



AfCFTA
Secretariat

Creating One Africa Market

Supporting Investment and Trade in Africa (SITA)

Summary

ODI, in partnership with the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), supports the negotiation and implementation of the AfCFTA. The partnership builds on collaboration amongst the institutions over the past four years and has been supported by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO). It includes analysis, technical assistance and capacity building events.

Background

The AU's Agenda 2063 aims to transform the structure of African economies by boosting intra-African trade and investment. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a crucial component in this strategy.

The AfCFTA includes a broad range of provisions, on which many countries lack the capacity to engage and negotiate. This may hamper uptake and implementation. The success of the AfCFTA will in part depend on whether and how its provisions are being implemented at country level.

The negotiation and implementation of the AfCFTA requires the coordination of a range of actors (including AU Member States and the Regional Economic Communities). The African Union Commission and, more recently, the AfCFTA Secretariat face challenges in undertaking this essential coordinating role.

The UK is committed to supporting economic development in Africa through boosting trade and investment. The AfCFTA is a critical instrument in this strategy. The recent UK Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy highlights the UK's intention to continue to partner with the African Union on free trade and with African countries to further shared prosperity goals.

Aims and activities

SITA aims to contribute to economic development objectives of African economies and the UK's efforts to support trade, investment and development on the continent. This is achieved amongst others by supporting the AfCFTA negotiation and implementation efforts at continental and national levels.

In particular, SITA aims to (i) support AfCFTA negotiations, (ii) assist on country implementation; and (iii) undertake policy relevant analysis.

SITA activities are structured around these three areas of work.

1. Supporting continent-wide AfCFTA negotiations

SITA supports negotiation and coordination efforts of the AfCFTA Secretariat, especially around the investment protocol of the AfCFTA, by appointing and managing an Investment Expert and a Senior Investment Expert. They provide continuous support to the AfCFTA Secretariat in the preparation for negotiations, engagement with Member States and production of technical reports.

SITA further directly supports the research and technical knowledge generation in the Economic Commission for Africa's African Trade Policy Centre (ATPC). A Trade Policy Fellow contributes to the joint ODI-ATPC research agenda on trade and investment.

SITA aims also to increase the capabilities of AfCFTA negotiators and officials in the AU member states and Regional Economic Communities. This involves capacity building activities in areas directly related to the negotiations (e.g. investment or e-commerce).

2. Supporting country level implementation of AfCFTA

SITA aims to address the challenges of implementing AfCFTA at country level by providing direct support in appropriate areas. This involves (i) an assessment of the level of preparedness of countries for the implementation of the AfCFTA and the creation of working relationships with the relevant stakeholders in each of the countries; and (ii) provision of technical assistance and capacity building support.

3. Policy relevant analysis

SITA undertakes policy-relevant analysis aimed at supporting the negotiation and implementation of the AfCFTA as well as on other general trade and investment policies around (i) investment; (ii) digital economy and e-commerce; and (iii) resilient economic recovery. These activities will be designed in close collaboration with research and activities of the ATPC, the AfCFTA Secretariat and African institutions and experts.

Contact details

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