

# The AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative - what lessons did we learn?

**UNECA Workshop in Mauritius**

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# Overview

Implementation of the AfCFTA - update for Mauritius

Why was a Guided Trade Initiative introduced?

How did it work?

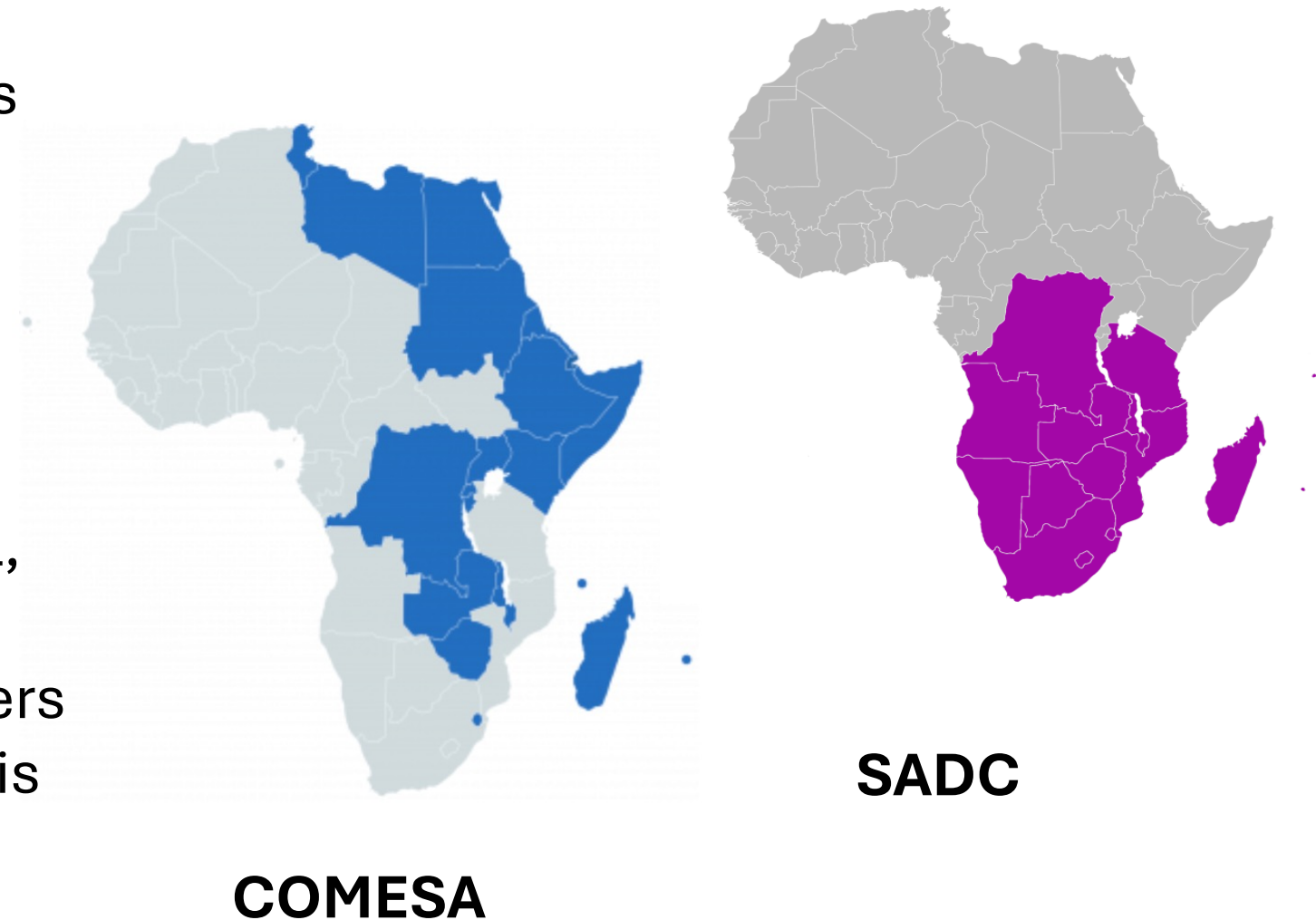
What lessons did we learn?

What happens now?

