

Background note

Options in establishing an AfCFTA National Implementation Committee

The case of Mozambique

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ADIN	Agency for the Integrated Development of the North
ADVZ	Zambeze Valley Development Agency
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AGOA	Africa Growth and Opportunity Act
AU	African Union
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CONSADC	National SADC Commission
CTA	Confederation of Private Sector Associations
DIMPC	Directorate of Institutional Matters and Programme Coordination
DP	development partner
EAC	East African Community
EU	European Union
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
FTA	free trade area
GTI	Guided Trade Initiative
IT	information technology
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NCO	National AfCFTA Coordination Office (Ghana)
NIC	National Implementation Committee
NTFC	National Trade Facilitation Committee
PESOE	Economic and Social Plan and State Budget
PPP	public–private partnership
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SITA	Supporting Investment and Trade in Africa
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
TNAG	Trade Negotiations Advisory Group (The Gambia)
ToR	terms of reference
TWG	technical working group
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
WTO	World Trade Organization

Executive summary

This report discusses the options that Mozambique could explore in establishing an African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) National Implementation Committee (NIC) to facilitate and coordinate the monitoring and implementation of the AfCFTA. It is based on a desk review, interviews with key informants (government and private sector), a survey of members of the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) and a validation workshop held in Ponto do Ouro, Mozambique, on 18–19 March 2025. Drawing on the experiences of other AfCFTA Member States' NICs, and considering current financial and technical limitations, Mozambique would benefit from using its existing NTFC structure, broadening its mandate to cover the AfCFTA topics. Under this umbrella, it could consider two possible options:

Option 1 would entail an AfCFTA NIC composed of the current NTFC members (government, private sector and development partner representatives) and other key provincial stakeholders represented by Regional Development Agencies (e.g. the Zambeze Valley Development Agency) and Development Corridors (Maputo, Beira and Nacala). The national-level structure could be replicated at the regional level (South, Centre and North) with representation from stakeholders (government, private sector and others) from the provinces along the Development Corridors. The Ministry of Economy would still chair both national and regional committees, but with the Development Corridors (or their management entities) co-chairing the regional committees.

Option 2 would entail a combination of Option 1 and representatives of key stakeholders from neighbouring countries along the Development Corridors – government, private sector and others – who could be invited to attend the NIC meetings on an ad hoc basis depending on the topics discussed.

Moreover, the establishment of the AfCFTA NIC per se within the NTFC structure will be a necessary but not sufficient condition for Mozambique to effectively implement the AfCFTA. Key challenges requiring particular attention are posed at three levels: technical, financial and political:

- Technically, the NTFC is at the heart of the trade facilitation agenda at bilateral, regional and international levels, and needs a stronger secretariat covering key areas of the AfCFTA, such as legal, customs, trade and transport issues. Ensuring continuous

multistakeholder engagement, coordination and capacity-building (government, private sector, academia and others) will be crucial.

- Financially, the Government of Mozambique needs to ‘think and act outside the box’ to find alternative, predictable and sustainable sources of NTFC funding. From an institutional standpoint, the NTFC is at the heart of the trade facilitation agenda in Mozambique. Existing public–private partnerships – Mcnet (single window) and Kudumba (port scanners) could be a good starting point for exploring alternative sources of NTFC funding.
- Mozambique needs a stronger political champion on the overall trade agenda and on the AfCFTA agenda in particular. Given its political mandate, the Prime Minister seems to be well placed to play this role.

1 Introduction

The Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was signed at the 10th Extraordinary Summit of the African Union (AU) Assembly on 21 March 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda. After the required number of ratifications were deposited with the designated depositary, the AfCFTA Agreement entered into force on 30 May 2019. Its general objectives are to create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of businesspersons and investments, to expand intra-Africa trade across the regional economic communities (RECs) and the continent, to enhance competitiveness and support economic transformation and to promote industrial development. The AfCFTA's specific objectives are to (i) eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade in goods, (ii) liberalise trade in services and (iii) cooperate on investment, intellectual property rights and competition policy on all trade-related areas.

By the end of 2024, Mozambique had achieved two milestones: (i) ratification of the AfCFTA Agreement in December 2022 through its Resolution 19/2022 of 30 December, and the subsequent notification to the AfCFTA Secretariat; and (ii) approval of its National AfCFTA Implementation Strategy in August 2024.

The AU Decisions and provisions of the AfCFTA Protocols provide guidance on AfCFTA implementation mechanisms at the national level. For example, AU Summit Decision of July 2018, emerging from Assembly/AU/3(XXXI) in Nouakchott, Mauritania, committed, among other things, to the establishment of National Implementation Committees (NICs) to ensure meaningful participation of all stakeholders and come up with national AfCFTA strategies. The AfCFTA Protocols also have provisions for monitoring the implementation of the AfCFTA. Examples include Article 31 of the Protocol on Trade in Goods, Article 26 of the Protocol on Trade in Services and Article 21 of the Protocol on Competition Policy. Mozambique is yet to formally establish its NIC; stakeholder consultations to date have been conducted using the structure of the existing National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) and/or ad hoc working groups.

Despite significant efforts made to date to kickstart the implementation of the AfCFTA (Submissions of Tariff Offers and Schedules of Commitments, adherence to the Guided Trade Initiative, among others), effective implementation of the AfCFTA is yet to be in place, largely because of the conclusion of the Phase I

negotiations on rules of origin is still pending and the process of submission of market access offers by the State Parties is ongoing. By the end of January 2025, 48 out of 54 AU Member States were State Parties of the AfCFTA.

This study considers the need to support Mozambique to establish its NIC to facilitate the monitoring and implementation of the AfCFTA. Sections 2 and 3 briefly discuss the study methodology and the policy, legal and institutional framework of international agreements signed by Mozambique. Section 4 reviews experiences from other African countries related to the establishment and functioning of NICs and possible lessons for Mozambique. Section 5 proposes options for Mozambique in establishing its AfCFTA NIC. Section 6 concludes and provides recommendations.

2 Methodology

We conducted primary research between December 2024 and March 2025, adopting a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative tools) over three avenues: desk review, fieldwork (interviews with key informants and questionnaire), and a validation workshop. Information gathered through these avenues were used to write the report.

- **Desk review** covered (i) existing national and international studies and (ii) the policy, legal and institutional framework governing international trade agreements and initiatives signed by Mozambique;
- **Fieldwork** involved interviews with key informants from government, the private sector and development partners (DPs) and a small survey through a questionnaire submitted to NTFC members (13 respondents out of 25). The detailed responses are included in Appendix 2;
- **Validation workshop** saw the presentation and discussion of preliminary findings with key AfCFTA stakeholders at a workshop in Maputo, Mozambique, in mid-March 2025.

Report writing saw the elaboration of the draft and final reports.

