



Call for Application



ON-LINE TRAINING

Making the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Work



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On-line Training

MAKING THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (AFCFTA) WORK

RELAUNCH - PHASE - II

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Announcement in Brief

Type : Short Term Course

Programme Area : Trade

Beginning end of the course : 17 August – 29 September 2021

Duration : 6 Weeks

Language : Bilingual (English-French)

Location : Web Based E-Learning

Fee : No Fee

Application Deadline : 10th August 2021

Specific target audience : No

Website : <https://elearning.unidep.org>

Applications : <https://www.unidep.org/?apply>

PROGRAM RATIONALE

The African Continental Free Area (AfCFTA) was officially launched at the 12th Extraordinary Summit of the African Union in Niamey, Niger on July 7, 2019. To date, 54 African states have signed the AfCFTA Agreement, which entered into force on April 29, 2019 when the threshold of 22 countries ratifying the Agreement was reached. Since then, 15 more countries have ratified the Agreement, and several other ratifications are in the pipeline. Thirty member states also signed the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment at the Niamey Summit, signalling a highly symbolic, formal initiative to ease restrictions on the movement of people across African borders.

The AfCFTA Agreement is far from complete. So far, only negotiations on trade in goods and services, and on the settlement of dispute, have been concluded, with the remaining issues – investment, competition policy, intellectual property rights, and e-commerce – meant to be delved into in the next phase of the negotiations. Nevertheless, the launch of the AfCFTA marks an important milestone in Africa's long and rather strenuous history of regional integration, going at least as far back as the Abuja Treaty of 1991, which envisaged an African Economic Community as the culmination of the integration process. A key objective of the AfCFTA is to create a single pan-African market for goods and services along with free movement of business persons and of capital.

Bringing together 55 countries, with a total population of more than 1.2 billion and a combined GDP in excess of US\$2.5 trillion, the AfCFTA is likely to emerge as an influential player in the global economy, and make Africa's voice heard across major platforms. By some estimates, the AfCFTA could generate welfare gains of up to 4 percent, and boost intra-Africa trade by at least 52 percent, depending on the extent of reduction in non-tariff barriers. The AfCFTA will leverage on trade as an engine of growth and boost opportunities for industrial diversification, generating jobs for men and women, including Africa's teeming youths, thus contributing towards the development goals enshrined in the AU's Agenda 2063.

The Trade Protocol of the AfCFTA Agreement was initially slated to come into effect on July 1, 2020 but this was delayed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Trading under the Agreement finally began on January 1, 2021. In the meantime, the AfCFTA Secretariat became fully operational, with the inauguration of the Secretariat building in Accra in August 2020. As one of the key institutions envisaged by the AfCFTA Agreement, the Secretariat will play a critical role in its implementation and in promoting continent integration in Africa.

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc across the world and plunged the global economy into a recession of unprecedented proportions. Africa has not been spared, with the continent's output shrinking by 2.1% in 2020. While growth is expected to rebound to 3.4% in 2021, economic recovery will remain subdued – and painful – for several years into the future. In addition to delaying the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement on Trade in Goods, the pandemic has somewhat derailed the roadmap for the completion of pending negotiations. The second phase of the negotiations was expected to conclude by June 2021, but this might now take another year at the minimum.

The pandemic has other significant repercussions on Africa's integration. On the one hand, it has unleashed protectionist sentiments as countries look inwards to build new productive capacity and reduce reliance on imports of critical commodities whose supply was cut short by disruptions in global supply chains. This may work against the AfCFTA's goal of continental integration. On the other hand, the AfCFTA supports the development of regional capacity and regional value chains, both of which can be trusted to provide a steady

supply of essential goods when external networks have become dysfunctional. Moreover, by highlighting the importance of e-commerce, the pandemic has underscored the necessity for countries to urgently implement the AU digitalization strategy as part of a Protocol on E-commerce in the full AfCFTA Agreement. On balance, COVID-19 can be a boon for continental integration as African economies ‘build back better’.

