

Support to Trade Agreements with Africa

Appui aux accords commerciaux avec l'Afrique (AACA)



NEWSLETTER

May 2023



Implemented by



In cooperation with





Actualité

Official Launch of the Guided Trade Initiative



Areas of intervention

- 1 – Support to the AfCFTA negotiation
- 2 - Support for the establishment of the prerequisites of the COMESA and AfCFTA Agreements
- 3 - Raising awareness among the private sector about the agreements and their implementation tools
- 4 – Cross-cutting activities



Project organisation and management

- 1-Planning workshop with the Ministry of Commerce and Export Development.
- 2-Internal organisational workshop for AACCA Team

 Hello !



Dear colleagues, dear partners, dear readers,

We are pleased to present the latest edition of our newsletter dedicated to the "Support for Trade Agreements with Africa" project. Over the past few months, we have worked closely with our partners to organize training and practical workshops on the challenges and opportunities related to trade agreements in Africa. We are happy to see that our efforts are bearing fruit with the official launch of the AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative in Tunisia. We would like to thank all our partners for their valuable cooperation throughout the project. We look forward to continuing this fruitful partnership in the coming months and to continue promoting and supporting intra-African trade.

Lisa Menucha



News





Official launch of the Guided Trade Initiative in Tunisia.

The Guided Trade Initiative of the AfCFTA was launched in Accra, Ghana on 7 October 2022 and seeks to allow commercially meaningful trading, and test the operational, institutional, legal and trade policy environment under the AfCFTA. Tunisia is part of 8 countries selected to take part in this important initiative.

The Ministry of Commerce and Export Development has informed all economic actors, including exporters, importers, distributors, and all those interested in the African market that following Tunisia's accession to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the General Customs Directorate has completed all necessary legal procedures and technical requirements to begin implementing the provisions of the agreement by the Tunisian party, on April 6th, 2023.

Therefore, those who wish to carry out foreign trade operations under this continental agreement can use the "AfCFTA" certificate of origin model, which can be issued by chambers of commerce and industry. This measure enables economic actors to benefit from the advantages related to the gradual elimination of customs duties and taxes with equivalent effect, based on reciprocity.

To consult the executive note of the African Continental Free Trade Area, you can access the official publication page of the Tunisian customs under reference "Text TA No. 016 of the year 2023 dated 06-04-2023."

More information: [The AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative - AfCFTA \(au-afcfta.org\)](https://www.au-afcfta.org/)





Areas of intervention





1 AfCFTA negotiation



Activities in progress

- Support to negotiate and implement Phase II of the AfCFTA
- Support for "Trade in Services" (TiS) regulations
- Support for "Trade in Goods" (TiG) regulations



Areas of intervention

1 – AfCFTA negotiation



EXCHANGE PROGRAM AS PART OF THE PROJECT: "SUPPORT FOR TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH AFRICA - AACA"

SWITZERLAND 27.02.2023 - 03.03.2023

Within the framework of the cooperation between the project "Support for Trade Agreements with Africa - AACA" and the Ministry of Trade and Export Development (General Directorate of Economic and Commercial Cooperation) and GIZ, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), a Tunisian delegation participated in a week-long exchange in Geneva, Switzerland from February 27, 2023, to March 3, 2023. This exchange week with various institutions allowed for the improvement of knowledge in the field of trade policy services, awareness of the different support programs proposed by international organizations (ITC, WTO, WB, UNCTAD, IISD), facilitated access to information, and studied the impacts of trade in services in Africa.

Throughout the week, various recommendations and initiatives were presented, including:

- Relying on the results of regulatory surveys and the restriction index (STRI) for the implementation of new measures in the field of trade in services in African economies.
- Adopting good regulatory practices to avoid obstacles related to trade in services.
- Relying on access to information and statistical data related to trade in services.
- Relying on mutual recognition and non-double taxation agreements.
- Establishing an initiative to facilitate investment and, therefore, economic development.





2 The prerequisites and conditions of use of the AfCFTA / COMESA are put in place



Activities in progress

- Support to coordinate and institutionalize the AfCFTA in Tunisia

- Identification of promising value chains in relation to the AfCFTA

- Support to Chambers of Commerce – Training on AfCFTA, Rules of Origin, Digitalisation of RO Rules of Origin

- Customs Support - AfCFTA, Rules of Origin, Tariff Classification, Trade

- Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation project in Tunisia with the Customs Authorities on anticipated decision

Planned Activities

- Support to PAPSS Pan-African Payment and Settlement System



Areas of intervention

2 - The prerequisites and conditions of use of the AfCFTA / COMESA are put in place



Creation of the AfCFTA National Committee in Tunisia

For a better implementation of the AfCFTA agreement, the Assembly of Heads of State of the African Union in July 2018 in Nouakchott committed to creating national AfCFTA committees to achieve the formulation of national strategies for free trade and strengthening intra-African trade.

