



# OFFICIAL GAZETTE

of the COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (COMESA)

**Volume No. 27**



**OFFICIAL GAZETTE**  
**of the**  
**COMMON MARKET FOR EASTERN AND**  
**SOUTHERN AFRICA (COMESA)**

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# ACRONYMS

ACBF	-	African Capacity Building Foundation
AfDB	-	African Development Bank
AGOA	-	Africa Growth and Opportunity Act
AFCAC	-	African Civil Aviation Commission
ARIPO	-	African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation
ATI	-	African Trade Insurance Agency
AU	-	African Union
CNS/ATM	-	Communication Navigation Surveillance Air Traffic Management System
COMESA	-	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMTEL	-	COMESA Telecommunications Company
CSR	-	Common Statistical Rules
EAC	-	East African Community
EDF	-	European Development Fund
ESA	-	Eastern and Southern
ESAPEA	-	Economic Partnership Agreement Africa (and Indian Ocean Region)
IC	-	Intergovernmental Committee

ICT	-	Information and Communications Technology
IMO	-	International Maritime Organization
RAERESA	-	Regional Association of Energy Regulators for Eastern and Southern Africa
RECs	-	Regional Economic Communities
RIA	-	Regional Investment Agency
RISM	-	Regional Integration Support Mechanism
SADC	-	Southern Africa Development Community
UNCTAD	-	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
WTO	-	World Trade Organization
ZEP-Re	-	PTA Re-Insurance Company

# THE COMESA AUTHORITY - HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

*As of 23 February 2022*



## **BURUNDI**

His Excellency Evariste Ndayishimiye,  
President of the Republic of Burundi

## **COMOROS**

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President of the Union of the Comoros

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President of the Republic of Djibouti

## **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

His Excellency Felix Antoine Tshilombo Tshisekedi  
President of the Democratic Republic of Congo

## **EGYPT**

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President of the Arab Republic of Egypt  
(Chairperson of the COMESA Authority)

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**MAURITIUS**

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Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius

**RWANDA**

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President of the Republic of Rwanda

## **SEYCHELLES**

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President of the Republic of Seychelles

## **SOMALIA**

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Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council of the Republic of the Sudan

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## **UGANDA**

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President of the Republic of Uganda

## **ZAMBIA**

His Excellency Hakainde Hichilema  
President of the Republic of Zambia

## **ZIMBABWE**

His Excellency Emmerson Mnangagwa,  
President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

# COMESA SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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Mr Asish K Daby

**HEAD, GOVERNANCE, PEACE AND SECURITY**

Ms. Elizabeth Mutunga

**HEAD, CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr Mwangi Gakunga

# COMESA INSTITUTIONS

COMESA Clearing House

COMESA Monetary Institute

Trade and Development Bank

African Trade Insurance Agency

COMESA Competition Commission

PTA Reinsurance Company (ZEP-RE)

COMESA Regional Investment Agency

Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute

COMESA Federation of Women in Business (COMFWB)

## **Specialized Agencies**

Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa - ACTESA

COMESA Business Council - CBC

Regional Association of Energy Regulators in Eastern and Southern Africa

- RAERESA

East African Power Pool

## **Judicial Arm**

COMESA Court of Justice

**IT IS HEREBY NOTIFIED** that the Council of COMESA Ministers at its Forty Second meeting held virtually on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> day of November 2021 issued the following Legal and General Notices:

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND ENERGY**

1

#### **1. The Ministers made the following decisions:**

##### **TRANSPORT**

##### **(i) POLICY AND REGULATORY HARMONIZATION**

##### **Transport Facilitation**

##### **Decisions**

#### **2. The Ministers urged Member States to:**

- a) Harmonize and domesticate regional transport policies;
- b) Adopt and apply transport transit facilitation instruments developed at COMESA and Tripartite levels;
- c) Benchmark policies and standards on relevant transport sub-sector international best practices;
- d) Sign the Solemn Commitment to the Implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision (YD) towards establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM); and
- e) Adopt the Economic Regulations and Consumer Protection Guidelines developed by the AUC through AFCAC applicable under the SAATM.

##### **Air Transport Liberalisation**

##### **Decisions**

#### **3. The Ministers urged Member States to:**

- a) Sign the Solemn Commitment towards establishment of the Single African Air Transport Market;
- b) Review their Bilateral Air Service Agreements to comply with YD and SAATM requirements; and
- c) Grant Fifth Freedom Rights as a major step towards full liberalization of the air transport market.

## Surface Transport

### Decisions

On Axle Loads Limits and Vehicle Overloads Control:

- 2 4. The Ministers urged Member States to;
  - a) Note the initiatives on road transport facilitation;
  - b) Take ownership of their individual Implementation Action Plan (IAP) for the signing, ratification and domestication of the Tripartite Road Transport Legal Instruments and make available resources in country to undertake the necessary activities that will result in a harmonised regulatory road transport framework in Eastern and Southern Africa;
  - c) Participate in all Tripartite workshops; and
  - d) Domesticcate and implement regionally agreed facilitation instruments.

On the Tripartite Transport and Transit Facilitation Programme (TTTFP):

5. The Ministers invited Member States to;
  - a) Note the initiatives on road transport facilitation including on the (Corridor Trip Monitoring System (CTMS);
  - b) Note the roadmaps on the validation of discussion papers on CTMS and CM and to participate in the planned meetings; and
  - c) Participate fully in all tripartite workshops, domesticcate and implement regionally agreed facilitation instruments.

On Corridor Development and Management:

6. The Ministers;
  - a) Urged Member States to adopt and implement COMESA and Tripartite Transit instruments to improve corridor efficiency;
  - b) Encouraged Member States to continue with programmes to upgrade and maintain corridor infrastructure and facilities; and
  - c) Urged Djibouti Corridor and Port Sudan Corridor States to sign the Corridor Agreement before closure of the TTTFP.

On One Stop Border Post (OSBP):

7. The Ministers;



- a) Urged Member States to connect Border Posts to the national electricity grid or install backup power services to reduce down time due to load shedding and power outages;
- b) Guided all agencies working at Member State border posts be harmonized to enhance and facilitate the movement of goods and persons at their borders;
- c) Urged Member States to adopt Integrated Border Management (IBM) systems and not just OSBP;
- d) Urged concerned Member States to implement OSBP study recommendations;
- e) Directed the Secretariat to undertake Capacity building on OSBP development and management on a continuous basis; and
- f) Urged Member States to deploy regional ICT systems such as CTMS to enhance data and information sharing, improve regulation and progressively digitise border transactions and avoid paper-based transactions which are easy to falsify and are a COVID-19 vector.

## **Maritime and Inland Water Transport**

### **Decisions**

On Maritime Ports:

8. The Ministers decided that;
  - a) Member States to carry out harmonization of statistical systems;
  - b) COMESA Secretariat mobilize resources to support the harmonization process;
  - c) Maritime authorities exchange information and experiences in the COMESA region;
  - d) Ports in COMESA Member States collaborate in the implementation of IMO agreements covering issues such as maritime safety, cybersecurity, piracy and illegal trade; and
  - e) Hub ports exchange information to facilitate trade flows and integration.

## **(ii) PHYSICAL CONNECTIVITY**

### **Air Transport**

#### **Decisions**

9. The Ministers urged Member States to:
  - a) Further collaborate and maintain a united front against COVID-19 pandemic notably with regards to issues of testing, vaccination, the potential imposition of travel

certificates by some parties etc. in line with African common position;

- b) Harmonize the cost of COVID-19 tests and mutual recognition of certificates;
- c) Develop recovery plans to deal with the aviation sector's post COVID-19 challenges based on African and international initiatives; and
- d) Pursue collaborating among African airlines.

10. The Ministers urged regional airlines to consider entering strategic partnerships with other global leading airlines.

### **Decisions**

11. The Ministers urged Member States to:

- a) Provide guidance on the way forward of the CNS/ATM project in general;
- b) Approve the utilization of the undisbursed funds towards supporting seamless operations; and
- c) Direct COMESA Secretariat to develop a project proposal to be funded by the undisbursed funds for consideration by the AfDB.

### **Surface Transport**

#### **Decisions**

12. The Ministers urged Member States to;

- a) Applaud Kenya, Egypt and Ethiopia for their significant contribution to railway infrastructure development in the region and Member States neighbouring Kenya to expedite new connections to the Kenyan network to ensure realization of full benefits;
- b) Promote development of railway infrastructure and use of railway mode of transport;
- c) Develop and apply equitable surface transport policies which promote integrated multimodal transport systems;
- d) Develop multimodal transport network for purposes of service efficiency;
- e) Build capacity to support these new developments in railway infrastructure; and
- f) Adopt measures to protect the new investment against vandalism.

### **Maritime Transport and Ports**

#### **Decisions**

13. The Ministers decided that:

- a) Djibouti and Kenya be applauded for developing additional port infrastructure capacity, and invite them to share their experiences with other Member States for learning and benchmarking purposes;
- b) Djibouti and LAPPSET Corridor States to utilize COMESA Trade and Transit Transport Facilitation Instruments on the corridor to ensure smooth flow of trade at reduced cost;
- c) Member States to improve and digitize Customs and border management processes through deployment of ICT based regional systems; and
- d) Member States to share their long-term plans like Kenya to facilitate coordinated infrastructure development.