# Mauritius is a member of COMESA and SADC, and is a party to the FTAs of these RECs

New preferential trade opportunities are in those AU member states with which Mauritius does not currently trade under preferences.

Once the AfCFTA is fully operational, traders will be able to choose which FTA they will trade under with partners that belong to two or more FTAs (as is currently the case with SADC and COMESA)



# Mauritius: Trade Agreements

## Multilateral Trade Agreements

WTO

GSP SCHEME

## Regional Trade Agreements

INTERIM EPA WITH EU

UK-ESA EPA

AGOA

AFCFTA

SADC FTA

COMESA FTA

TRIPARTITE FREE TRADE AREA

## Bilateral Trade Agreements

CHINA

INDIA

PAKISTAN

TURKEY

UAE

## Other initiatives

IORA

IOC

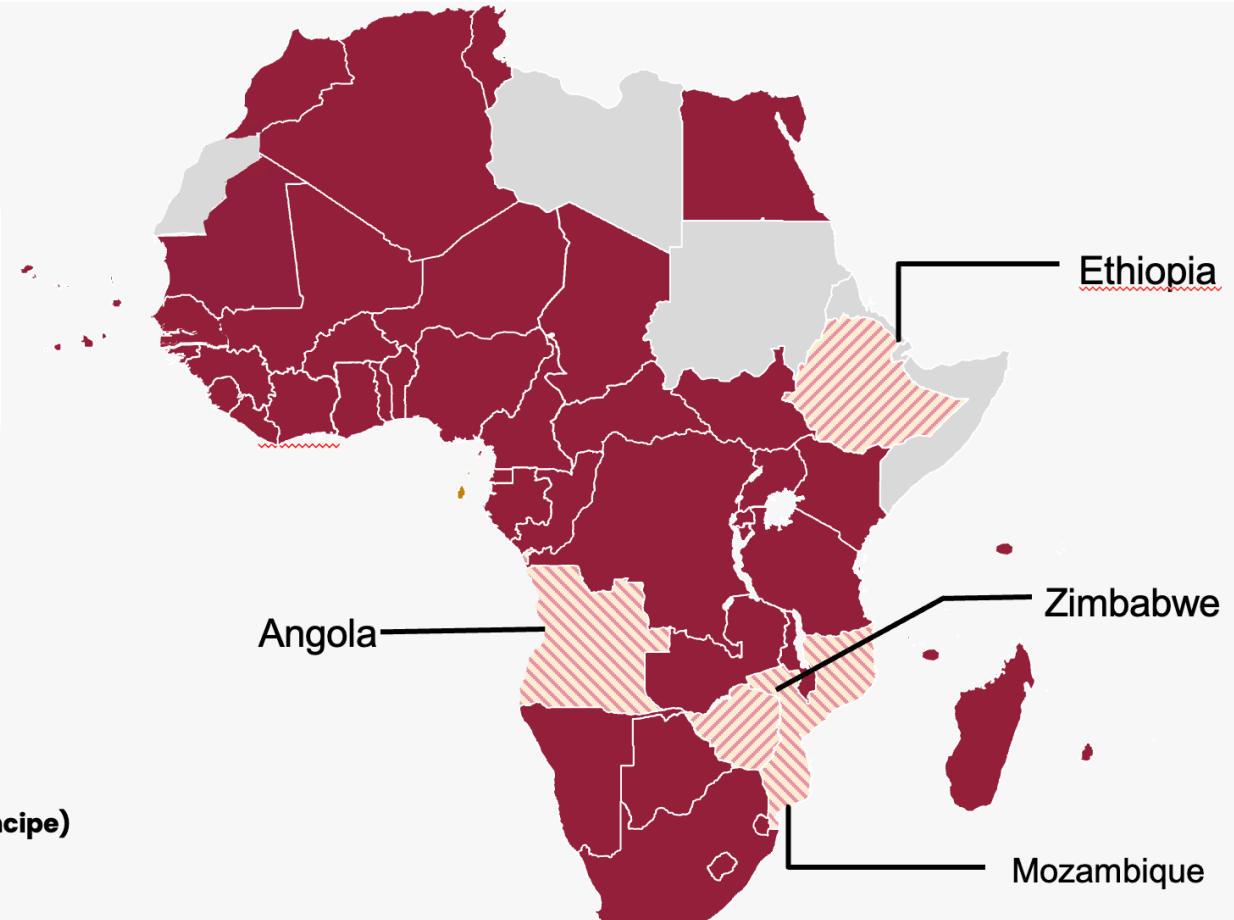
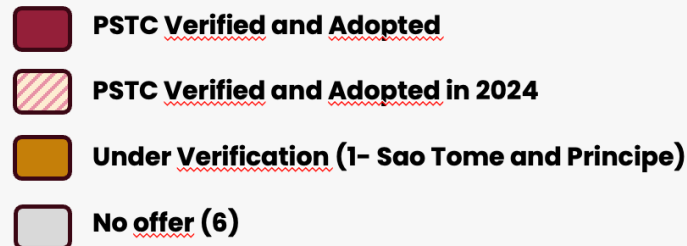
TIFA

