date has had little response to the incentives of sub-regional integration processes; (ii) reinvigorate inclusive growth ; (iii) lay the foundations for industrialisation and structural transformation of African economies; and (iv) promoting sustainable development.

Successful implementation of the Agreement would give concrete form to the vision of an “integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa” shared by the African States (Agenda 2063) and would contribute to achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Agenda 2030).

The AfCFTA could therefore significantly change the situation in Africa, a continent that still trades little with itself and remains relatively marginalised in world trade.² More specifically, it is estimated that the elimination of customs duties on 90% of products subject to tariff regimes could increase trade flows by 16%, or around US\$16 billion, particularly in the mining, manufacturing and agricultural products sectors.³ Forecasts by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) are along the same lines, indicating that effective liberalisation could, in the long term, generate 1 to 3 points of additional growth, increase employment by 1.2% and significantly reduce trade deficits.⁴

¹ IMF (2019): *Sub-Saharan African Regional Economic Outlook: Opportunities and Challenges of the African Continental Free Trade Area* (ch.3) (<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/REO/SSA/Issues/2019/04/01/sreo0419>, accessed on 16 September 2019).

² IMF (2019): *Sub-Saharan African Regional Economic Outlook: Opportunities and Challenges of the African Continental Free Trade Area* (ch.3) (<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/REO/SSA/Issues/2019/04/01/sreo0419>, accessed on 17 September 2019).

³ Source : IMF (2019).

⁴ Source: UNECA (2018): *The Case for the African Continental Free Trade Area : The AfCFTA, Africa's trade flows and industrialization* (<https://repository.uneca.org/bitstream/handle/10855/24380/b1189331x.pdf?sequence=1> , accessed on 16 September 2019).

For Côte d'Ivoire, the effective implementation of the AfCFTA will contribute to significantly increasing exportation to regions outside ECOWAS.⁵ The industrial sector could reap the greatest benefits from this expansion, with trade growth of up to 8.5%. The Agreement therefore provides an opportunity to promote industrialisation and promotes tools for the structural transformation of the economy. Although customs revenue losses could be as high as 10.3%, the welfare of the population could be improved thanks to the prospects of higher incomes, job creation and greater access to diversified and affordable goods and services.

However, these economic opportunities come with risks and costs associated with opening borders and liberalising domestic markets. In addition to the loss of customs revenues, the implementation of the Agreement could have redistributive effects, both within and between countries, in terms of welfare, wages and inequalities. The nature, scale and direction of these effects will depend on the structure and complexity of the economy and trade.

To maximise the expected effects of the Agreement signed and ratified by Côte d'Ivoire, the country needs to ensure that it is implemented on the basis of its existing and potential comparative advantages and its level of sectoral competitiveness. These factors will determine the extent to which market and investment opportunities, as well as their associated risk could materialise. It is against this backdrop that this National Strategy for the Implementation of the AfCFTA has been drawn up, with technical support from the UNECA, contributions from the African Union (AU) Commission and the International Trade Centre (ITC), and funding from the European Union. On the basis of a study based on multilateral and bilateral consultations with key actors in Côte d'Ivoire's public and private sectors, this strategy identifies opportunities and risks, assesses the institutional and regulatory framework, and reflects a strong political will. It establishes a roadmap for implementing the AfCFTA in Côte d'Ivoire and maximising its economic and social impact.

1.2. Objectives

The aim of this AfCFTA National Strategy is to enrich the reference framework for Côte d'Ivoire's inclusive development by addressing trade policy. It aims to help the country identify the main commercial and industrial opportunities, the constraints and the necessary measures. It also includes a scheme for applying the

⁵ The results come from a simulation exercise using computable general equilibrium modeling conducted by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) based on the MIRAGE model and data from GTAP (version 9.0) and MACMAP-HS6.

provisions of the Agreement in order to take full advantage of national, regional and global markets.

The strategy is based on an in-depth analysis of Côte d'Ivoire's macroeconomic and trade profile, its institutional and regulatory framework, and the identification of opportunities and risks. It proposes an Action Plan for the implementation of the Agreement at the national level, with a monitoring and evaluation framework entrusted to the AfCFTA-NC.

1.3. Methodology

The development of the National Strategy is based on a participatory and inclusive process, integrating quantitative and qualitative data. This process began with a national AfCFTA awareness-raising forum, held on 2 and 3 May 2019 in Abidjan, to gather key recommendations for the development of the strategy. A scoping workshop then brought together various public and private stakeholders on 11 and 12 September 2019. Discussions in working groups focused on the guiding criteria defined by the AfCFTA National Committee Secretariat in collaboration with the UNECA and the African Union Commission. In October and November 2019, a series of additional consultations provided an opportunity to explore in greater depth various aspects raised during the initial consultations.

More specifically, the following axes, which essentially reproduce the guiding criteria, have served as methodological guides in the development of the Strategy:

- an analysis of the macroeconomic framework, the structure of the productive apparatus, the trends and composition of international trade, and highlight underlying policy orientations and strategies. This analysis must highlight the extent to which they are consistent with the implementation of the Agreement, in order to optimise the expected benefits;
- an assessment of the regulatory and institutional frameworks to verify their consistency with the tools and mechanisms of the AfCFTA, and to identify the adjustments needed to implement the Agreement effectively;
- identification of market opportunities and value chain development at different levels, based on criteria of market access, comparative advantage, sectoral competitiveness and trade facilitation measures;
- an inventory of the risks associated with the liberalisation of the domestic market and the obstacles to the implementation of the Agreement. This inventory should make it possible to formulate risk mitigation measures and actions to reduce adjustment costs; and

- the definition of strategic objectives, the development of a strategic action plan, and the establishment of a monitoring and evaluation framework linked to the main opportunities and risks identified beforehand.

1.4. Overview of the AfCFTA

The decision of establishing/creating AfCFTA was adopted at the 18th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in 2012, with implementation⁶ scheduled for 2017. This initiative aims to achieve the goal of a unified, autonomous and prosperous Africa, with the creation of a single market allowing the free movement of goods, services, people and capital.

The planned expansion of intra-African trade, facilitated by the Protocol on Trade in Goods of the first phase of the negotiations, is based on several aspects: (i) the gradual removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers; (ii) improving customs procedures and facilitating trade and transit; (iii) enhanced cooperation and harmonisation in the areas of technical barriers and sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards; (iv) promotion of value chains at sub-regional and regional levels; and (v) progress towards socio-economic development, diversification and industrialization across the continent.

In accordance with the Agreement, the process of trade liberalisation takes account of the nature of the goods and their respective contribution to the country's economy. In the short term, 90% of tariff lines, which concern so-called 'non-sensitive' products, will be liberalised. 'Sensitive products', representing 7% of tariff lines, will be liberalised after a maximum adjustment period of 10 years (13 years for Least Developed Countries - LDCs). The remaining 3% will continue to be protected (See Table 1).

The Services Protocol, by contributing to the emergence of a unified and liberalised market for services (with the exception of those falling within the sovereign domain of governments), should help by: (i) progressive liberalise of services sector in Africa ; (ii) improving the competitiveness of the sector by extending the market; (iii) reducing transaction costs ; (iv) increasing domestic and foreign investment; and

⁶ The 18th Session also marked the adoption of an action plan aimed at strengthening intra-African trade (Action Plan on Boosting Intra-Africa Trade – BIAT), which is structured around seven pillars: trade policy, trade facilitation, productive capacities, trade infrastructure, access to finance, trade information, and integration of factor markets..

(v) promoting research and innovation in services to accelerate economic and social development.

Table 1: Timetable for the Liberalisation of Goods under the AfCFTA

		Price reductions		
		For non-sensitive products	For sensitive products	For excluded products
Country rankings	Countries not in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) category	Full liberalisation in 5 years (linear reduction)	Full liberalisation in 10 years (linear reduction)	No reduction
	Least Developed Countries (LDCs)	Full liberalisation in 10 years (linear reduction)	Full liberalisation in 13 years (linear reduction)	No reduction
	Group of Seven (i.e. Djibouti, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Sudan, Zambia, Zimbabwe)	More than 85% liberalised in 10 years (linear reduction) ; a further 5% fully liberalised in 15 years (linear reduction)	Full liberalisation in 13 years (linear reduction)	No reduction

Source: AfCFTA Negotiation Forums.

In sum, the effective and successful implementation of the AfCFTA is expected to improve global competitiveness, both at the level of industries and individual firms, by harmoniously exploiting the significant opportunities linked to economies of scale, market access offers and greater efficiency in the allocation of resources, which are often scarce in countries.

However, it was not until the Extraordinary Summit in Kigali (Rwanda), held from 17 to 21 March 2018, that the Agreement was presented to African leaders⁷ for signature. At this Summit, 44 of the 55 countries signed the Agreement, a number that has now risen to 54. Article 23 of the Agreement stipulates that entry into force will occur when the threshold of 22 States having ratified is reached, which took place on 30 May 2019.

The operationalisation phase was launched at the 12th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Niamey (Niger) on 7 July 2019. This phase focused on five instruments intended to contribute to the implementation of the Agreement. These instruments are briefly explained in Table 2.

⁷ In addition to the AfCFTA text, the Kigali Declaration and the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons and the Right of Residence and Establishment were also presented for signature. The Declaration was signed by 47 member states, and the Protocol by 30.

Table 2: Instruments for Making the AfCFTA Operational

Instruments	Brief description
AfCFTA Rules of Origin	A set of criteria for determining the origin of goods to ensure that a product marketed within the AfCFTA is eligible or not for preferential treatment in the country of import. The Rules of Origin as seen in Annex II of the Agreement Establishing the AfCFTA provides the criteria for verifying whether products qualify for preferential treatment.
Schedules of tariff concessions on trade in goods	List established by country or tariff union, according to the Timetable for the Liberalisation of Goods under the AfCFTA (see Table 1). For Côte d'Ivoire, this list is established within the framework of ECOWAS.
Online mechanism for monitoring and eliminating non-tariff barriers	Online mechanism for reporting, monitoring and eliminating non-tariff barriers. Each actor can report trade-distorting measures under the AfCFTA. The mechanism can be accessed at https://www.tradebarriers.africa/
Electronic payments system	Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PASPSS), designed to interconnect all economic and financial actors. This system facilitates cross-border transactions in local currencies, enabling economic operators to sell and buy in their respective local currencies.
African Trade Observatory	The African Trade Observatory (ATO) will be the reference point for qualitative and quantitative data and information relating to trade in the Member States.

The negotiations on trade (Phase 1) will be followed shortly by those on investment, competition and property rights (Phase 2). The effective start of the liberalised trade regime as planned by the AfCFTA is set for 01 July 2020.

2. Socio-Economic Overview and Framework for Implementation of the AfCFTA in Côte d'Ivoire

2.1. Macroeconomic and Social Profile

Côte d'Ivoire is the largest economy in the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), accounting for 36% of its GDP in 2016⁸ and therefore its main economic driver⁹. Generally speaking, the country's socio-economic profile is both variable and contrasted, with macroeconomic performance largely linked to strong growth, on the one hand, and social indicators that reveal the relatively difficult living conditions of a large section of the population, on the other, all suggestive of the scope of the reforms aimed at making the country an emerging power.

2.1.1. General Policy Orientation

Côte d'Ivoire has opted for the 'liberal' economic model and aims to be an emerging country by 2020. However, this philosophical orientation is combined with a culture of development planning. The country has therefore embarked on a wide range of economic and social reforms since 2012. At a global level, these reforms have led to the introduction of two National Development Programmes (NDP): the 2012-2015 NDP and the 2016-2020 NDP. These programmes are intended to serve as a reference framework for all major interventions by the Côte d'Ivoire government for the benefit of the population, economic actors and the Ivorian economy.

The 2016-2020 NDP aims to make Côte d'Ivoire an industrial powerhouse, united in its cultural diversity, democratic and open to the world. It is also structured around five main strategic areas: (i) strengthening the quality of institutions and governance, (ii) accelerating the development of human capital and social well-being, (iii) accelerating the structural transformation of the economy through industrialisation, (iv) developing infrastructures with a harmonious territorial network and with a view to preserving the environment, and (v) strengthening regional integration and international cooperation.

These two Plans are the source of numerous reforms aimed at liberalising the country's productive energy and strengthening the economic fabric in terms of industry, agriculture and services

⁸ Commission, Multilateral Surveillance Report (www.uemoa.int).

⁹ EPC-ANNEXE Côte d'Ivoire. WT/TPR/S/362/Rev.1 • Côte d'Ivoire

For example, the Ivorian government has undertaken several reforms with a view to making the private sector the real engine of economic growth by improving the business environment, in particular by:

- involving all national actors (justice, notaries, bankers, architects, Directorate General for Taxation (DGI), Directorate General of Customs (DGD), administrations, high authorities, etc.) concerned;
- reducing the costs, procedures and time involved in setting up a business;
- creating a “One-Stop Shop for Investors” with a “One-Stop Shop for Business Formalities” to simplify and speed up business start-ups.

In addition, the framework for dialogue between the State and the private sector has been strengthened through the revitalisation of the State/Private Sector Consultation Committee (CCESP). These reforms have also led to the revamping of the National Export Strategy (NES), the implementation of whose recommendations should improve the position of Ivorian economic operators on the sub-regional and regional scene, particularly with the liberalisation and trade facilitation measures expected from the AfCFTA.

Internationally, Côte d'Ivoire's resolutely liberal stance has led it to join various unilateral and multilateral trade liberalisation initiatives. The country has always played a leading role in sub-regional integration processes such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA). As a member of the UEMOA, Côte d'Ivoire has harmonised a number of national economic policy mechanisms with the other members, with whom it also shares the same currency, the CFA franc. The country is also a member of the Mano River Union, a grouping of four West African countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire (2008), as well as the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), having been an observer.

Côte d'Ivoire has also signed an Interim Economic Partnership Agreement (IEPA) with the European Union (EU), the implementation of which has been underway since 2017. The country has also been a signatory to the regional Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between ECOWAS and the EU since 2014. Finally, in terms of multilateral liberalisation, Côte d'Ivoire is a founding member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and is a signatory to the organisation's agreements. As part of these agreements, Côte d'Ivoire has embarked on a process of liberalising its economy, notably in compliance with the General Agreement on Trade in Services.

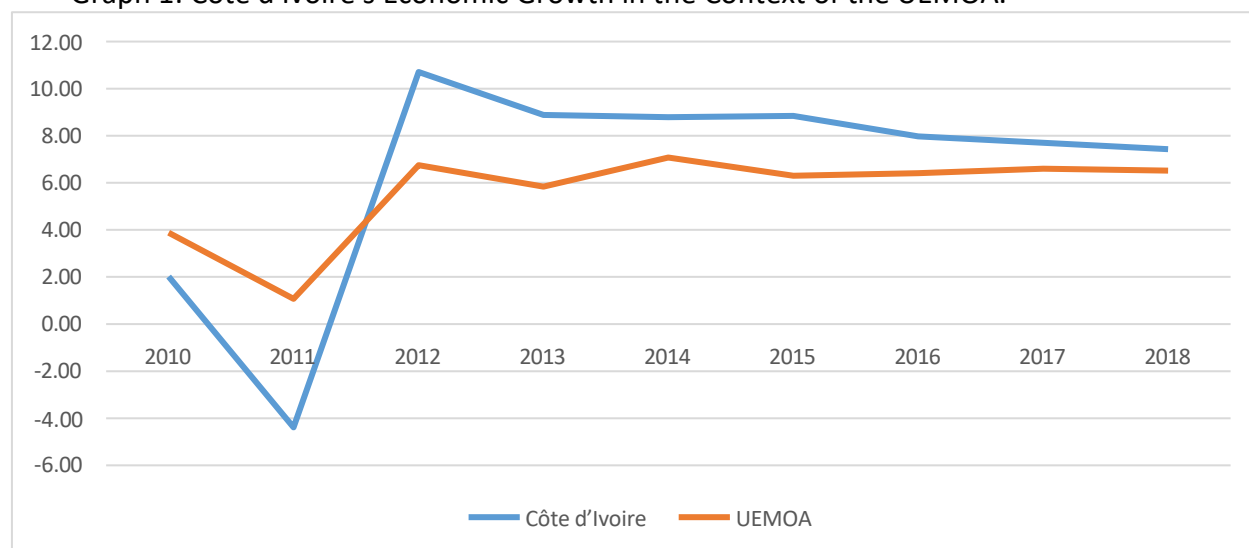
In tandem with these political initiatives developed by the public authorities, the private sector, through the General Confederation of Enterprises of Côte d'Ivoire (CGECI), has another strategic plan called “Côte d'Ivoire 2040, the challenge of the best”. The aim of this forward-looking plan is to promote the private sector through the design and implementation of a strategy for the growth and development of Côte d'Ivoire by 2040. The plan also includes an export promotion strategy with a regulatory framework for trade.

2.1.2. Recent Macroeconomic Performance

Côte d'Ivoire has achieved solid macroeconomic performance in recent years, thanks to the stabilization of its political and social climate, as well as structural reforms focused on strengthening tax administration, consolidating banking sector stability, fostering inclusive growth, improving the business environment, and enhancing statistical institution. With more than a third of the GDP of the UEMOA and a GDP per capita of US\$1,692.5 in 2018, Côte d'Ivoire is the leading economy in the region.¹⁰

The country's growth trajectory recovered significantly in the early 2010s. The rate rose from -4.4% in 2011 to 10.7% the following year. Since then, the pace has slowed slightly to 7.4% in 2018, although the highest in the sub-region, whose overall economic profile the country dictates, as Graph 1 below shows, with projections of around 7.5% in 2019 and 7.3% in 2020.¹¹ This high rate of growth is mainly powers attributed to the continuing improvement in the business environment, relatively high investment and a very sustained level of private consumption.¹²

Graph 1: Côte d'Ivoire's Economic Growth in the Context of the UEMOA.