14. On COMESA ports, the Ministers urged Member States to:

- a) Benchmark their ports against best performing ports in the world to improve their productivity and throughput; and
- b) Implement COMESA Trade and Transit Transport Facilitation Instruments to reduce congestion at ports and improve competitiveness of transport corridors.

### **Inland Waterways Transport**

#### **Decisions**

15. On Inland Waterways Transport, the Ministers decided that:

- a) Egypt's efforts be applauded on VICMED and call upon African, international organizations and development partners to mobilize resources for the full feasibility study; and
- b) Member States around Lake Tanganyika synchronize their investment/development plans to ensure that Member States can protect existing infrastructure against changing meteorological conditions.

### **INSTITUTIONAL CONNECTIVITY**

#### **Support to the Air Transport Sector Development in the Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Region Programme**

#### **Decisions**

16. The Ministers invited Member States to:

- a) Support implementation of the program by providing requisite information;
- b) Align national programs to the regional program;
- c) Undertake additional activities under the defined Result Areas for consideration by

the Steering Committee;

- d) Identify national areas requiring support in line with the project design; and
- e) Establish a Tripartite Railways Association.

## **Decision**

17. The Ministers directed the Tripartite Taskforce to convene a meeting to discuss modalities of establishing the Tripartite Railways Association.

## **ENERGY**

### **Domestication of the COMESA Model Energy Policy Framework**

#### **Decisions**

18. The Ministers commended:

- a) Djibouti and D.R. Congo for the efforts made towards the establishment of energy regulators; and
- b) Kenya for the dramatic increase in electricity access over the last few years by increasing from 2.3 million in 2013 to 8.2 million by the end of April 2021, thereby achieving electricity access rate of over 75%.

19. The Ministers invited Member States to participate in the review of the Model Energy Policy once the review is launched.

### **Regional Infrastructure Finance Facility (RIFF) Project**

#### **Decisions**

20. The Ministers invited Member States to:

- a) Make use of the Financing, Technical Assistance and Capacity building opportunities available under the RIFF project; and
- b) Provide data and participate in the upcoming studies to be implemented under the RIFF project.

### **Power Interconnection Projects**

#### **Decision**

21. The Ministers requested the three ZTK countries convene a meeting to assess the progress of the project.

### **Regional Association of Energy Regulators for Eastern and Southern Africa (RAERESA)**

#### **Decisions**

22. The Ministers decided that:

- a) RAERESA should continue engaging with the countries which are in the process of establishing their regulators to give impetus to the full establishment of effective energy regulators; and
- b) The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Djibouti be invited to join RAERESA.

### **Programme on Enhancement of a Sustainable Regional Energy Market in Eastern Africa-Southern Africa-Indian Ocean (EA-SA-IO) Region**

#### **Decisions**

23. The Ministers decided that:

- a) Member States share information with the consultancy firm which has been contracted to implement harmonized regulatory/technical frameworks and synthesized renewable and energy efficiency strategies in the ESA-IO region to assist them to complete the reports and the guidelines; and
- b) Member States be invited to participate in the forthcoming consultative and validation workshops.

### **TELECOMMUNICATIONS/ICT**

#### **Development /Reviewing of COMESA Model Policies and Bills.**

##### **Decision**

24. The Ministers directed the Secretariat to explore funding options to carry out cybersecurity awareness and capacity building.

### **Progress on Implementing the Enhancement Governance and Enabling Environment for the ICT Market (EGEE-ICT) in the EA-SA-IO Region Programme**

##### **Decision**

25. The Council urged Member States to fully participate in the programme implementation process to ensure successful realization of the programme benefits.

### **COMTEL Project**

#### **Decisions**

26. The Ministers decided that:

- a) COMTEL project be discontinued because of the time factor and improved backbone connectivity in country and between countries making the project no longer viable; and

- b) The Secretariat be directed to undertake a new study to assess the links between COMESA Member States and determine if there are any missing links.

## **Association of Regulators for Information and Communications for Eastern and Southern Africa (ARICEA)**

8

### **Decision**

27. The Ministers directed the Secretariat to convene ARICEA AGM as soon as possible to resolve the outstanding issues regarding the recruitment of the Executive Secretary and hosting of ARICEA.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)**

### **Decisions**

28. The Ministers:

- a) Recognized the progress in the implementation of COMESA IT Programmes. and commended the work of IT Division; and
- b) Encouraged Member States to make use of the communication platform developed by the COMESA Secretariat.

29. Council endorsed the decisions made during the Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Transport, Information and Communication Technology and Energy.

## **Regional Investment Agency**

### **Decisions**

30. The Council decided that:

- a) COMESA Secretariat and RIA in coordination with the Member States and relevant COMESA institutions, to prepare a detailed list of projects and opportunities available in the infrastructure sectors, and to prepare an introductory overview of each opportunity to be presented to investors, before the end of the first quarter of 2022; and
- b) COMESA Secretariat and RIA, in coordination with the Member States and the relevant COMESA institutions to organize an investment forum to present the investment opportunities available in the member states during the second quarter of 2022. Financial institutions and investors in the targeted sectors to be invited to the Forum.

## **YOUTH AFFAIRS**

### **MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS**

#### **Decisions**

31. The Ministers:

- a) Adopted the COMESA Reporting Guidelines on Youth;
- b) Urged Member States to use the COMESA Reporting Guidelines on Youth to prepare annual reports on youth matters and submit to Secretariat; and
- c) Requested Secretariat to organize training sessions with Member States on the COMESA Reporting Guidelines on Youth.

### **Joint COMESA/AUC-AGA Project on Youth engagement in Democratic Governance and Socio-economic Development**

#### **Decisions**

32. The Ministers:

- a) Commended the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for the support to the joint COMESA and AU/AGA project on Youth Engagement in Democratic Governance and Socio-economic Development Processes in Africa;
- b) Encouraged COMESA Secretariat and AU/AGA to continue with the collaboration to strengthen youth engagement on the continent; and
- c) Urged the Secretariat to work with Member States, National Youth Councils and Youth Organizations towards having youth focal points for COMESA in all countries.

### **The Baseline Studies on Youth**

#### **Decisions**

33. The Ministers:

- a) Urged Member States to continue engaging their national stakeholders to provide the consultant with data and statistics for the final report;
- b) Called on Member States that have not designated the data collectors to do so as soon as possible to allow participation of all Member States in the study and/or allow the Secretariat to use youth leaders in selected countries who are already involved in COMESA activities to avoid further delays;
- c) Directed the Secretariat to use the findings of the study to measure progress and impact of the project; and

- d) Urged Member States to use the findings of the study in developing their policies in socio economic development and democratic governance.

## **Role of the Youth in Silencing the Guns in the COMESA Region**

### **Decisions**

34. The Ministers:

- a) Urged COMESA and AU to strengthen collaboration on youth engagement at both regional and national levels and include the youth in peace and security programming as this will allow their voices to be heard;
- b) Urged COMESA and AU to work closely in popularizing the Continental Framework on Youth, Peace and Security;
- c) Urged Secretariat and Member States to upscale skills and youth training in the area of peace and security; and
- d) Urged the Secretariat to widely disseminate the internship opportunities and call for application under the Governance, Peace and Security Unit.

## **YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES, GUIDELINES AND TRAINING MANUALS**

### **The Draft COMESA Youth Engagement Strategy**

#### **Decisions**

35. The Ministers:

- a) Adopted the COMESA Youth Engagement Strategy;
- b) Urged the Secretariat to develop modalities to enhance the capacity of youth and youth led organizations/networks to participate and contribute meaningfully to democratic governance and socio-economic development processes in COMESA Member States; and
- c) Urged the Secretariat and Member States to institutionalize intra and inter-generational platforms for engagement of youths at national and regional levels on policy and programmes.

### **Terms of Reference for the Establishment of the COMESA Advisory Panel**

#### **Decisions**

36. The Ministers:

- a) Adopted the instauration of the COMESA Youth Advisory Panel as one of the strategies to better engage COMESA youth in policy dialogue and Adopted the Terms of Reference for Panel;



- b) Urged the Secretariat and Member States to operationalize the COMESA Youth Advisory Panel;
- c) Urged Member States to nominate candidates for the COMESA Youth Advisory Panel based on the agreed terms of reference and submit the names and CVs to COMESA Secretariat towards selection/election of the members of the panel; and
- d) Urged Member States to ensure collaboration between Parliaments and Ministries in Charge of Youth Affairs to institutionalize the practice of youth parliaments.

## **The COMESA Social Media Strategy**

### **Decisions**

37. The Ministers:

- a) Adopted the Social Media Strategy for youth to guide social media activities on youth;
- b) Urged the Secretariat and its partners to use the strategy to reach more youth in the region;
- c) Urged the Secretariat to maintain a more active and targeted Social Media presence; and
- d) Urged the Secretariat to bridge the gap between youth and regional policy making institutions.