# Negotiations and Implementation Update: Provisional Schedules of Tariff Concessions

Zimbabwe to gazette soon

48

Provisional Schedules of  
Tariff Concessions  
adopted

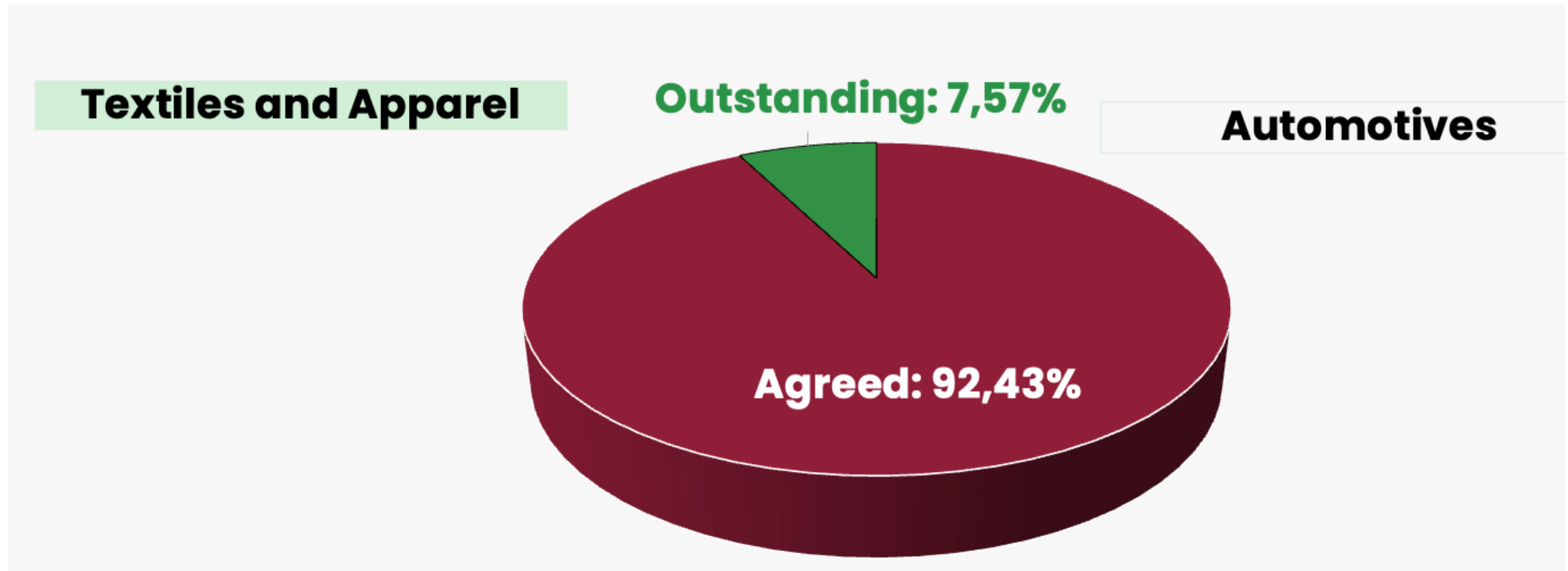


Check: Will the tariff for a product be reduced under the AfCFTA?

