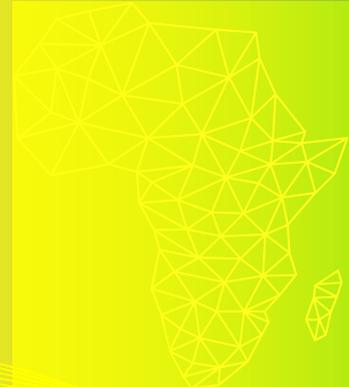


## ONE TRADE AFRICA

# Empowering African Businesses



All photos © Shutterstock.com

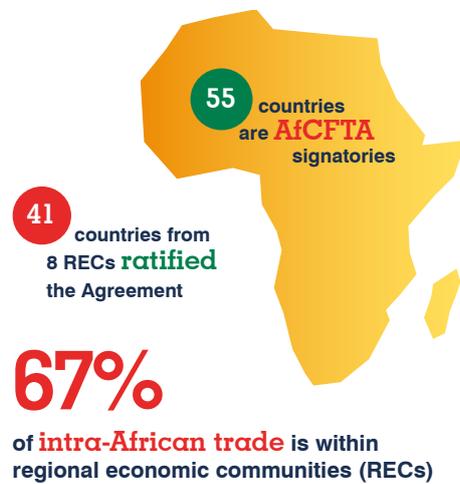
## Maximizing the benefits of African regional integration for small businesses, women and youth entrepreneurs

The African continent is creating the largest free trade area in the world. Once in full operation the **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)** will connect 1.3 billion people across 55 African countries with a combined gross domestic product of \$3.4 trillion.

Implementation of the Agreement comes as African countries are grappling with the triple-C crisis of Covid-19, climate change and conflict. This provides African countries with an occasion to reconfigure and diversify their production and trade and prioritize the development of robust and resilient intra-African supply chains.



## One Trade Africa



Intra-African trade is only 14% due to **high tariff and non-tariff trade costs**

tariffs with African countries

11.8%

tariffs with non-African partners

6.3%

**63%**

of exporters are affected by trade obstacles related to NTMs

ITC analysis shows that the AfCFTA represents a pivotal opportunity to change this

**\$22 billion**

intra-African export potential

**94**

promising continental value chains

Although the AfCFTA has been operational since 2021, most African businesses are neither informed nor empowered to access market opportunities. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), especially led by women and youth, need access to information, resources, skills, assets, credit, and economic opportunities.

“One Trade Africa”, ITC’s corporate programme launched in 2021 sets out to empower and enable African MSMEs, as well as young and women entrepreneurs to access meaningful business opportunities created by the AfCFTA.

The programme is designed to support Africa to advance on ONE coherent framework that encompasses not only the AfCFTA, but also the REC Free Trade Area Agreements, the building blocks of the AfCFTA, and trade arrangements between Africa and the rest of the world. This is to ensure convergence with a unified goal of boosting the competitiveness of African MSMEs and their participation in both intra- and extra-African trade.

### ONE TRADE AFRICA: three-pronged delivery to compete, connect, change

#### ENTERPRISE level

MSMEs, women and youth entrepreneurs can identify and access AfCFTA opportunities

#### BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM level

Actors in the business ecosystem (e.g., business support organizations) can deliver relevant, tailored services to MSMEs