¹⁰The GDP per capita is at 2010 constant prices.

¹¹Source : World Bank (WDI); projections for 2019 and beyond are from the IMF

¹² Source : IMF Country Report (Côte d'Ivoire) No. 19/197, July 2019.

Source: authors, based on World Bank data (World Development Indicators - WDI).

This relatively strong growth is mainly attributable to the services sector, which grew by 9.15% in 2018, compared with 7.13% for the industrial sector and 4.18% for the agricultural sector. In terms of the sectoral breakdown of activity, the services sector is the largest, accounting for 32.6% of GDP, compared with 25.2% for industry and 19.8% for agriculture. The decline in the weight of industry has been observed since 2014, when its contribution to GDP was 27.4%. While this trend marks an *early process of deindustrialisation*, it also highlights the challenges and difficulties of structural transformation, which generally relies on industrialisation to improve the overall productivity of the national economy.

In terms of macroeconomic policy management, the country is relatively in line with the UEMOA convergence criteria, particularly where inflation is concerned. Declining steadily since 2015, when the consumer price index had risen by 1.25%, the rate was established at 0.44% in 2018. It is forecast to rise to 1% in 2019 and 2% in 2020, although still below the community standard of 3%. This reflects the economy's ability to increase the price competitiveness of its products on external markets, likely due to prudent monetary management by the Central Bank of West African States. The money supply seems to be keeping pace with the needs of the economy, with the M2 component (money and quasi-money) rising by 8.8% in 2017 and 13.5% in 2018.

In terms of public finances, central government revenue (income and grants) increased by 5.3% in 2018 to 19.9% of GDP, while expenditure also increased by 3.4% to 23.8% of GDP, reducing the budget deficit from 4.5% to 4% of GDP between 2017 and 2018. The divergence in the growth rates of public revenue and expenditure is expected to persist in 2019 and 2020, with the public deficit projected to stabilize at 3%, aligning with the Community standard.

These public deficits, combined with strong growth, have raised the country's profile on the financial markets, leading to an increase in public debt of almost 5 points in two years, reaching 53.2% of GDP in 2018. However, this trend is expected to reverse, with projections of 52.5% in 2019 and 51.2% in 2020, reinforcing the country's performance compared with the community debt threshold of 70%.

Overall, the country's ability to fit into a structured pattern of economic integration suggests the prospect of harmonisation on a wider scale when the time comes.

These macroeconomic performances come against an institutional backdrop marked by a still very high level of corruption and a relatively fragile political and social climate. According to Transparency International's 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index, the country ranks 105th in the world (17th in Africa, just behind Gambia and Tanzania), with a score of 35/100. Although this score has fallen by one point compared with the previous edition, the country has nevertheless moved up two places. The persistence of efforts to fight corruption is crucial because of its depressive impact on growth through, for example, the flight of capital from the productive system and the misallocation of the nation's talents and productive resources. Furthermore, the approach of the 2020 elections could contribute to making the political and social climate relatively more complex and uncertain. While this may have negative repercussions for the trajectory of the economy, the perceptions of private investors remain unaffected, at least for the time being.¹³

2.1.3. Social Indicators

The social dimension of Côte d'Ivoire's economy remains mixed. With a total population estimated at 25.8 million, a demographic growth rate of 2.6%, an urbanisation rate of 51.6% and a high poverty rate estimated at 46.3% in 2015, Côte d'Ivoire's socio-economic trends still reflect little of the dynamism of economic activity. According to an approach based on purchasing power parity and a threshold of 1.90 USD, 24.51% of the population lives in severe multidimensional poverty, placing the country in 18th place among developing countries with the lowest poverty levels.¹⁴

In terms of the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI), the country ranks 172nd out of 189 countries, dropping one place since 2015. Of the thirteen potential competitor countries in Africa, only Nigeria has a lower life expectancy at birth than Côte d'Ivoire at 54.1 years, while Algeria has the highest longevity on the continent at 76.3 years. Similarly, only Guinea among these countries has a lower HDI. In terms of expected years of schooling, Côte d'Ivoire is in last place with 9.0 years, compared with 15.1 years for Mauritius and Tunisia, the best performers in Africa. In terms of years of schooling completed, it is only ahead of Rwanda, Senegal and Guinea. Finally, in terms of Gross National Income per capita, Côte d'Ivoire ranks ninth, with USD 3,481, compared with USD 20,189 for Mauritius, the highest level in Africa.

¹³IMF assessment during its latest mission to the country (July 2019).

¹⁴ Source: UNDP.

2.1.4. Implications for the AfCFTA

Analysis of the profile and macroeconomic performance of the Ivorian economy indicates that the current situation in Côte d'Ivoire is generally favourable to the AfCFTA, although there are still risks of a downturn. There are several reasons for this favourable situation.

Firstly, the political framework is fully in line with the liberal economic model. Economic management, illustrated by numerous reforms in public finance, trade relations and privatisations since 2012, is strongly oriented towards liberalism. The AfCFTA itself, in its trade section, follows a liberal logic by seeking to reduce, or even remove, barriers to trade between African countries. In line with this orientation, the Ivorian government, which has opted for economic liberalism since independence, is implementing trade policy measures of a liberal nature. This political support and the choice of development geared towards an openness to other countries are assets for the AfCFTA, which can take advantage of them.

Secondly, the macroeconomic situation is favourable, marked by strong economic growth, although there are signs of weakness. Rising industrial production could benefit from African markets to initiate a deeper structural transformation of the Ivorian economy.

Finally, the economic and structural context remains stable, despite some concerns, making it unlikely that the Ivorian population will reject the AfCFTA in the short term.

However, risks of a reversal remain in the medium term. These risks are linked, on the one hand, to the low social impact of economic growth and, on the other, to the socio-political unrest that has shaken the country in recent years, despite recent relative stability. In addition, Côte d'Ivoire's economic growth has shown a low level of inclusion: the Gini index, which measured 43.2% in 2008, fell only slightly to 41.5% in 2015.¹⁵

2.2. Trends and structure of foreign trade

2.2.1. Trade Policy in the Context of ECOWAS

In terms of trade, eligible products originating in ECOWAS are exempt from customs duties and quantitative restrictions (quotas).

¹⁵ Source: World Bank (WDI).

However, products from other member countries of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) which are not part of ECOWAS (notably Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania and Somalia), with those from the rest of Africa, are subject to Most Favoured Nation (MFN) treatment. The corresponding tariffs are defined within the framework of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET), which came into force on 1 January 2015. The ECOWAS CET comprises five tariff categories, based on the level of processing of the products as well as their strategic or social character, as shown in Table 3.

This import tax system, combined with the structure of Côte d'Ivoire's foreign trade, sheds light on the composition of the tariff base.¹⁶ At the HS10 level of disaggregation, 2% of tariff lines are duty-free. This mainly includes medicines (HS30), orthopaedic appliances (HS9021), laboratory cultures (HS3821 and HS3822) and petroleum oils (HS2709).

Table 3: Tariff Structure of the ECOWAS CET

Categories and rates	Products concerned
Category 0: 0%.	Social goods: health products (medicines, impregnated mosquito nets), cultural products and certain cereals (millet, sorghum, maize), etc.
Category 1: 5%	Essential products, basic raw materials, capital goods, specific inputs; goods used to manufacture other products (fertilisers, agricultural equipment).
Category 2: 10%	Inputs and intermediate products, meaning products that are somewhat more processed than those in the second tariff category but are not produced in sufficient quantity in the region and are unlikely to be manufactured locally in the short term.
Category 3: 20%	Final consumer goods i.e. finished products that have reached the final stage of processing.
Category 4: 35%	Specific goods for economic development, i.e. products that are sensitive because of their strategic nature for the development of the region (criteria: vulnerability of the product, regional integration, promotion of the sector and strong potential for production).

Source: CEDEAO (https://www.ecowas.int/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/CET_Factsheet_EN.pdf)

¹⁶ Source: TRALAC, Côte d'Ivoire: Intra-Africa trade and tariff profile – 2018 (<https://www.tralac.org/resources/our-resources/14009-ivory-coast-intra-africa-trade-and-tariff-profile.html>)- accessed on 30 October 2019.

The 5% tariff category is applied to 37% of imported products, including live animals, milk, grains such as maize, seeds, minerals and cars for assembly.

The 10% category applies to 23% of products, such as fresh fish, coffee, tea, rice, palm and olive oils, and wood.

The category subject to 20% customs duty accounts for 36% of tariff lines and includes products such as smoked fish, seafood, flowers, pulses, nuts, fruit and spices, cosmetics and clothing.

The highest tariff category, at 35%, applies to just 2% of tariff lines, covering products such as beef, pork or poultry, tomatoes, potatoes, sugar, cocoa powder and chocolate, palm oil, yoghurt, and woven cotton fabrics.

In addition to the CET, a number of trade defence measures are in place, including temporary restrictions on imports of certain products, the application of countervailing customs duties to counter the effects of subsidies, and anti-dumping measures to deter trade practices deemed illegal. These protective measures include the Import Adjustment Tax (IAT), which compensates for the difference between the new common tariff and the initial tariff applied by the country, and the Supplementary Protection Tax (SPT), designed to limit the effects of unpredictable variations in imports. However, these two additional measures must not exceed 3% of the tariff lines in order to prevent any abuse.

This tariff protection system, with a CET level for ECOWAS that is higher than that for UEMOA (13.1% compared with 11.9%), offers significant incentives to businesses, particularly those involved in production or seeking to position themselves in the assembly sector. This system is also advantageous for the horticulture, poultry and agro-industry sectors, as well as for the soap and textile industries, as long as the price advantage on the domestic market thanks to the customs tariff is not compromised by other competitiveness factors, such as quality or production costs.

Building on this community trade promotion mechanism, Côte d'Ivoire has drawn up a National Export Strategy (NES) for the period 2015-2019, aimed at realising the official vision of an 'emerging Côte d'Ivoire by 2020 thanks to exports. Based on an assessment of the main constraints, such as supply capacity, the quality of the business environment, access to regional and international markets, as well as social and environmental aspects, the NES aims to improve the competitiveness of national products, diversify trade, enhance the efficiency of value chains, and optimise the business environment.

The NES has identified several priority sectors based on their export potential and their contribution to Côte d'Ivoire's development. This portfolio includes traditional and emerging sectors such as (i) rubber and plastics, (ii) cashew, (iii) cotton, textiles and clothing, (iv) tropical fruits, (v) cassava and its derivatives, and (vi) new information and communication technologies. The NES action plan is also in line with the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation, signed in Bali in December 2013 and ratified by Côte d'Ivoire on 8 December 2015. The 35 technical measures planned aim to increase the transparency, predictability and efficiency of border procedures, in order to speed up the movement, release and clearance of goods, including in transit. To support this commitment, a National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) has been set up to coordinate the implementation of the action plan linked to these multilateral commitments.

At the supranational level, the UEMOA Commission has launched a Regional Trade Facilitation Programme (RTFP) to strengthen reforms of border procedures in the sub-region. With the entry into force of the agreement on 22 February 2017, it has become essential to coordinate national and sub-regional dynamics through the creation of the UEMOA Regional Trade Facilitation Committee (RTFC). This Committee is responsible for facilitating, coordinating and supervising the application of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation (ATF) in the UEMOA space and for acting as a link between the National Trade Facilitation Committees of each Member State.

Among the initiatives aimed at streamlining the trading environment is the establishment of the Single Window for Foreign Trade (GUCE)¹⁷ in Côte d'Ivoire. This platform brings together all those involved in foreign trade, in particular economic operators, and offers them 'simplification and standardisation of trade procedures, faster operations, trade facilitation, as well as dematerialisation and reduced travel'. The GUCE enables procedures to be *completely* dematerialised, offering the following functionalities: (i) management of commercial transactions, in particular obtaining import authorisation online from the Ministry of Trade; (ii) single electronic manifest; (iii) submission of customs declarations; (iv) electronic payment; (v) computerised management of import and export certificates and authorisations; and (vi) collaborative management of inspections.

Although the National Export Strategy (NES) has come to an end, the public momentum that accompanied it could be extended through new programmes and strategies aimed at strengthening the country's trade profile. At UEMOA level, the Trade Competitiveness and Regional Integration Support Project (PACCIR), launched in 2017 as part of a partnership between the European Union (EU) and the countries of the UEMOA region, illustrates this continuity. Currently under negotiation for a second phase, PACCIR aims to improve trade facilitation and the business environment, focusing on the following initiatives: (i) facilitating the electronic exchange of the UEMOA Certificate of Origin between member states; (ii) decentralising the monitoring of trade policies; (iii) strengthening trade dispute settlement mechanisms at regional level; (iv) creating an online alert mechanism to identify and eliminate

¹⁷ Website: <https://www.webbfontaine.ci/guichet-unique-du-commerce-exterieur/> (Accessed on 30 October 2019).

trade barriers hindering regional integration ; and (v) develop a regional economic intelligence portal including a directory of exporting companies in the region, a section for promoting business opportunities, and a showcase for exhibiting and selling regional agricultural and craft products online (e-commerce).

These trade policy guidelines, at national, regional and international level, have undoubtedly helped to shape the country's trade profile, influencing its current trends and structure.

2.2.2. Stylised Trade Facts

The trends and structure of Côte d'Ivoire's foreign trade between 2010 and 2017 reveal an appreciable performance, reflecting the economy's growth trajectory. Thanks to a more sustained dynamic in exports compared with imports of goods and services, the trade surplus rose from 1.8 to 2.8 billion constant US dollars over this period, an increase of 53.4%.¹⁸

For goods, a similar trend was observed, as shown in Graph 2, despite an interruption in 2013 when the trade balance swung into deficit. This deficit is attributable to the resumption of growth in imports from 2011 onwards, marked by a faster rise than that of exports (86% compared with 9% between 2011 and 2013).

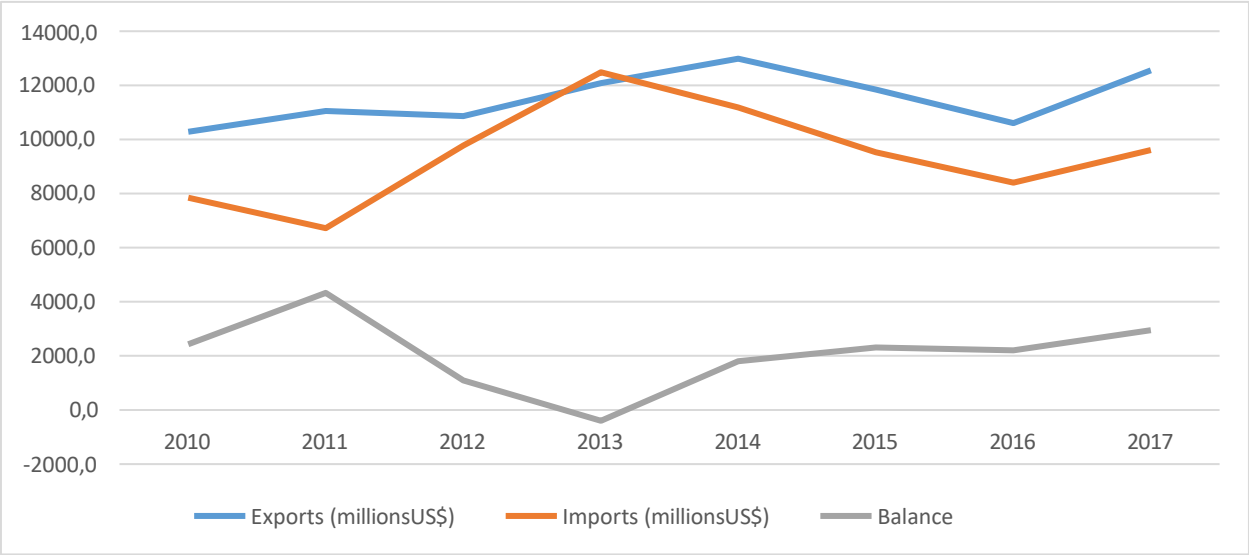
In terms of the structure of foreign trade, there has been a notable reorganisation of export and import baskets between 2010 and 2017, both in terms of products and partners.

¹⁸ Source: Authors' calculations based on World Bank data (WDI).

As Table 4 shows, the share of mining products in exports fell significantly, from 24.3% to 13.2% of total exports (excluding services), to the benefit of manufactured products (which rose from 27.1% to 31.1%) and agricultural products (from 48.6% to 55.8%).

Imports show a similar restructuring trend. The share of mining products has gradually declined in favour of agricultural and manufactured products. Manufactured products now account for the bulk of imports, establishing more than half of incoming flows of goods.

Graph 2: General Trends in Côte d'Ivoire's Trade in Goods



Source: authors, based on World Bank (WDI).

In more detail, Côte d'Ivoire's exports are still dominated by cocoa and its derivatives, as well as oil and its derivatives, accounting for a combined 60% of exports in 2010 and 52% in 2017. Cocoa and its derivatives are mainly exported to Europe (particularly the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and France) and the United States, which account for more than two-thirds of exports in this sector. On the other hand, oil and its derivatives are mainly destined for the Netherlands (16.5%) and neighbouring African countries such as Mali (15.1%) and Burkina Faso (11.6%). Citrus fruits, which rank third in terms of exports, are mainly exported to Asia, in particular Vietnam and India, which together account for 80% of these exports.

As for imports in 2017, oil and its derivatives continue to dominate in 2017, although its share is declining, along with cereals. More than half of the oil imported by Côte d'Ivoire (51.4%) comes from neighbouring Nigeria, while cereals are mainly imported from Asia, in particular Thailand (24.5%), India (16%), Vietnam (15.6%) and China (14%).