Box 1 presents questions included in the survey questionnaire.

Box 1 Questionnaire to NTFC members

- Which options should Mozambique adopt to establish the AfCFTA? The NTFC structure or a new structure?
- What structure of Mozambique's AfCFTA NIC Secretariat have?
- What kind of reforms would be needed to effectively manage the implementation of preferential trade agreements/unilateral trade preferences in general, and the AfCFTA in particular?
- What national mechanisms (existing or new) could be used to mobilise funds for the activities of the AfCFTA NIC?

3 Policy, legal and institutional framework of international agreements signed by Mozambique

The trade policy agenda in Mozambique is currently governed by two sets of policy frameworks. The first is composed of high-level national-level policies, strategies and programmes. The key instruments at this level are the five-year government plans (the latest of which was for the period 2020–2024; the 2025–2029 plan is being developed), the Trade Policy and Strategy 2023–2032, the National Export Strategy 2020–2025, the Industrial Policy and Strategy 2016–2025 and the National Industrialisation Programme. These instruments are complemented by sectoral strategies with linkages to external trade, such as the Strategic Plan for the Development of the Agricultural Sector 2023–2030. Nearly all of these have institutional mechanisms to monitor implementation, chaired by the respective leading government entity. For example, the newly established Ministry of Economy (ex-Ministry of Industry and Trade) leads implementation of both the Trade Policy and the National Export Strategy. One of the major challenges facing the government is its limited financial and technical resources to effectively monitor the implementation of these instruments.

The second set of policies is composed of international preferential trade agreements and unilateral trade initiatives. These grant Mozambique's access to external markets or platforms for trade facilitation through (i) bilateral trade agreements (e.g. Mozambique–Zimbabwe), (ii) regional trade agreements (e.g. the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Free Trade Area (FTA)), (iii) multilateral trade agreements (e.g. the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA)), (iv) the AfCFTA Agreement and (v) unilateral trade preference schemes such as the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) or the UK's Developing Countries Trading Scheme. The key common features of these instruments include the establishment of monitoring/implementation, funding, composition and functioning mechanisms (see Table 1).

- **Monitoring and implementation** is broadly conducted through joint technical committees, technical working groups (TWGs) and national implementation committees.
- **Funding:** Limited state budget allocations and support come from development partners (e.g. the EU, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) and Switzerland), with state contributions in-kind and staff.
- **Composition and functioning:** Instruments are generally run by interministerial working groups and multistakeholder forums (government entities, private sector representatives, DPs and other non-state actors). Secretariats are in place but with limited technical capacity. Technical meetings are held regularly, ranging from monthly to biannual.

Mozambique is yet to formally establish its AfCFTA NIC. Until now, the national stakeholder engagement processes related to the AfCFTA have been largely inclusive but carried out on an ad hoc basis. In mid-2024, the Ministry of Economy (ex-Ministry of Industry and Trade) started a process of reviewing the NTFC Decree 81/2017 of 29 December to adjust its mandate to the new national and international context, including the need to monitor implementation of the AfCFTA (Article 2). A new Draft Proposal on the Decree has been available since late 2024, with approval to come after the inauguration of the new government in early 2025. This review process has benefited from financial and technical assistance from Promove Comércio, an EU-funded programme. Generally, one of the key challenges facing Mozambique is limited technical and financial resources to implement international trade agreements and/or trade initiatives, with often a heavy reliance on support provided by DPs.

Table 1 provides a snapshot of the policy, institutional and legal framework of trade agreements signed by Mozambique.

Table 1 Policy, institutional and legal framework of international trade agreements signed by Mozambique (selected)

International trade agreements	Implementation mechanism and legal framework	Funding	Functioning
Bilateral trade agreements	Established joint trade committees established e.g. Art. XXI of the Mozambique-Zimbabwe Trade Agreement	Overall state budget allocated to Ministry of Economy	• Composition: governments of Parties and co-chaired by focal points – ministries in charge of trade • Monitoring/reviews by government led by Ministry of Economy (at least annual meetings or with 6-week notice)
SADC trade protocols (goods and services)	• SADC TWGs, subcommittees and councils • National SADC Commission (CONSADC), Presidential Decree 1/2003 of 26 March • Ad hoc national working groups (e.g. services)	• SADC programmes largely funded by DPs • Limited state budget allocated to CONSADC, but has limited discussions of trade agenda	• CONSADC has formal operating rules but is composed only of government entities led by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation • Ad hoc discussions of trade policy/facilitation issues through targeted stakeholder meetings and NTFC Market Access Subcommittee
WTO TFA	NTFC • WTO TFA, Art. 23, para. 2 • Decree 81/2017 of 29 December	• No state budget allocation, but government contribution in-kind (offices and staff) • Short-term projects funded by DPs, e.g. US, EU and Canada	• Composition: government, private sector, DP representative • Regular technical committee meetings chaired by Ministry of Economy (once/month) • Steering committee: twice/year, chaired by Ministry of Economy • Secretariat in place but with limited staff, mostly covering administration issues • No formal operating rules but work in progress
AfCFTA	Not yet established	Not yet defined, but DPs to play a role	To be defined by AfCFTA Subcommittee

Source: Authors using data from various sources, including the Mozambique Trade Portal: <https://portalcomercioexterno.gov.mz/en/home/>

4 Learning from other AfCFTA National Implementation Committees

This section identifies lessons from other AfCFTA Member States' NICs in terms of functions (4.1) and forms (4.2) and discusses the general formation and operationalisation of NICs (4.3).

4.1 Functions

NICs have been established throughout Africa (see Table 2). Some have existed since early on (2018) – from around the time the AfCFTA Agreement came into force (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria) – and have collaborated with the private sector to make trade under AfCFTA rules a reality (e.g. matchmaking and certification for the Guided Trade Initiative (GTI) in Ghana), developed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems (Nigeria) or engaged in high-profile public events (Côte d'Ivoire). Other NICs have more recently been established by decree (e.g. Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, etc.). Still other African countries need to catch up and seek guidance. Some already have appropriate structures in place (Senegal, South Africa).

Table 2 Status of NIC establishment (information available by March 2025)

NICs ESTABLISHED (BY DECREES/GOVERNMENT DECISIONS)	EXISTING STRUCTURES	ONGOING ESTABLISHMENT OF NICs
Cameroon	Namibia	Cabo Verde
Central African Republic	Sao Tome and Principe	Mauritania
Congo	Senegal	Mozambique
Côte d'Ivoire	Angola	Liberia
Democratic Republic of the Congo	South Africa	Tanzania
Egypt	Djibouti	
Gabon		
Ghana		
Kenya		
Nigeria		
Rwanda		
Togo		
Comoros		
Tunisia		
Malawi		
Mauritius		
Algeria		
Morocco		
The Gambia		2018 to 2022 15
Seychelles		2023 7
Burundi		2024 6
Sierra Leone		

Different colours refer to different years of notification (28 in total by March 2025).