Tariff Negotiation Modalities

Product Category	% of tariff lines	Phase-in timeframe	
		Non-LDCs	LDCs
Category A (non-sensitive)	90%	5 years	10 years
Category B (sensitive)	7%	10 years	13 years
Category C (excluded)	3% (no more than 10% of import value)	No liberalisation	No liberalisation

# Rules of Origin negotiations: update



# Other important developments recent AfCFTA developments

- Special Economic Zones (**Ministerial Directive**: goods produced in an SEZ, can be traded under AfCFTA preferences, provided the Rules of Origin are complied with)
- Simplified Trade Regime (**Ministerial Directive**: Preferential Trading Arrangement for Women and Youth Traders) – still beoing developed
- Trade Aggregators: AfCFTA State Parties must register their aggregators (very useful for SMMEs to benefit from AfCFTA preferences)

# Boosting AfCFTA trade: AfCFTA as a Framework for Industrialisation - and **Special Economic Zones**

## **Priority Sectors for Industrialisation**

- Automotive (Automotive value chain Strategy, Automotive Fund)
- Agri-business
- Transport & logistics
- Pharmaceuticals
- ....

***Ministerial Directive:*** Goods produced in SEZ are eligible for AfCFTA Preferences, provided they comply with AfCFTA RoO. (SEZs must be notified to AfCFTA Secretariat)

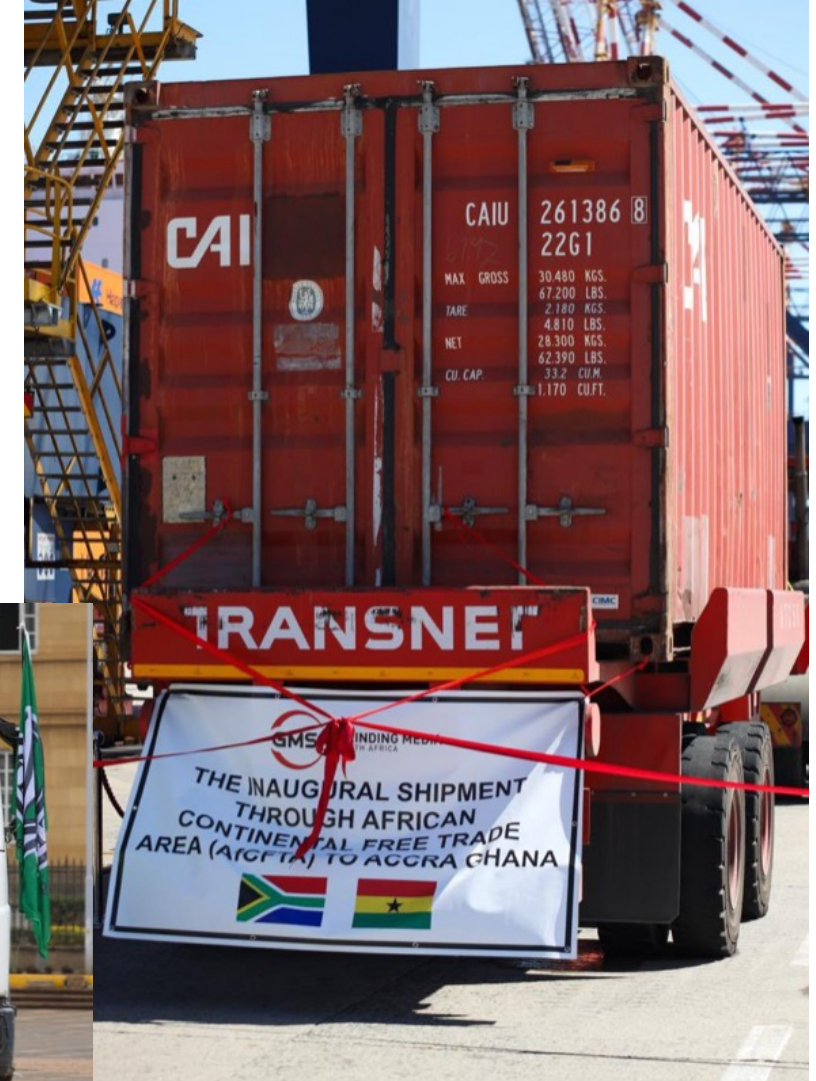
***State Trading Companies*** (Aggregators)

