

SPECIAL HALF-DAY WORKSHOP

PREPARING BUSINESS
ASSOCIATIONS FOR START OF
AfCFTA TRADING ON JULY 1, 2020

BUILDING THE RIGHT TOOLKITS

AGENDA

Facilitated by AfroChampions & AU Trade and Industry Department

DATE: 25th NOV 2019

TIME: 2PM – 5PM

VENUE: ET Skylight Hotel, Addis Ababa

BACKGROUND

Major stakeholders, including Pan-African development organizations, multilateral development finance institutions and individual countries, are rapidly preparing for the start of trading under the AfCFTA in July, 2020. The AU and other regional bodies are facilitating the negotiations of the various protocols under the Treaty, while countries are holding consultations to devise their country-specific AfCFTA implementation strategies.

The implementation of the AfCFTA, which exposes African businesses to 1.2 billion consumer population market with \$6.3 trillion GDP (in purchasing power parity), creates enormous opportunity for Africa's private sector and its businesspeople to trade and create wealth and jobs to aid the continent's economic transformations and integration. With this immense opportunity come challenges and risks for businesses, especially SMEs, in the respective countries. The risks and challenges may even be much greater for businesses in less competitive economies. In effect, the risks and challenges AfCFTA poses to private sector businesses may be country-specific – depending on a country's economic and trade competitiveness.

Yet, despite the enormous opportunity and its associated risks, it appears the African private sector is lagging behind in the on-going preparation toward the start of trading in July, 2020. Initial survey by AfroChampions reveals that, while individual countries are actively involved in the ongoing negotiations and developing country AfCFTA implementation Strategies, the private sector, largely represented by the Business Associations, are not actively taking steps to enable their members prepare to reap the benefits of AfCFTA, and also mitigate any possible adverse impacts.

To develop the right toolkits that adequately serve the needs of the Business Associations and, in consequence, empowers them to take maximum advantage of the opportunities that AfCFTA offers while minimizing the adverse impacts when trading starts next year, this Workshop is organized to conduct a needs assessment from the viewpoint of the Business Associations.

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this Consultative Workshop is to;

- » Share ideas while understanding, from the point of view of African Business Associations, what it will take for them to build capacity and be ready to trade when trading within the world's largest Free Trade Area kick-starts next year.
- » Conduct a survey of African Business Associations on AfCFTA capacity and preparedness to inform interventions including the development of appropriate AfCFTA toolkits for the use of business associations
- » Establish a baseline for subsequent business association surveys on AfCFTA progress
- » Secondly, create the platform for the formation of the African Business Association Working Groups on AfCFTA.

FORMAT

During this workshop, focus group discussions will complement a needs assessment survey and brainstorming in order to generate ideas on what should be the appropriate interventions and content of the proposed toolkits to make them relevant to the operations of the business associations.

EXPECTED OUTPUT

The focus group discussions and the needs assessment survey from this workshop, among other things, are intended to produce ideas that will be used to build toolkits that business associations can use to:

- » Train and build capacity of association members to trade in the AfCFTA.
- » Assess competitiveness, opportunities and risks and develop AfCFTA strategies for their associations
- » Engage government and policy-makers



AGENDA

2pm – 2.05pm

Opening remarks by Commissioner Muchanga & Mrs. Souad Osman

2.10pm – 2.20pm

State of AfCFTA: Research Findings by Afrochampions

2.30pm – 3.45pm

Group Breakout Sessions (Needs Assessments)

- » Products & Services that are covered under the agreement for each country (the products you can trade in)
- » The Tariff lines expected and implications
- » The process to go through to export to each country
- » Dispute resolution mechanisms among countries and between companies (and how fast will things be redressed)
- » Compensation remedies for countries
- » Influencing Rules of origin and standards (the process of issuing certification of origin – influence of local manufacturers/industrial associations vs chambers of commerce)

3.45pm – 4pm

Conduct Business Associations Survey on AfCFTA Readiness

4pm – 4.15pm

Coffee break

4.15pm – 5pm

Group reports

5pm

Preliminary Discussion on formation of AfCFTA working groups

- » (What should the groups be for Day 26th Nov?)
- » SMEs working group
- » Manufacturers working group
- » Multinationals working group
- » Payments working group
- » Non-tariff barriers working group

5.15pm

Closing