## **COMESA Recruitment, Deployment and Management System for the Internship Programme**

### **Decisions**

38. The Ministers:

- a) Adopted the COMESA Youth Internship guidelines;
- b) Urged Member States to embrace internship programs in both public and private sector and learning institutions at national level and use the guidelines to manage internship programmes for youth; and
- c) Urged Member States to ensure that all ministries and sectors set up and implement youth internship programmes to balance the support for youth.

## **Training Manual on Youth in Electoral Processes**

### **Decisions**

39. The Ministers:

- a) Adopted the training manual on Youth in the Electoral Processes; and

- b) Urged Member States, Youth Associations, Youth Organizations, and other stakeholders to use the Manual in the training of youth in the electoral processes.

## **YOUTH EMPOWERMENT**

### **Decisions**

40. The Ministers urged Member States to submit country reports on youth affairs highlighting:
- a) Population of youth, institutional structures, national legal, policy and strategic frameworks on youth empowerment and development; and
  - b) Status on youth participation in the country's political governance, support for decent and productive work opportunities for youth in the private sector, and support on youth entrepreneurship to enhance employment.

## **COVID-19 and its Impact on the Youth**

### **Decisions**

41. The Ministers urged:
- a) The Secretariat to organize an experience sharing meeting on the impact of COVID-19 on youth for Ministers of Youth Affairs from Member States;
  - b) Member States to prepare reports on the impact of COVID-19 on youth, and attend the experience sharing meeting Secretariat will convene; and
  - c) The Secretariat to make the COMESA Technical Committee and Ministerial meetings on Youth Affairs sustainable so that matters of youth continue to be elevated in regional integration.

## **GENDER AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

### **MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR GENDER AND WOMEN**

#### **50 Million African Women Speak Project**

### **Decisions**

42. The Ministers decided that:
- a) Host Ministries for the project should encourage the project country team members to participate actively in the marketing of the 50MAWS platform -[www.womenconnect.org](http://www.womenconnect.org) among women, youth, service providers and other stakeholders at national level to increase participation and usage of the platform;
  - b) Member States through ministries of infrastructure and telecom regulators to advocate the rolling out of ICT infrastructure in underserved areas in Member States to promote universal access and affordable internet, and to negotiate subsidized rates

of data for women in small scale businesses;

- c) The Secretariat, as the lead REC on the 50MAWS Project and host for the platform, implements the Council Decision on the retention of a lean team of project staff to maintain and manage the platform during the transition to the second phase of the project;
- d) The Secretariat requests AfDB to consider granting the project support for the second phase to enable it to enhance the functionalities of the platform, create linkages to similar initiatives, enhance publicity and awareness, and develop and implement sustainability plans for the achievement of the goal of contributing to the economic empowerment of women;
- e) Host Ministries of the project in the Member States who have not yet appointed a project focal point person assign and support one of their officers as the project focal point for the implementation of the project activities at national level; and
- f) The Secretariat and COMFWB ensure that the content on the 50MAWS platform is not duplicated but instead hyperlinks to the platform are created to enhance awareness and usage, as COMFWB continues to market the 50MAWS platform among its national chapter members.

### **Regional Enterprise Competitiveness and Access to Market Program (RECAMP)**

43. The Ministers decided that:

- a) Member States plan and allocate more resources to support gainful engagement of women and youth in select value chains;
- b) The Secretariat further mobilizes resources to support the implementation of regional industrialization and SMEs development strategies;
- c) Member States need to implement a quota system for women and youth owned small and medium businesses to enable them benefit from public procurement system;
- d) Member States support the profiling survey for women and youth SMEs to enable the availability of information and database on women and youth-owned SMEs in horticulture; leather, leather products and agro-processing, and enable targeted support; and
- e) Ministries responsible for SMEs use the COMESA questionnaire on women and youth SMEs to conduct periodic country surveys to update the national and COMESA database.

## **GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

### **COMESA Gender Policy Implementation Plan**

#### **Decisions**

44. The Ministers:

- a) Endorsed the COMESA Gender Policy Implementation and Tracking Plan; and
- b) Directed the Secretariat to disseminate the Gender Policy Implementation and Tracking Plan to Member States, COMESA Institutions and other stakeholders for implementation.

### **COMESA Gender Planning Guidelines, Checklists and Indicators**

#### **Decisions**

45. The Ministers:

- a) Adopted the draft COMESA Gender Planning Guidelines, Checklists and Indicators to facilitate gender mainstreaming for all COMESA programs and projects; and
- b) Directed the Secretariat, COMESA Institutions and Member States to use the Gender Planning Tools, Checklists and Indicators during designing, implementation and reporting of COMESA programs and projects at different levels and disseminate the tools to other stakeholders.

### **COMESA Online Course on Gender and Trade**

#### **Decisions**

46. The Ministers:

- a) Adopted the COMESA online manual for Gender and Trade;
- b) Encouraged professionals at Secretariat and in the Member States and COMESA Institutions to take the online course; and
- c) Directed the Secretariat, through the Human Resources Unit, to ensure that all staff take the course as a requirement for continuous learning.

### **COMESA and UNCTAD Online Training on Trade and Gender**

#### **Decisions**

47. The Ministers decided that:

- a) Member States encourage trade experts and other economic sector professionals to take part in the online courses on gender to enhance their knowledge and skills on

gender responsive programming and reporting; and

- b) Professionals that participated in the course to apply the acquired knowledge and skills in their regular work including during reporting on their performance.

## **COMESA Gender and Statistics**

### **Decisions**

48. The Ministers decided that:

- a) The Secretariat considers hiring a social statistician to support the Statistics Unit and strengthen the availability of regional gender sensitive and social development statistics;
- b) The Secretariat allocates resources under the Statistics Unit for the publication of the COMESA Gender Statistics Bulletin; and
- c) Member States encourage gender training for statisticians to enhance their skills in gender sensitive data collection, analysis, and reporting.

## **COMESA Gender Technical Working Group**

### **Decision**

49. The Ministers decided that Members of the Gender Technical Working Group enhance their skills on gender mainstreaming by attending free online courses on gender and participate actively in the meetings of the gender group.

## **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **COMESA Social Charter and Toolkit**

### **Decisions**

50. The Ministers:

- a) Adopted the Social Charter toolkit;
- b) Directed the Secretariat to conduct Member State sensitization on the Social Charter for signature and ratification, and uses the Social Charter Toolkit in the sensitization missions; and
- c) Urged Member States to speed up the signing and ratification process of the Social Charter.

## **HIV and AIDS Policy implementation and Tracking Plan**

### **Decision**

The Ministers decided that the Secretariat disseminates the HIV and AIDS Policy Implementation and Tracking Plan to various stakeholders.

## **EMERGING ISSUES**

### **Outbreak and Response to COVID-19**

#### **Decision**

51. The Ministers directed the Secretariat to operationalize the COMESA Health Desk to coordinate implementation of regional health programmes including on the response to epidemics such as COVID-19 and others.

## **IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA: UN-WOMEN**

### **Decisions**

52. The Ministers decided that:

- a) The Secretariat conducts a study on the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls, men and boys in the Member States that are not included in the UN-Women study; and
- b) Member States implement the recommendations in the UN-Women Study on the impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

## **GENDER POLICY**

### **Decisions**

53. The Ministers decided that:

- a) The Secretariat develops a regional compendium on legal and policy frameworks on women's rights and gender issues in the COMESA region (GBV, child marriage, labour laws, etc);
- b) Member States share their gender policies and guidelines to be uploaded on the COMESA website; and
- c) The Secretariat expedites the development of the GBV in the workplace policy.

## **INDUSTRY**

### **Industrialisation in the Region**

#### **Decisions**

54. The Ministers:

- a) Adopted the sectoral frameworks subject to incorporation of additional inputs by some Member States;
- b) Urged Member States to develop measures to domesticate the frameworks and to mobilise resources (financial, technical) needed for their implementation as well as to share experiences on the Frameworks;
- c) Urged Member States to come up with a regional industrial integration plan and value chains based on comparative advantages to enhance local production of goods and services; and
- d) Directed the Secretariat to support Member States in the implementation of the frameworks including resource mobilization.

### **COMESA Common Investment Area Agreement (CCIA)**

#### **Decisions**

55. The Ministers:

- a) Urged Member States to support the public awareness campaigns, the CCIA ratification and domestication processes; and
- b) Directed the Secretariat to coordinate with COMESA RIA and Member States to prepare a concept note on annual COMESA investment fora to showcase investment opportunities for cross border and foreign investment attraction.

### **Metrology Infrastructure in the COMESA Region**

#### **Decision**

56. The Ministers urged Member States to support operationalization at national level of the proposed COMESA Regional Metrology Implementation Matrix Cluster.