Source: AfCFTA Secretariat

Based on the experiences of active NICs, the ODI Global (2023)¹ identifies 10 crucial NIC functions:

- 1 Support the formulation of country positions in trade negotiations (involving coordination across ministries and complementing existing trade negotiation structures).
- 2 Facilitate implementation and advise the government on policy reform and domestication of AfCFTA provisions and complementary instruments (coordination across ministries) in line with existing structures to implement trade and development policies.
- 3 Develop plans and strategies.
- 4 Report on activities and plans, and monitor and evaluate activities of the NIC itself.
- 5 Monitor and evaluate policies and projects to support AfCFTA implementation and relevant AU-related objectives such as the trade and development aspirations in the AU's Agenda 2063.

¹ Sebahizi, P., Habte, M., Noor, H., Chitanda, Y., Semedo, J. T., te Velde, D. W., Abudu, D., Agarwal, P., Mendez-Parra, M. (2023). *AfCFTA National Implementation Committees: scoping options and support mechanisms*. ODI Research Report. London: ODI (<https://en/publications/afcfta-national-implementation-committees-scoping-options-and-supportmechanisms>)

- 6 Coordinate and implement donor activities and capacity-building events in the area of the AfCFTA and development (covering trade and other instruments) in line with existing implementation structures.
- 7 Raise awareness and collaborate with all stakeholders (communication).
- 8 Enable meaningful collaboration with the private sector (certification, readiness assessments) to ensure the economic benefits of the AfCFTA.
- 9 Ensure inclusiveness: include mainstream vulnerable groups, gender and youth in AfCFTA implementation plans.
- 10 Provide an interface between the AfCFTA Secretariat and State Parties.

The table in Appendix 1 compares the roles and responsibilities of the AfCFTA NIC in the case of five African countries with best practice functions. It includes examples from Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda, modelled around NTFCs. Mozambique does well on several objectives, such as ensuring coordination to implement AfCFTA policies, monitoring and supervising compliance, the importance of awareness creation and being an interface with the AfCFTA Secretariat. There are questions around the role of private sector development, ensuring inclusiveness and the ability to developing AfCFTA-related plans and strategies.

4.2 Institutional forms of NICs

While there are common functional requirements, each country will need to decide on the institutional form that suits it best. Five salient institutional form features have emerged:

- 1 Three types of bodies have proven important in all cases: a high-level steering committee (chaired by the minister of trade or a higher-level official and reporting to the president or prime minister), a secretariat and TWGs/subcommittees. All these bodies and groups need legal backing.
- 2 The prime minister or president needs to oversee the high-level steering group but does not need to chair it. The minister of trade could also take this role.
- 3 The secretariat needs a senior, active, experienced and well-connected coordinator or lead, who reports to the steering committee and the permanent secretary for trade. Other people could include a legal advisor, a strategic communications specialist, a stakeholder engagement specialist, programme officers, enterprise support specialists, IT officers and administrators.
- 4 The private sector should be included at the steering committee level and in the TWGs.

- 5 The NIC should engage in visible activities such as awareness-raising campaigns on the AfCFTA; capacity-building; developing a monitoring, evaluation and peer learning framework; and working with the AfCFTA Secretariat, including the secretary-general, on visits and other communications or engagements.

We discuss different institutional forms, which can be broadly summarised as:

- creating a new institutional structure (Ghana, Nigeria)
- enhancing existing institutional structures (Rwanda, Tanzania, The Gambia)

For countries with little capacity or financial resources, such as Mozambique, the second option is perhaps most relevant; for those countries want to elevate the importance of their NICs, Option 1 makes sense.

Countries with an effective NTFC can use that option, but for those where this is not the case and where stronger coordination across ministries is needed, a more elaborate structure sitting in the presidency is needed.

4.2.1 Ghana

Operationalising the AfCFTA Agreement effectively requires a structured institutional framework that aligns national priorities, clarifies stakeholder roles and ensures seamless coordination. For this, Ghana has adopted a whole-of-government approach through the establishment of the following:

- The **Inter-Ministerial Facilitation Committee** provides policy oversight to align AfCFTA participation with national development objectives.
- The **National Steering Committee on the AfCFTA** offers technical guidance and oversight in implementing the National Policy Framework and Action Plan for Boosting Trade with Africa.
- The **National AfCFTA Coordination Office (NCO)** serves as the focal point for operationalising the Agreement.
- **TWGs** are convened as needed to identify and address trade constraints around trade policy, trade facilitation, trade-related infrastructure, enhancing productive capacity, trade information, trade development finance and factor market integration.

NCO organisational structure:

- **National AfCFTA coordinator: 1**
- **Senior advisors (consultants)**
 - Capacity-building and stakeholder engagement: 1
 - Strategic communications and outreach: 1

- Enterprise development: 1
- Legal and negotiations: 1
- **M&E specialist: 1**
- **Programme officers (consultants)**
 - Enterprise development and market access: 1
 - Trade policy and research: 1
 - Stakeholder engagement: 1
 - Trade information: 1
 - M&E: 1
- **Research officers: 6**
- **Administration**
 - Admin/operations: 1
 - Front desk: 3
 - IT and facility management: 2
 - Drivers: 2
 - Security: 2

The Ghanaian NCO is regarded as one of the most elaborate across the continent.

4.2.2 Nigeria

Nigeria's experience shows that the form and function of NICs are dynamic and subject to change. The AfCFTA National Action Committee has become the AfCFTA National Coordinating Office, showing the importance of coordination. A distinguishing feature of the NIC in Nigeria is that it is located in the presidency, reporting to the chief of staff. This reflects the experience that implementation needs strong backing and coordination from the centre. Meanwhile, the NTFC is seen to be ineffective, and siloed sitting within a ministry.

The NIC consists of (i) a steering committee, which includes institutions and ministers, (ii) committees (domestic and external) and (iii) a coordinating office in the presidency. There are also new proposals, such as to include the private sector in the steering committee and to have TWGs rather than subcommittees.

The current office has only around five, often seconded from different departments, but there are plans to have some 10–15 consultants as trade experts. These would be funded by Nigeria and not external donors.

4.2.3 Rwanda

By contrast, in Rwanda, most of the NIC members are also members of the NTFC. Rwanda considered it unnecessary to have different

committees serving similar functions but for different regions (e.g. AfCFTA or EAC). Importantly, too, the NTFC is seen as an effective body, suggesting country context matters greatly in deciding on an optimal structure.