In April, the Tunisian national AfCFTA committee, representing the national coordinating body with the AfCFTA Secretariat, was created through a ministerial decree.

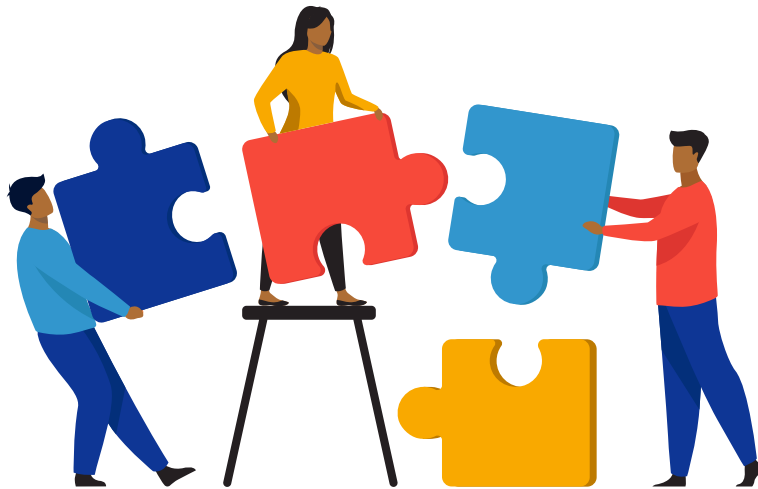
The committee is responsible for monitoring the various aspects of cooperation with the AfCFTA Secretariat and all its structures as well as with the African Union in all areas, including:

Developing the national strategy for the implementation of the commitments provided for in the AfCFTA agreement and all its protocols and annexes, as well as any initiative and program carried out by the AfCFTA Secretariat and its affiliated structures,
Working towards the proper implementation of the provisions of the AfCFTA agreement in Tunisia in coordination and consultation with the parties concerned,
Identifying national needs for technical, institutional and financial capacity building in all areas related to the implementation of the commitments resulting from the accession to the agreement,
Evaluating and monitoring the progress of negotiations in which the country participates at the continental level and the results of the implementation of the provisions of the AfCFTA agreement on the national economy and its economic integration into the African space.

As part of the mission to support the institutionalization of the AfCFTA in Tunisia, the AACA project is organizing a benchmarking trip for the core team of the Tunisian national committee to Ghana from May 19th to May 25th.

The purpose of the trip is to understand and evaluate Ghana's experience in implementing its national AfCFTA strategy, as well as the implementation of operationalization instruments of the Agreement. The trip also aims to observe the functioning of the Ghanaian National AfCFTA Coordination Office, and the AfCFTA Secretariat, as well as other institutions involved in the implementation of the AfCFTA.

The dialogue space created during this trip will stimulate reflection to shape in an innovative and efficient way the establishment and operationalization of the AfCFTA National Committee.





Areas of intervention

2 - The prerequisites and conditions of use of the AfCFTA / COMESA are put in place



Identification of promising value chains within the framework of the AfCFTA



The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) opens up new trading opportunities within a liberalized market encompassing 54 countries and 1.5 billion consumers. In partnership with the GIZ, via the Project Support for Trade Agreements with Africa in cooperation with the Ministry of Trade and Export Development, the International Trade Centre (ITC) conducted a study to identify opportunities for strengthening and developing intra-African value chains that are promising for Tunisia through the elimination of tariffs and reduction of other trade frictions or barriers under the AfCFTA regime.

In this context, the experts from the Centre held three training workshops on the "**African Trade Observatory (ATO)**" tool **involving 77 participants** from the Ministry of Trade, chambers of commerce and industry, the General Directorate of Customs, CEPEX, and UTICA in Tunis, Sfax, and Sousse.

The African Trade Observatory (ATO) is one of the five operational instruments of the AfCFTA launched during the Twelfth Extraordinary Summit of the African Union in Niamey in July 2019. The ATO dashboard aims to provide up-to-date and reliable data to inform trade policy decisions and to analyze the implementation of the AfCFTA and estimate its impact. Additionally, it supports the start of trade within the free trade zone.

Visit the information page developed specifically following these workshops: [Market Access Map \(macmap.org\)](https://www.macmap.org)





Areas of intervention

2 - The prerequisites and conditions of use of the AfCFTA / COMESA are put in place



Support to Chambers of Commerce and Industry - Training on AfCFTA and COMESA Agreements, Rules of Origin, Digitization of Certificate of Origin (e-CoO) issuance.