### **The COMESA Business Council Position Paper on Business**

#### **Decisions**

57. The Ministers urged Member States to:

- a) Harmonize regulatory requirements to address the disparity including procedures for registration of drugs;

- b) Develop mutual recognition agreement for pre-packaged food in COMESA region;
- c) Support the digital financial inclusion for MSMEs; and
- d) Consider establishing track and trace system at national and/or regional level before 2023 as recommended by World Health Organisation (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Protocol to Eliminate illicit Trade in Tobacco products.

58. Directed the Secretariat to develop a regional COMESA Anti-Illicit Trade Regulatory Framework; and apply for observer status at the Meeting of Parties (MOP) to facilitate engagement on issues of illicit Trade on Tobacco products.

### **Zambia-Zimbabwe Joint Industrialization Project**

#### **Decisions**

59. The Ministers:

- a) Urged Member States to form similar joint industrial cooperation programmes based on comparative advantages to promote industrialization and regional integration; and
- b) Directed COMESA Administration and Budget Committee to consider allocating more budget for programmes implementation under Industry and Agriculture Division without any further financial burden to Member States.

### **Intra COMESA Trade Fairs**

#### **Decisions**

60. The Council decided that:

- a) Egypt organizes a coordination meeting with the COMESA Secretariat to discuss the concept paper in December 2021; and
- b) The Secretariat and Member States to hold a workshop before end of April 2022 to discuss and finalize the concept paper and develop an action plan for this initiative within the framework of the COMESA region's industrialization strategy 2017-2026.

## **LEGAL MATTERS**

### **Progress Report of the COMESA Court of Justice**

#### **Decisions**

61. The Ministers decided that:

- (a) The Court should continue building the capacity of Judges and Members of Staff to enhance service delivery; and



- (b) The Court should continue optimizing the use of technology for service delivery and to enhance access to justice.

## **COMESA Court of Justice 2021-2025 Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP)**

### **Decision**

62. The Ministers adopted the Court of Justice Medium-Term Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025.

### **Sessions of the Legal Drafting Sub-Committee**

#### **Decisions**

63. The Ministers decided that:

- a) Sessions of the Legal Drafting Sub-Committee be convened physically to avoid network connectivity challenges, competing time zones and capitalize to comfortably extend working hours under the same time zone in order to dispense of their mandate more efficiently; and
- b) As there are numerous draft legal instruments to be considered, such consideration be spread over several Legal Drafting Sub-Committee sessions.

## **COMESA INSTITUTIONS**

### **RE-INSURANCE COMPANY (ZEP-RE)**

#### **Decisions**

64. The Ministers:

- a) Requested Member States to collaborate with and support financial inclusion initiatives started by ZEP-RE by allocating resources and putting in place policies that will support access to insurance especially at micro level;
- b) Urged Member States to implement policies aimed at retaining insurance premiums underwritten in the region through enhancement of local content in insurance business and discourage placement of big-ticket lines outside the region;
- c) Requested Member States to facilitate the activities of ZEP-RE in their respective territories by allowing the Company to operate unfettered in their territories; and
- d) Urged Member States to prioritize the institutions foreign exchange allocation request and movement of funds in and outside the respective Member State territories.

### **AFRICAN TRADE INSURANCE (ATI)**

#### **Decision**

65. The Ministers decided that non-ATI Member States be urged to join the ATI.

## **COMESA REGIONAL INVESTMENT AGENCY (RIA)**

### **Decision**

66. The Ministers decided that the term of the RIA Board be renewed for two years effective from November 2020.

## **COMESA YELLOW CARD SCHEME AND REGIONAL CUSTOMS TRANSIT GUARANTEE (RCTG)**

### **Decisions**

67. The Ministers decided that:

- a) The Kingdom of Eswatini expedites the implementation of the Yellow Card scheme in Eswatini; and
- b) The Government of Sudan engages the National Bureau of Sudan to pay its arrears amounting US\$588,300.22 to the budget contribution of the Council of Bureaux of the Yellow Card Scheme.

## **Regional Customs Transit Guarantee (RCTG Carnet)**

### **Decisions**

68. The Ministers:

- a) Urged Zambia to address the issues raised by the Clearing and Forwarding Agents and implement the RCTG Carnet;
- b) Directed the Secretariat to conduct a study on the challenges that may be faced if Zambia does not join the scheme;
- c) Urged DR Congo, Malawi, and Zimbabwe to commence the operations of the RCTG Carnet by early 2022; and
- d) Urged Ethiopia and Djibouti to finalize the preparations and commencement of the operations of the RCTG Carnet in December 2021.

## **STATISTICAL MATTERS**

### **Consideration of the COMESA Regional Strategy for Development of Statistics 2021-2025(RSDS 2021-2025)**

#### **Decision**

69. The Ministers decided that the 2021-2025 COMESA Regional Strategy for Development of Statistics be approved to guide the work of statistical development in the COMESA region and provide statistical support to the 2021-2025 COMESA Medium Term Strategic Plan. The 2021-2025 COMESA RSDS is attached hereto and marked as Annex I

## **2021-2025 MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGIC PLAN (MTSP)**

### **Decision**

70. The COMESA 2021-2025 MTSP be adopted.

21

## **THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

### **Decisions**

71. The Ministers:

- a) Commended the Secretariat for its efforts in mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 including the development of the online platform, the COVID-19 Guidelines;
- b) Urged Member States to utilize the platform as well as the guidelines to ensure seamless flow of goods and services, and enhanced local production of critical goods within the region;
- c) Urged Member States to take note of the low COVID-19 vaccination levels in the region, and together with other African RECs advocate for equitable access and distribution of the vaccines and enhance vaccination sensitization programmes both at national and regional levels;
- d) Urged Member States to support Africa COVID-19 Vaccine Development and Access Strategy which focuses on:
  - i. Accelerating African involvement in vaccine development;
  - ii. Ensuring Africa's access to sufficient vaccine supply to reach 60% (800million) target of the continent's population with vaccinations; and
  - iii. Removing barriers to vaccine delivery and uptake.
- e) Commended Egypt, Rwanda and Kenya for immensely contributing to the efforts by the Africa CDC on developing capacity to manufacture vaccines and urged other Member States to follow suit in the bulk manufacture and production of vaccines and other pharmaceutical requirements; and
- f) Urged Member States to develop key strategies to Fastrack the COVID-19 recovery and implement the recommendations from the Socio-Economic Impact Study.

## **TRADE AND CUSTOMS**

### **Committee on Trade in Services**

### **Decisions**

72. The Ministers decided that:

- a) Member States who have not submitted their initial draft schedules of specific commitments (offers) for any of the seven priority sectors to do so by 31st December 2021;
- b) Member States whose draft schedules have been considered by the Committee on Trade in Services finalize and submit their revised updated schedules of commitments to the Secretariat by 31st December 2021;
- c) Member States should finalize consideration of all the draft schedules of specific commitments that have been submitted for adoption and approval by Council at its next meeting in 2022; and
- d) The Secretariat, in collaboration with cooperating partners, should continue providing technical assistance and capacity building to the Member States to facilitate the negotiation process.

### **MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON CUSTOMS CAPACITY BUILDING (TWG-CCB)**

#### **Decisions**

73. The Ministers:

- a) Adopted the TORs for the Technical Working Group on Customs Capacity Building which is attached hereto and marked Annex II;
- b) Adopted the Rules of Procedure for the Technical Working Group on Customs Capacity Building which is attached hereto and marked Annex III);
- c) Directed the Secretariat to align implementation of the capacity building work programme with the new Customs and Trade Facilitation Work Programme (2021-2025); and
- d) Decided that the Secretariat and members of the TWG - CCB identify additional areas of cooperation for further engagement with the WCO on regional implementation of Customs capacity building activities.

### **COMESA REGIONAL TRADE INFORMATION PORTAL (CRTIP) AND CUSTOMS AUTOMATION REGIONAL SUPPORT CENTRE (CARSC)**

#### **Decisions**

74. The Ministers:

- a) Adopted the ToRs for Technical Working Group on Customs Automation (TWG-CA), attached hereto and marked Annex IV, be submitted; and
- b) Urged Member States to submit names of members of the TWG-CA by 30th November 2021 so that they would work with the UNCTAD CARSC/CRTIP and COMESA Project Implementation Team in testing and implementing the prototypes

as they would be developed.

## **2018-2020 COMESA CUSTOMS WORK PROGRAMME AND CONSIDERATION OF THE 2021-2023 COMESA CUSTOMS WORK PROGRAMME**

### **Decisions**

23

75. The Ministers:

- a) Adopted the COMESA Customs and Trade Facilitation Programme (2021-2023), attached hereto and marked Annex V;
- b) Aligned the COMESA Customs and Trade Facilitation Programme, implementation period with the MTSP 2021 – 2025;
- c) Directed the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Member States, to mobilize required resources to support the implementation of the Work Programme;
- d) Directed the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Member States, to develop and implement monitoring and evaluation framework with a view to enhance implementation of planned activities at regional and national levels;
- e) Directed the Secretariat to ensure adherence to the common format for COMESA Certificate of Origin; and
- f) Directed the Secretariat to support D. R. Congo in establishing a Trade Portal and implementing the Simplified Trade Regime.