Table 4: Structure of Côte d'Ivoire's International Trade (goods, %)

EXPORTS	2010	2017
Agriculture	48.6	55.8
Mining products	24.3	13.1
Manufactures	27.1	31.1
Main products	Cocoa and cocoa products: 37.2 Mining products: 23.7 Naval products: 7.1	Cocoa and cocoa products: 39.4 Mining products: 12.5 Citrus and other fruit: 11.3
IMPORTS	2010	2017
Agriculture	19.4	21.3
Mining products	26.4	19.9
Manufactures	54.1	58.8
Main products	Mining products: 23.7 Naval equipment: 10.8 Cereals: 7.8	Mining products: 16.6 Machinery/equipment: 9 Cereals: 7.7

Source: authors, based on data from COMTRADE (2017).

The structural trade surpluses observed over the period were sustained in 2017 by agricultural products such as cocoa and its derivatives (USD 4.9 billion) and citrus fruits (USD 1.4 billion). Conversely, manufactured products, particularly capital goods (machinery, equipment, household appliances), as well as cereals and seafood products (fish and shellfish), exerted negative pressure on the trade balance, with a cumulative deficit of more than USD 2.2 billion. These differentiated trade positions, depending on the product, offer opportunities for trade with African countries that have opposite trade positions, particularly those with close trade links.

Côte d'Ivoire's trade profile is also characterised by a wide diversity of partners. In general, as Table 5 shows, Côte d'Ivoire's trade is mainly oriented towards the rest of the world (outside Africa), accounting for more than two-thirds of the country's trade flows, both inbound and outbound. While the share of imports from countries in the sub-region almost halved between 2010 and 2017, to the benefit of non-African partners, the share of exports to the sub-region increased at the expense of partners outside Africa. This change in trading partners has not, however, had a significant impact on intra-African trade outside ECOWAS, which remains relatively limited.

Analysing the combination of products and destinations offers an additional perspective on the country's trade performance, particularly for exports. Between 2010 and 2017, the number of

active export lines rose from 1,916 to 2,449, an increase of almost 28%.¹⁹ This growth reflects, on the one hand, the addition of many new exported products (916), far greater than the number of products that have left export markets (384). On the other hand, the number of trading partners rose from 143 in 2010 to 159 in 2017, an increase of almost 9%. On average, the country is thus able to serve more markets with a wider range of products.

This dynamic illustrates the dual expansion of extensive and intensive margins: an ability to penetrate new markets and diversify the export portfolio with new products. This positive feature of Ivorian trade establishes an important asset in the context of the AfCFTA, which could open up Côte d'Ivoire's evolving export offer to new markets and new demands.

Table 5: Structure of Côte d'Ivoire's International Trade (partners)

Imports (%)				Exports (%)			
2017		2010		2017		2010	
ECOWAS	14.1	ECOWAS	27.8	ECOWAS	23.8	ECOWAS	17.7
Nigeria	65.5	Nigeria	94.8	Nigeria	32.0	Nigeria	24.1
Togo	15.2	Senegal	2.3	Togo	27.4	Senegal	21.4
Senegal	10.7	Guinea	0.7	Senegal	14.7	Guinea	21.2
Rest of Africa	6.3	Rest of Africa	6.1	Rest of Africa	7.5	Rest of Africa	5.1
Morocco	29.3	Mauritania	34.2	Morocco	32.3	Mauritania	60.4
South Africa	17.9	South Africa	28.4	South Africa	14.3	South Africa	8.3
Mauritania	17.9	Morocco	14.2	Mauritania	14.3	Morocco	5.6
Rest of the world	79.6	Rest of the world	66.2	Rest of the world	68.7	Rest of the world	77.2
China	16.9	Nigeria	39.7	China	20.7	Nigeria	15.4
France	13.9	France	17.9	France	15.0	France	12.2
Nigeria	11.6	China	10.5	Nigeria	10.1	China	8.0

Source: authors, based on COMTRADE data.

¹⁹ Authors' calculations based on COMTRADE data at the HS6 disaggregation level.

Table 6 shows the structure of trade in the services sector. In 2017, all aggregate items showed a deficit balance. Transport-related flows dominate and are mainly responsible for the overall deficit in the balance of services, which amounts to USD -2.1 billion. However, on a more detailed analysis of individual items, 'other transport', particularly inland freight, showed a surplus of almost USD 68 million, with exports more than double imports and accounting for over 91% of total exports of transport services. This underlines the essential role of road transport in cross-border trade in goods. With the expected increase in trade flows due to trade liberalisation, this role is likely to increase, which will probably require an improvement in road infrastructure in terms of quality and capacity.

Table 6: Structure of Côte d'Ivoire's Trade in Services

EBOPS codes	Services	Exports (millionsUS\$)	Weight (%)	Imports (millionsUS\$)	Weight (%)	Balance (millionUS\$)
205	Transport	138.7	43.2	1945.0	79.5	-1806.3
206	<i>Sea transport (freight)</i>	1.3	0.4	1404.2	57.4	-1402.9
210	<i>Air transport</i>	10.2	3.2	272.5	11.1	-262.3
211	<i>Passengers</i>	9.3	2.9	201.9	8.3	-192.6
212	<i>Freight</i>			70.6	2.9	-70.6
214	<i>Other transport</i>	127.2	39.6	58.3	2.4	68.9
216	<i>Freight</i>	126.1	39.3	58.3	2.4	67.9
236	Travel	181.0	56.4	381.2	15.6	-200.3
245	Communications			0.2	0.0	-0.2
249	Construction			14.7	0.6	-14.7
253	Insurance	1.3	0.4	101.9	4.2	-100.6
266	Royalties and licences			3.9	0.2	-3.9
200	Total	321.0	100.0	2447.0	100.0	-2126.0

Source: authors, based on data from COMTRADE (2013).

2.2.3. Implications for the AfCFTA

The political will to make trade a central lever in Côte d'Ivoire's quest for economic emergence establishes a major asset for the implementation of the AfCFTA. This commitment is reflected in the introduction of various trade facilitation and promotion instruments at national, regional and international levels, as well as in the existence of a structured institutional mechanism. Building on these arrangements, which the Agreement will strengthen by opening up the continental market, the AfCFTA will be able to take advantage of the expertise already developed in trade integration.

In addition, the AfCFTA could support Côte d'Ivoire's trade dynamic by offering new opportunities for expansion, particularly towards the ECOWAS market, where the country could replace

partners outside Africa for certain agricultural products. With the elimination or reduction of trade barriers thanks to the AfCFTA, Côte d'Ivoire could also seek to expand its access to markets beyond ECOWAS, which are still relatively restricted.

2.3. Main Challenges for the Ivorian Economy in view of the AfCFTA

To optimise the expected effects of the AfCFTA, Côte d'Ivoire will have to overcome a number of complex challenges, due to their multifaceted nature, their persistence and their degree of severity. These challenges are mainly of a macroeconomic, institutional and regulatory nature, and also concern the commercial environment and the business climate.

2.3.1. Macroeconomic Challenges

While economic growth has remained sustained in recent years, stabilising its trajectory and strengthening its inclusive nature are major challenges. The recent slowdown suggests that this momentum is running out of steam, revealing the limited scope of current reforms to improve the economy's competitiveness. Other challenges include:

- Increasing the mobilisation of public resources by broadening the tax base, simplifying the tax system and strengthening the tax and customs administrations;
- continuing efforts to streamline expenditure and control the wage bill, while integrating the social dimension. The forthcoming electoral period is likely to generate high expenditure and risks of excesses, threatening compliance with the UEMOA and ECOWAS convergence criteria beyond 2019;
- Prudent management of public debt to minimise the risk of over-indebtedness and strengthen resilience to shocks. The crisis of the 1970s and 1980s, followed by adjustment programmes, consolidated the choice of a liberal economic model, but weakened the country's productive capacity and generated social, political and military tensions;
- the structural transformation of the economy, requiring better use to be made of local raw materials, particularly agricultural. The proportion of raw materials in Côte d'Ivoire's exports remains high, with accelerated industrialisation crucial to sustaining growth in the medium and long term. Commodity processing programmes therefore need to be stepped up.

2.3.2. Institutional and Regulatory Challenges

The institutional and regulatory challenges related to the AfCFTA are significant. In particular, Côte d'Ivoire's institutional framework for defining national policy on trade development and promotion could serve as a valuable asset in implementing the AfCFTA. However, the actual impact of these efforts faces various constraints, including challenges in aligning national policy directions with private initiatives within the existing public-private dialogue framework, as well as in harmonizing and coordinating the regional cooperative framework (UEMOA/ECOWAS) with AfCFTA mechanisms, the contours of which remain to be fully defined. The subsequent challenges to address in this context are therefore as follows:

- The alignment of development models or structural transformation policy directions arising from the two main forward-looking studies—“*Côte d'Ivoire 2040*” led by public authorities and “*Côte d'Ivoire 2040, the Challenge of Excellence*” (*original name in French: “Côte d'Ivoire 2040, le défi du Meilleur”*) led by the private sector—is crucial for establishing a stable development model that ensures Côte d'Ivoire's dynamic growth. While efforts are being made to harmonize these initiatives, particularly through public-private dialogue within various technical working groups, the strategies, priorities, and mechanisms often differ. These differences, while not conflicting, highlight a broader scope and stakes that exceed the mandates of these technical discussion groups.
- the stabilisation of the development model with its underlying political orientation. The risk of disruption often associated with a change at the head of State in Côte d'Ivoire also entails a risk of institutional questioning. With this in mind, the reforms to be implemented must safeguard the continuity of the development model, taking into account the AfCFTA;
- the streamlining of the institutions responsible for the practical implementation of Côte d'Ivoire's trade commitments. There are a multitude of institutions involved in export promotion in Côte d'Ivoire: the Association for the Promotion of Exports of Côte d'Ivoire (APEX-CI), the WTO Inter-ministerial Consultative Committee (NICC-WTO), the National Export Council (NEC), the National Economic Policy Council (NEPC) for ECOWAS and UEMOA, EPA Committee, represented by the EPA Expert, National Committee for the AfCFTA, Public-Private Sector Dialogue Committee and Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) ;
- aligning national strategies to take advantage of the various international 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;

- Assessing and ensuring the consistency of Côte d'Ivoire's various international trade commitments, particularly in terms of regulations. Côte d'Ivoire has made commitments within different frameworks with different actors, which sometimes overlap: autonomous trade liberalisation; trade liberalisation within the framework of the UEMOA; trade liberalisation within the framework of ECOWAS; trade liberalisation within the framework of the EPA (interim and regional); trade liberalisation within the framework of the WTO and trade liberalisation within the framework of the AfCFTA;
- The effective implementation of already adopted reforms, policies, and public programs remains essential. Côte d'Ivoire has a track record of either not fully implementing or only partially implementing impactful and relevant projects, programs, policies, and reforms. It would not be an overstatement to describe this as an "implementation crisis," which ultimately affects the credibility of public action. This challenge includes ensuring the enforcement of adopted regulations, including those in the trade sector.

2.3.3. Commercial Infrastructure

Overall, in terms of infrastructure, Côte d'Ivoire still has some way to go, although its performance has improved significantly since 2010. According to the African Development Bank's (AfDB) 2019 Infrastructure Development Index, the country ranks 22nd on the continent for the overall quality of infrastructure in areas such as transport, energy and information and communication technologies (ICTs).²⁰ Although it has improved steadily over the past decade, its score of 23.28/100 remains below the continental average of 27.39. Excluding the top three countries (Seychelles, Egypt and Libya), which have scores above 80 and are considered special cases, Côte d'Ivoire's score would be close to the continental average. Within the ECOWAS region, Côte d'Ivoire ranks 5th, after Cape Verde (47.96), Senegal (30.63), Ghana (29.51) and Gambia (28.97).

From a component point of view, performance is relatively good in the field of ICTs, where the country ranks 15th on the continent. However, its score of 22.81/100 still reflects low quality in absolute terms, as do transport and energy infrastructures, which have scores of 6.76 and 6.21 respectively).

²⁰ Source: <http://infrastructureafrica.opendataforafrica.org/> (accessed on 27 November 2019)

Other indicators offer additional insights into the overall quality of the infrastructure stock and its various components. According to the Logistics Performance Index (LPI), Côte d'Ivoire ranks 50th out of 160 countries, with an overall score of 3.08, compared with the best score of 4.20 held by Germany in 2018. The improvement in infrastructure in 2018 was driven by the components 'international shipments' (score of 3.21, 45th in the world) and 'quality and competence of logistics' (score of 3.23, 37th in the world).

These scores and the ranking obtained by Côte d'Ivoire in 2018 show a relatively good quality of infrastructure according to this indicator, placing the country in second place in Africa, just after South Africa, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Côte d'Ivoire's Logistics Performance in the African Context

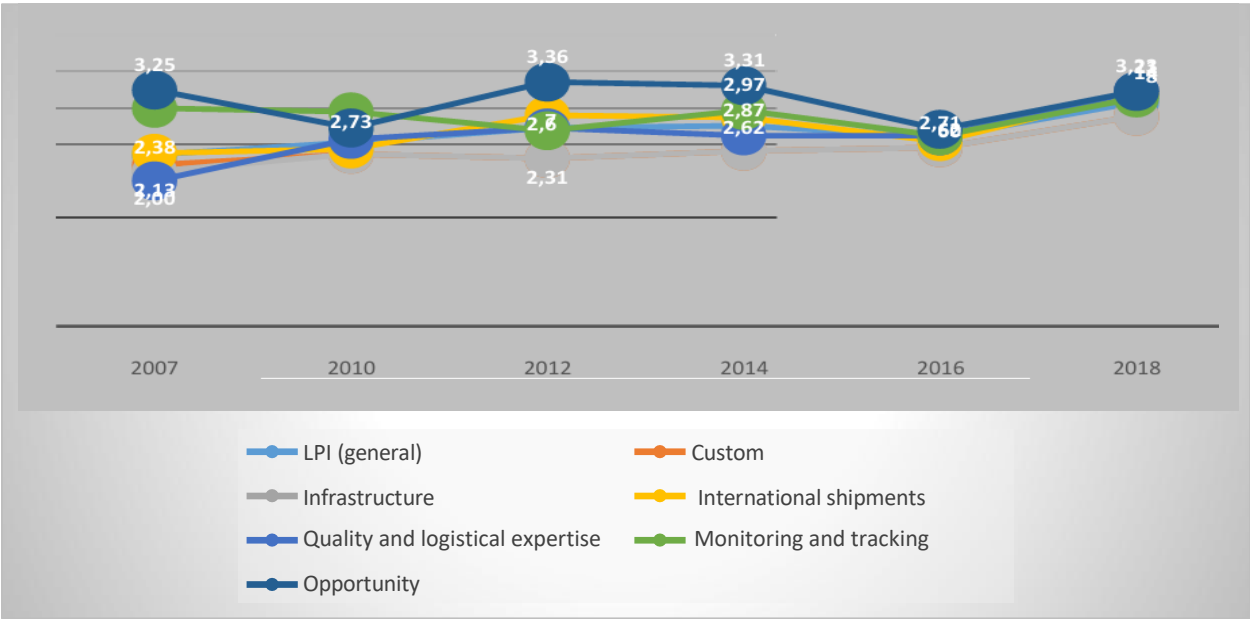
LPI: overall score					Country	LPI: world ranking				
2010	2012	2014	2016	2018		2018	2016	2014	2012	2010
3,46	3,67	3,43	3,78	3,38	South Africa	33	20	34	23	28
2,53	2,73	2,76	2,60	3,08	Côte d'Ivoire	50	95	79	83	109
2,04	2,27	2,76	2,99	2,97	Rwanda	57	62	80	139	151
2,61	2,98	2,97	3,18	2,82	Egypt	67	49	62	57	92
2,59	2,43	2,81	3,33	2,81	Kenya	68	42	74	122	99
2,79	2,85	2,56	2,43	2,75	Benin	76	115	109	67	69
2,72	2,82	2,51	nd	2,73	Maurice	78	nd	115	72	82
2,55	2,53	2,30	2,15	2,60	Cameroon	95	148	142	106	105
2,84	3,17	2,55	2,50	2,57	Tunisia	105	110	110	41	61
2,47	2,51	2,63	2,66	2,57	Ghana	106	88	100	108	117
nd	3,03	nd	2,67	2,54	Morocco	109	86	nd	50	nd
2,59	2,45	2,81	2,63	2,53	Nigeria	110	90	75	121	100
2,36	2,41	2,65	2,77	2,45	Algeria	117	75	96	125	130
2,60	2,58	2,32	2,62	2,45	Togo	118	92	139	97	96
2,86	2,49	2,62	2,33	2,25	Senegal	141	132	101	110	58
2,38	2,45	2,62	2,20	2,23	Liberia	143	142	102	119	127
2,60	2,48	2,46	2,36	2,20	Guinea	145	129	122	115	97
2,41	2,34	2,20	2,19	2,16	Gabon	150	143	150	131	122
2,33	2,28	2,50	2,26	2,11	Libya	154	137	118	137	132
2,25	2,28	2,54	2,24	2,05	Angola	159	139	112	138	142

Source: World Bank (*Logistic Performance Index*).

The improvement in the quality of its infrastructure and its strategic positioning in the sub-region are major assets for Côte d'Ivoire in the context of the AfCFTA. Indeed, this improvement shows that the country is outperforming powerful competitors such as Algeria (117th in the world), Nigeria (110th in the world), Morocco (109th in the world), Mauritius (78th in the world), Kenya (68th in the world) and Egypt (67th in the world). The quality and availability of infrastructure, both commercial and physical, have a direct impact on trade costs. Such a position suggests a relatively high level of cost-competitiveness in the context of African trade.

