



**PROJECT TO IMPLEMENT PROACTIVE
SECTORAL TRADE STRATEGIES FOR
IMPROVED ACCESS TO THE AFRICAN
MARKET**

**Terms of Reference
(ToR)**

MARCH 2021

I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The Agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which officially came into force on 30 May 2019, represents a major opportunity to strengthen economic integration on a continental scale. The agreement aims to boost intra-African trade, which remains low, accounting for only around 15% of trade. Part of the AU's Agenda 2063, the AfCFTA embodies an ambitious vision and a far-reaching integration project, which Côte d'Ivoire joined on 21 March 2018, following the signing of the Agreement, prior to its ratification in November of the same year.

The integration efforts driven by various regional economic communities, in conjunction with the objectives of the AfCFTA, aim to establish a common market for goods and services across Africa, while facilitating the free movement of economic operators. This Agreement therefore represents a golden opportunity for Ivorian exporters, who must seize this opportunity to invest in the regional and continental market, while benefiting from the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers. The AfCFTA Agreement commits African countries to eliminating customs duties on 90% of goods produced within the continent.

Côte d'Ivoire is determined to take full advantage of this continental market, thereby strengthening its economic and trade cooperation with AU member states. To support this process of better integrating the African market, the AfCFTA National Committee, **with technical and financial support from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the European Union, developed a national strategy for the implementation of the AfCFTA in 2019.** This activity was carried out in an inclusive manner, involving public and private administrations, in order to identify the requirements and best approaches for developing trade with Africa.

The national strategy for implementing the AfCFTA is part of the country's overall development plans. It aims to create strong regional value chains and support intra-African trade, particularly in intermediate and manufactured products. The strategy is based on six main axes, namely:

- **Axis 1:** Greater ownership of the Agreement's content by all stakeholders
- **Axis 2:** Streamlining of the institutional and regulatory framework to promote trade and apply the provisions of the Agreement
- **Axis 3:** Strengthening the reference framework for public strategies with a view to improving the competitiveness of sectors

- **Axis 4: Developing and implementing proactive sectoral trade strategies**
- **Axis 5:** Upgrading producers (particularly VSEs/SMEs/SMIs) and products
- **Axis 6:** Promoting the participation of women in cross-border trade

Côte d'Ivoire is a key player in West Africa, where it has always been one of the countries with one of the highest levels of intra-regional trade, after Nigeria. As part of the African trade agenda, Côte d'Ivoire intends to play a leading role and is fully committed to economic and trade integration.

In order to achieve this ambition, one of the fundamental actions is “**the development and implementation of proactive sectoral trade strategies**”, as stipulated in the fourth strategic axis. The AfCFTA will lead to increased competition on the continent, and countries involved in intra-African trade will have to base their competitiveness on the quality of their products and services. This project, which stems from the recommendations of the national strategy for implementing the AfCFTA, aims to identify the products for which Côte d'Ivoire has a clear comparative advantage in terms of production, processing and marketing. It will also identify the markets for these products in Africa.

II. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

This programme is designed to meet a range of needs.

1. A study of Regional Markets and Identification of Côte d'Ivoire Products with Potential for the African Market

The first step will be to launch a detailed listing of products (raw materials or original manufactured goods) for which Côte d'Ivoire has a comparative advantage, or those corresponding to external demand, based for example on the conclusions of the national export strategy (*e.g. cashew nuts, bananas, cassava and its derivatives, tropical fruits, etc.*).

Downstream, a market study should make it possible to assess the chances of prospering in a given market and reduce the uncertainties and risks for economic operators.

2. Establishment of a Directory of Exporting SMEs

Secondly, in collaboration with public or private trade support institutions such as the National Export Council (NEC), the Côte d'Ivoire Export Promotion Agency (APEX-CI), the Côte d'Ivoire Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI-CI) and the Côte d'Ivoire SME Agency, a directory of SMEs and exporters active in the production, processing and marketing chain for the products identified in advance should be drawn up.

3. Strengthening the Competitiveness of Exporting SMEs

Finally, it will be important to stimulate government action in favour of SMEs and exporters, by providing them with the necessary support and guidance. The aim is therefore to promote the Côte d'Ivoire label and destination, and to develop and diversify national production by strengthening industrial capacity. It also aims to encourage the development of regular trade with African countries within the framework of the AfCFTA, to promote access to African markets, to promote commercial information among traders and to provide them with the necessary assistance.

I. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

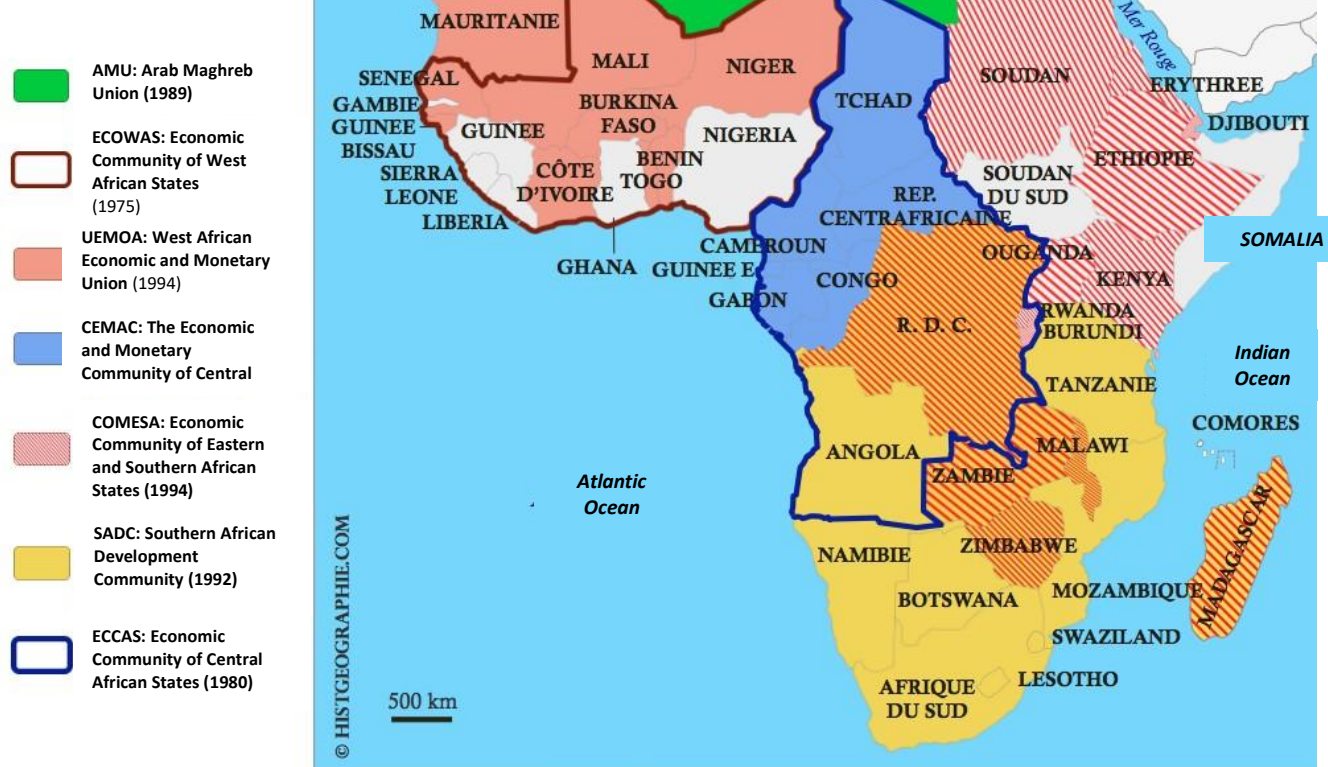
To achieve the aforementioned objectives, it is proposed to organize the activities outlined below:

Activity 1: Product Identification and Market Research

- **Organisation of workshops** with the agricultural and industrial sectors to identify priority export products, taking into account the products in the National Export Strategy (NES).
- **Market analysis of five regional organisations in Africa with the aim of identifying the markets offering the best opportunities for the Ivorian products selected;** This section aims to recruit one (1) main consultant and five (5) regional consultants respectively from the following five regional markets: Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), East African Community (EAC), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).
- **Date:** April to September 2021
- **Location:** To be determined
- **Target audience:** members of the AfCFTA-NC Technical Committee, producers, manufacturers (including SMEs, VSEs), traders and exporters.

Countries are classified according to the cardinal points below:

THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES



African Countries by Cardinal Points

- ***Timetable for carrying out the analysis of growth markets and the appropriate penetration methods for each target market***
 - Consultant selection period: April - May 2021
 - Period of market analyses, drafting and provision of results by consultants: 17 May 2021 - 31 August 2021
 - Validation meeting with all consultants and Ivorian stakeholders: 14 September 2021
 - Presentation of the findings of the study: 28 September 2021

Activity 2:

- ***Organisation of training seminars on the following themes:***
 - ***"AfCFTA: Promising Markets for Ivorian Products and How to Access them"***
 - ***"Preparing Ivorian Exporters for Effective Participation in the Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF)"***.

- **Date:** 19 October 2021 - 30 November 2021.
- **Target group:** manufacturers (including SMEs), first-time exporters.

NB: Due to their cross-cutting nature, they will be implemented in conjunction with the Directorate of Export Promotion, the Trade Events Department of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (for the organisation of trade fairs), and the Côte d'Ivoire Export Promotion Agency (APEX-CI).

II. EXPECTED RESULTS

The project to develop and implement aggressive commercial sector strategies should achieve the following results:

- Ivorian products with high export potential on the African market have been clearly identified
- Ivorian SMEs and first-time exporters receive training and support from national export support and financing institutions (Ministry of Trade, APEX-CI, Côte d'Ivoire SME Agency, etc.)
- Growth markets have been identified
- Ivorian products are better presented at trade fairs (national and international)
- The manufacturing industry is expanding, and Ivorian products are becoming increasingly competitive

Focal Point:

AfCFTA-NC Executive Secretariat

Telephone: +225 27 22 59 98 05 / 07 78 29 18 10

E-mail : secretariat@cnzlecaf.gouv.ci