## **TRADE FACILITATION MEASURES TO SAFEGUARD CROSS-BORDER TRADE UNDER COVID-19 CONDITIONS**

### **Decisions**

76. The Ministers urged health authorities in Member States to consider:

- a) Harmonizing COVID19 Testing fees and period of validity of the certificates; and
- b) Developing harmonized protocols to facilitate cross border movement of travellers who have been vaccinated against COVID-19.

## **COMESA CBM GUIDELINES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

### **Decisions**

77. The Ministers decided that:

- a) Member States submit comments/inputs on the Draft Guidelines and Draft Implementation Strategy to the Secretariat by 30th November 2021; and
- b) The Secretariat review the Guidelines and Implementation Strategy to incorporate comments from Member States and submit revised version to the next Heads of Customs Sub Committee meeting.

## COMESA REGIONAL AEO STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs) AND TRAINING MANUAL

### Decisions

78. The Ministers decided that:

- a) The draft revised COMESA Regional AEO Implementation Guidelines with proposed amendments and the draft COMESA Regional AEO SOPs Manual as amended be shared with the Member States to undertake national consultations and send their inputs to the Secretariat by 30th November 2021;
- b) The COMESA Regional AEO Training Material attached hereto and marked Annex VI, Terms of Reference for the COMESA Regional TWG on AEO attached hereto and marked Annex VII and COMESA AEO implementation roadmap attached hereto and marked Annex VIII) be adopted; and
- c) Member States make specific requests related to implementation of the regional AEO Programme to the Secretariat to provide demand driven technical assistance and capacity building.

## COMESA ANNUAL RESEARCH FORUM

### Decisions

79. The Ministers decided that:

- a) COMESA considers strategic interventions to fast-track recovery process from COVID-19 pandemic including, Digitalization of trade instruments, for instance, e-trade, e-logistics, and e-legislation under the COMESA Digital Free Trade Area initiative, as well as promoting the diversification of markets for COMESA imports and exports;
- b) Member States explore innovative funding options for the research forum STI programme and the Master of Regional Integration scholarships;
- c) The Secretariat shares call for innovations with leading universities in the region and seek for participation of their best innovators;
- d) Member States consider sponsoring their government officials to undertake the Master of Regional Integration Programme;
- e) Collaborating Universities be urged to sign Memoranda of Understanding with COMESA and commence offering the Master of Regional Integration in their respective countries to promote uptake of the programme;
- f) COMESA engages the African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), college of scholars, to build synergies on innovation enhancing strategies; and
- g) COMESA engages ACBF and African Regional Intellectual Property Organization

(ARIPO) for capacity building on innovations and intellectual property Rights.

## **TRADE AND TRADE FACILITATION**

### **GLOBAL AND REGIONAL TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS**

#### **Decisions**

25

80. The Ministers decided that:

- a) The Secretariat develops the template for non-FTA participating Member States updates and share with Member States by 30 November 2021;
- b) The Non-FTA Member States provide written progress updates every three months on their status towards FTA implementation;
- c) The Secretariat engages non-COMESA FTA Member States with a view of establishing what could be hindering their participation in the FTA and devise strategies which could fast-track their FTA participation;
- d) The Secretariat engages with Uganda, share the list of products not covered by the FTA and ascertain if it is still applicable; and
- e) The Secretariat develops a trade policy review/performance report for all Member States annually starting from 2022 to enhance participation in the FTA.

#### **A. COMESA NTBs Regional Forum and Report of Capacity Building for National Monitoring Committees (NMCs) and NTB Focal Points (NFPs).**

#### **Decisions**

81. The Ministers decided that:

- a) Member States that have not formally notified their NMCs to do so by 30th November 2021 in compliance with decisions of the 41st Meeting of Council;
- b) Member States provide the Secretariat an updated list of National Focal Points and their WhatsApp phone numbers to facilitate the creation of a WhatsApp Group by 30th November 2021;
- c) National Monitoring Committees provide national progress reports on implementation of the NTB Regulations as per the agreed regional workplan on a quarterly basis; and
- d) The proposed amendment to article 11 be considered under the regular review period in terms of article 16 of the Regulations on Review and Amendments.

## **Time Bound Matrix on Elimination of NTBs**

### **Decision**

82. The Ministers:

- a) Decided that Member States with NTBs relating to NTMs to organize bilateral meetings to consider and recommend way forward to the Regulatory Authorities; and
- b) Directed the Secretariat to organize technical training for Focal Points on the utilization of the online system since the majority were newly appointed and need to be oriented to the system.

### **Kenya Sugar Safeguard Sub-Committee**

### **Decision**

83. The Ministers adopted the Modalities for reallocation of Kenya brown sugar unused quota shares (Annex IX).

## **TRADE FACILITATION PROGRAMME**

### **COMESA EDF 11 - Trade Facilitation Programme (TFP) and Small-Scale Cross Border Trade Initiative (SSCBTI)**

### **Decisions**

84. The Ministers:

- a) Directed the Secretariat, in collaboration with Member States and Development Partners, to mobilize technical and financial resources for the implementation of WTO TFA Category Commitments;
- b) Directed the Secretariat to engage DRC and Madagascar on the support required for the development of National Trade Information Portals and linking existing national trade information portals to the regional COMESA portal being developed;
- c) Directed the Secretariat to continue working with Targeted Member States to facilitate the work of consultants engaged to conduct reviews by responding to requests for information timeously; and
- d) Decided that consideration be given to extend the SSCBT Project to ensure completion of activities.

### **Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project (GLTFP) and Trading Under Groupage System and the COMESA Simplified Trade Regime**

### **Decisions**

85. The Ministers decided that the Member States earmarked to implement the GLTFP should:



- a) Identify, implement, and support preferred option on sustainability of Trade Information Desks after the project closes on 31 December 2021;
- b) Support the smooth operations of JBCs through regular meetings and consultations so that JBCs can continue playing their expected role in facilitating cross-border trade, fostering good trading relations and neighbourliness; and
- c) Hold consultations with stakeholders involved in cross-border trade to remove potential obstacles facing the groupage system and develop policies or procedures that will support the smooth operation of the system for the benefit of all.

## **COMESA Online Platform for Information Sharing**

### **Decisions**

86. The Minister decided that:

- a) The Nominated Focal Points adhere to their terms of reference and undertake necessary actions to facilitate increased participation of private sector in the use of the Platform;
- b) Member States consider additional Focal Points to include private sector associations/bodies;
- c) In collaboration with the designated National Focal Points, the Secretariat support national awareness activities to create demand for the tool and increase its operations;
- d) National Focal Points engage private sector associations with a view to increasing the number of registered companies and uploaded products into the Platform;
- e) All Focal Points upload trade and trade related information including trade policy and measures affecting import and exports and continue updating the information; and

87. Directed the Secretariat to consider interfacing the Platform with existing national trade platforms in Member States.

## **EXTERNAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS**

### **Update on COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area**

#### **Tripartite FTA Agreement**

### **Decisions**

88. The Ministers urged:

- a) Member States who have not signed the TFTA Agreement to do so;
- b) Member States to advance and prioritize implementation of COMESA integration programmes irrespective of other regional and continental integration initiatives;

and

- c) Member States who have signed the TFTA Agreement to fast-track the ratification process.

## **Update on The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)**

### **Decisions**

89. The Ministers decided that:

- a) A regional preferential approach be implemented as opposed to bilateral agreements to avoid undermining the growth of small economies where the US may not have commercial interests;
- b) The US government be engaged on the need for the promotion and protection of domestic or local industries;
- c) AGOA eligible countries ensure that their national utilization strategies serve as one-stop shops to address the AGOA constraints experienced during the twenty-one years of AGOA's existence and diversify their productive structures, add value, and transform their economies;
- d) AGOA awareness be increased to contribute to changing export behaviour and this in turn would help the region diversify into strategic sectors such as the textile and leather sector; and
- e) Member States and the Secretariat work closely with the existing regional US Trade and Investment Hubs to facilitate effective utilization of AGOA, create sustainable partnerships between the local producers and buyers in the US as well as seek capacity building in meeting US market requirements for agricultural and manufactured products.

## **World Trade Organization (WTO)**

### **Decisions**

90. The Minister decided that:

- a) There is need to strengthen participation at various levels and mitigate insufficient levels of capacity on WTO issues;
- b) The WTO African Group be strengthened as well as other coalitions through more consultations and engagements by Increasing technical support and capacity building of experts and negotiators;
- c) The COMESA Secretariat technical capacity be strengthened to provide effective technical support during WTO negotiations; and

91. The Ministers directed that the Secretariat be convened a preparatory meeting ahead of the 12<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference for COMESA.

### **Intra-COMESA Trade Fair**

#### **Decisions**

92. The Ministers:

- a) Directed the Secretariat and CBC, in collaboration with Member States, to mobilize resources to organize the COMESA Trade Fair; and
- b) Decided that an Intra-COMESA Trade Fair be held every two years in a host Member State.