As such, Rwanda's AfCFTA NIC operates under the NTFC, which coordinates strategy execution. No separate act or decree was needed. The NTFC reports to the Industrial Development and Export Council and oversees thematic working groups (e.g. market access, investment/intellectual property, services/e-commerce). To streamline governance, internal analyses are ongoing to merge the NIC's functions into the NTFC, aligning mandates with RECs (East African Community (EAC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)) and the AfCFTA framework, to eliminate duplication. Currently, NIC working groups are undergoing protocol-specific training to strengthen sectoral implementation.

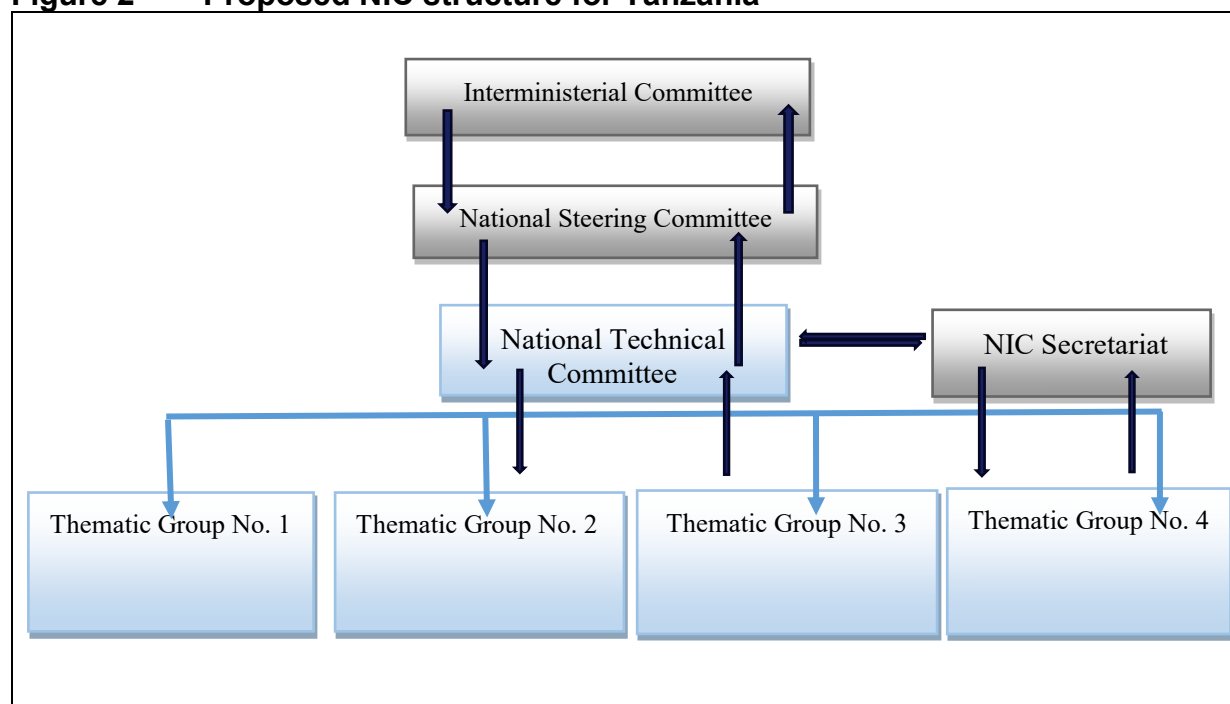
Figure 1 Institutional form of Rwanda's NIC



Source: Government of Rwanda

4.2.4 Tanzania

Figure 2 presents the proposed organisational chart for the Tanzania AfCFTA NIC.

Figure 2 Proposed NIC structure for Tanzania

Source: Workshop to discuss terms of reference of NIC, Dar es Salaam, February 2025

The AfCFTA NIC will consist of representatives from various relevant government ministries, agencies, private sector organisations, academia and civil society. The composition should be inclusive and diverse to ensure comprehensive perspectives and expertise.

4.2.5 The Gambia

The Gambia's NIC was established only recently. Its structure includes three main bodies: (i) a Trade Negotiations Advisory Group (TNAG), (ii) a National Committee and Secretariat and (iii) thematic groups.

The Government of The Gambia established the TNAG in 2014. It serves as a forum for advice on the formulation and execution of trade and trade-related policy at all stages of development and implementation. It advises and supports ministers and senior government officials in preparation and/or during international negotiations on trade in goods and services and trade-related aspects of intellectual property and investment, as well as advising and supporting the government on implementation. The government established the AfCFTA NIC as a subcommittee of the TNAG. The deputy chair is to be from the Confederation of Gambian Industries.

The Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment serves as the secretariat and chair. The secretariat comprises a staff of four, whose roles are to undertake all technical work on the AfCFTA; to keep records of committee deliberations,

activities and programme facilitation; and to be the link between all national stakeholders and the government.

4.3 Formation and operationalisation of NICs

AfCFTA and ODI Global (2023)² suggests a five-step template for the formation and operation of NICs, appropriate to each country setting:

- 1 **Form a multistakeholder committee/s.** A committee could be government-led or a national taskforce formed to serve as an NIC, involving a steering committee, a secretariat with an experienced and well-connected lead and a set of TWGs, which involve the private sector and engage in a range of activities in areas covered by the AfCFTA Agreement.
- 2 **Develop a clear mandate and results framework.** The committee's (legal) mandate should be clearly defined, outlining its goals, objectives and responsibilities. It is important to have legal backing, a budget and performance indicators based on a clear results framework. Equally important is developing a mandate that fits the AfCFTA's responsibilities into the wider trade and development framework.
- 3 **Provide adequate resources.** The committee will need adequate resources, including funding, staffing and technical support, to carry out its work effectively.
- 4 **Engage in consultation and outreach.** The committee should engage in regular consultation with stakeholders and conduct outreach activities to build awareness of the AfCFTA and the committee's work.
- 5 **Monitor and evaluate.** The committee should establish a robust M&E framework to track progress and identify challenges in the implementation process at the national level.

² Sebahizi, P., Habte, M., Noor, H., Chitanda, Y., Semedo, J. T., te Velde, D. W., Abudu, D., Agarwal, P., Mendez-Parra, M. (2023). *AfCFTA National Implementation Committees: scoping options and support mechanisms*. ODI Research Report. London: ODI (<https://odi.org/en/publications/afcfta-national-implementation-committees-scoping-options-and-supportmechanisms>)

5 Possible options to be considered for the structure of Mozambique's AfCFTA NIC

The AU's Decision of the 31st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in July 2018 in Nouakchott, Mauritania, instructed Member States to set up NICs to facilitate implementation of the AfCFTA. Different countries are at different stages of the formation and evolution of the NIC – drafting new legal texts (or reviewing existing ones), holding stakeholder consultations or in implementation per se. As discussed in Section 3, low levels of technical and financial resources are a limiting factor in the effective implementation of trade agreements such as the AfCFTA. Given this, Mozambique seems to be most comfortable using the existing structure of the NTFC to broaden its mandate and strengthen its capacity to implement trade agreements including the AfCFTA, 75% of NTFC members interviewed by this study team favoured this approach. This is in line with the options of Rwanda and to some extent The Gambia, as outlined in Section 4.