However, taken individually, Côte d'Ivoire's infrastructure indicators show a good overall performance, but require some caution due to fluctuations in individual indicators, which remain sensitive to socio-economic and political conditions. For example, between 2007 and 2018, the customs and general infrastructure indicators reflect the impact of the 2010 post-election crisis, which was marked by clashes that caused loss of life and the destruction of certain production and control infrastructures. On the other hand, variations in infrastructure indicators relating to international shipments, monitoring and tracking, and opportunities, show a certain structural fragility. This is also reflected in variations in the quality and competence of infrastructures.

Graph 3: Evolution of Logistics Performance Components in Côte d'Ivoire



Source: World Bank (*Logistic Performance Index*)

Against this backdrop, the challenges to be met in the run-up to the AfCFTA are threefold:

- reducing uncertainties linked to socio-political conflicts, with the aim of safeguarding maximum fluidity in cross-border trade by reducing the sources of socio-political conflict and their negative effects;
- redefining the missions assigned to customs, focusing its functions on the protection and fluidity of the domestic market rather than on the collection of financial resources for the governments;
- continuous improvement in the quality of infrastructure to further reduce the transaction costs associated with trade, as well as the development of infrastructure in all sectors, given the significant gap between Côte d'Ivoire and the best-ranked countries, including South Africa, the highest-ranked African country.

2.3.4. Business Climate

In terms of the business climate, Côte d'Ivoire has made significant efforts since the crises of 2002 to 2012. The Ivorian government has undertaken numerous reforms aimed at positioning the private sector as the true engine of economic growth by (i) improving the business environment and (ii) engaging all national stakeholders. The reforms adopted by Côte d'Ivoire are diverse, encompassing business creation processes, land access, and tax incentives, among others. The country has even designated CEPICI as the one-stop investment centre responsible, among other things, for ensuring, the following:

- facilitating business formalities relating to the creation, operation and transfer or expansion of businesses (the administrations and bodies involved in these formalities are grouped together within the CEPICI);
- helping to reduce the costs and time involved in said formalities;
- receiving and processing applications from investors wishing to benefit from the advantages of the Investment Code;
- Receiving and processing investors' applications for land for industrial use.

The country has made real improvements in the Doing Business rankings, featuring among the 10 most reform-minded countries in the 2019 edition. In the 2020 edition, Côte d'Ivoire ranks 110th out of 190 countries, with a score of 60.7/100.

Analysis of the components that make it easier to do business shows that Côte d'Ivoire ranks favourably as concerns setting-up a business and obtaining loans, holding 29th and 70th place in the world respectively for both as seen below in Table 8. However, the country lags behind in terms of cross-border trade (163rd in the world), obtaining building permits (152nd in the world), connecting to electricity (141st in the world) and protecting minority investors.

In the African context, this analysis confirms the overall observations, highlighting Côte d'Ivoire's competitive position in terms of business start-ups. Only three African countries (Tunisia, Togo and Mauritius) are ahead of it in this area. The country also stands out for the functioning of the credit market, being ahead of only five African countries (Rwanda, Kenya, Zambia, Nigeria and Malawi). The lag in other business climate indicators establishes a series of additional challenges to be met in order to strengthen the country's competitive profile and further unleash the entrepreneurial potential of the private sector, so that it can face up to the increased competition expected with the liberalisation of domestic and continental markets.

Table 8: The Business Climate in Côte d'Ivoire (2020)

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>World ranking</i>
<i>Setting up a company</i>	93.7	29
<i>Obtaining building permits</i>	57.4	152
<i>Connecting to electricity</i>	59.2	141
<i>Transfer of ownership</i>	58.6	112
<i>Obtaining loans</i>	70	48
<i>Protection of minority investors</i>	42	120
<i>Payment of taxes</i>	68	114
<i>Cross-border trade</i>	52.4	163
<i>Performance of contracts</i>	57.6	94
<i>Settlement of insolvency</i>	47.9	85
<i>Overall average</i>	60.7	110

Source: World Bank (*Doing Business* 2020).

2.4. Cross-Cutting Issues

2.4.1. Promoting Women

The status of women has long been a priority in Côte d'Ivoire. As early as 1976, the country created a ministry dedicated to the status of women. In this constant effort to improve, this strategic ministry has been entrusted to one man, out of only 15 ministers. In addition, Côte d'Ivoire has ratified most of the international instruments relating to gender equality, notably the 1995 Beijing Declaration and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The country is also committed to adapting its legal framework to

comply with regional and international gender standards. As a result, national legislation is gradually becoming more sensitive to the issue of gender equality. For example, the Ivorian Constitution of November 2016 promotes gender parity in the labour market.

However, despite this particular attention to the status of women, Côte d'Ivoire still has some way to go to achieve real equality. The 2015 African Development Bank (AfDB) Gender Equality Index ranks Côte d'Ivoire 43rd out of 52 countries in Africa, while the World Economic Forum for the same year ranked it 136th out of 144 countries worldwide.

In terms of education, according to the 2014 General Census of Population and Housing (RGPH), 63% of Ivorian women are illiterate, compared with 49% of men. In addition, many girls do not have access to formal education: for every 10 boys enrolled in primary school, only 9 girls are; only 14% of girls access secondary education, compared with 30% of boys; and 34.1% of girls leave school early, compared with 28.4% of boys. In terms of educational attainment, 42% of girls are enrolled in primary and secondary education, compared with 60% of boys. In 2017, the primary school completion rate was 64.68% for girls and 78.49% for boys, while the secondary school completion rate was 38.18% for girls and 53.45% for boys.

In politics, women represent 9.2% of the National Assembly, 12.1% of the Senate and 19.4% of ministers. In employment, 64% of women participate in the labour market, mainly in the informal sector (World Bank, 2017). Among formal jobs, 26.4% are held by women compared with 52% by men, while the civil service employs 31% women. According to the UEMOA trade policy report, gender inequality remains pronounced, with an employment rate of 51% for women compared with 82% for men.

All in all, gender inequality in Côte d'Ivoire is marked, with an index of 0.663 on the UNDP scale, where perfect equality corresponds to 0. This inequality manifests itself in various areas: the seats held by women in the National Assembly (9.2%), the percentage of the population aged 25 and over with at least a secondary diploma (17.8% for women compared with 34.1% for men between 2010 and 2017), and the activity rate among people aged 15 and over (48.1% for women compared with 66.2% for men). As a result, Côte d'Ivoire ranks 155th out of 186 countries worldwide, and 32nd in Africa. These data are summarised in Table 9 below.

Table 9: The Profile of Gender Inequalities in Côte d'Ivoire in the African Context

Country	Gender Inequality Index - 2017		Share of seats in parliament - 2017 (% held by women)	Population with at least a secondary education qualification - 2010-2017 (% aged 25 and over)		Activity rate - 2017 (% aged 15 and over)		Ranking in Africa
	Value	Ranking		Woman	Men	Woman	Men	
	Maurice	0.373	84	11.6	64.3	67.3	45.1	72.7	1
Algeria	0.442	100	21.3	37.5	37.9	15.2	67.3	2
Tunisia	0.298	63	31.3	41.2	52.7	24.3	70.6	3

South Africa	0.389	90	41.0	74.2	77.4	47.9	62.0	6
Egypt	0.449	101	14.9	58.2	70.7	22.2	73.7	7
Morocco	0.482	119	18.4	28.0	34.8	25.0	74.1	8
Congo	0.578	143	14.0	46.7	51.0	67.4	72.0	11
Ghana	0.538	131	12.7	54.6	70.4	74.8	79.2	12
Kenya	0.549	137	23.3	29.2	36.6	62.4	68.5	14
Cameroon	0.569	141	27.1	32.5	39.2	71.2	81.2	19
Nigeria	..	..	5.8	..	..	50.4	59.8	22
Rwanda	0.381	85	55.7	12.6	17.0	86.0	86.3	23
Senegal	0.515	124	41.8	11.1	20.1	45.5	69.9	29
Côte d'Ivoire	0.663	155	9.2	17.8	34.1	48.1	66.2	32
Guinea	..	..	21.9	..	..	63.0	65.4	37

Source: UNDP.

2.4.2. Youth Employment

As in most African countries, Côte d'Ivoire's population is very young: the 16-35 age group accounts for 77.3% of the total population, or around three out of every four people, according to the 2014 RGPH. This figure reflects the fragility of youth employment in Côte d'Ivoire and reflects the precariousness of their conditions, particularly for young girls in the tourism, hotel and catering sectors, where the application of legal provisions remains limited and often not sufficient.

Youth employment in Côte d'Ivoire poses two major problems: a youth unemployment rate of 5.5%, higher than the national average of 4.7%.²¹

²¹ Source: UNDP.

These figures show the difficulties Côte d'Ivoire faces in offering employment to all its young people. Since 2012, however, the authorities have succeeded in reducing the youth unemployment rate from 9.8% in 2012 to 3.9% in 2016, although it rose again to 5.5% in 2017. To support young people, the government created the National Youth Fund (*in French: FNJ - Fonds National pour la Jeunesse*) back in 2012.²²

The FNJ, a Public Industrial and Commercial Establishment, was established by decree on 10 October 2012, amending decree no. 92-154 of 16 March 1992 on the creation, organisation and operation of the Fund. Its main objective is to support any initiative by young people aimed at their socio-economic integration. It is responsible for: (i) implementing socio-economic promotion strategies for young people; (ii) financing, refinancing, and co-financing investment and working capital loans for young project promoters to facilitate their integration into the economy; (iii) providing personal guarantees for the duration of loans granted to young promoters by partner financial institutions; (iv) sourcing, collecting, processing, organizing, and disseminating data, information, and opportunities to guide young entrepreneurs in their projects; (v) supporting and monitoring the operation of financed businesses; (vi) developing partnerships with structures pursuing similar objectives; (vii) financing specific programmes to support young people, particularly in out-of-school education; and (viii) financing actions of community interest.

The analysis of youth employment also shows a sharp change in the activity rate, which fell from 51% in 2012 to 29.3% in 2017, a sign of efforts to keep young people in the labour market.

However, youth employment reveals inequalities to the disadvantage of young girls, as Table 10 shows. In 2017, the overall unemployment rate for young people was 5.5%, but the rate for young men was 4.7%, compared with 6.5% for young women. These three rates and their trends confirm the inequality between young women and men in the Ivorian labour market.

Another feature of youth employment in Côte d'Ivoire is the difficulty of applying the provisions of the Labour Code, particularly as regards child labour. According to the UNDP, child labour affects 29.1% of children aged between 5 and 17. The low level of education (36% of young people do not attend school) and the high dependency rate (77.7%) contribute to increasing the vulnerability of young people on the labour market in Côte d'Ivoire

²² Kouakou et Koba (2015) : L'emploi des jeunes en Côte d'Ivoire : une étude diagnostique (Youth employment in Côte d'Ivoire: a diagnostic study), Report, CRDI, Canada

Table 10: Status of young people on the labour market, by gender

	2012	2013	2016	2017
Participation rate (%)	51	50.9	36.2	29.3
<i>Men</i>	51	50.6	41.1	31.4
<i>Women</i>	51	51.1	32.1	27.2
Unemployment rate (%)	9.8	6.5	3.9	5.5
<i>Men</i>	10.2	5.4	2.8	4.7
<i>Women</i>	9.3	7.5	5.1	6.5

Source: International Labour Organisation (<https://ilostat.ilo.org/fr/data/country-profiles/>)

2.4.3. Environment and Climate Change

Climate change and environmental issues are having an increasingly marked impact on Côte d'Ivoire. According to the World Bank (2018), the country is one of the most vulnerable to climate change, ranking 147th out of 169 countries.²³

The effects of this degradation are numerous: accelerated deforestation, rising production costs, a threat to agricultural crops, particularly cocoa, severe coastal erosion, and rising waters that threaten coastal tourist sites (such as Grand Lahou and Lahou Panda), compromising their tourism development. This situation is also leading to the loss of mangroves, which are an essential source of biodiversity and human nutrition.

Côte d'Ivoire's deforestation rate is 200,000 ha/year, making it the most heavily deforested country in tropical Africa, partly due to inadequate management plans and the high incidence of illegal logging.²⁴ The area of dense forest, which was 12 million hectares in 1960, is now estimated at less than 2 million hectares (excluding national parks and reserves), and could disappear within a decade without adequate measures.

The costs associated with climate change are already being felt; rising temperatures and rising ocean waters are directly threatening cocoa farming and the entire coastal region, which is home to almost 80% of the country's economic activities, according to the World Bank (2018).

²³ World Bank Group (2018) « So Tomorrow Never Dies: Côte d'Ivoire and Climate Change », July 2018, seventh edition.

²⁴ Komenan (2019): Environnement et développement durable en Côte d'Ivoire (*Environment and sustainable development in Côte d'Ivoire*), UFR-SEG/UFHB, Working paper.

Changing rainfall patterns and the drying up of arable land are endangering crops, including cocoa, the economic mainstay of Côte d'Ivoire, accounting for 10% of GDP, a third of exports, and the livelihoods of 5 million people (a fifth of the population) according to the World Bank. Warming temperatures, changing rainfall patterns and the drying up of arable land are direct threats to crops.

Côte d'Ivoire is experiencing coastal erosion at a rate of approximately 1 to 3 meters per year. Consequently, "many coastal villages are gradually disappearing giving way to the ocean." More than two-thirds of the Ivorian coastline is impacted by coastal erosion. Furthermore, fishing output is at risk of declining by 50% due to bio-climatic changes affecting the Atlantic Ocean.

Côte d'Ivoire's high level of vulnerability to climate change and environmental problems stems from its geographical location, the structure of its economy and its lack of preparedness.

To meet these challenges, Côte d'Ivoire has undertaken a number of reforms. The Ministry of the Environment, Urban Hygiene and Sustainable Development has adopted a National Programme for the Mitigation of Greenhouse Gases and Adaptation to Climate Change (PNCC). This programme includes a scientific committee for reflection and guidance that ensures the participation of all national stakeholders. It aims to meet Côte d'Ivoire's commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 28% by 2030, increase the share of renewable energies in the energy mix to 16% by 2030, and limit deforestation and forest degradation. The government has also made commitments to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, although collective awareness still needs to be raised. In addition, the authorities have signed up to international protocols and action plans, ratifying the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1994, submitting their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and signing the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015.

Although the costs of a resilience strategy are high, they are lower than the costs of inaction and can be offset by climate-smart investment opportunities in growth sectors that create jobs.

However, these reforms remain largely ineffective for the time being, due to a lack of collective and political awareness of climate and ecological issues. Indeed, few Ivorians feel concerned by these issues, and there is still no guiding law on sustainable development.

In the context of the AfCFTA, this situation presents both risks and opportunities. It establishes a risk, because the costs associated with climate change could harm Côte d'Ivoire's competitiveness with other African countries and affect its growth potential. But it also presents opportunities: the implementation of the AfCFTA could raise collective and political awareness, and attract green investment, particularly in renewable energies.

2.4.4. Technology and Innovation

In Côte d'Ivoire, innovation and technological development do not yet benefit from a unified framework, unlike scientific research. Institutionally, these fields are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESRS) via its Directorate of Research and Innovation, which has the following missions:

- Designing and coordinating national scientific research policy;
- Supervising the monitoring and evaluation of national research programmes;
- Promoting the results of research and innovation;
- Facilitating technology transfer to develop scientific and innovation clusters.

However, The National Agronomy Centre, a key structure for research and technological innovation in the agricultural sector, is also under the supervision of the MESRS. This is not the case of other key structures, such as the Ivorian Intellectual Property Office (*Office Ivoirien de la Propriété Intellectuelle*) created by Decree No. 2005 112 of 24 February 2005) and the Ivorian Society of Tropical Technology (*in French : Société Ivoirienne de Technologie Tropicale*) created in 1979, do not fall under its authority.

Furthermore, Côte d'Ivoire still does not have a guideline law to govern scientific research and innovation, although a Directorate of Research and Technology Transfer has been set up within the MESRS.

Despite this, efforts are being made by Côte d'Ivoire, notably with the Directorate of the promotion and valorisation of scientific research results, the setting up of a Research and Innovation Support Fund, and the creation of a scientific innovation centre at the Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny, equipped with a supercomputer, an incubation centre, an industrial research unit and a Wave performance laboratory.

The innovation capacity of Ivorian businesses remains relatively weak compared with other sub-Saharan African countries. As Table 11 shows, only 40.1% of Ivorian companies have introduced a new product or service, of which 70.3% were also new to their main market. Furthermore, only 15.9% of these companies have innovated their processes, with 3.4% using technology licensed from foreign companies. While 18.1% of companies have their own website, 53.7% use e-mail to interact with their customers and suppliers. These innovation indicators place Ivorian companies below the regional average, indicating a low level of competitiveness.

This low capacity for innovation and technological development is mainly due to the low level of investment by companies in research and development (R&D): only 6.8% of Ivorian companies invest in R&D, compared with an average of 16.9% in sub-Saharan Africa.

This situation represents both a threat and an opportunity. Ivorian companies' low capacity for innovation may put them at a disadvantage in the AfCFTA, but increased competition can also stimulate innovation. It also provides an opportunity to learn from other African companies through the mechanism of learning-by-exporting, as well as the potential for technology transfers that often accompany foreign direct investments (FDI).

