



THE AFRICAN CAPACITY BUILDING FOUNDATION | FONDATION POUR LE RENFORCEMENT DES CAPACITES EN AFRIQUE

Africa Rising: The ACBF Trade Program at the Forefront



Across Africa, a new narrative is taking root, and the continent is poised for an economic transformation fuelled by intra-African trade. At the forefront of this movement stands the ACBF Trade Program, a strategic driver propelling Africa towards a future of prosperity. Recognizing the critical role of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as the engine of this growth, this program fosters success within the African landscape. We go beyond simply recognizing the potential of MSMEs; our mission is to empower them to thrive!

The Trade as an Engine of Economic Development program prioritizes three key areas:



Integrating trade agreements into national legal frameworks



Enhancing MSME awareness of these agreements.



Empowering MSMEs to capitalize on the resulting opportunities.

Boosting Intra-African Trade

Challenge

Africa's potential for intra-continental trade holds immense promise, yet translating agreements into real benefits remains a challenge. Signed agreements are often not implemented, leaving both governments and businesses uncertain. Complex regulations further hinder progress, keeping a wealth of untapped potential locked away.

Solution

The Trade Program tackles these issues head-on, empowering stakeholders to unlock the power of intra-African trade through:

Empowering Governments for Effective Implementation

We build the capacity of governments to integrate trade agreements into national legal frameworks, ensuring smooth implementation and tangible domestic policies that benefit businesses.

Equipping MSMEs for Success

We address the knowledge and skills gap within the private sector, equipping MSMEs with tools to navigate the complexities of intra-African trade, enhance export capabilities, ensure compliance with quality standards, and meet packaging requirements.



Why Intra-African Trade Matters



Empowering MSMEs

Our focus is on youth- and women-owned MSMEs, addressing their challenges and ensuring inclusivity.



Harnessing Regional Growth

We help MSMEs leverage regional trade agreements and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), unlocking opportunities.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



Agenda
2063
The Africa We Want

Aligning with Global Goals

Our program supports the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), as well as the Agenda 2063 vision of transformed economies and a united Africa.

A Collaborative Force for Africa's Trade Transformation

"The ACBF Trade Program is energizing Africa's economic future. Empowering MSMEs, the engine of our continent's trade, is at the program's core. By forging strong partnerships with businesses, private sectors, and thought leaders, we are poised to unlock a wave of economic growth and development across Africa."

- Trevor Simumba, Head of Trade



We foster a supportive ecosystem for trade success by engaging key partners across sectors:

Governments

Integrate trade agreements into national frameworks and inform policy.

Civil Society

Think tanks provide research and advocacy to empower MSMEs.

Private Sector

Associations amplify the program message, fostering collaboration between MSMEs.

Beyond national actors, we leverage partnerships with:

Regional Bodies

SADC, COMESA, ECOWAS to promote regional integration. Development Partners: African Union, AfCFTA, EU, AfDB, Afreximbank to combine resources and expertise.

Academia

Ensuring cutting-edge knowledge informs the program.

We also engage with the media, civil society, and the public to build a broad understanding of economic development benefits. This multi-stakeholder approach ensures a comprehensive and impactful program, empowering all actors in Africa's economic transformation.

Realizing the Vision to Transform Intra-African Trade

Through the Trade program, we want to create a holistic ecosystem for Africa's trade transformation:



Agreements Become Action

Governments are equipped to effectively domesticate and implement trade agreements, translating aspirations into tangible national frameworks.



Empowered MSMEs

Capacity building efforts equip MSMEs with the knowledge and resources on intra-African trade, fostering policy dialogue sessions and sharing clear trade agreement briefings.



Export Success for All

Non-tariff barriers and complex regulations are addressed, increasing export capabilities and creating smoother paths to success for African businesses.

Driving Change on the Ground: **The CADAST Project**

The Capacity Development for Africa's Structural Transformation (CADAST) project, funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) is a targeted intervention driving change, tackling the gap between well-intended policies and effective implementation.

CADAST recognizes that successful implementation of AfCFTA hinges on robust macroeconomic policy management and efficient public finances - the areas where many African member states struggle. Through targeted training, technical assistance, and policy dialogue, CADAST empowers national and regional institutions, ensuring that decisions are grounded in research and translated into actionable strategies.

The project strategically focuses on African Development Fund (ADF)-eligible countries, particularly those facing transition towards new economic realities. By targeting countries like Benin, Ghana, and Ethiopia, CADAST fosters inclusive growth across diverse regions. This commitment extends to both Francophone and Anglophone regions through collaboration with national think tanks and regional partners.

Recognizing the immense potential of Africa's youth and women, CADAST prioritizes partnerships with organizations championing gender and youth inclusion. This strategic approach acknowledges the reality that 80% of Africa's micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) involved in cross-border trade are youth and women-led. By empowering these demographics, CADAST fosters a more inclusive and dynamic African economy.

The project's execution plan is designed for tangible results. Well-defined activities are set to begin from September 2024, following a transparent procurement process. This will translate into a significant increase in the capacity of MSMEs to conduct cross-border trade, alongside improved government facilitation of trade processes. The project's strategic location in Accra, Ghana, positions it alongside the AfCFTA Secretariat, fostering close collaboration and maximizing impact on Africa's economic transformation.

The CADAST project demonstrates how targeted capacity building can unlock Africa's immense economic potential. By empowering institutions, entrepreneurs, and policymakers, CADAST paves the way for a prosperous and inclusive future for the continent.



Unlocking Africa's Trade Potential: A Call to Action

A collaborative effort between stakeholders, partners, and donors is necessary to streamline regulations and customs processes, facilitate cross-border movement for African businesses, and invest in infrastructure development that fosters regional market connectivity. The trade community must advocate for a shift from resource extraction to value-added product trade, promoting policies that promote intra-African trade and empower MSMEs via knowledge sharing and capacity building. Moving forward, fostering strategic partnerships


and scaling up successful initiatives with stories to tell are crucial. Widespread adoption of such models holds immense potential for increased government revenue, job creation, and a flourishing business landscape across the continent. By fostering a conducive trade environment and empowering key actors, the ACBF Trade Program positions itself as a powerful catalyst for Africa's economic transformation.



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 comms@acbf-pact.org

 <https://www.acbf-pact.org>

 <https://elibrary.acbf-pact.org/>

 www.linkedin.com/company/africa-capacity-building-foundation

 https://twitter.com/ACBF_Official

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