Africa’s ability to capture the benefits of the AfCFTA will depend on member states’ commitment to liberalization schedules and other provisions of the AfCFTA Agreement; their capacity to design and implement national strategies and mitigation policies; and their continued interest in the remaining negotiations. At a fundamental level, making the AfCFTA work for Africa requires that the implementing countries fully own up to the Agreement. Ownership goes beyond policymakers; it encompasses the business community, labour groups and, indeed, ordinary men and women.

It is with this in mind that the present online course is designed. It is aimed at building momentum for, and political ownership of, the AfCFTA by educating key stakeholders – decision-makers in Government, high-level officials, NGOs and representatives of private sector organizations – about the promise for development that the Agreement holds, and what it would take to benefit most from it. Thus, the participants in this course are not seen as final beneficiaries but as ambassadors and agents of change who can share their newly acquired knowledge with peers and other stakeholders, and, together, work to make continental integration work for Africa.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this online course, participants should be able to:

1. Appreciate the role that regional integration could play in Africa’s economic growth and development;
2. Understand the arduous process leading to the AfCFTA, and the way forward;
3. Recall and understand key provisions of the AfCFTA agreement and its protocols;
4. Critically assess what it would take for the AfCFTA to deliver on its promises;
5. Evaluate the likely impacts of the AfCFTA — both in terms of gains and losses — on their respective country;
6. Comprehend the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on continental integration efforts and consider how the AfCFTA could provide opportunities for economies to build back better;
7. Recommend, as part of a country AfCFTA strategy, measures that their government could take to leverage the opportunities arising from the AfCFTA and mitigate any short-term costs;
8. Explain the fundamentals of the AfCFTA and its potential impacts to other interested parties.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

The course comprises 5 modules. The outline of the modules is as follows:

- Module 1: Regional integration in Africa: Overview
- Module 2: AfCFTA: Where do we stand today?
- Module 3: AfCFTA: Next steps
- Module 4: Impacts of the AfCFTA
- Module 5: COVID-19 & AfCFTA: Building forward better
- Module 6: Making AfCFTA work

METHODOLOGY

This self-paced course will be delivered from 17 August to 29 September 2021. The course will be moderated asynchronously on a weekly basis and participants are required to participate in the weekly on-line discussions. In addition, each module has interactive lessons that provide the core content around the topic for that module. The lessons are designed in a way that learners are also able to self-assess their understanding through built-in quizzes. Additional resources such as bibliographies, web links and optional readings are provided for participants who wish to deepen their knowledge of the course topic.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The course targets groups and individuals that are interested in obtaining a better understanding of regional trade agreement, the role of various stakeholders and how AfCFTA can serve as an instrument for the development of African continent.

They include:

- Civil servants in National Ministries and Agencies responsible for urban development and local Government as well as Ministries of Trade, Finance, planning and
- Economic development
- Diplomats from Permanent Missions and Ministries of Foreign Affairs
- Officials from Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
- Professionals in private sector and civil society organizations
- Faculty, researchers and students
- Interested citizens

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Acceptance to the Course

Applicants to the course are expected to have, as a minimum, a bachelor's degree preferably where courses related to trade. In addition, two years of work experience will be required. Women candidates are also strongly encouraged to apply.

Until the registration deadline, participants are accepted to the course on a rolling basis and subject to availability of slots.

Applications must be completed exclusively on IDEP online application platform at <https://www.unidep.org/?apply>

Certificate of Completion

A Certificate of Completion will be issued by IDEP to all participants who successfully complete the course-related self-assessments presented for each module.

Technical Requirements

Access to internet is an essential condition for participation. The following specifications, as a minimum in terms of hardware and software, are required to take this e-Learning course, please consult your Network Administrator or Systems person to ensure that you have the following:

- Platform: Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT, ME, XP or superior; Mac OS 9 or Mac OS X; Linux
- Hardware: 64 MB of RAM, 1 GB of free disk space
- Software:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader
 - Adobe Flash Player
 - Microsoft Office (Windows or Mac) or Open Office
 - Browser: Internet Explorer 7 or higher or Firefox 36 or higher
- Modem: 56 K
- Note that JavaScript, Cookies and Pop-ups must be enabled

CONTACT INFORMATION

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