Table 11: Innovation Activities of Côte d'Ivoire Companies in the African Context

Indicators	Côte d'Ivoire	Average Sub-Saharan Africa
Percentage of companies using licensed technology by foreign companies	3.4	15.4
Percentage of companies with their own website	18.1	29.3
Percentage of companies using e-mail to interact with customers/suppliers	53.7	57.3
Percentage of companies introducing a new product/service	40.1	43.2
Percentage of companies whose new product / service is also new on the main market	70.3	71.1
Percentage of companies introducing a process innovation	15.9	38.4
Percentage of companies investing in R&D	6.8	16.9

Source: World Bank (*Enterprise Surveys*, 2016)

In terms of FDI, cumulative inflows over the last three years (2016-2018) amount to USD 2.5 billion, or 7.6% of the total for the ECOWAS region (behind Nigeria, Ghana and Guinea). Outflows are much lower, at US\$1.02 billion, or 15% of the region's total (behind Nigeria)²⁵. These long-term capital flows reflect on one hand, the country's potential to attract foreign technology and, on the other, the entrepreneurial dynamism of Ivorian companies, which drives them to transfer acquired or local technology beyond national borders.

The AfCFTA, by liberalizing capital markets across Africa, is expected to create new opportunities for technology diffusion, with FDI serving as one of the primary channels for international technology transfer (in addition to imports of capital goods). Ivorian companies stand to benefit, as well as the subsidiaries they will establish across the continent

3. The AfCFTA: Production and Market Opportunities for Côte d'Ivoire

3.1. Potential of the AfCFTA for Côte d'Ivoire

The AfCFTA, by succeeding in removing trade barriers and liberalising trade on a continental scale and establishing a harmonised framework conducive to competition, investment and innovation, could generate substantial economic and social benefits.

According to recent estimates by UNECA, the AfCFTA should boost Côte d'Ivoire's GDP and exports²⁶. Although the overall increase is modest (less than 1% for GDP and less than 3% for exports), these conceal much more pronounced effects for Côte d'Ivoire's relations with its African partners²⁷. More specifically, Côte d'Ivoire's exports to Africa would increase significantly, i.e. by between 3.5% and 8.5% (the more ambitious the trade liberalisation, the greater the increase in exports to African partners). The increase in Côte d'Ivoire's exports to its African partners would be most pronounced in the industrial sectors, offering invaluable opportunities for industrialisation through trade. According to the dual qualification approach as a guide to

²⁵ Source : UNCTAD.

²⁶ Based on the dynamic, multi-sector, and multi-country MIRAGE general equilibrium model. The study can be accessed through this publication: CEA (2019). An empirical assessment of AfCFTA modalities on goods. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Mimeo.

²⁷ Unless otherwise indicated, all figures are derived from calculations by the ECA based on the MIRAGE general equilibrium model.

liberalisation currently adopted under the AfCFTA, Côte d'Ivoire's exports of industrial products to the rest of Africa would rise by more than 10%.

Exports from Côte d'Ivoire to its African partners would also rise in the other main sectors, with an increase of around 10% in the energy and mining sectors. Exports in the agricultural and food sectors are also expected to rise by a significant 8%. Looking more closely at specific sectors, Côte d'Ivoire's exports to the rest of Africa are expected to increase by more than 25% in clothing, wood and paper products, electronics and vehicles and transport equipment, following the AfCFTA reforms.

The agricultural and food sectors of the Ivorian economy that would benefit most from the continental reforms would be crops, with export growth of over 30%. Exports from Côte d'Ivoire would increase significantly to all African sub-regions outside West Africa, and particularly to Cameroon, Ethiopia, Malawi, Morocco, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The country's exports to West Africa would not change significantly because the AfCFTA would not lead to increased access to the ECOWAS market, since access is virtually unrestricted within the ECOWAS customs union.

3.2. Risks Associated with the AfCFTA

While the country certainly has significant advantages to leverage within the context of the AfCFTA, opening up the domestic market and exposing national production structures to competition from the rest of Africa come with relatively substantial risks. This is based on the general principle that reforms as deep as those proposed by the Agreement are likely to produce both winners and losers.

The risks are therefore very real, and they come in various forms. They mainly relate to (i) the adequacy of the country's institutional and regulatory framework, (ii) the capacity of domestic producers, particularly SMEs/SMIs, to face up to the competition that will intensify in a context of limited proximity of commercial structures, (iii) the capacity of logistics chains to accommodate growing trade flows and (iv) the degree of symmetrical application of the provisions of the Agreement, particularly reciprocity and the rule of origin. Table 12 provides a detailed description of these risks.

Table 12: Potential Risks for Côte d'Ivoire in the Context of the AfCFTA

Domains	Type of risk	Comments
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<p>Institutional and regulatory framework</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existence of several agreements to which Côte d'Ivoire is a signatory (UEMOA, ECOWAS, AU, WTO, EPA). - Multiple structures responsible for trade programmes and strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk of inconsistency between Côte d'Ivoire's various commitments. - Problem of harmonising and coordinating the prerogatives and activities of the various entities. - Non-operationalisation of several liberalisation programme management structures.
<p>Intensification of competition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Competition between African products, which are often substitutable rather than complementary when unprocessed. - Increased competition from processed products from developed countries and Asia. - Competition from new entrants to the domestic market. - Weak capacity of SMEs to meet market requirements and manage their economic vulnerability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low level of product processing and diversification; absence of a research and innovation department. - Difficulties in selling primary products on African markets, particularly in the sub-region. - Competition for manufactured products will be with other countries (Europe, America and Asia). - The need to deal with foreign products and companies setting up in the country with new skills, resulting in a loss of market share and jobs. Hence the need to consolidate the local market. - Low level of professionalism among operators and the small-scale nature of their production system. - Limited knowledge of international standards with little capacity to meet the requirements of the markets to be conquered. - Poor access to basic services to develop activities (consultancy, training, accounting and finance, research and innovation). - Inadequate training programmes to meet business needs, despite the proliferation of private vocational schools. - Rising input costs: for example, the minimum wage has risen from CFAF 36.607 to CFAF 60.000, with the CNPS contribution rising from 8% to 14%, along with electricity costs. - Increased fiscal and parafiscal pressure, estimated at 38% on formal businesses (due to the size of the informal sector). - High level of domestic public debt, which hampers the activities of small operators. - Limited access to finance to modernise and develop activities on a continental and international scale, particularly affecting women,

		most of whom are in the informal sector. According to the National Federation of Trade Actors of Côte d'Ivoire (FENACCI), around 80% of cross-border trade is organised by women.
Configuration of supply chains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customs red tape and high approach fees. - Lack of document management skills among most operators, particularly SMEs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High cost of port fees; fees paid at land borders are considered to be as high as those paid at ports. - Customs-related hassles have been highlighted by both traders and formal SMEs. These issues arise not only at the borders but also throughout the supply chain within the country. Frequently raised by women through FENACCI, these challenges can lead to significant discouragement. - Development of transport infrastructure: this remains an essential element in the competitiveness of economic operators. - The lack of mastery in document management for import and export procedures by SMEs, combined with their inability to optimize logistics operations, reduces their competitiveness. - Cumbersome administrative procedures, affecting delivery times and border operations.
Application of the provisions of the Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asymmetrical adherence to the principle of reciprocity - Limited application and enforcement of provisions related to rules of origin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-application of reciprocity, allowing non-Ivorians to develop competing activities without offering the same advantages to Ivorians. - Potential use of rules of origin and non-tariff barriers as instruments of protection.

Source: Based on various consultations

3.3. Achieving Commercial Gains

Unlocking the opportunities offered by the AfCFTA depends to a large extent on the competitiveness of local industries and their ability to stand out in a competitive environment on current and potential export markets. The industries best placed to benefit from market expansion are those where the country has comparative advantages, reflecting an ability to produce and export at lower costs.

While a country's resource endowments—its relative abundance in factors of production—may underpin its competitive advantages, it is often the level of technological efficiency that drives greater productivity. When this is the case, the country's industry in that sector will tend to export the related products more extensively than its competitors. Examining the structure of

trade (i.e., the relative weight of active trade lines) can thus reveal the country's advantages. The Revealed Comparative Advantage (RCA) index is a valuable tool for determining the country's capacity to penetrate markets, especially as trade environments become increasingly favourable.

In addition, the scale of the gains from trade liberalisation depends very much on the profile of the partner countries involved. While the supply of exports must meet the demand for imports, a strong match between foreign consumer preferences and the structure of the supply of exports, measured by the trade proximity or complementarity index (TCI), reveals potential markets that could be exploited by lifting trade barriers.

3.3.1. Competitiveness and Structural Proximity: Trade in Goods

Analysis of the comparative advantage index shows that the country has a good level of competitiveness across a wide range of products. For 96 active lines (HS2 level of disaggregation), the index reveals comparative advantages on 78 products, i.e. more than 4/5. Table 13 shows the main products for which competitiveness is high, notably rubber (ranked 1st in Africa), fruits and nuts - including cashew nuts (3rd), cotton and textiles (11th), and milling products such as cassava (11th). These four sectors, in addition to NICTs, were already identified as priorities by the National Export Strategy (NES).

In addition, Table 13 highlights the main markets for these products, where the country holds competitive advantages. These markets represent the highest share of African imports, thereby indicating potential market opportunities for these products. Such identification allows for a more strategic redirection of export supply, particularly towards North and Southern African markets, within the trade liberalization framework established by the AfCFTA. For instance, cocoa and its derivative products could more actively target South African and Egyptian markets, while fruits and nuts, cotton, animal or vegetable oils, tobacco, coffee, and wood products could aim to increase penetration into the North African market.

Table 13: Côte d'Ivoire's Competitiveness on African Goods Markets

HS2 Code	Products	RCA	Main potential competitors in Africa (high RCA)	Main importers (% of total imports from Africa and the rest of the world)
18	Cocoa and cocoa products*	10465.8	Ghana, Sao Tome, Sierra Leone, Cameroon	South Africa (27.4), Egypt (20.2), Algeria (18.2)
08	Fruit and nuts*	1209.9	Benin, Egypt, Tanzania, Burkina Faso	Egypt (25.4), Algeria (23.8), Morocco (12.8)
89	Boats/canoes and related equipment	482.0	Benin, Seychelles, Guinea, Togo	Congo (36.2), Mauritania (14.5), Namibia (11.4)
40	Rubber and rubber products*	457.3	Cameroon, Guinea, Malawi, Sierra Leone	South Africa (24.5), Egypt (16.2), Algeria (11.6)
46	Straw products	453.2	Togo, Madagascar, Senegal, Rwanda	South Africa (26.5), Burkina Faso (15.3)
52	Cotton*	407.1	Benin, Burkina Faso, Togo, Cameroon	Egypt (26.4), Tunisia (22.9), Morocco (18.6)
15	Oils of animal or vegetable origin	199.6	Tunisia, Tanzania, Benin, Togo	Egypt (15.7), Ethiopia (13.8), Algeria (12.4)
24	Tobacco and manufactured substitutes	190.2	Malawi, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Senegal	Algeria (18.0), Egypt (17.9), South Africa (9.5)
34	Soap and surface-active agents	177.3	Burundi, Uganda, Cameroon, Tanzania	South Africa (14.5), Egypt (14.4), Algeria (10.3)
33	Essential oils	170.8	Togo, Egypt, Senegal, Madagascar	South Africa (29.7), Egypt (11.1), Morocco (9.3)
09	Coffee, tea and spices	142.8	Burundi, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Kenya	Egypt (26.1), Algeria (20.7), Morocco (17.9)
71	Precious stones	131.9	Botswana, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Namibia	Botswana (55.3), South Africa (22.2), Namibia (4.7)
11	Milled products*	110.8	Burundi, Rwanda, Lesotho, Uganda	Sudan (18.9), South Africa (9.1), Ethiopia (7.0)
44	Wood and wood products	110.1	Cameroon, Central African Republic, Gambia, Sierra Leone	Egypt (39.7), Algeria (15.3), Morocco (12.1)
27	Fuels/oil and mineral oils	90.1	Algeria, Nigeria, Angola, Cameroon	South Africa (20.1), Egypt (18.3), Rwanda (11.8)
63	Textiles*	73.1	Togo, Tunisia, Morocco, Tanzania	South Africa (10.4), Sudan (8.6), Ethiopia (6.8)
19	Cereal products	49.9	Senegal, Gambia, Tunisia, Egypt	Nigeria (16.9), Algeria (15.9), Egypt (14.6)

Notes: RCA represents the revealed comparative advantage index. Values are simple averages for the period 2015-2017. The star indicates the strategic products targeted by NES.

Source: authors, based on COMTRADE data (2015-2017).

In contrast, Table 14 provides insights into the products for which the country is least competitive in export markets. It highlights a decline in competitiveness for certain products (such as clothing accessories or live animals). For others, an increased performance is noted, although it has not been sufficient to make the respective sectors competitive enough in export markets (such as knitted or crocheted fabrics and resins and adhesives). For these latter products, the trend may suggest potential advantages that could fully materialize if the current momentum continues within an improved trade environment.

Table 14: Côte d'Ivoire's Least Competitive Products on African Goods Markets

HS2 Code	Products	RCA 2017	Change 2010-17
61	Clothing accessories	1	-0.81
60	Fabrics	0.9	0.90
13	Resin and sap	0.9	0.81
42	Leather goods	0.8	-0.25
95	Games and accessories	0.7	0.69
62	Textile accessories	0.5	-0.33
50	Silk	0.5	0.50
2	Meat	0.4	-0.58
45	Cork and derivatives	0.2	-0.48
81	Metals	0.1	0.10
80	Tin and tin products	0.1	0.10
75	Nickel and derivatives	0.1	0.10
43	Fur and furs	0.1	0.10
1	Live animals	0.1	-1.06
91	Watch products	0	-0.08
79	Zinc and derivatives	0	-1.16
58	Tapestries, trimmings, embroideries	0	-0.72
51	Wool	0	0.00

Source: authors, based on COMTRADE data (2017 and 2010).

As part of a wider strategy to expand African export markets, the development of production and export capacities, combined with further streamlining of trade procedures, could generate substantial export gains. Products identified in the National Export Strategy (NES) may continue to receive particular attention, being at the heart of specific measures linked to the AfCFTA. However, to fully optimise the gains expected from the opening of markets, a multi-sectoral approach is needed, incorporating not only the sectors where competitiveness is improving, but also other products with comparative advantages (as mentioned above).

Priority sectors or products should therefore include:

- Priority products already identified in the NES ;
- products for which the country has competitive advantages on the export market, such as animal or vegetable oils, essential oils, soap, coffee, wood and cereal products;
- products with growing export potential (those with an increasing level of comparative advantage, as indicated in Table 14), such as fabrics, silk, and resins

In terms of the structural proximity between Côte d'Ivoire's merchandise trade and African markets, Table 15 identifies the countries whose demand best matches Côte d'Ivoire's export supply. Although levels of proximity remain relatively low, indicating limited complementarity between the products exported by Côte d'Ivoire and those imported by Africa, the markets with the greatest trade potential are mainly outside ECOWAS (particularly for the first eleven countries). This suggests that continental integration could offer more opportunities for trade expansion than the current sub-regional processes.

Furthermore, the relatively low levels of trade proximity suggest that capturing African markets (outside of ECOWAS), in terms of products, should occur along both intensive and extensive margins. This means not only increasing the volumes of already traded goods but also achieving greater market penetration through a broader diversification of the export product portfolio. This approach would align with the preferences for imported goods, as seen in Table 15 which also provides insights that are consistent with the structure of the country's comparative advantages.

With the liberalisation of intra-African trade, an expansion strategy towards these 'ideal' partners would probably be more affordable, as there is already a stronger demand for Ivorian products in these markets than in others. As a result, the strategy could focus more on intensive margins (by boosting production capacity in the targeted sectors) rather than extensive margins, which require export diversification (notably by introducing new products that are in low demand in these key markets).

Table 15: Structural Proximity and Trade in Goods of Côte d'Ivoire in Africa

Partners	ICC	Share of Côte d'Ivoire exports (%)	Main imports from countries of interest to Côte d'Ivoire (% total countries) ^(a)
Botswana	36,1	0,2	Cereals (1.5), wood (1.3), rubber (1.2)
Seychelles	34,6	0	Fish/crustaceans (9.9), boats/canoes and related equipment (7.3); rubber (2.4)
Namibia	32,5	0,1	Precious stones (4.5), brewery (2.5), rubber (1.9)
Maurice	30,9	0	Fish/crustaceans (5.4), cotton (3.5), tobacco (1.3)
Mozambique	30,2	0	Boats/canoes and related equipment (4.3), oils of animal or vegetable origin (2.3), mill products (2.2)
Mauritania	28,4	0.6	Boats/canoes and related equipment (29.1), oils of animal or vegetable origin (2.3), cereals (2.1)
Morocco	27,8	0.8	Cereals (3.6), animal and vegetable oils (1.4), cotton (1,3)
Lesotho	25,3	0	Clothing (6.7), cotton (5.2), milled products (2.3)
Egypt	24,9	0.7	Cereals (5.8), wood (2.2), rubber (1.2)
South Africa	24,7	4,2	Rubber (1.3), cereals (1.3), essential oils (1.1)
Burundi	23,8	0	Textiles (3.6), cereals (3.1), rubber (2.3)
Mali	22,1	5,9	Animal and vegetable oils (1.9), tobacco (1.5), textiles (1.1)
Madagascar	21,4	0,1	Cotton (3.7), cereals (3.6), oils of animal or plant origin (3.0)
Senegal	20,7	3,1	Cereals (10.3), animal and vegetable oils (2.4), flour mill (1.8)
Kenya	20,4	0,3	Cereals (5.6), oils of animal or plant origin (3.5), rubber (1.2)

Notes: TCI represents the Trade Complementarity Index. The values are simple averages for the period 2015-2017. (a) These are products commonly exported by the country or for which it has comparative advantages.

Source: Authors, based on COMTARDE data (2015-2017))

Table 16 shows Côte d'Ivoire's participation in certain African value chains and opportunities for expansion. These value chains refer to the processing stages of products, from their primary state (raw materials often serving as intermediate products) to their final form, intended mainly for household consumption.