### **Private Sector Issues**

#### **Decisions**

93. The Minister decided that:

- a) Member States consider studies to determine the impacts of the AfCFTA's exclusion list;
- b) Member States consider supporting the development of Mutual Recognition Framework to reduce standards related Non- Tariff Barriers (NTBs);
- c) Sustained capacity building and sensitization activities be undertaken through workshops and seminars about trading instruments and opportunities in the continental market; and

94. Directed the CBC to coordinate with the COMESA Trade and Customs Division in the development of an action plan on implementation of recommendations on the private sector.

### **BENEFITS OF COMESA INTEGRATION: EXPORT POTENTIALS OF INTRA-COMESA TRADE**

#### **Decisions**

95. The Ministers decided that:

- a) The capacity of the Trade and Customs Division be enhanced to enable it to effectively undertake an expanded mandate, including providing technical advice to ongoing negotiations in the Tripartite FTA, AfCFTA, EPAs, AGOA and WTO within the budget limit and the matter be referred to the next Budget and Administrative Committee; and
- b) Resources within the Secretariat be reallocated to enhance and facilitate undertaking of policy research to inform trade policy issues and other regional integration

programmes.

96. The Minsters directed the Secretariat:

- c) To organize a workshop for Tunisia on transport and logistics during the first quarter of 2022;
- d) To undertake a study on transport and logistics including the regulatory frameworks, obstacles, and their effect on intra-COMESA trade; and
- e) To undertake a study on the role of new technologies and electronic trade in enhancing trade.

### COMESA VISIBILITY IN MEMBER STATES

#### Decision

97. The Ministers directed that the Secretariat to undertake national awareness and sensitization activities on COMESA Programs especially trade and investments opportunities in the region.

### COMESA MEDIA AWARDS – 2021

Name of Journalist	Country/Media Organization	Topic/ Synopsis
Sarah Mawerere	Uganda Broadcasting Corporation  Uganda	COMESA facilitates the cross-border trade: Benefits for the women traders  This was a radio feature on how the cross-border women traders in Uganda have so far benefited from the COMESA's World Bank funded Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Project
Mohamed Lotfy Yahia	National Media Authority  Egypt	COMESA and the African Dream  The programme explored how COMESA, creates a conducive economic environment for commercial activities among the Member States, and how this can achieve Africa's dream of prosperity and progress.

#### Decision

98. The Ministers awarded the identified winners.

# ANNEX I

## **COMESA Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics 2021 – 2025**

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The COMESA Medium Term Strategic Plan (2021-2025) anchors the COMESA region's policy direction and responds to the COMESA Treaty provisions to foster economic development through regional integration. COMESA has adopted a developmental approach to regional integration, which covers market integration, industrialization and infrastructure development. This approach is designed to achieve our public policy objectives of creating jobs, raising incomes, and achieving economic transformation towards improved livelihoods and well-being of our people.

The 2021-2025 MTSP builds on COMESA's commitment to regional integration and is supported by 4 interdependent pillars; Trade and Market Integration, Physical Integration, Production Integration and Gender and Social Integration. These pillars require quality, harmonized and timely statistics. As such this has necessitated a statistical response to the MTSP 2021-2025 which this tier 2 Statistics Strategy aims to achieve.

The Regional Strategy for the development of Statistics laid out herein builds on the 2017-2020 Strategic plan in which a number of laudable successes were registered, among them, continued development of human capital in our Member States and beyond, robust statistical leadership and coordination in the COMESA Statistical System, development of harmonization methods and statistical guidelines, increase in statistical partnerships and improved data management and dissemination despite the incidence of COVID-19 in the last year of plan implementation

The Strategy aims to learn from challenges faced in the implementation of the previous plan. Through an independent review of the performance of the 2017-2020 Strategy a number of key recommendations have been incorporated. In this context, the focus of the Strategy will not only be to serve as a statistical response to the MTSP 2016-2020 but also to build on lessons learnt in the implementation of the previous Strategy. Special emphasis will be made on strengthening the use of technology to enhance production, transmission and dissemination of regional statistics, enhancement of technical skills, competencies, literacy and structures, consolidation of gains on harmonization of statistics in the COMESA region, strengthening strategic partnerships for support of the MTSP 2016- 2020 in addition to supporting the MTSP's Strategic objectives.

The Strategy also recognizes the role of the COMESA Statistical System in the global Statistical system and its role as a regional coordinator for the implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa II (SHaSA2) 2017-2026, the continental approach to development of statistics in Africa.

Under the able leadership of the COMESA Committee on Statistical Matters (CCSM), it is envisaged that the Strategy will provide a basis for monitoring and review, resource mobilization and statistical advocacy.

Lastly it is our expectation that as a result of the implementation of this Strategy the role of statistics in evidence based regional policy making will be enhanced, a result that is in agreement with the COMESA Treaty provisions for development of a robust regional statistical system.



## Acknowledgements

An independent evaluation of the 2017-2020 Statistics Strategy was undertaken by the African Development Bank and Paris 21. The outcome of these evaluations was key in formulating the 2021-2025 Statistics Strategy.

The drafting of the Strategy was undertaken by the African Union/EU PAS programme, COMESA Secretariat Statistics unit and a team of stakeholders from selected Member States. Member States undertook the final review at the validation meeting held in March 2021.

## Acronyms

AFDB	African Development Bank
AUC	African Union Commission
BOP	Balance of Payments
CCSM	COMESA Committee for Statistical Matters
CFTA	Continental Free Trade Area
CoDG	Committee of Director Generals of Statistical Offices
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East African Community
EDF	European Development Fund
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTA	Free Trade Area
GLTFP	Great Lakes Trade Facilitation Programme
HCPI	Harmonized Consumer Price Index
ICP	International Comparison Program
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMTS	International Merchandise Trade Statistics
MTSP	Medium Term Strategic Plan
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSO	National Statistical Offices
NSS	National Statistical System
PARIS21	Partnership
PAS	Pan African Statistics Programme
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SCB	Statistical Capacity Building
SSCBT	Small Scale Cross Border Trade
SHASA2	Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa

SDGS	Sustainable Development Goals
STATCOM	Statistical Commission for Africa
REC	Regional Economic Community
RSDS	Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics
TIS	Trade in Services
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNSC	United Nations Statistics Commission
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## 1 Introduction and Background

### 1.0 Background

This is the third iteration of the COMESA Regional Statistics Strategy; it covers a five-year period and is the successor to the second plan that ends in December 2020. This plan aims to inform and engage the stakeholders in the regional statistical system which includes COMESA Secretariat, COMESA Institutions, COMESA Member States and development and cooperating partners in guiding the successful implementation of the regions strategic objectives in its regional integration and development agenda. It aims to elaborate COMESA's strategic vision for the development of statistics in a harmonized and coordinated manner to reach the regional integration goals of the common market.

The year 2020, marked the end of the second regional Statistics Strategy's tenure. Concurrently, a new COMESA MTSP covering the period 2021-2025 was being developed for approval by Council in 2021. These two events necessitated firstly a review of the performance of the COMESA Statistics Strategy 2017-2020 and secondly, a need to craft a new statistical response to the COMESA MTSP 2021-2025 and ensuring that the new RSDS was aligned to international development agendas and the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa 2017-2026 frameworks.

### 1.1 Overview of COMESA

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) was established by Treaty in 1994, with the vision of being "a fully integrated, internationally competitive regional economic community with high standards of living for all its people, ready to merge into an African Economic Community" (Article 3 of the COMESA Treaty).

COMESA is the largest of the eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) recognized by the African Union, comprising 21 Members states (after the joining of Somalia and Tunisia in 2018), with a total population of 586 million people and a combined GDP of about USD 805 billion (2019). The trade integration agenda of COMESA includes a functioning Free Trade Area (FTA) currently including 16 Member States. It also entails various trade and transport facilitation instruments, the creation of a Customs Union as well as the progressive liberalization of trade in services, investments and the free movement of persons in the region. COMESA is also involved in various trade agreements and negotiation processes with third parties, such as the Tripartite (COMESA – EAC – SADC) Free Trade Area (formally launched in June 2015), the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) formally launched in July 2019 at the African Union level and the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the European Union.

The aims and objectives of COMESA have been designed to remove the structural and institutional weaknesses in the Member States by pooling their resources together in order to sustain their development efforts either individually or collectively. COMESA has adopted a developmental approach to regional integration, which covers key pillars of market integration, industrialization and infrastructure development. This approach is meant to achieve the shared policy objective of job creation, increased incomes and economic transformation all of which lead to the penultimate goal of improved livelihoods for the citizens of COMESA.

This developmental approach is guided by Medium Term Strategic Plans (MTSP) which focus on achieving key strategic objectives for a period of five years. The Medium-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2016-2020 was COMESA's roadmap for achieving its regional economic integration goals. The MTSP 2016-2020 focused on the following strategic objectives: Strengthening Market Integration; Attracting Increased Investments; Strengthening the Blue Economy; harnessing the Benefits of Strategic Partnerships; strengthening the development of Economic Infrastructure; Industrialisation; Fostering Gender Equality and Social Development; Ensuring Regional and Secretariat Readiness; and strengthening Regional Knowledge and Skills.