Currently, the NTFC is composed of representatives of the government, the private sector (formal and informal associations) and DPs (one representative). Its structure includes four bodies: the Steering Committee, the Technical Committee, the Subcommittees and the Secretariat (see Figure 3).

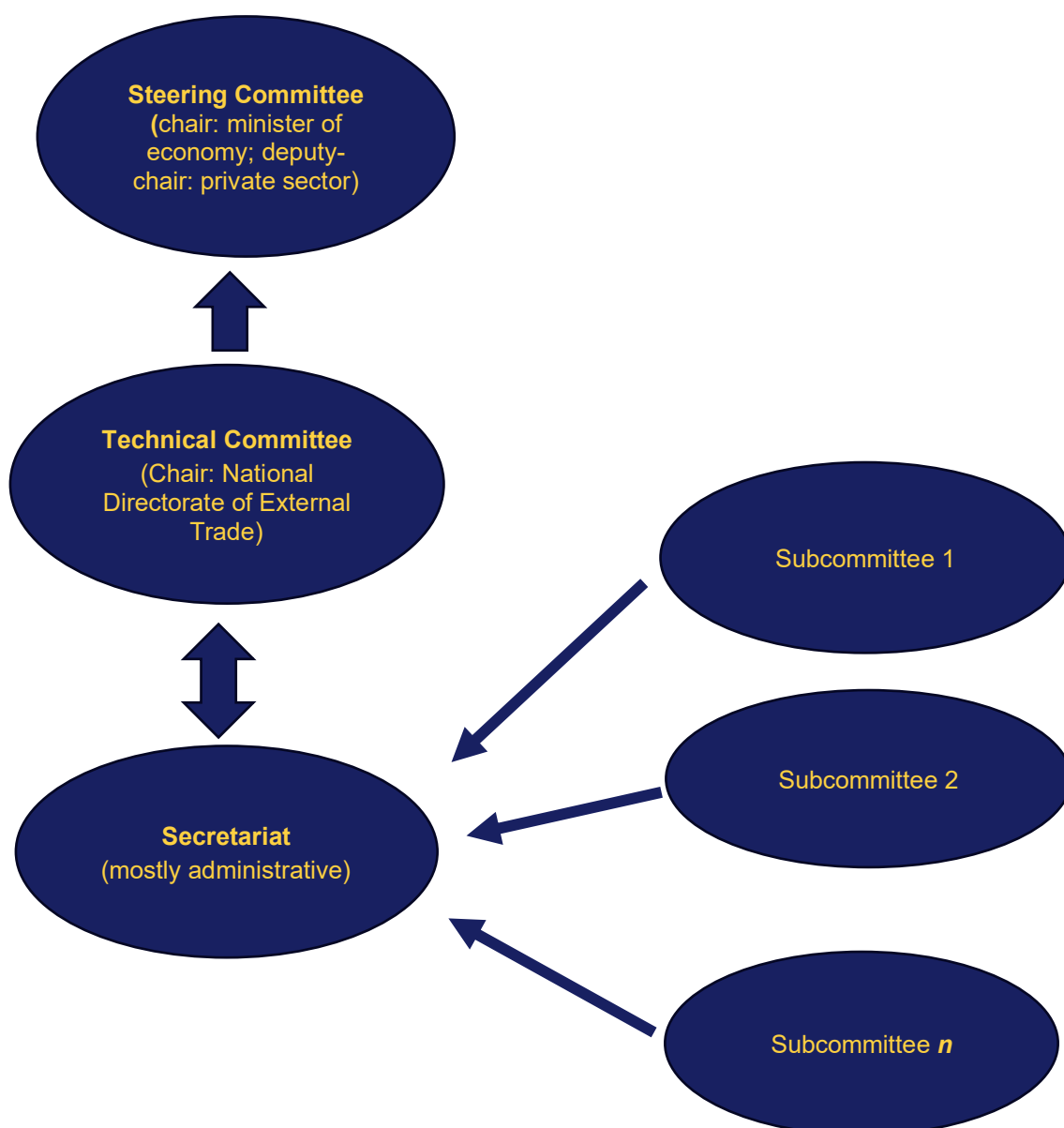
- The **Steering Committee** is the highest body of the NTFC and is composed of the minister of economy (chair) and a representative of the private sector (Confederation of Private Sector Associations, CTA). Its main tasks include providing strategic guidance to the Technical Committee and approving and monitoring the implementation of annual workplans. It meets twice per year (biannual meetings).
- The **Technical Committee** is composed of representatives of the government, the private sector and DPs at technical level. It reports to the Steering Committee and is chaired by the National

Directorate of External Trade and co-chaired by the National Directorate of Private Support – both in the Ministry of Economy. It meets twice per month.

- **Subcommittees** are composed of subgroups of the Technical Committee with a dedicated focus on specific themes such as market access and trade in services. Members of these subgroups are derived from the Technical Committee, with representatives from the government and the private sector.
- The **Secretariat** is currently composed of an executive secretary who handles the daily operations of the NTFC (e.g. preparation of meetings, drafting of meeting notes, sharing of documentation). Technical staff from the Ministry of Economy provide support to the Secretariat on an ad hoc basis.

The second column of Table 3 summarises the status of the NTFC. Three key weaknesses of the NTFC are worth noting. First is the exclusion of key entities from the current structure. For example, the NTFC operates exclusively at the national level, with no representation at the provincial or regional level from government and private sector entities. For example, the Provincial Directorates of Industry and Trade and Transport, the Regional Development Agencies (e.g. Agency for the Integrated Development of the North, ADIN, and Zambeze Valley Development Agency, ADVZ) and the Development Corridors (Maputo, Beira and Nacala) are key stakeholders in the trade agenda but are not members of the NTFC. The key informants interviewed indicated that efforts were ongoing to establish subregional structures of the NTFC (e.g. Beira Corridor).

Second, the NTFC Secretariat is severely understaffed, with only one full-time executive secretary, focusing mostly on administrative issues. Third, the NTFC has no government budget, and many activities requiring financial resources are funded by DPs on an ad hoc (project) basis. The government contributes to NTFC activities in-kind with staff from the Ministry of Economy and office space for most meetings. Going forward, ensuring the effectiveness of the NTFC will require not only addressing these weaknesses but also broadening the NTFC's mandate to incorporate AfCFTA implementation, which has its own challenge of ensuring it covers all the AfCFTA topics/Protocols.