In general, Côte d'Ivoire is more oriented towards global than regional value chains for primary or intermediate goods. However, in the case of final goods, exports are geared more towards African markets. The relative importance of exports of primary goods, combined with low or zero imports, highlights the country's position upstream of international value chains, where its share of the total value of the final product remains limited.

Furthermore, although agri-food products are an important asset for the country, their current

position in the value chain (with primary product exports exceeding those of finished goods) highlights the potential for greater profitability through enhanced value chain integration. Advancing up the value chain would require significant value addition to primary products, which requires the development of a processing industry focused on adding value to raw materials.

Table 16: Côte d'Ivoire in Global and Regional Value Chains

BEC codes	Products	Exports (millionsUS\$)	Share of Africa (%)	Imports (millionsUS\$)	Share of Africa (%)
11	Food/beverage, primary ()	4809.8	0.1	249.0	6,4
21	Industrial inputs, primary	1187.1	1.4	206.6	0.0
22	Processed industrial inputs	1452.9	0.0	2372.9	0.1
31	Fuels/lubricants, primaries	582.1	0.0	1164.0	0.2
32	Fuels/lubricants, processed	1141.9	68,3	679.3	0.0
41	Capital goods (except transport equipment)	402.7	0.0	1230.4	0.0
42	Parts/accessories (except transport equipment)	79.5	0.0	497.5	0.0
51	Transport equipment (passengers)	7.7	37,3	259.6	0.0
52	Transport equipment (other)	114.4	69,2	392.1	0.0
53	Transport equipment parts/accessories	25.1	39,4	166.7	0.0
12	Food and beverages, Processed	1799.3	22,4	1496.1	0.1
61	Consumer durable goods	16.2	77,2	142.1	0.0
62	Consumer goods, semi-durable goods	113.6	96,3	1311.4	0.0
63	Consumer non-durable goods	409.2	93,6	1063.0	0.0

Notes: Values are simple averages for the period 2015-2017

Source: authors, based on COMTRADE data (2015-2017).

3.3.2. Competitiveness and Structural Proximity: Trade in Services

The most recent data on trade in services in Côte d'Ivoire dates from 2013, with various changes since then possibly having altered this country profile. This prompts a cautious interpretation of the results of the analyses below, although an overview of the structure of trade in services remains informative. The availability of more recent data would provide a better understanding of the current profile, with an additional basis for assessing the dynamics of this important sector.

Among the 11 categories of services listed, Côte d'Ivoire demonstrates a high level of competitiveness in transport, travel and insurance services (see Table 17).

The country stands out particularly in ‘other transport’, especially road freight, where it is the continental leader. Despite growing competition linked to the liberalisation of trade, Côte d'Ivoire could target the African market by specifically targeting the main importing regions, such as North Africa for sea freight, air transport and insurance, or the travel market for Nigeria.

Table 17: Competitiveness of Côte d'Ivoire in African Service Markets

EBOPS code	Services	ACR	Main competitors in Africa (high ACR)	Main African markets (% of total African imports, all origins)			
205	Transport	34.1	Ethiopia (103.0)	Nigeria	14.7	South Africa	13.4
206	Maritime transport	1.7	Mozambique (107.6)	Egypt	33.7	Libya	14.4
208	Freight	2.3	Egypt (76.8)	Egypt	35.2	Libya	15.0
210	Air transport	12.0	Libya (203.8)	Morocco	14.6	Ghana	14.5
211	Passengers	13.6	Libya (251.6)	Morocco	24.2	Ghana	19.6
213	Other	9.0	Madagascar (416.2)	Egypt	46.9	Kenya	16.2
214	Other transport	102.1	Côte d'Ivoire (102.1)	Zimbabwe	23.0	Tanzania	16.7
216	Freight	370.7	Côte d'Ivoire (370.7)	Zimbabwe	20.5	Zambia	18.2
236	Travel	33.8	Comoros (86.3)	Nigeria	26.2	South Africa	15.3
253	Insurance	10.8	Libya (386.9)	Libya	25.5	Egypt	24.2

Source: authors, based on data from COMTRADE (2013).

Table 18 shows the countries with which Côte d'Ivoire could establish ‘ideal’ trade partnerships due to the structural proximity of their services trade. The majority of countries with a high structural complementarity index for trade in services are in Southern Africa, with the top 8 countries having an index above 50. This shows a significant match between Côte d'Ivoire's services supply structure and the needs of these countries. On the basis of the demand for imports of specific services in each country (as a proportion of the country's total imports of services), Côte d'Ivoire can then define a targeted strategy for penetrating the unified and liberalised continental services market.

Table 18: Côte d'Ivoire's Structural Proximity and Trade in Services in Africa

Ideal “partners”	TCI	Main services imported (% of partner's total imports)
Botswana	70.2	Other transport (33.9); travel (2.2)
Malawi	66.9	Travel (23.7); air transport (14.0)
Zimbabwe	64.8	Other transport (44.6); other professional services (27.7)
Burundi	61.8	Other transport (36.6); air transport (15.4)
Maurice	60.1	Other professional services (35.7); travel (3.1)
Rwanda	58.6	Government (42.2); other transport (12.1)

Uganda	55.9	Other transport (25.4); other professional services (23.0)
Tanzania	55.9	Other transport (25.4); other professional services (23.0)
Libya	54.3	Maritime transport (32.0); travel (5.2)
Cape Verde	54.3	Maritime transport (16.9); air transport (7.4)
Tunisia	54.0	Maritime transport (37.8); travel (3.6)
Nigeria	52.8	Travel (44.2); other professional services (26.3)
Zambia	52.8	Other professional services (43.4); travel (0.8)
Namibia	50.0	Other professional services (40.6); air transport (20.2)
Egypt	49.3	Maritime transport (38.7); travel (5.0)
Congo	42.1	Insurance (32.6); Government (21.3)
Djibouti	41.7	Maritime transport (61.8); insurance (10.8)
Guinea	38.1	Maritime transport (37.2) Other professional services (26.7)

Note: The unavailability of data for the years immediately prior to 2013 makes it impossible to obtain average values over a relevant period, at the risk of moving further away from the country's contemporary trade profile.

Source: authors, based on data from COMTRADE (2013).

4. Côte d'Ivoire and the AfCFTA: a SWOT Analysis

The AfCFTA represents a significant export diversification and structural transformation opportunity for Côte d'Ivoire. Realising this potential is largely based on the country's strengths, influenced by the structure and dynamics of its comparative advantages. However, trade liberalisation entails risks, the extent of which also depends on the level of competitiveness of Côte d'Ivoire's sectors and the effectiveness of the reforms needed to improve it.

Based on the above analyses, Table 19 provides a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of Côte d'Ivoire's prospects in the context of the implementation of the AfCFTA, identifying the strengths, constraints, opportunities and associated risks.

Table 19: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

Strengths	Weaknesses
- Relatively strong political will, reflected by the quick signing of the Agreement, establishing the AfCFTA National	- Lack of knowledge of the AfCFTA's content and mechanisms among stakeholders, partly due to the absence of a communication plan and associated resources;

<p>Committee, with progress in appointing the AfCFTA Executive Secretariat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alignment of AfCFTA objectives with the country's existing trade strategies (NES, Trade Facilitation, etc.) - Sustained economic growth trajectory - Macroeconomic stability - Existence of a framework for dialogue between the State and the private sector - Relatively large availability of natural resources with wide agro-ecological diversity - External competitiveness on a wide range of markets (particularly food products, culture, crafts, etc.) - Relatively high structural proximity of trade in services with Africa - Experience and achievements in the process of liberalisation in ECOWAS and UEMOA (e.g. discipline in the conduct of economic policy with reference to convergence rules and criteria, coherent and relatively simplified CET/ECOWAS arrangements, joint border brigades, etc.) - The business environment is more favourable than in most African countries and is constantly improving - Existence of research and innovation structures with a number of public incentive mechanisms - Improving banking and financial sector - Commercial infrastructure that is highly competitive on the African scene - A highly diverse media landscape, enabling better communication of the AfCFTA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AfCFTA-NC operating budget not yet implemented - There is no directory of AfCFTA stakeholders - Multiplicity of trade support institutions, poor coherence and lack of harmonisation - Cumbersome and inefficient administration - Insufficient public support for private companies - Difficulties for businesses to access funds - Predominance of informal activities - Relatively weak match between the country's supply of goods for export and demand for imports from African countries (limited structural commercial proximity) - Relatively fragile political and social context - The level of industrialisation is still low, with the weight of industry declining - Still very low level of processing and adding value to basic products - Limited match between the profile of the workforce and the production requirements of companies - Aspects of the business climate still unfavourable: long delays and relatively high costs in cross-border trade procedures, (particularly at ports), complexity of procedures for obtaining building permits relatively long time and relatively high costs for electricity connections and limited protection for minority investors - Limited access to credit, particularly export credit, especially for SMEs/SMIs and women (partly due to a lack of information on existing financing opportunities) - Limited access to internet for women (due to their illiteracy levels) - Road network still of limited quality, although better than most African countries (see indicators above)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of a mechanism for matching supply and demand in the transport sub-sector, with little professionalisation of transport players - Insufficient collaboration between road transport players in the various partner countries - Low level of investment in R&D - Absence of a research and innovation policy law - Low level of coordination between structures responsible for promoting research and innovation - Poor use of research results to support the competitiveness of economic activities - Lack of venture capital to support the process of bringing research results to market.
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Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considerable increase in possible markets for producers thanks to the large number of signatories, reflecting the political will to implement the AfCFTA - Increased potential for processing and adding value to commodities - Diversification of exports (products and partners) and reduction of the risks associated with volatile commodity prices and uncertainty on world markets - Increased productivity and efficiency in the allocation of productive resources - Increased capacity of the economy to create jobs, particularly for young people - Improved incomes for economic operators - Improved access to a wider range of low-cost consumer products and intermediate goods: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of public revenue associated to the reduction customs tax base - Weakening of important segments of the production system (uncompetitive SMEs/SMLs and unorganised sectors) - Loss of jobs and income for nationals with the availability of foreign skills and the restructuring of the production system in the short term - Non-compliance with the principle of reciprocity and the rule of origin by partners, which could distort the free play of competition - Socio-political crises hindering entry to these markets because of the insecurity of goods and people

<p>improved household conditions and productivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved conditions for women (entrepreneurial dynamism and expansion of trade) and reduction of gender inequalities - Opportunities for technology transfer and diffusion associated with exports, foreign competition and foreign direct investment - Increased incentives to accelerate the pace of public reforms, due to the significant political weight and overall momentum associated with the larger number of partners - Technical and financial support from partners such as the ECA, the African Union and others, which could speed up the implementation of measures to improve the competitiveness of the economy - A dispute settlement mechanism that would encourage the elimination of actions that do not comply with the principles of reciprocity - Online mechanism for monitoring and eliminating non-tariff barriers - Availability of an exhaustive list of trade fairs and other commercial events - Existence of a legislative and regulatory framework favourable to technological innovation (personal data protection, telecoms, cybercrime, etc.) - Improvement and harmonisation of the rules of the financial and banking sector (with a view to having stronger banking structures and facilitating transactions between countries). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uncertainty linked to the political situation ahead of the forthcoming general elections - Insufficient regulatory framework to protect research and innovation products - Institutional instability of public policies, due to changes of ministers (particularly in the area of innovation).
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Source: authors.

5. Mechanism for Implementing the AfCFTA in Côte d'Ivoire

5.1. Institutional Implementation Mechanism

5.1.1. The AfCFTA National Committee (AfCFTA-NC)

- Organisation and operation

Presidential decree number 2018-514 dated 30 May 2018 established the AfCFTA National Committee (AfCFTA-NC) in Côte d'Ivoire. Placed under the authority of the Prime Minister's Office, the Committee has the task of coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Agreement. More specifically, it is responsible for (i) acting as an interface between the country and the AfCFTA Secretariat, (ii) promoting the Agreement at national level, (iii) monitoring and evaluating activities to implement the Agreement, (iv) contributing to the development of national strategies for negotiations on the Agreement, (v) dealing with issues relating to negotiations and implementation, (vi) contributing to strengthening national expertise on the AfCFTA, (vii) to disseminate and popularise information and publications from the AfCFTA Secretariat, (viii) to gather proposals from national stakeholders with a view to improving their participation in the Agreement, (ix) to make recommendations to the Government on issues relating to the implementation of the Agreement, (x) to ensure the effective implementation of measures taken by the Government under the Agreement, and (xi) to propose to the Government the draft legislative and regulatory texts required for the implementation of the AfCFTA.

The organisational structure and operating procedures of the AfCFTA-NC are based on three bodies: i) the Strategic and Decision-Making Council, which deliberates on all matters relating to the Agreement and defines the negotiating strategies and measures needed to implement the Agreement. ii) The Technical Committee, the technical co-ordination and administrative management body of the AfCFTA-NC, organised in Thematic Working Groups (TWGs), responsible, among other things, for discussing issues relating to the implementation of the Agreement and for defining and implementing information programmes and strengthening national expertise on the AfCFTA. iii) The Executive Secretariat, the technical, administrative and financial management body.

The direct involvement of the country's senior political authorities in the AfCFTA-NC is undoubtedly indicative of the political will to succeed in the challenge of continental integration. For example, the Prime Minister, Head of Government, effectively chairs the Strategic and Decision-Making Council, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs is vice-chairman, while the Minister of Trade chairs the Technical Committee. Both these bodies also include various ministries directly or indirectly linked to trade or integration, their technical bodies and various private sector stakeholder or umbrella organisations (federations, consular chambers, etc.). This will safeguard the exclusivity and collective ownership of the Agreement and its implementation.

- Making the AfCFTA-NC more effective

While the presence of economic operators directly involved in trade is crucial to the proper functioning of the Committee and to the effective appropriation of the measures planned for in the Agreement, their under-representation risks limiting their weight in the deliberations and the implementation process. A parity-based approach would therefore be desirable and could help to increase private representation on the two basic bodies (Strategic and Decision-Making Council).

With a view to individual and ongoing involvement of members, it would be advisable to envisage dedicated staff. Continuity of involvement is important, as the success and temporal coherence of the activities carried out as part of the implementation are based on a relatively long memory of the previous stages of the process. A structure that sends different representatives to different committee activities could give the impression of perpetual repetition, with the risk of losing the thread of individual and collective reflection.

5.1.2. Other Elements Contributing to the Institutional Set-up

The multifaceted issue of economic integration and improving the country's trade position has produced a myriad of structures which would benefit from harmonising their activities. Bringing these structures into line will undoubtedly result in more effective public intervention and the pooling of relatively scarce human and financial resources.

For example, the NES has given rise to the National Export Council (CNE), which is responsible for coordinating and managing the implementation of the strategy. The Agreement on Trade Facilitation also gave rise to a National Committee on Trade Facilitation. The convergence of these public bodies towards a common objective of promoting trade, combined with the commonality of the members and the limited financial and material resources, calls for institutional unification, for example through a single institution which would federate the various existing (and future) committees, which would then be sub-committees, each benefiting from the expertise and outputs of the other within the framework of a coherent institutional scheme. A harmonious organisational scheme would avoid any potential cumbersomeness, while contributing to more effective public action.

5.1.3. Financing Implementation

The state budget contribution is expected to finance the activities of the AfCFTA National Committee (AfCFTA), specifically covering the implementation of priority measures and actions (for short-term execution) as well as incentives for members. The decree stipulates that 'the activities of the members of the Technical Committee and the Thematic Working Groups shall not be remunerated' (Article 14 of the Decree). Even if these activities fall within the scope of the regular duties of the members, in particular those from the Ministries and affiliated public bodies, there is nothing to safeguard their effective involvement in the work and the appropriate

alignment of individual incentive mechanisms to the smooth running of the committees. However, the possibility of remuneration is recognised for each member in the form of a fixed allowance for travel and session related expenses, the amount and terms of payment of which are defined by Order of the Ministers responsible for Foreign Affairs, Trade, Finance and the Budget' (Article 14). If such a provision helps to provide greater incentives for members, the level of budgetary effort corresponding to the amounts of the allowances should sufficiently reflect the public will to succeed in the endeavour of achieving African integration, the level of effort and involvement expected of members and the opportunity costs incurred.

In addition to the State budget, the resources of the AfCFTA-NC, which should be earmarked for the remuneration of participating members and the funding of planned activities, would come from contributions from development partners and donations and endowments of all kinds (Article 19 of the Decree). In this respect, advocacy should be envisaged, starting with an exhaustive listing of activities and their progress, a precise assessment of needs and an identification of potential contributors. The latter should also include the national private sector and community organisations in the sub-region. Financial autonomy should, however, be combined with an independence that safeguards impartiality in the implementation strategy (in particular the pace and direction of national market liberalisation and the elimination of trade barriers).

5.2. Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism

The Action Plan forms the basis of the monitoring and evaluation mechanism. It sets out the implementation strategy, indicating the actions and activities to be carried out and the results they should achieve within the specified timeframe. The success of the strategy will be measured by the effectiveness of the planned measures in terms of achieving the strategic objectives over a specified period.

To facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the AfCFTA, it is suggested that the Committee (in particular the Thematic Working Groups - TWGs) produce periodic activity reports (e.g. every year). These will provide information for monitoring and evaluating both the strategy and the members of the Committee responsible for implementing it.

The evaluation exercise could be undertaken every 3 years and entrusted to an external expert. The results could then indicate the extent to which the planned actions have been undertaken and the strategic objectives achieved. The evaluation will provide recommendations for adjustments to improve the effectiveness of implementation. These adjustments may involve revising the content of the Action Plan or reorganising the Committee.