The current MTSP 2021-2025 focuses on the four strategic pillars namely; Market Integration, Physical Integration/Connectivity, Productive Integration and Gender and Social Integration. The statistical programme will;

- a. Support the MTSP's strategic objectives through capacity development and provision of the following statistics relevant to these strategic pillars;
  - Trade integration – International merchandise trade statistics, small scale cross border trade statistics, statistics of international trade in services, labour migration statistics, price statistics, balance of payments statistics and statistics on emerging issues related to trade integration.
  - Productive integration – Business and industrial statistics, agriculture statistics, national accounts, blue economy statistics and climate change statistics, innovation surveys and statistics on emerging issues related to the productive pillar.
  - Physical Integration and Connectivity – Infrastructure statistics i.e., transport, energy and ICT statistics and statistics on emerging issues related to this pillar.
  - Gender and Social Integration – Engendered statistics related to each of the pillars above.

Specifically related to strengthening the above statistics, the following sub objectives will apply;

- (i) Strengthen and monitor statistical capacity building in the COMESA region.
  - (ii) Consolidate the harmonization of statistics in the COMESA region through development of national implementation roadmaps and statistical regulations and guidelines.
  - (iii) Strengthen technological adoption as an enabler of the COMESA region statistical system.
  - (iv) Strengthen user engagement in order for regional statistics to be more responsive to policy making.
- b. Strengthen Strategic Partnerships in Statistical Development – Anchored by the role of RECS in implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHASA II), contribute to the development of continental and global statistical agendas including SDGs.

### 1.1.1 COMESA Membership

The following table 1 summarizes the size of the COMESA region by geographical area, population size and Gross Domestic Product in current prices and GDP per capita.

III.1. Table 1: COMESA in figures, 2019

Member State	Total Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Population mn, 2019	GDP Curr. Prices US\$ mn, 2019	GDP per capita
Burundi	27,830	11.5	3,012.3	261.2
Comoros	1,861	0.9	1,185.7	1,393.5
Congo, Dem. Rep.	2,344,860	86.8	47,319.6	545.2
Djibouti	23,200	1.0	3,318.7	3,408.8
Egypt	1,001,450	100.4	303,175.1	3,020.0
Eritrea	117,600	6.7	6,513.0	969.2
Eswatini	17,360	1.1	4,405.4	3,837.0
Ethiopia	1,104,300	112.1	96,107.7	857.5
Kenya	580,370	52.6	95,503.1	1,816.5
Libya	1,759,540	6.8	52,076.3	7,683.8
Madagascar	587,295	27.0	14,083.9	522.2
Malawi	118,480	18.0	11,032.2	612.7
Mauritius	2,040	1.3	14,180.4	1,203.5
Rwanda	26,340	12.6	10,122.5	801.7
Seychelles	460	0.1	1,698.8	17,401.7
Somalia	637,655	15.4	7,711.0	499.3
Sudan	1,879,357	42.8	18,902.3	441.5
Tunisia	163,610	11.7	38,797.7	3,317.5
Uganda	241,550	44.3	34,387.2	776.8
Zambia	752,610	17.9	23,064.7	1,291.3
Zimbabwe	390,760	14.6	21,440.8	1,464.0
COMESA	11,778,528	586.1	808,038.4	1,372.8

Source: COMSTAT and WDI, 2020

With a total land area of 11.778 million sq. km, a combined population of 586 million and GDP of US\$ 805 billion, COMESA is a formidable economic bloc with prodigious strategic and geopolitical significance in Africa, as it spans the continent and includes small island states. It is home to eight countries that have reached middle incomes status. Notable are Seychelles which is designated a High-income country with US\$ 17,401 followed by Mauritius and Libya as Upper middle-income countries with US\$ 11,203 and US\$ 7,684 per capita respectively. The regional per capita GDP (at current prices) is estimated to be US\$ 1,380 in 2019. The remaining eleven countries are in the low-income per capita categories. The COMESA region is also home to some of the fastest growing economies in Africa such as Rwanda and Ethiopia.

### 1.1.2 COMESA Governance

COMESA endeavours to create an environment that is conducive to free trade and investment in the region and has the following priority areas: Trade liberalization, Trade Facilitation, Infrastructure development, Liberalization of financial and monetary systems, Investment promotion and private sector support and Agricultural development.

#### The Decision-Making Organs of COMESA

There are four organs of COMESA which have the power to take decisions. These are:

The Authority of Heads of State and Government; The supreme policy organ responsible for the general policy, direction and control of the performance of the Secretariats executive functions.

The Council of Ministers; responsible for ensuring the proper functioning of COMESA in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty.

The COMESA Court of Justice: the judicial organ of COMESA, based in Khartoum, Sudan.

The Committee of Governors of Central Banks: monitors and ensures proper implementation of the monetary and financial cooperation programmes.

In addition to these are the Intergovernmental Committee, the Technical Committees, the Secretariat and the Consultative Business Committee who make recommendations to the Council of Ministers, which in turn make recommendations to the Authority.

### 1.1.3 COMESA Divisions and Units

The COMESA Secretariat is made up of the following Divisions:

1. Agriculture, Industry and Private Sector Development
2. Budget and Finance
3. Gender and Social Affairs
4. HR and Administration
5. Information and Networking
6. Infrastructure and Logistics Division
7. Legal and Corporate Affairs
8. Trade and Customs

III.2. In addition to the eight Divisions there are nine units namely:

1. Climate Change
2. COMAID
3. Corporate Communications

4. Governance, Peace and Security
5. Internal Audit
6. Information Resource Center
7. Resource Mobilization and International Cooperation
8. Strategic Planning Research and Policy Harmonization
9. Statistics

#### **1.1.4 COMESA Institutions and Specialized Agencies**

COMESA Institutions and specialized agencies have been created to promote regional co-operation and development. Collaboration between COMESA and its institutions is essential pursuant to Article 175 of the COMESA Treaty. The thirteen COMESA Institutions and specialized agencies and their locations are listed below:

1. Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA): Lusaka, Zambia
2. Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI): Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
3. African Trade Insurance Agency (ATI): Nairobi, Kenya.
4. COMESA Business Council: Lusaka, Zambia
5. COMESA Clearing House: Harare, Zimbabwe
6. COMESA Competition Commission: Lilongwe, Malawi
7. COMESA Council of Bureaux on the Yellow Card Scheme: Lusaka, Zambia
8. COMESA Monetary Institute: Nairobi, Kenya.
9. COMESA Regional Investment Agency (RIA): Cairo, Egypt
10. Federation of National Association of Businesswomen (FEMCOM): Lilongwe, Malawi
11. Regional Customs Transit Guarantee Scheme: Lusaka, Zambia.
12. Trade Development Bank (TDB): Bujumbura, Burundi.
13. The COMESA Re-Insurance Company (ZEP-RE): Nairobi, Kenya.

The Statistics unit works in close collaboration with the Divisions, Units and specialized agencies and institutions of COMESA to create a common market information system, cooperation in statistical development in different statistical clusters and a comprehensive information system for the depository and dissemination of statistics in the COMESA region.



## 2. Mandate on Statistics

### 2.0 Article 140 of the COMESA Treaty

Statistical Development and management in COMESA are guided by Article 140 of the Treaty. The Treaty provisions state that Member States undertake to co-operate in the field of statistics in order to create an enabling environment for the regular flow of up-to-date, reliable, harmonised and comparable statistical data on various sectors of economic activity, required for an efficient implementation of the objectives of the Common Market. To this end, the Member States shall:

- i. provide regularly and timely to the Secretariat statistical data that are reliable, harmonised and comparable, through the harmonisation and adoption of common methodologies, concepts and definitions to be used in collecting and compiling statistics;
- ii. harmonise and adopt common statistical classification to be used in compiling their statistics;
- iii. encourage co-operation among their national statistical systems in the exchange of statistical data covering various sectors of their economic activities such as external trade, agriculture, industry, energy, natural resources, transport, communications, tourism, population, manpower, money and banking, balance of payments, external debt, government finance, prices, purchasing power parities and national accounting investments;
- iv. promote the exchange of skills and personnel and enhance co-operation in statistical training through the use of existing training institutions;
- v. co-operate in the field of data processing; and
- vi. adopt a Common Market strategy for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa.

### 2.1 Importance of Statistics in regional integration and development

The COMESA Secretariat is cognizant of the fact that the consolidation of the Customs Union and operationalization of the Common Market and eventually a Monetary Union as well as the different development programmes rely heavily on the availability of accurate, reliable, timely, harmonized and comparable statistics for decision-making, devising appropriate policies, planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting purposes. As such, COMESA and its specialized agencies and institutions put paramount importance on the development and strengthening of the regional strategy for the development of statistics, so as to enhance the production of harmonized regional and national to support regional integration and development processes.