Figure 3 Current NTFC structure in Mozambique

Considering existing technical and financial constraints and the ongoing efforts to establish subregional NTFC structures and the AfCFTA NIC, Mozambique's government could consider two options.

Option 1

This option would entail an AfCFTA NIC composed of current NTFC members (government, private sector) and other key provincial stakeholders represented by the Regional Development Agencies (e.g. ADVZ) and Development Corridors (Maputo, Beira and Nacala Corridors). The national-level NTFC structure could be replicated at the regional level (South, Centre and North) with representation from stakeholders (government, private sector and others) from the provinces along the Development Corridors. The Ministry of Economy would still chair both national and regional committees, but

with the Development Corridors (or their management entities) co-chairing the regional committees. Figure 2 depicts this proposed new structure of the NTFC.

Option 2

This option would entail a combination of Option 1 and the presence of representatives from key stakeholders from neighbouring countries along the Development Corridors, who could be invited to attend the NIC meetings on an ad hoc basis depending on the topics discussed. More importantly, would be the overall leadership of the Prime Minister who would be politically stronger to coordinate implementation, provide guidance to and monitor progress of the Steering Committee and other line ministries with AfCFTA-related mandates.

Under both Options 1 and 2, significant amounts of technical and financial resources would be required to bring about the reforms needed to support effective AfCFTA implementation. For example, 92% of the survey respondents in this study recognised the importance of strengthening the current NTFC Secretariat with additional experts (e.g. legal, customs, trade and transport). Furthermore, in terms of effectiveness, 55% of respondents stated that the NTFC Technical Committee needed to be more active and effective, whereas 33% of respondents stated that the NTFC Subcommittees needed to be more active and effective. Respondents also stressed the importance of continuous capacity-building of NTFC members on AfCFTA technical issues (e.g. customs issues, digital trade, trade in goods and services) as essential and required.

Finally, planning, budgeting and funding of AfCFTA NIC activities will be equally critical for effective AfCFTA implementation. Currently, NTFC activities are clearly defined in its annual plans but excluded from the Ministry of Economy's annual Economic and Social Plan and State Budget (PESOE). In terms of funding, two possible mechanisms could be explored further. The first potential mechanism could be national funding sources through either the Ministry of Economy's budget or public-private partnerships (PPPs). In the latter case, Mozambique already has two PPPs aimed at facilitating trade (Mcnet³ and Kudumba⁴), whose pros and cons are publicly known. The fees currently charged to external trade operators through these existing PPPs could be explored with regard to mobilising funding for NTFC activities at national and regional/Corridor levels, without necessarily creating a new funding mechanism.

The second funding mechanism is external. The role of the bilateral, regional and multilateral DPs is viewed as crucial in providing funding

³ Mcnet is the private entity currently managing the Single Electronic Window system on behalf of the government/Revenue Authority: <https://tradenet.mcnet.co.mz/mtn/jsf/login/MOZTNLoginPage.jsf>

⁴ Kudumba is the private entity currently managing the scanning of all traded goods at the main ports on behalf of the government: <https://kudumba.com/>

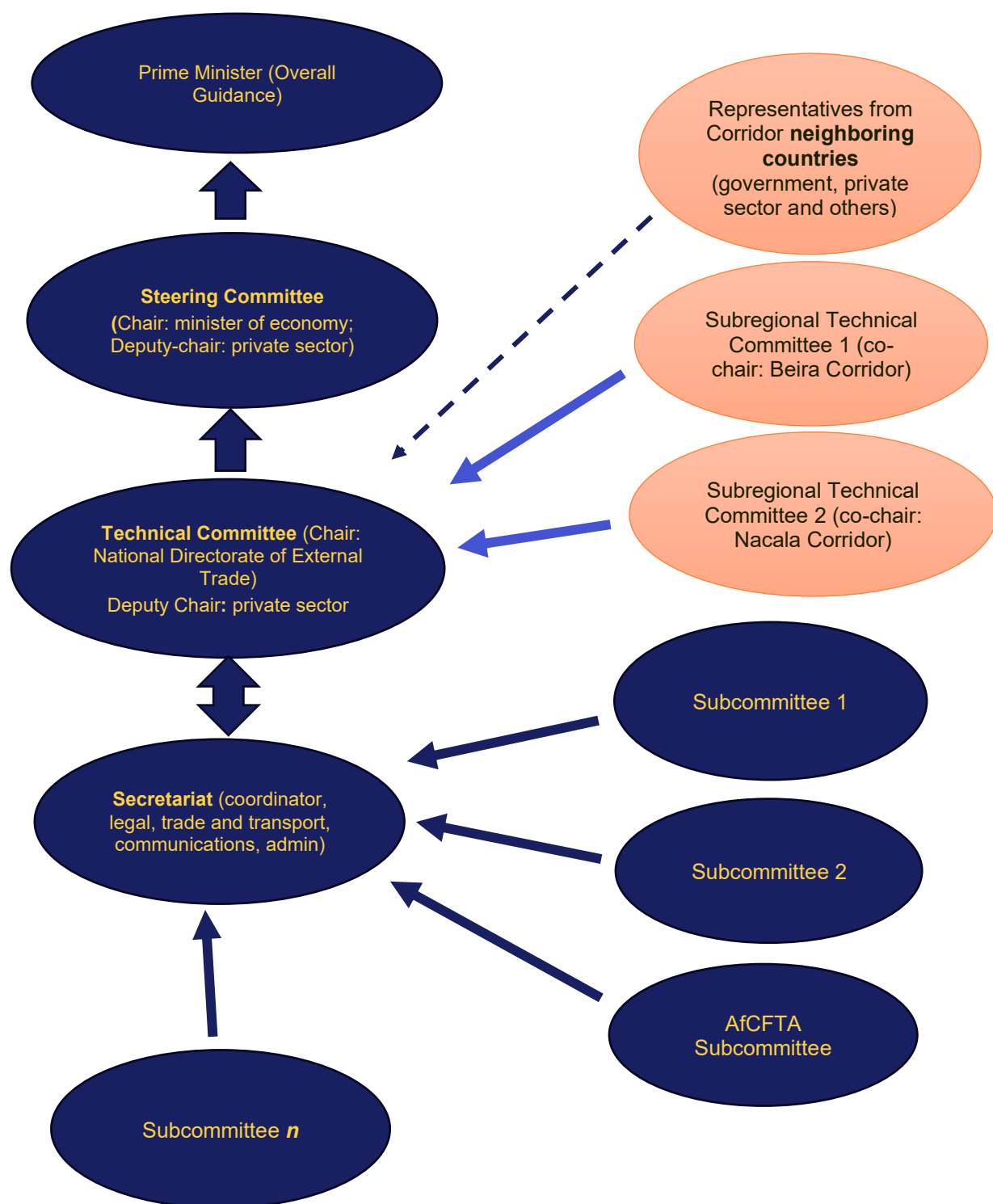
for the activities of the AfCFTA NIC, but ensuring sustainability is always challenging.