5.3. Communication Strategy and Visibility

The successful implementation of the AfCFTA depends to a large extent on a good communication strategy. This should help to inform and raise the awareness of all economic and social actors, in an approach that is both participatory and inclusive, with the ultimate aim of ensuring their ownership of the Agreement. Such a communication strategy is based on the definition of the content of the communication message, a clear identification of the stakeholders (the target), the definition of strategic actions, the use of appropriate vectors, the timetable for implementing and monitoring the communication action and the definition of effectiveness criteria.

5.3.1. Content of the Communication Message

Communicating about the AfCFTA requires precise definition of the content and scope of the information to be disseminated. The message to be communicated should be structured based on a distinction between the primary message, the main messages and the Supporting Arguments. While the first two are derived directly from the legal text of the Agreement, the latter are mainly derived from research and analysis of the mechanisms underlying the achievement of the objectives of the proposed instruments.

Primary message: This provides information on the purpose of the Agreement, which is to create a unified and liberalised market on a continental scale, and on the ultimate objectives, which are to improve competitiveness, bring about structural transformation and industrialisation, and achieve inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development. These are the constituent elements of Article 3 of the Agreement.

Main messages: These indicate the profile of the single market, the process by which it should be achieved and the potential impacts. Member States should liberalise domestic markets and progressively remove the various barriers to intra-African trade, as stipulated in Article 4 ('Specific Objectives') of the Agreement, the Protocols on Trade in Goods and Services (subject of the first phase of negotiations) and the provisions on intellectual property rights, investment and competition (second phase of negotiations).

Supporting Arguments: What are the expected effects? To what extent could regional integration benefit the country? What are the expected opportunities and risks for various economic and social sectors? What mechanisms could be used to optimise the expected impacts? The answers to questions such as these are vital to ensure popular support for this political project, by convincing them that the ambitions are realistic. These answers are most often the results of work that the Technical Committee could either commission or develop on the basis of a simple compilation of results from existing work (research, reports, etc.).

5.3.2. The Communication Target

The far-reaching reforms contained in the Agreement establishing the AfCFTA are likely to have a direct or indirect impact on all actors in the country's economic and social life, albeit to varying degrees, depending on whether they are producers, traders, workers, the unemployed, local elected representatives or ordinary citizens. More specifically, the communication strategy could target:

- officials in ministries and other public bodies responsible for issues directly or indirectly linked to trade: this is the case, for example, of all the ministries listed in the Presidential Decree establishing the AfCFTA-NC;
- political actors: members of parliament, local elected representatives, leaders of political parties, etc;
- civil society organisations
- organisations representing women, young people, etc.;
- umbrella organisations bringing together operators from all segments of economic activity: SMEs/SMIs, large companies, farmers, merchants, liberal professions, etc. ;
- the academic and research world (universities, research centres, think-tank, etc.);
- the media;
- the general public

The participatory and inclusive process requires an exhaustive listing of all the key actors, both in the capital and in the other regions of the country.

5.3.3. Strategic Actions

The communication exercise could include the following actions:

- the development of the message in all its components, particularly the Supporting Arguments, and alignment with the specific profile of the target audience (notably an appropriate level of technical language, format presentation, and the ideal amount of information);
- awareness-raising seminars;
- public conferences and round tables, particularly at universities and consular chambers;
- TV, radio and press advertising, etc.;
- the availability of focal points in all the major structures and organisations targeted, who could also play the role of 'AfCFTA champions';
- the organisation of press briefings, the pretext for which could be a major national or African event in the implementation of the AfCFTA;
- the development of a website dedicated to the AfCFTA with easily accessible written and audio content (in different official and local languages).

5.3.4. Communication Channels

Depending on the target audience, the communication format may be based on the following tools:

- Print: for example, leaflets or brochures briefly presenting the message developed above;
- Audio and video: documentary films in official and local languages, accessible on YouTube or relayed by television channels or appropriate social media channels (such as Facebook, Twitter or WhatsApp), and featuring key actors with whom the target audience can identify;
- Audiovisual (television programme) or radio platforms can also be solicited;
- Internet: most websites of government institutions directly linked to trade, consular chambers and umbrella associations should dedicate an explicit page to the AfCFTA; on this page should be available a whole series of information relating to the Agreement, its purpose, its stakes for the country and the various actors that make it up (in other words, the message set out above); links to external websites, such as those of the African Union, UNECA, ITC and TRALAC, should be included on the pages to provide more technical information for those who wish it.

As part of the communication plan, strategic relays can be considered to help better reach the various targets. For example, the umbrella organisations and the various professional associations should be at the heart of the communication system in order to raise awareness among stakeholders at grassroots level and throughout the country.

5.3.5. Implementation Schedule and Monitoring of Activities

As the communication plan is an essential component of the AfCFTA strategy, it should be implemented over the entire duration of the AfCFTA. In addition to the specific activities planned, its content should specify their temporal sequence so as to facilitate implementation and monitoring. The action plan below provides more details in this respect.

The AfCFTA-NC will be responsible for implementing the action plan. It will ensure that the planned measures are implemented down to the smallest detail, with any adjustments required to safeguard greater effectiveness.

5.3.6. Efficiency Indicators

The success of the communication strategy will be measured by the degree of awareness of the target audience, on the one hand, and the proportion of the target audience that has been reached, on the other. In other words, a significant proportion of the target audience (e.g. over 90% of stakeholders) should be sufficiently aware of the key aspects of the Agreement. These include in particular the purpose of the AfCFTA, its objectives, the dates on which the country signed and ratified the Agreement, the tools for achieving integration, and the opportunities and risks for the country. These are all components of the communication message.

A periodic survey or poll could be used to assess the effectiveness of the communication strategy. Using a relatively short questionnaire based on the above points, on the one hand, and a sample

that is sufficiently representative of the country's different regions, on the other, the survey or poll would be administered for the first time at the start of the implementation of the communication strategy in order to have a baseline situation, which would most likely indicate a low level of awareness of the AfCFTA. Subsequent surveys could take place every 3 to 4 months, depending on the rate of progress in implementing the strategy. These successive surveys should reveal a growing rate of awareness among individuals and an increasingly high level of knowledge of the content of the Agreement.

Quantified results indicators could be defined on the basis of the results of the initial survey. These would reveal the scale of the communication task ahead. For example, doubling the number of people aware of the Agreement (correct answers to the questions 'What does the AfCFTA mean?' and 'What are its objectives?') and doubling the number of people with a good knowledge of its content (accurate answers to the questions 'How does the AfCFTA seek to achieve its objectives?' and 'What are the opportunities/risks for Côte d'Ivoire?') will be synonymous with the effectiveness of the strategy developed in the meantime, starting with the second wave of the survey. Subsequent waves may modify these effectiveness assessment thresholds, given the declining nature of the awareness-raising effort.

Funding for the survey/poll related operations (Development of questionnaire, sampling, interviews, statistical processing and report production) will come from the AfCFTA-NC budget.

6. Action Plan for Implementing the AfCFTA in Côte d'Ivoire

On the basis of the macroeconomic context, the institutional and regulatory framework and the country's trade profile, a series of measures can be considered for implementing the AfCFTA. These measures, contained in an Action Plan, should help to seize the opportunities offered by the market, on the one hand, and mitigate the inherent risks, on the other, with the aim of optimising the expected impacts of the Agreement for Côte d'Ivoire, in particular the increase and diversification of trade flows with the continent, the structural transformation of the economy, economic growth and sustainable development.

6.1. Strategic Objectives or Axes

Implementation of the AfCFTA should help to achieve the following objectives or strategic axes:

- (1) Allowing for greater ownership of the content of the Agreement by all stakeholders;
- (2) Streamlining of the institutional and regulatory framework for promoting trade and effective application of the provisions of the Agreement;
- (3) Strengthening the reference framework for public strategies and improving the competitiveness of sectors;
- (4) Developing and implementing ambitious sectoral trade strategies;
- (5) Upgrading producers (in particular VSEs/SMEs/SMIs) and products; and
- (6) Promoting the participation of women in cross-border trade.

6.2. A Strategic Action Plan for Implementation of the AfCFTA

Table 20 details the conversion of the strategic axes into specific measures, actions and activities. The latter are, however, intended to be mutually reinforcing, given their high degree of complementarity.

As for the priority actions or activities, they mainly concern those with a relatively short implementation horizon, i.e. two years (2020-2022). Successful implementation of this important part of the action plan should safeguard the success of future actions and activities, and hence the entire strategy for implementing the Agreement. The crucial role of these priority actions in mobilising resources should also be recognised.

Table 20: An Action Plan for Implementing the AfCFTA in Côte d'Ivoire

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	SPECIFIC MEASURES	ACTIONS	ACTIVITIES	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE	LEADERSHIP	RESULT INDICATORS
(1) Greater ownership of the content of the Agreement by all stakeholders	Implement a communication plan	Draw up a communication plan	Organise national stakeholder consultations	2020-2021	Ministry of Trade and Industry AfCFTA-NC	National consultation organised
			Drawing up and disseminating information and awareness-raising messages in official and local languages throughout the country	2020-2021		Number of AfCFTA messages developed in local languages and number of messages disseminated in local languages
			Organise awareness-raising days for stakeholders: NGOs, private sector, civil society, universities, women's and youth associations, etc.	from 2020		Number and type of workshops/seminars organised for different socio-professional groups
			Integrate the AfCFTA and related issues into teaching and training modules.	from 2020		Number of training modules developed, number and type of people trained
			Raise awareness among all agents responsible for controlling and regulating trade (customs, police, etc.)	from 2020		Number and proportion of control officers trained
		Introduce annual AfCFTA days	Adopt the relevant regulations	2020	Ministry of Trade and Industry	Regulatory texts adopted
		Identify and designate "AfCFTA"	Draw up selection criteria	2020		Selection criteria defined

		Personalities”, ambassadors responsible for promoting the Agreement	Establish a board in charge of selection from among the members of the AfCFTA-NC	2020	AfCFTA-NC	Selection committee set up
		Nominate a company or company director each year for its efforts to achieve the AfCFTA objectives.	Create an Award	2020		Award created
			Draw up selection criteria and missions	2020		Selection criteria and missions defined
			Establish a selection team among the members of the AfCFTA-NC	2020		Selection committee set up
Monitor and evaluate the communication plan	Periodically assess the level of awareness of the Agreement and the issues at stake among all stakeholders	Conduct periodic surveys each year	from 2021	Ministry of Communication	Survey results available periodically	
(2) Streamlining of the institutional and regulatory framework for trade promotion and effective application of the provisions of the Agreement	Operationalise the AfCFTA-NC as soon as	Formalising members' participation in the Committee's work	Draw up ToRs for members based on the Decree, with a view to safeguarding the Committee's stability (in terms of its missions, composition and members' terms of office).	2020	Ministry of Trade and Industry	The AfCFTA is fully operational, with its own budget and staff.
		Appoint all members of the Committee	Issue an inter-ministerial Order appointing the members designated by the various bodies and have dedicated staff.	from 2020		

	possible	Draw up a financing plan for priority actions and mobilise the resources needed for operations and equipment	Applying the decree	from 2020		
		Ensuring members' incentives	Applying the decree	from 2020		
		Monitor the activities of the TWGs	Produce regular activity reports	From 2020		
		Evaluate the performance of the Committee and its members	Carry out the evaluation every 3 years with an external consultant	from the end of 2020		
		Safeguarding the Committee's organisational and operational flexibility	Adjust the composition and prerogatives as necessary	From 2021		
		Specify the conduct of TWG activities	Draw up a calendar of activities covering all regions of the country	2020		
	Ensure an improved representativeness of the private sector in the AfCFTA-NC	Ensure that the Committee is representative	Make public-private parity the principle of representation within the AfCFTA	From 2020	Prime Minister's Office	The representativeness of the private sector and SMEs/VSBs is a reality
		Involve all professions	Consider specific associations such as artisans	From 2020		
		Ensure that smaller-scale businesses are represented on the Committee	Take into account especially SMEs/SMIs/VSEs	From 2020		

	Ensure greater participation by women and young people in the running of the AfCFTA-NC	Ensure the effective presence of women in the Committee	Take gender into account (integration of women's associations) when convening meetings and running activities for the AfCFTA-NC	From 2020		The representation of young people and women is effective.
		Ensure the effective presence of young people in the Committee	Taking young people into account (integration of youth associations) when convening meetings and organizing AfCFTA-NC activities	From 2020		
	Coordinate AfCFTA related activities along with national and community level bodies	Preparing participation in meetings of the Council of Ministers and in the various committees and sub-committees of AfCFTA trade representatives	Ensure the effective participation of the country, in terms of budget, designation of representatives and planning, in accordance with Articles 11 and 12 of the Agreement.	from 2020	Ministry of Trade and Industry + AfCFTA-NC	Effective participation by the country in the regional bodies set up under the AfCFTA The members of the AfCFTA-NC, as well as the country's representatives, are well aware of the provisions of the country's trade policy and their evolution, as well as the provisions of the Agreement.
		Notify the NC-AfCFTA of any new provisions in the country relating to trade and commerce.	Inform the AfCFTA-NC of any future trade agreements or commitments, in accordance with Article 17 of the Agreement			
			Notify the country's representatives of any new trade arrangements, in accordance with Article 26 of the Agreement			
		increase the level of information of the members on all obligations and exceptions relating to the Agreement	Ensure that Committee members are well informed about exceptions, the legal basis for exemptions and safeguard measures, particularly those relating to emerging industries.			

	Build-up the technical capacities of AfCFTA-NC members	Increase the level of knowledge of the provisions of the Agreement, in particular the Articles and Annexes, in accordance with Articles 27 and 29 of the Protocol on Trade in Goods	Assess members' capacity-building needs and organise capacity-building seminars/workshops, in partnership with various government bodies	from 2020	AfCFTA-NC + Ministry of Trade and Industry	Enhanced capacity of AfCFTA-NC members
	Develop a platform to coordinate all export support and promotion structures	Issue a founding decree	Identify the relevant authority and support it in the process	2021	Ministry of Trade and Industry	The platform for the convergence of public and private trade support institutions and the implementation of commitments and strategies is operational
		Identify all national structures involved in supporting and promoting exports	Consult existing databases on the subject	2020		
		Draw up a situational analysis of existing support mechanisms	Carry out an assessment of the coherence and relevance of each structure identified	2020		
		Align the missions and prerogatives of all the structures	Consider institutional links	2020		
		Align the implementation action plans for the country's various trade commitments, including multilateral commitments (EPA, ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme, UEMOA, AfCFTA, WTO, etc.),	Developing an overall plan to bring together individual plans	2020		

		as well as bilateral ones.				
	Build-up the capacities of Trade Support Institutions	Organise information seminars/workshops	Assessing needs and developing an appropriate training offer	from 2020	Ministry of Trade and Industry	Members are sufficiently trained to carry out their duties
	Streamline of the trade information system	Develop and publicise an Internet platform accessible to all stakeholders	Hire expertise to develop the website and link it to the Ministry of Trade and Industry	from 2020	AfCFTA-NC	The platform exists, is operational and well promoted.
		Have the platform managed by the <i>National Committee for the Promotion of Foreign Trade</i>	Assign the Committee responsibility for regular content production with supervision of administration	from 2020		
		Involve umbrella organisations in the production of information	Raise awareness among organisations and get them to sign up (producing information and disseminating it to grassroots members)	from 2020		
	Make the GUCE more effective and visible, to speed up the process of	Organise information and training workshops/seminars on using the GUCE	Undertake awareness-raising activities with all stakeholders and in all regions	from 2020	Ministry of Trade and Industry	GUCE more visible and more operational (improved visitor
		Set up access facilities	Draw up a map of local	from 2020		

	digitising tax collection	throughout the country for all operators	representations with a view to establishing offices in the main regions			numbers and usage)
	Establish a partnership framework with the AfCFTA National Committees from the other ECOWAS members states	Help set up an AfCFTA (ECOWAS) Regional Committee	Engage in advocacy with member states at meetings	2020-2021	AfCFTA-NC + Ministry of commerce and industry	Effective cooperation between committees ECOWAS-wide ZLECAf nationals
		Strengthening Community achievements	Identify achievements and assess performance and constraints	from 2020		
		Harmonise and reconcile national positions with a view to continental integration	Develop common positions for negotiations	2020		
	Mobilise additional funding for the operations of AfCFTA National Committees	Mobilize additional funding for the operation of AfCFTA national committees through levies on passenger and commercial air traffic.	Assess the annual funding requirements for the planned actions, draw up a resource mobilisation strategy based on various necessary tools (funding plan, activity summary document, etc.).	From 2020	AfCFTA-NC	A significant proportion of additional resources are available for the operation and activities of the AfCFTA-NC
		Train AfCFTA-NC members in setting up bankable projects and making the case to financial partners	Evaluate the state of knowledge and the gap to be filled by offering training.	2020		

		Make an advocacy to potential financial partners to mobilise additional resources.	Identify partners and undertake advocacy work	From 2021		
	Ensure application the provisions of the AfCFTA, in accordance with Part II of the Agreement relating to non-discrimination clauses, Part III relating to the liberalisation of trade in goods, and the various Annexes relating to Rules of Origin, Trade Facilitation, Non-Tariff Barriers and Transit	Establish the market access list (sensitive, non-sensitive and protected products)	Carry out a complementary study based on various criteria (existing or potential comparative advantages, potential for trade, growth and development, etc.).	2020-2021	Ministry of Trade and Industry+ AfCFTA-NC	Côte d'Ivoire has a trade liberalisation timetable under the AfCFTA-NC
		Ensure that the Customs Code adjusts to these new tariff provisions and is ready to apply the Rules of Origin	Initiate the necessary reforms with the relevant authorities	2020-2021		
		Gradual liberalisation of trade in goods and services, according to the established timetable	Dismantle customs barriers	from July 2020	Ministry of Trade and Industry	The process of gradual liberalisation of goods is effective
			Identify and remove/reduce non-tariff barriers	from July 2020		
		Organise national consultations, including in particular the private sector, with a view to presenting the country's position on the liberalisation of services	2020	AfCFTA-NC + Ministry of Trade and Industry	Côte d'Ivoire is ready for the second phase of negotiations	
Preparing the next phases of the AfCFTA negotiations	Organise national consultations to present the country's position on investment	2020				