***Simplified Trade Regime for Women and Youth – to be finalised***

# Guided Trade Initiative

Launched: 7 October 2022

7 countries: Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, **Mauritius**, Rwanda, Tanzania – others joined later



# Requirements for GTI Participation

1. Country must be a State Party to the AfCFTA Agreement
2. Have a **Schedule of Tariff Concessions** technically verified and approved by the Council of Ministers (CoM) as part of the **Ministerial Directive (1/2021)** on the application of PSTCs
3. **Gazetting of PSTCS** according to National laws
4. Establishment of *Ad hoc* or Standing AfCFTA coordination committee
5. **Nomination of designated competent authorities** to certify originating products
6. **Notification** of Designated Customs Authority, submission of specimen stamps and authorised signatures
7. **Notification of the required NTMs (SPS, TBT)** required for export and import
8. **Mobilise and connect businesses** with other members of the GTI

# What lessons did we learn from the GTI?

- Uptake was slow and low (why – information about the AfCFTA still not accessible?)
- Trade facilitation is very important
- Trade routes, transport costs and border management
- Standards play an important role (some countries to do accept conformity assessments done by agencies in other countries – mutual recognition agreements can make a big difference)

# GTI developments

- Guided Trade Initiative: expanded from 7 to 39 participating countries
- *The Council of Ministers decided to end the GTI and focus on the the **implementation** of the AfCFTA*

## II-Market Access: Issued Certificates of Origin



Issuing Country	2022	By January 2025
Cameroon	2	2
Egypt	2	948
Kenya	3	58
Ghana	1	105
Rwanda	3	9
Tanzania		226
Tunisia		120
Mauritius	2	
South Africa		1,580
Nigeria		10
Grand Total	13	3,058

How many RoO certificates have been issued  
- under the AfCFTA – by MRA?

# Guided Trade Initiative has ended – what happens now?

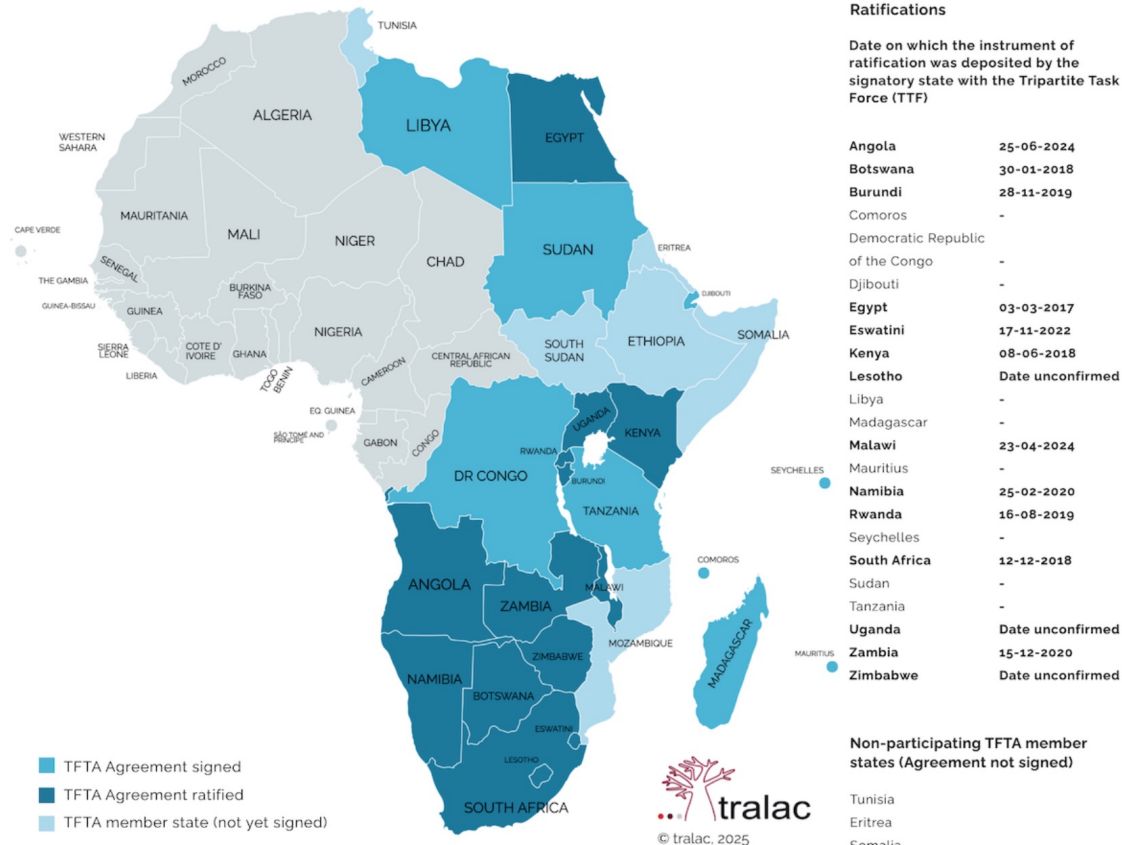
Trade in Category A products, for the State Parties that have completed the necessary domestic implementation