Table 3 Options for the structure of the AfCFTA NIC

	Current status	Option 1 (proposal)	Option 2 (proposal)
Composition/structure	- Government (ministries), private sector (formal and informal associations) and donor representative - No provincial/regional representation	- Government (Prime Minister's Office, ministries and selected public institutes), private sector (formal and informal associations), regional development agencies (e.g. ADVZ and ADIN), Development Corridors and donor representative - Provincial/regional level	- Option 1 - Regional Trade Facilitation Committees (chair: Ministry of Economy; co-chair Development Corridors) - Ad hoc guests from neighbouring countries (government and private sector)
Implementation mechanism and legal framework	- NTFC mandate does not include AfCFTA (ongoing review process, Draft Proposal 2024) - In practice, discussions go beyond WTO TFA issues	Broaden NTFC mandate to include AfCFTA, SADC and bilateral trade agreements (Draft Proposal 2024)	
Functioning	Meetings: virtual (technical) and in-person (Steering committee) in the capital (2/month) Secretariat, largely for admin issues	Meetings: bi-monthly virtual (technical) and in-person (Steering Committee) in capital (2/month); quarterly meetings with the Prime Minister Stronger Secretariat, especially for technical issues (legal, economic and customs)	Meetings: monthly virtual (technical) and in-person (Steering Committee) with rotating locations (1/bi-month); quarterly meetings with the Prime Minister Stronger Secretariat, especially for technical issues (legal, economic and customs)
Funding	- Reliance on support from DPs - Government contribution in-kind (offices and staff)	- Mobilise additional resources internally and externally (DPs) - Continued government contribution in-kind (offices and staff)	

Source: Authors

Figure 4 Proposed revised NTFC structure to support AfCFTA implementation



6 Conclusions

Current financial and technical limitations mean the government in Mozambique needs to use the existing NTFC structure and broaden its mandate to cover, among other things, AfCFTA implementation (like what Rwanda has done). While each country has its own specificities and there is no one-size-fits-all approach, Mozambique could learn from the experiences of other existing AfCFTA NICs. Drawing on these experiences and considering its current financial and technical limitations, Mozambique would benefit from using its existing NTFC structure, broadening its mandate to cover the AfCFTA and considering two possible options:

- **Option 1:** would entail an AfCFTA NIC composed of current NTFC members (government, private sector) and other key provincial stakeholders represented by the Regional Development Agencies (e.g. ADVZ) and Development Corridors (Maputo, Beira and Nacala Corridors). The national-level structure could be replicated at the regional level (South, Centre and North) with representation from stakeholders (government, private sector and others) from the provinces along the Development Corridors. The Ministry of Economy would still chair both the national and the regional committees, but with the Development Corridors (or their management entities) co-chairing the regional committees.
- **Option 2** would entail a combination of Option 1 and representatives from key stakeholders from neighbouring countries along the Development Corridors – government, private sector and others – who could be invited to attend the NIC meetings on an ad hoc basis depending on the topics discussed. The Prime Minister's office should be highest level of the NIC.

Moreover, the establishment of the AfCFTA NIC per se would be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for Mozambique to effectively implement the AfCFTA. Key challenges at three levels will need to be addressed: technical, financial and political.

- Technically, the NTFC needs a stronger secretariat covering key areas of the AfCFTA, such as legal, customs, trade and transport issues. Ensuring continuous multistakeholder engagement, coordination and capacity-building (government, private sector, academia and others) will be crucial.
- Financially, the Government of Mozambique needs to 'think and act outside the box' to find alternative, predictable and sustainable sources of NTFC funding. From an institutional standpoint, the

NTFC is at the heart of the trade facilitation agenda in Mozambique. The existing trade facilitation PPPs – Mcnet (single window) and Kudumba (port scanners) could be a good starting point to explore alternative and innovative sources of NTFC funding.

- Mozambique needs a stronger political champion on the trade agenda and on the AfCFTA in particular. In the current political context, the Prime Minister's office seems to be well placed to play this role.

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Appendix 1 Functions of NICs – best practices and plans by Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, The Gambia and Mozambique

10 best practice functions (AfCFTA Secretariat and ODI, 2023)	Rwanda: proposed functions in draft NIC ToR, 2024	Tanzania: draft ToR of AfCFTA NIC, August 2023	Uganda: proposed functions in draft NIC ToR, December 2023; draft AfCFTA implementation strategy	The Gambia AfCFTA NIC ToR, 2024/2025	Mozambique proposed revision of Decree creating NTFC (2024), Art. 3 and Art. 6
1. Facilitate implementation, and advise and lobby government around policy reforms necessary for proper implementation of AfCFTA commitments.	Align Rwanda's trade and economic policies with objectives of AfCFTA. Develop and implement measures to simplify customs procedures, reduce trade barriers and enhance trade facilitation mechanisms to promote seamless trade within AfCFTA.	Oversee and coordinate effective implementation of AfCFTA provisions. Develop strategies to reduce or eliminate trade barriers to facilitate movement of goods and services within AfCFTA framework. Work with relevant authorities to streamline trade procedures, documentation and customs processes.	Advise on national trade policy implementation priorities. Propose reforms in trade policy regulatory framework in relation to AfCFTA.	Support and advise government to leverage opportunities offered by AfCFTA through projects and programmes. Leverage political will to ensure stakeholder buy-in.	Coordinate and propose necessary actions for the implementation of trade facilitation agreements and establishment of the AfCFTA and other relevant activities aimed at making the process of import, export and transit of goods more efficient and transparent and less costly; Ensure interinstitutional coordination to guarantee implementation of the provisions of the trade facilitation agreements and creation of the AfCFTA.