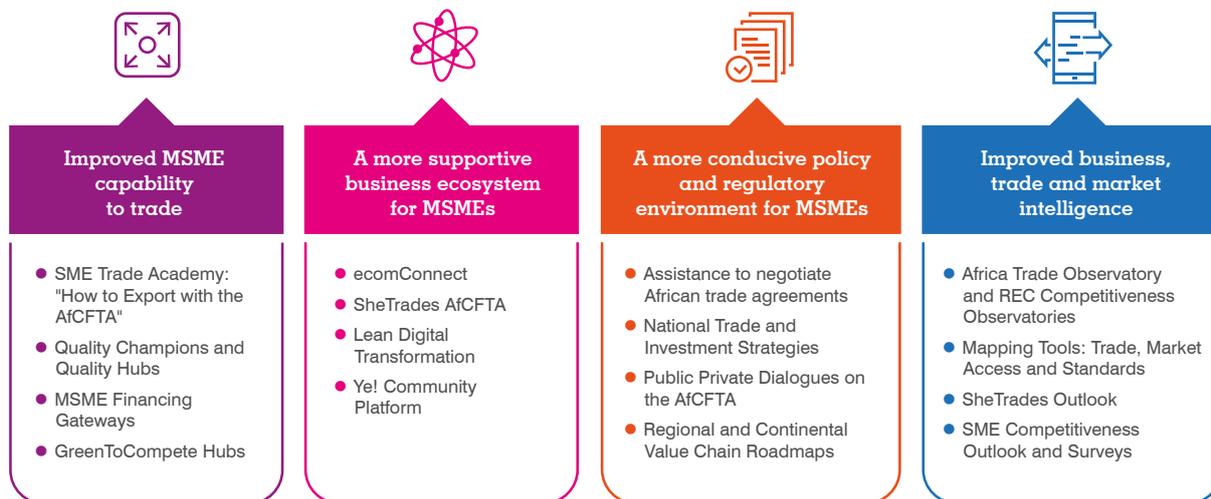
#### POLICYMAKING level

National, regional, and continental policymakers and regulators receive on-demand, technical support to set respective rules under which MSMEs can thrive



## Adapting ITC tools for an integrated African market

The One Trade Africa programme is a critical initiative of the ITC Strategic Plan 2022-2025, broadening opportunities for African small businesses and tailoring **ITC tools** and services to the African continent through supporting businesses to incorporate **Green and Digital Goals**.



## Our Achievements

One Trade Africa centres around Africa's private sector, because it is the key driver for the success of the Free Trade Area. ITC particularly supports small businesses, young entrepreneurs and women, especially those operating in the informal sector.

We can only achieve systemic change when we empower women and youth in their economic transformation.

**Small businesses form the backbone of Africa's economy**

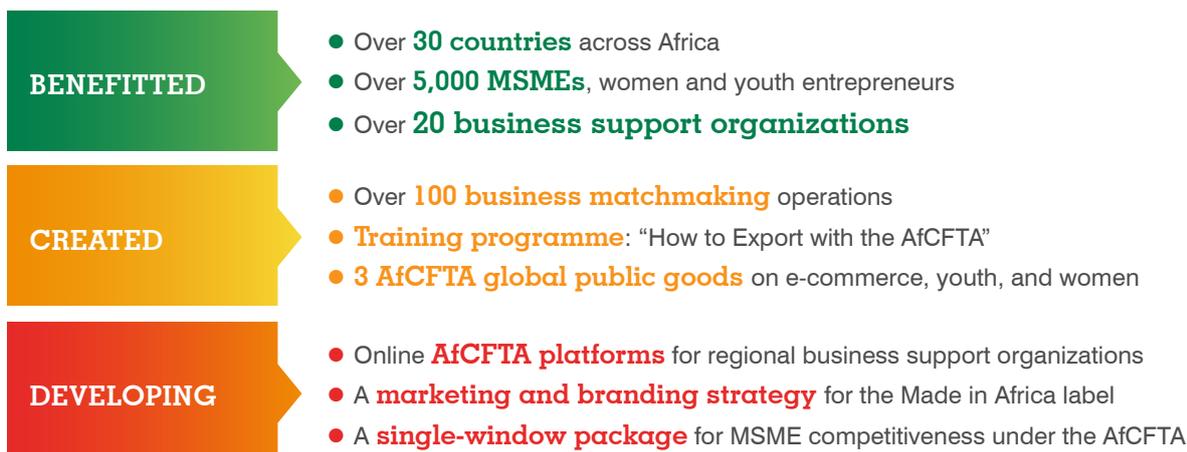
**33 of 55 African countries** are LDCs

**90% of African businesses** are SMEs of which 60% operate in the informal sector

**Women** own a third of all registered SMEs

**60% of the African population** is below the age of 25

### ONE TRADE AFRICA





## Our Partners

One Trade Africa is designed and implemented in close coordination with the African Union Commission, AfCFTA Secretariat, African Business Council, RECs, African policy makers, and national and regional business support organisations and women and youth business groups.

The programme also benefits from partnerships with the African Union Development Agency, African Organisation for Standardisation, African Export Import Bank, African Development Bank, International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation and CUTS, and United Nations agencies including the UN Economic Commission for Africa, United Nations Development Programme and UN Women.

**One Trade Africa is financially supported by the Government of Finland and Afreximbank.**

## Advancing the African Union and UN Goals

The five-year One Trade Africa programme will be executed gradually, with customized interventions for each African country and the regional community as a whole.

It seeks to ensure the AfCFTA supports the following UN Sustainable Development Goals and is aligned to the African Union Agenda 2063 to create the *Africa We Want*.



### Contact

Aissatou Diallo, Senior Coordinator AfCFTA and LDCs  
Lily Sommer, Programme Officer  
**P:** +41 22 730 0284 **E:** [onetradeafrica@intracen.org](mailto:onetradeafrica@intracen.org)

<https://intracen.org/one-trade-africa>

### Postal address

International Trade Centre  
Palais des Nations  
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland