



## ETHIOPIA NATIONAL WORKSHOP

### Contribution of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to economic diversification in Africa in the context of the AfCFTA

#### Organized jointly with GIZ and the African Union

**Based on the new “Handbook on Special Economic Zones in Africa, Towards Economic Diversification across the Continent”**  
**23 – 24 September, 2021 | Hybrid | Venue: Kilinto Industrial Park**

#### Key issues

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) were adopted relatively late in Africa, but they have been gaining considerable traction recently. Today, there are an estimated 237 established SEZs in 38 of the 55 African Union Member States. Many more are under construction or in a projection stage. In addition, there are more than 200 single-enterprise zones (or free points).

Despite SEZs having been widely used for decades, there is relatively little systematic research on their performance or economic impact, especially in the African context. UNCTAD’s World Investment Report 2019 presented a comprehensive analysis on the number and types of SEZs, however, large gaps remain concerning data on their design and on the overall benefits accrued to the host economy.

There is, therefore, a need for greater knowledge, peer learning, and technical cooperation between regional and national authorities in the design and planning of effective and development oriented SEZs. They also need to adjust to the new regulatory environment that will be implemented across the Continent when the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) is fully implemented.

The Handbook on Special Economic Zones in Africa (SEZs for Economic Diversification in Africa)”, developed by UNCTAD in partnership with GIZ, examines trends in African SEZs, scrutinizes best practices, policy recommendations, and serves as a foundation for technical cooperation in the development of sound policy guidelines for the development of more effective, resilient and sustainable SEZs in Africa. The Handbook makes particular emphasis on providing policy guidelines to help SEZs adjust to the new trade and investment environment in Africa after the full implementation of the AfCFTA. In addition, it delivers recommendations aimed at enabling SEZs and SEZ programmes to adjust proactively to current and future changes in global value chains (GVCs) and investment patterns.

#### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND DISSEMINATION | ETHIOPIA SESSION

As part of the technical cooperation and capacity building events organized for the dissemination of the findings of The Handbook, a high-level panel discussion, followed by a national workshop session will be held on September 23 - 24, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.



The workshop session will include presentations of the findings of the Handbook to a diverse audience of policymakers and practitioners involved with SEZs' issues and planning from Ethiopia, as well as academic training sessions and site visits. By the end of the workshop, participants and their respective counterparts will be equipped to provide best practices and recommendations for the Commission of the African Union (AUC) and the AfCFTA secretariat on SEZs to consider.

Participants in the national workshop include representatives from the Ethiopian government, specialized agencies and private sector organizations, including the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ethiopia Investment Commission, Industrial Parks Development Corporation, as well as the African Union Commission, the African Association of Economic Zones, among other organisations.

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