The Chambers of Commerce and Industry are committed to operationalizing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in Tunisia. In this context, a needs assessment mission was conducted between December and February by the AACA project through field interviews with CEOs, executives, agents, and members, as well as through online in-depth questionnaires addressed to customs officials and exporting companies.

In the coming months, a series of activities ranging from the creation of a platform for digitizing the process of issuing certificates of origin to the design of AfCFTA/COMESA rules of origin manuals, as well as several training workshops in Tunis and the regions will be organized.

In addition to developing trade, AfCFTA offers Tunisia an opportunity to strengthen the competitiveness of its companies, create more jobs, improve national income, and modernize its economy. That is why it is essential that all stakeholders are properly equipped and knowledgeable about the agreements to take advantage of the trade preferences and opportunities offered by the continent.

Stay tuned!



Areas of intervention

2 - The prerequisites and conditions of use of the AfCFTA / COMESA are put in place



Public-Private Dialogue: Working session on the establishment of a private sector coalition

On March 6th and 7th, 2023, a working workshop was held on the establishment of a private sector coalition for African multilateral trade agreements. This event is part of the mission "Establishment of a public-private dialogue addressing free trade issues with Africa" jointly implemented by GIZ and the Ministry of Commerce and Export Development (MCDE) through the AACA project.

This seminar provided an opportunity to bring together the key players in the representation of the Tunisian private sector, as well as to establish a connection between the chief negotiator of the ZLECAf and COMESA trade agreements and the structures of the Private Sector coalition in view of the upcoming Public-Private Dialogue sessions.

Thus, this meeting achieved several objectives, namely:

An information objective:

- Allow MCDE to inform the private sector about progress in negotiation and integration of the COMESA and ZLECAf agreements;
- Provide representatives of the private sector with information and decision-making tools regarding exports and imports in Africa;
- Encourage the present actors to organize training sessions within their own structure to ensure the dissemination of this information/tools among Tunisian economic operators.

A common vision objective:

- Create a network or even a Tunisian team by bringing together private sector focal points who will soon collaborate within the ZLECAf National Committee;
- Draw the attention of actors in various private sectors to the importance of identifying common priorities regarding liberalization and facilitation of exchanges.





Project organisation and management





Organisational workshop with the Ministry of Trade and Export Development.

Date: 30 & 31 January 2023



The cooperation project between the "General Directorate of Economic and Commercial Cooperation (DGCEC)" of the MCDE and the "Support for Trade Agreements with Africa (AACAA)" project has undergone multiple developments since August 2020. This is mainly due to the alignment of project activities with the progress of negotiations and implementation of African multilateral trade agreements, as well as the expansion of GIZ's scope of intervention.

Since January 2022, this project has become a more comprehensive project, moving from a simple country support component for the AfCFTA to a project supporting trade agreements with Africa, including support activities at various levels and for different public and private stakeholders.

In this context, a two-day organizational workshop was held on January 30th and 31st, 2023, with the aim of clarifying the expectations of both parties and setting the priorities of the cooperation project.

At the end of this workshop, the two teams succeeded in:

- Having a better understanding of the functioning, objectives, and methodology of a cooperation project;
- Having a better understanding of the operational plan and expected results of the cooperation project;
- Deliberating, after consultation, on the coordination instruments adopted;
- Deliberating, after consultation, on the priority activities for 2023;
- Evaluating, after consultation, the progress of activities, findings, and avenues for improvement.
- In summary, this workshop provided an opportunity for both parties to better understand the project's stakes and to harmonize their actions for more effective cooperation.



Internal organisational workshop for AACCA Team

Date: 8 march
Tunis



Following the organizational workshop held on January 30th and 31st, 2023 with the "General Directorate of Economic and Commercial Cooperation (DGCEC)" of the MCDE and the "Support for Trade Agreements with Africa (AACCA)" project, the AACCA project team had an organizational working workshop with the objective of creating technical committees for the operational monitoring of the project and harmonizing the various intervention missions of the project in a cohesive and pragmatic manner.

At the end of this workshop, the team was able to:

- Update the project's operational plan;
- Deliberate, after consultation, on the technical committees;
- Deliberate, after consultation, on the possibilities of complementarity of project activities;
- Allocate, after consultation, responsibilities to team members.

In summary, this workshop provided an opportunity for both parties to better understand the project's stakes and to harmonize their actions for more effective cooperation.

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Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Project Lead: Lisa Menucha

Team Leader AACA: Amal Mghirbi

📍 Ministry of Trade and Export Development, Tunis 1001, Tunisia

✉ lisa.menucha@giz.de
amal.mghirbi@giz.de

🌐 www.africatradeagreements.tn

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