



INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE CFTA ESTABLISHMENT PROJECT

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Project purpose

The project's objective was to help foster and boost intra-African trade expansion, leading to sustained economic growth and inclusive development through dedicated support to the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), and thereby facilitating a process of inclusive structural transformation of African countries. The project was implemented between 2014 and 2016.

The project beneficiaries included member States of the African Union, the African Union Commission, and several Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

Project deliverables

Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 technical-cum-training material 3 additional technical material prepared and published
Training workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 training workshops 1 validation workshop 1 stakeholder consultation to develop negotiation strategies for CFTA
Negotiations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ministerial event on investment facilitation in the era of anti-globalization
Advisory services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13 events

Evaluation methodology

The evaluator developed a four-phased approach:

- **Phase 1:** Review of programme design and project related documents (19 documents).
- **Phase 2:** Conduct field work with focus on meetings, surveys and interviews to collect data. The evaluator carried out 20 interviews in Addis Abada during the Africa Trade Week. The survey, available

in English and French, was sent to 128 participants.

- **Phase 3:** Draft final report drafted and carried out consultations to review UNCTAD's feedback.
- **Phase 4:** Submit final evaluation report.

RESULTS

UNCTAD developed a pilot initiative that served a fundamental need of member states of the African Union, which was appreciated by the majority of stakeholders as a high-value addition to the process of concluding the CFTA. While this project has laid the technical foundations for the start of the negotiations, significantly more such support is required. The success of the CFTA depends on the continuous capacity building and efficient negotiations and neither member states nor regional institutions can alone respond to this challenge.

Relevance: The evaluator concludes that the project was relevant to the filling the knowledge gaps and skills required for the CFTA process.

The project's intervention logic as formulated in the project document was coherent and designed to purpose and also contributed to the CFTA progression, but does not provide a long-term framework for a successful conclusion of the process.

Effectiveness: The quality of UNCTAD support was highly appreciated by the beneficiaries. Reports and training manuals were considered vital inputs for the continental workshops and advisory missions - 63% of surveyed participants stated that they had developed new negotiation skills after participating in these events. The documents are currently available on UNCTAD's website for non-participating countries.

EVALUATION AND MONITORING UNIT

BRIEFS

JULY 2017

QUICK FACTS

PROJECT TITLE:

Strengthening capacities of African countries in boosting intra-African trade through support for establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) 1213AR

COUNTRIES:

Member States of the African Union

REGION:

Africa

EVALUATION TEAM:

Mr. Veepin Bhowon (independent evaluator)

PROJECT DURATION:

January 2014-November 2016

DIVISION:

DITC

PROGRAMME MANAGER::

Mr. Bonapas Onguglo

BUDGET:

\$490,000

DONORS:

UN Development Account

IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES:

UNCTAD in partnership with African Union Commission and UNECA

Please click [here](#) for the full report.

Joint event: UNCTAD, Government of Kenya, African Union Commission (AUC) and Commonwealth Secretariat



UNCTAD's Secretary General Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi speaking at the joint event that took place during the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi in Dec 2015

However, the evaluation noted that while the project laid the technical foundations for the start of the negotiations, much more such support is required, which the African Union member states, the regional institutions, and the private sector consider UNCTAD well positioned to provide.

Efficiency: The project had a 98.5% implementation rate and successfully utilized UNCTAD's internal expertise, including the UNCTAD Regional Office in Addis Ababa. UNCTAD was efficient in using in-house expertise in the delivery of various technical outputs of the project. This project has enabled UNCTAD to boost its working relationships with the African Union Commission and Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

Sustainability: The issue of sustainability was not clearly defined in the project document and there was no indication of initiatives having been or being undertaken to the national level as a result of project efforts.

Impact: The immediate result of the project was an increase in the capacity of the participants through the training activities and changes in policy documents.

The evaluator concluded that was not possible to know yet the long-term impact of this project, especially regarding the adoption and implementation of policies and measures establishing the CFTA.

Gender equality and Human Rights: While not captured in the project document, gender elements have been embedded in the project's outcome in the form of increased market access and business opportunities for women, particularly in services and agro-food sectors. Such opportunities would arise from trade reforms at the national and intra-regional levels following the implementation of the CFTA.

Partnerships and Synergies: Strong partnerships were developed with government officials (who represented 63% of the project beneficiaries). One of the weaknesses observed in this project has been the low profile of the private sector in the project activities.

Key recommendations

Based on the findings, the evaluator proposed the following key recommendations for UNCTAD (for a full list of recommendation, refer to evaluation report):

- 1) Prioritize continued support to the CFTA.
- 2) Ensure a long-term approach for future projects of similar nature.
- 3) Improve results-based management approaches for measurement of the effectiveness and impact, including through:
 - A clearly defined monitoring system
 - A mid-term self-evaluation/assessment
- 4) Develop a set of screening criteria to select project beneficiaries.
- 5) Ensure strong participation of the national trade unions and industry associations in trade policy negotiation.



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