			Organise national consultations with a view to presenting the country's position on competition	2020		
				2020		
			Organise national consultations to present the country's position on property rights	2020		
(3) Strengthening of the reference framework for public strategies and improvement of the competitiveness of sectors	Strengthen the reference framework for public strategies	Integrate more fully the provisions of international conventions on environmental protection into national legislation, with sanctions for violations.	To draw up an inventory of the country's international commitments and evaluate and strengthen their level of integration into the national institutional system	2020-2022	Ministry of Environment	Better application of public commitments to environmental protection
		Implement the Lagos decision to fund research and innovation at 1% of GDP	Assess the trend in public efforts and seek to reduce the gap	2020-2023	Ministry responsible for promoting research and innovation + Ministry of the Economy and Finance	At least 1% of GDP allocated to research and innovation

	Adopt the law governing research and technological innovation	Identify the constraints on adoption and raise awareness of its importance	2020	Ministry for Innovation and Research	The law has been adopted and publicised
	Continue to improve the macro-economic framework	Control external debt	from 2020	Ministry of the Economy and Finance	The macroeconomic framework has been strengthened and is in line with the convergence criteria
		Consolidate the country's position with regard to the other UEMOA convergence criteria	from 2020		
	Strengthen the performance of the NES	Evaluate the performance of the first phase of the NES	2020-2021	Ministry of Trade and Industry + CNE + APEX-CI	The first phase of the NES has been evaluated and the second phase developed
		Draw up the second phase of the NES	2020-2023		
	Finalise and implement the second phase of the UEMOA's PACCIR, with it being reoriented towards the AfCFTA	Find out about the current stage of finalisation and raise awareness of the need to take account of the new AfCFTA situation	2020-2021		Second phase of PACCIR has been finalised and implemented
	Harmonise national legislation, particularly in terms of intellectual property and various standards (such as all those relating to the hotel industry)	Make an inventory of existing tools and assess their level of coherence	2020-2022	Ministry of Planning	Easier trading
	Effectively communicate and apply the texts governing activity and competition in the sectors, particularly transport	Organise awareness-raising and training workshops/seminars on competition law	from 2020	Ministry of Trade + National Competition Council	Better application of competition legislation
		Organise training workshops/seminars on competition law, particularly for SMEs/SMIs/VSEs	from 2020		
	Broaden the tax base	2021-2025			

		Reduce the tax burden on formal activities	Encourage the formalisation of the informal sector	2021-2025	Ministry for SMEs	Tax burden improved, in line with UEMOA directives
			Harmonise the actions of public and semi-public tax collection services (State, decentralised authorities)	from 2021		
		Strengthening the management capacity of SMEs and the informal sector	Pool services to SMEs by revitalising the Accredited Management Centres (CGA)	2020	Ministry of Trade and Industry	The capacity of SMEs is strengthened and the size of the informal sector reduced
			Facilitating customs clearance for grouped imports of goods by SMEs	à partir de 2020		
		Reduce or eliminate non-tariff barriers	Carry out an exhaustive inventory of existing non-tariff barriers, both legal and illegal	2020-2021	Ministry of Trade and Industry	An exhaustive list of non-tariff barriers
			Rationalise legal barriers and remove illegal barriers	2021-2022		Number of non-tariff barriers eliminated or reduced
		Streamline and reduce trade costs	Strengthen the Community (ECOWAS) system for streamlining border procedures by making joint brigades operational at all borders with neighbouring countries	From 2020	Ministry of Trade and Industry	Noticeable reduction or even elimination of non-tariff barriers
			Pursue the implementation of the measures contained in the Agreement on Trade Facilitation	2020-2022		

			Help safeguard the transparency, simplification and standardisation of fair trade rules and standards on a continental scale (in particular rules of origin)	2020	Ministry of Trade and Industry	Smoother, cheaper cross-border trade	
			Accelerate the process of dematerialising procedures, in particular electronic payments to avoid corruption and arbitrariness	2020-2022	Ministry of Economy and Finance + BCEAO + Customs	Advanced dematerialisation of customs clearance procedures and reduced lead times	
		Fighting corruption in all its forms	Develop and publicise mechanisms for denouncing corruption, arbitrariness and harassment of public officials	2020-2022	Good governance authority	Sharp fall in the corruption perception index	
	Strengthen the competitiveness of sectors	Continue to improve the business climate (<i>doing business</i>)		Reduce the costs and time taken to connect to the electricity grid	2020-2023	State Secretariat for Investments + CEPICI	Gradual improvement in the business environment
				Reduce the costs and time taken to issue building permits	2020-2023		
				Ensure the protection of minority investors	From 2021		
				Improve insolvency procedures	From 2021		
				Improve the quality of basic infrastructure, particularly roads	2020-2025		
			Make sites available	2020-2022	Ministry of Construction and Urbanism		
			Complete demarcation	2020			
	Clear customary rights	2020					

		Reinforcing security on cross-border transit corridors	Ensure recognition of the certificate of conformity by all agents involved in the countries concerned	From 2020	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Diaspora	Improved security and fluidity of trade at borders
			Streamline the control system (e.g. a single multifunctional post: customs, police, health officers, etc.).	From 2020	Ministry of the Interior + Ministry of Defence + Ministry of Budget and State Portfolio	
		Facilitating entrepreneurship	Identify the main obstacles to the development of entrepreneurship	2020-2022	Ministry of Trade and Industry + Ministry of SMEs	Proportion of entrepreneurs has increased
			Propose measures to make the environment more attractive	2020-2022		
			Distinguish between the specific case of female entrepreneurship and that of young people	2020-2022		
			Distinguish between the specific case of the natural resource development and processing sectors	2020-2022		
			Distinguishing the specific case of the country's basic products (cocoa, nuts, cotton, rubber, etc.)	2020-2022		
			Distinguish the specific case of labour-intensive sectors with a view to promoting employment for young people and women (in particular tourism and hotel businesses).	2020-2022		
			Adopt corrective and offensive measures for each type of business and for each product	2020-2022		

		Make effective the measures proposed by the relevant public institutions (ministries or affiliated agencies/directorates)	Follow up proposed measures with the relevant public institutions (ministries or affiliated agencies/directorates)	From 2020	Prime Minister's Office	Rate of implementation of relevant measures proposed by public institutions and ministries
		Ensure the physical presence and effective operation of the local offices of the Investment Promotion Agency (CEPECI)	Map out representations and set up offices in strategic areas	2020-2025	State Secretariat for Investments + CEPICI	Number of regions with a local representative office of the Investment Promotion Agency (CEPECI)
		Encourage the informal sector to formalise	Apply the Decree setting out the procedures for acquiring and losing entrepreneurial status	2020	Ministry of SMEs	The number of activities being formalised is increasing
		Facilitate the establishment of SMEs in industrial zones	Reduce establishment costs	2020-2025		The proportion of SMEs/SMLs/VSEs in the industrial zones
		Set up a freight exchange	Carry out a feasibility study with relevant stakeholders	2020-2023	Minister of Transport + Ministry of Trade and Industry	Freight exchange set up and running
		Further simplify the tariff system	Exempt low-value imports from tariffs, e.g. less than US\$2,000	2020	Ministry of Trade and Industry + Ministry of Economy and Finance	Low-value <i>duty-free</i> imports

(4) Developing and implementing aggressive sectoral trade strategies	Promote the Côte d'Ivoire brand and its reputation as a popular destination	Systematise “economic diplomacy”, with political and government support for national private sector initiatives on foreign markets	Define and implement an “economic diplomacy” policy	2020-2022	Ministry of Foreign Affairs + Ministry of Trade and Industry	Number of economic missions to African countries by Ivorian economic operators
		Launch the “Ivorian Products Days” concept to raise awareness of Ivorian products abroad	Give priority to targeting countries with high commercial potential or close commercial ties	2020-2022	Ministry of Trade and Industry + Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Number of trade fairs and other activities to promote Ivorian products held
	Organise trade fairs and other promotional events in partnership with consular chambers		From 2022			
	Develop trade intelligence mechanisms	Set up a dedicated body	Adopt the necessary regulatory framework	2020-2022	Prime Minister's Office	Market intelligence mechanisms exist and are operational
		Carry out regular forward-looking analyses of the dynamics of actual and potential export markets, particularly in Africa	Identify African markets with strong potential and actual demand for Ivorian products	from 2020	AfCFTA-NC	
			Identify African markets with strong potential outlets for Ivorian products	from 2020		
	Develop tourism	Implement the tourism strategy ‘Côte d'Ivoire 2025’	Carry out a situational analysis to identify implementation difficulties	2020-2025	Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts	Number of tourists visiting Côte d'Ivoire each year
		Develop areas of interest to tourists	Identify sites and consult with relevant stakeholders	2020-2022		

	Strengthen the country's industrial capacity	Speed up the processing of primary products	Set up a system of tax incentives, in particular tax exemptions on processing equipment	2020-2025	Ministry of Trade and Industry + Ministry for SMEs	Number and percentage of primary products processed locally
			Set up a monitoring and evaluation mechanism	2020-2021		
(5) Upgrading producers and products	Develop the capacity of businesses (particularly SMEs/VSEs) to penetrate foreign markets	Informing and raising awareness among stakeholders (particularly VSEs and SMEs) of the procedures and facilities for foreign trade	Draw up and disseminate an "Exporter's Guide"	from 2020	Ministry for SMEs	Proportion of exporting SMEs/VSEs and proportion of their turnover accounted for by exports
		Develop information and awareness campaigns on the requirements of foreign markets	Assess specific information needs and develop an awareness-raising strategy	from 2020		
		Raise awareness of the requirements of foreign markets in terms of compliance with product standards (health, technical, etc.) and certification	Assess needs relating to standards and markets, and develop an awareness-raising strategy	from 2020		
	Further professionalize	Strengthen the managerial capacity of Associations' executives	Assess the extent of needs and develop a training offer	2020-2023		Increased professionalisation of umbrella organisations and massive membership

	stakeholder groups.	Promote and encourage mass membership of individual actors	Make the organisations more attractive to stakeholders (encourage the umbrella organisations to develop their capacity to support their members and to develop awareness-raising campaigns)	2020-2030	CGECI	(proportion of relevant activities organised each year for the benefit of their members)
	Provide umbrella organisations greater responsibility in strategies for upgrading economic operators	Give the umbrella organisations exclusive responsibility for managing the ongoing training of employees	Delegate to the umbrella organisations the legal obligation to provide ongoing training for workers, with public oversight	from 2021	CGECI	Bankruptcy rate each year in the country
		Give the umbrella organisations sole responsibility for managing the financial resources allocated to ongoing training	Collecting and transferring company contributions in this area to the umbrella organisations	from 2021		
	Improve the quality of the workforce, particularly in terms of matching business needs	Involve the umbrella organisations more in defining initial training	Develop collaborative programmes between training schools and umbrella organisations	from 2021	Ministry of Youth and Youth Employment	Graduate unemployment rate
		Develop work-study training programmes	Encourage training schools and institutes, as part of their collaboration with the umbrella organisations, to offer practical experience to learners	2020-2025		
		Help match the quality of the workforce with job profiles	Carry out a study to provide information on the issue of the quality of the workforce in a context of changing business requirements and needs	2020-2021		

		Assess the country's preparedness for e-commerce (apply the recommendations)	Carry out a situational analysis of the existing situation and the gaps.	2020	Ministry for the Post Office and the Digital Economy	The country's preparedness for e-commerce is known
	Promote e-commerce: the possibility of conducting business remotely on electronic platforms, with public support mechanisms	Put in place a series of appropriate regulatory measures	Regulatory framework for the creation (certification) of digital accounts	2020-2022	BCEAO + Ministry for the Post Office and the Digital Economy + ARTCI	Regulations exist and are applied
Regulatory framework for payment			2020-2022			
Regulations governing the use of agents			2020-2022			
Regulatory framework for consumer protection			2020-2022			
Regulatory framework for competition and infrastructure sharing, particularly interconnection			2020-2022			
	Encourage the development of ICTs	Strengthening the link between the private sector and universities	2020-2025	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	Share of ICT in GDP	
		Capitalise on the ICT skills of young Ivorians	from 2021	Ministry of Youth and Youth employment		
		Develop ICT training by increasing the number of ICT graduates	2020-2025	Ministry of Vocational Training		
		Integrate ICTs into regional development plans	2020-2025	Ministry of Planning		

	Improve the mechanism for promoting innovation	Put in place a national policy (adoption of the research and innovation orientation law)	Review and update the existing framework law on research and innovation.	2020-2021	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	A framework law on scientific research and innovation is adopted and implemented.
			Adopt the updated draft framework law.	2020-2021	Scientific and	
		Strengthening the protection of authors' rights	Assess the level of protection with a view to improving it	2020-2022	Ministry of Culture and Francophonie	Copyright infringement rate
		Organise information workshops/seminars on the approach to obtain patents and certificates	Assess needs and gaps, and develop appropriate training provision	From 2020	Ivorian Intellectual Property Office (OIPI)	Number of seminars/workshops organised and number of types of socio-occupational groups targeted
		Incorporating tax incentives	Reduce taxation on the acquisition of capital goods / tax-free related expenditure	2020-2021	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research	Tax incentives for innovation are available
	Develop sectors that are already sufficiently competitive	Promote sectors with growing commercial potential (growing comparative advantages)	Establish an exhaustive list of these sectors and develop specific strategies in partnership with stakeholders	2020-2022	Ministry of Trade and Industry	Proactive trade measures are adopted and implemented
		Promote on « ideal » destinations	Identify these destinations for each sector based on the level of structural commercial complementarity	2020-2022		
(6) Promoting women's participation in cross-border trade and		Organise workshops/seminars on drafting bankable projects	Assess needs and develop a specific training offer	from 2020	Ministry of Women, Family and Children	Rate of women's access to financing

entrepreneurship	Develop and strengthen public initiatives to improve women's access to finance	Set up funds to support women's activities and empowerment	Make an inventory of existing funds, assess their performance and suggest improvements / even create new ones	from 2020		
	Develop and strengthen women's organisations and groups, particularly in trade and the informal sector	Provide them with financial support	Identifying specific constraints and developing consistent support	from 2020		Proportion of women's organisations and associations in the total number of umbrella organisations
		Implement specific frameworks for them	Assess needs and encouraging support structures to adapt their services	from 2020		
		Help organise information and training workshops/seminars for their members	Assess needs and gaps and developing training offers	2020-2025		
Equip and support women- and youth-led businesses,	Strengthen the managerial capacities of VSEs and SMEs run by women in terms of knowledge of export permit and certificate procedures	Assessing needs and gaps and developing training offers	2020-2030			Number of women's

	strengthening the managerial capacities of women-led micro and small enterprises.	Strengthen the managerial capacities of VSEs and SMEs run by young people in terms of health and phytosanitary standards	Assessing needs and gaps and developing training offers	2020-2030	Ministry for SMEs	and/or young people's businesses in difficulty and upgraded
	Identify obstacles specific to women's and young people's entrepreneurship	Understand obstacles specific to women's and young people's entrepreneurship	Conduct studies on the constraints and key factors influencing entrepreneurship among women and youth.	2020-2021		Accurate identification of the obstacles specific to the entrepreneurship of women and young people and their participation in cross-border trade, and the development and implementation of public strategies to overcome them.
		Understand the profile of women's and young people's entrepreneurship	Assess financing and capacity needs.	2020-2021		
	Support women and young people in entrepreneurship	Set up specific funds to support women in entrepreneurship	Assess needs in terms of funding and capacity	2020-2025	Ministry of Women, Family and Children +	Proportion of women and
		Organise information workshops/seminars for women and young people on the existence of specific support mechanisms for them in all regions of the country.	Assess needs and gaps and develop training offers	From 2021		

		Develop a mentoring system for women managers of very small businesses and SMEs involved in commerce (mentors could be women managers from companies)	Develop selection and matching criteria and define ToRs.	2020-2030	Ministry of Youth and Youth Employment	young people in the total number of entrepreneurs in the country
Support women and young people in trade (domestic and cross-border)		Understand the specific obstacles to trade participation	Identify the main obstacles specific to women and young people participating or wishing to participate in trade (domestic and cross-border)	2020-2021	Ministry of Trade and Industry + Ministry of Women, Family and Children + Ministry of Youth and Youth Employment	Rate of formalisation of young and women economic operators involved in cross-border trade
		Adopt and implement appropriate measures to overcome them	Propose solutions and collaborate with relevant public institutions	2020-2023		
Promote the financial inclusion of women and young people, for example through a financial education		Organise information workshops/seminars on financial education for women and young people.	Assess needs and gaps and develop training offers	From 2020	Ministry of Women, Family and Children	Financial inclusion rate of women and young people in the country
		Target the provisions for promoting financial inclusion in the Community (UEMOA/ECOWAS) for women and young people.	Make an inventory of existing tools, assess their scope and suggest possible adjustments in collaboration with the relevant institutions	2020-2022		

	programme	To target the provisions for promoting national financial inclusion for women and young people	Make an inventory of existing tools, assess their scope and suggest possible adjustments in collaboration with the relevant institutions	2020-2022		
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Source: authors.