The negotiations must be completed (so that from 1 January 2026 trade under the full AfCFTA may be possible)



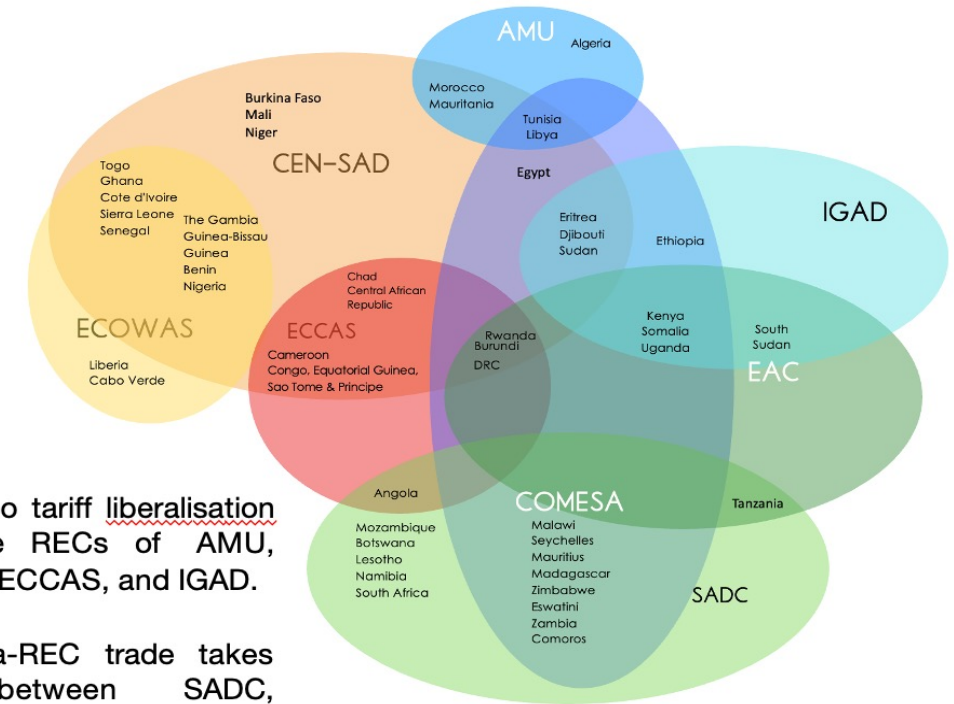
# Keep monitoring....

Which countries have ratified the TFTA Agreement?



Last updated: March 2025

## Regional Economic Communities



There is no tariff liberalisation under the RECs of AMU, CENSAD, ECCAS, and IGAD.

Most intra-REC trade takes place between SADC, COMESA and the EAC.

A key feature of RECs is overlapping membership. In many cases, countries and companies are free to decide which provisions to apply.

Several African countries also have bilateral trade and investment agreements between them.

EAC gained two new members:

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Somalia acceded to the EAC in 2022, and 2023, respectively.

Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger withdrew from ECOWAS on 25 January 2025

Update: Rwanda has given notice of withdrawing from ECCAS