10 best practice functions (AfCFTA Secretariat and ODI, 2023)	Rwanda: proposed functions in draft NIC ToR, 2024	Tanzania: draft ToR of AfCFTA NIC, August 2023	Uganda: proposed functions in draft NIC ToR, December 2023; draft AfCFTA implementation strategy	The Gambia AfCFTA NIC ToR, 2024/2025	Mozambique proposed revision of Decree creating NTFC (2024), Art. 3 and Art. 6
2. Monitor and evaluate policies and projects to support AfCFTA implementation.	Establish a robust M&E framework to track progress of implementation process, identify challenges and propose corrective measures.	Establish mechanisms for monitoring implementation of AfCFTA-related policies and measures. Regularly evaluate impact of AfCFTA implementation on trade volumes, economic growth and job creation. Adjust strategies based on monitoring results to ensure effective implementation and address emerging challenges.	Coordinate follow-up on implementation of decisions at regional and multilateral levels (in ToR). M&E (in strategy).	Monitor compliance in implementation of AfCFTA Agreement.	Monitor and supervise compliance with provisions of TFA and AfCFTA Agreement. Ensure execution of activities necessary to comply with Strategic Plan and NTFC Activity Plan, and implementation and monitoring of AfCFTA National Strategy and its Action Plan, within established deadlines, holding the institutions that make up NTFC accountable.
3. Report on activities and plans and monitor and evaluate activities of NIC itself.	Prepare regular reports on progress of implementation process and submit to relevant authorities.	Included only under the eight proposed functions of national steering committee.	Report to NIC on progress of implementation of agreed action plans.	M&E.	Provide information to government on process of implementation of TFA and establishment of AfCFTA.
4. Raise awareness (communication).		Assess level of awareness, develop and implement capacity-building programmes, disseminate information about AfCFTA.	Secretariat to disseminate reports, manage communication and undertake M&E of implementation and all AfCFTA-related technical work.	Support AfCFTA communications and AfCFTA national sensitisation campaign.	Disseminate information on TFA and AfCFTA in liaison with private sector.
5. Coordinate and, where appropriate, implement donor activities and capacity-building events.	Identify capacity gaps and develop training to enhance skills and knowledge of relevant stakeholders on AfCFTA and its implications. Mobilise internal and external financial resources for	Included only under eight proposed functions of national steering committee.	NIC to provide guidance for studies and consultations.	Resource mobilisation for AfCFTA Strategy implementation.	Monitor implementation of technical and financial assistance and ensure coordination with other activities aimed at trade facilitation and continental free trade.

10 best practice functions (AfCFTA Secretariat and ODI, 2023)	Rwanda: proposed functions in draft NIC ToR, 2024	Tanzania: draft ToR of AfCFTA NIC, August 2023	Uganda: proposed functions in draft NIC ToR, December 2023; draft AfCFTA implementation strategy	The Gambia AfCFTA NIC ToR, 2024/2025	Mozambique proposed revision of Decree creating NTFC (2024), Art. 3 and Art. 6
	implementation of AfCFTA strategy and other related measures/actions.				
6. Develop plans and strategies for AfCFTA implementation.		Harmonise policies, regulations and procedures to facilitate trade, eliminate barriers and promote economic growth and development in line with AfCFTA goals. Identify existing trade policies, regulations and laws that need to be aligned with AfCFTA provisions; roadmap for policy harmonisation. Propose necessary amendments to policies and regulations to ensure compliance with AfCFTA requirements.	Actions plans developed in AfCFTA implementation strategy.	Provide support in sector strategy development and implementation.	
7. Enable meaningful collaboration with private sector.	Engage with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector, civil society and academia, to ensure their active participation and contribution to implementation process.	Engage with private sector organisations and associations to understand needs, challenges and opportunities under AfCFTA. Develop initiatives to encourage private sector participation in cross-border trade, investment and joint ventures. Facilitate creation of networks and platforms	Membership of NIC committees includes private sector.		No specific task.

10 best practice functions (AfCFTA Secretariat and ODI, 2023)	Rwanda: proposed functions in draft NIC ToR, 2024	Tanzania: draft ToR of AfCFTA NIC, August 2023	Uganda: proposed functions in draft NIC ToR, December 2023; draft AfCFTA implementation strategy	The Gambia AfCFTA NIC ToR, 2024/2025	Mozambique proposed revision of Decree creating NTFC (2024), Art. 3 and Art. 6
		that connect Tanzanian businesses with potential partners across the continent.			
8. Ensure inclusiveness.	Engage with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector, civil society and academia, to ensure active participation and contribution to implementation process.	Included only under eight proposed functions of national steering committee.		Support mainstreaming of gender and youth in trade development.	
9. Support formulation of country positions in trade negotiations.			Act as consultative body for developing AfCFTA-related negotiating positions (ToR).	Support preparation and participation of The Gambia AfCFTA negotiating team. Partake in negotiations and deliberations and provide technical advice to government on all AfCFTA-related matters.	Issue opinions within framework of TFA and AfCFTA.
10. Provide interface between AfCFTA Secretariat and countries.				Support preparation and submission of relevant AfCFTA notification requirements.	Maintaining contact with the secretariats of WTO and AfCFTA on matters relating to trade facilitation and continental free trade.

Source: AfCFTA Secretariat and ODI support on NICs

Appendix 2 Questionnaire responses

This appendix summarises the responses to the questionnaire, with a total of 13 submissions.

1. When creating the National Committee for the Implementation of the AfCFTA, which option should be adopted by the government?

13 responses

- **69.2%:** Strengthen the current structure of the NTFC, also assigning it the mandate to monitor implementation of the AfCFTA.
- **23.1%:** Create a new structure with a mandate that includes trade facilitation agreements.
- **7.7%:** Create a new structure with an exclusive mandate to implement the AfCFTA.
- **0%:** Create a new structure with a mandate that includes the WTO TFA and the AfCFTA Agreement.

2. What structure should be used for the AfCFTA NIC Secretariat?

Out of 13 responses

- **7.7%:** Maintain the current secretariat.
- **92.3%:** Strengthen the current secretariat with more dedicated staff: legal, commercial, customs and other aspects.
- **0%:** Other.

3. What reforms should be made at the level of the Steering or Technical Committee to effectively monitor the implementation of preferential trade agreements and initiatives and improve their performance?

Out of 13 responses

- **15.4%:** frequency of meetings
- **53.8%:** active participation of members

- **30.8%:** technical subcommittees
- **0%:** others

**4. What national mechanisms – existing or new – could be used to mobilise financial resources for the operation of CNFC?
Examples?**

Out of 9 responses

- inclusion of NTFC activities in PESOE
- direct support from the government
- sponsorship from various collaborators/partners
- work with key funders/donors, multilateral and bilateral cooperation partners to allocate more resources to NTFC
- allocation of part of the national budget specifically to NTFC activities. The Ministry of Industry and Trade or the Ministry of Finance could establish a dedicated budget line for NTFC operations, ensuring sufficient resources for its regular operations and specific projects. PPPs can be an excellent tool for NTFC financing. The private sector, especially companies benefiting from more efficient trade, could be encouraged to contribute financially or through logistical and technical resources. These partnerships could involve financing transport infrastructure, logistics, technology, information or personnel training; and, importantly, the NTFC could launch training and certification programmes on international trade, customs management, logistics and other relevant topics. These programmes could generate revenue for the NTFC while strengthening the country's trade capacity
- resources from the African Development Bank or other partners
- mobilising more financial partners
- Ministry of Economy seeking support from partners to make this project viable through mediation, as it will need to interact with various economic agents across different regions of the country for consultations
- local initiatives, with compensation made through charges applied during the issuance of certificates for preferential treatment benefits.