### 2.2 The role of statistics at the Continental and International level

Regional Statistical System are part of wider statistical systems that include Global, Continental and National statistical systems and its development is impacted by statistical developments at these various levels. It is, therefore, crucial to appreciate and develop the Regional Statistics Systems in context of these systems, taking advantage of opportunities they present for

knowledge transfer, peer learning and benchmarking on best practices. At the International level there is the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics principles are the overarching standards for official statistics across countries and for the global statistical system. The Principles were adopted by the UN Statistical Commission in 1994 and endorsed by the UN General Assembly in January 2014. They provide a compass and point of reference for all official statistical work and operations in all countries. As such the statistical fraternity engaged in official statistics are expected to be well versed in these principles and apply them in their work.

At continental level, there is the African Charter on Statistics which was endorsed by the 12th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in February 2009. The Charter which builds on the Fundamental Principles works as a tool for statistical advocacy at the highest level of government and commits countries to develop statistics in a manner consistent with best practice and international standards; to use statistics for policy development, planning and decision-making at all levels; and African governments to scale up support to statistics.

At national levels, most COMESA Member States have revised their Statistics Act to capture new and emerging developments in the areas of data production and use. The key areas of concern revolved around governance, resource mobilization and other institutional arrangements that regulate statistical production and development within Member States. The revised Statistics Acts build on both the Fundamental Principles and the Charter on statistics at global and continental levels.

## 2.3 International Frameworks

The Busan Action Plan for Statistics is the international framework for statistical development. The plan was adopted at the 4th High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held at Busan, Korea in 2011. It updates the priorities and work of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics (MAPS) and provides direction for statistical development in the decade ahead. The Busan Action Plan supports three principles, namely: fully integrate statistics in decision making, promote open access to statistics and increase resources for statistical systems.

The Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA2) has been adopted by the African statistical community as the general framework for statistical development in the continent. The strategy was endorsed by the Joint Conference of African Ministers for Finance and Economy in 2010. It aims to provide harmonized and quality statistics for the design and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of integration and development policies in Africa.

The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) is internationally recognized as the best framework for building statistical capacity across the entire NSS and for dealing with a plethora of statistical challenges in developing countries. In Africa the NSDS is expected to be aligned to the Busan Action Plan and the SHaSA as well as being anchored in national development processes especially the National Development Plan.

The Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) is the masterplan for regional statistical development. It is the accepted framework for responding to the statistical requirements of regional development. RSDS identifies regional strategies and activities

that harmonise conceptual frameworks, methods and tools for ensuring data comparability based on international recommendations and standards. It also serves as a framework for the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs at the regional level. It is a complementary process to the formulation of NSDS.

## 2.4 Statistical bodies

In addition to the above principles and frameworks, there are statistical bodies at regional, continental and international level in which Member States play an active role. These are:

- The COMESA Committee on Statistical Matters responsible for the provision of policy and strategic guidance regarding development of statistics in the region. The Committee comprises Heads of National Statistical Offices of COMESA Member States and Heads of other organisations in the National Statistical system such as Central Banks, Sectoral Ministries and Customs offices.
- The Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa) is the apex inter-governmental body established by the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in 2006 to oversee and coordinate statistical development in Africa. It comprises Heads of National Statistical Offices from African countries.
- The UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) which was established in 1947 is the highest body of the global statistical system. It brings together the Chief Statisticians from Member States from around the world. It is the highest decision-making body for international statistical activities especially the setting of statistical standards, the development of concepts and methods and their implementation at the national and international level.

## 2.5 Latest global statistical developments

There have been a number of global statistical developments in the recent past that need to be taken into account in designing the new plan. Two such initiatives which have been endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission are prominent. They are:

- The Data Revolution which has been called for by the United Nations to support the post-2015 international sustainable development agenda. The data revolution is basically about unlocking the power of data and delivering the “right data to the right people in the right format and at the right time”.
- The Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics which is a collaborative initiative for the modernization and transformation of official statistics. This agenda emphasizes five themes that need to be addressed under the National Statistical Systems and official statistics to be improved, namely:
  - coordination at and between global, regional and national statistical systems,
  - communication and advocacy

- integrated statistical systems for data collection, processing and dissemination
  - innovation and modernization through standards-based statistical business architecture
  - training and capacity building
- Big data for official statistics which refers to massive volumes of both structured and unstructured data that are so large that it is difficult to process them using traditional database and software techniques. Every digital process and social media exchange produces big data. Systems, sensors and mobile devices transmit it. Big data is arriving from multiple sources at an alarming velocity, volume and variety. Big data can be analyzed to extract value - patterns, predictions, and other insights from raw digital information that can lead to better decisions and strategic business moves.
  - African Information Highway and Open data initiative: The initiative is about data that can be freely used, reused and redistributed by anyone – subject only, at most, to the requirement to attribute and share alike. Key features of open data initiative are Availability and access - data to be available in a convenient or modifiable form. Reuse and redistribution - data to be provided in machine readable format and under terms that permit reuse and redistribution including the intermixing with other datasets. Universal participation - everyone should be able to use, reuse and redistribute without discrimination.
  - Innovations and advancements in Data Science: The modern economy provides the challenge of measuring fast-evolving forms of economic activity, and the opportunity to exploit huge amounts of new data and information. There is renewed interest in investigating the use of new data sources (including administrative data and big data) for public good and to help build data science capability for the benefit of the region. A new generation of tools and technologies is being used to exploit the growth and availability of these new data sources. Innovative methods, such as machine learning and natural language processing, are providing richer, more informed measurement and analyses on the economy, the global environment and wider society to help policymakers, researchers and businesses.

## 2.6 The need for a new RSDS

The second RSDS for COMESA came to an end in 2020. Remembering that the current statistics strategy was drafted to correspond to the COMESA MTSP 2016-2020 and respond to its strategic objectives, whose tenure has also come to an end. At the present time, a new COMESA MTSP covering the period 2021-2025 has been developed and is awaiting approval by Council in 2021. Therefore, there was an urgent need to develop a new RSDS that speaks to the new COMESA MTSP 2021-2025 and mainstreams SHaSA2 and other international development agendas.

In crafting a statistical response to the COMESA MTSP 2021- 2025, the RSDS design team after extensive consultation devised the COMESA Statistics Strategic Framework 2021 – 2025 which was used as the starting point for the COMESA Statistics Regional Strategy 2021-2025. The framework was approved and endorsed by the COMESA Committee of Statistical Matters in October 2020 was the foundation of the next strategy. It covers a period of five years.

However, to design the new RSDS, an assessment of the performance and implementation of the second RSDS at COMESA Secretariat and Member State level had to be undertaken. The assessment was made and is reported in chapter two.

### **3. Assessment of the COMESA Statistics Strategy 2017-2020**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The second COMESA Statistics Strategy 2017-2020 has been implemented since 2018, after being approved by the 37th Council of Ministers meeting held in November 2017. This Strategy was implemented at both regional and Member State level. In order to formulate the next regional strategic plan for the development of statistics in the COMESA region, an assessment of the implementation of the CSS 2017-2020 was undertaken at regional and national level.

The assessment was undertaken from June to December 2020 and involved:

- PARIS 21 was engaged to undertake the end term evaluation of the CSS 2017-2020.
- Due to the occurrence of COVID 19 information from stakeholders was obtained through the use of online questionnaires using Google forms and using emails. Getting responses was a serious challenge in the RSDS development process especially due to lockdowns and work from home. Stakeholders were consulted specifically on statistical development issues including statistical awareness, awareness about the relevance of the strategy, risks and assumptions and input for the next strategy.
- Undertaking an extensive literature review of relevant literature from COMESA Secretariat and in Member States including COMESA MTSP 2016-2020, draft COMESA MTSP 2021-2025, COMESA Annual reports and publications, CCSM reports, COMESA Stakeholder meeting reports, other RECs RSDS plans, Mission reports, pan African institutions reports and assessments. National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS); some statistical reports from Member States.
- Administering three questionnaires - one to collect general information about implementation of CSS 2017-2020 and another one about some specific activities undertaken by the National Statistics Offices.
- The Final assessment report was considered by the CCSM held in 2020 and recommendations were made to Council of Ministers meeting in November 2020
- Council of Ministers approved the recommendations of the report as Council Decisions in the Council of Ministers reports.

Stakeholder participation is essential for the success of the RSDS because it enables them to take ownership of the RSDS and its development and implementation process. The following stakeholders were identified:

- The COMESA Secretariat and its COMESA Specialized Institutions and Agencies
- National Statistics Offices;
- Central Banks
- National Revenue Authorities
- Relevant Ministries and Government Agencies
- Pan-African institutions; and
- Development Partners

### **3.1 Current State of the COMESA Statistical System**

#### **3.1.1 Current Membership of the COMESA Statistics System**

COMESA operates under the principle of subsidiarity, where implementation of the strategy is the responsibility of each COMESA Member State. Member States have a National Statistical System (NSS) that is buttressed and regulated by a national statistical legislation. The statistical legislation confers on National Statistics Offices (NSOs) the responsibilities to develop and coordinate the NSS. In most Member States, this is not being done effectively and as a result, NSSs remain weak and under-perform, which in part explains lack of quality in some data they produce. In many countries, statistical reforms are being undertaken to improve statistics as one of the anchors of national development and to also enhance statistical production. In particular, NSOs are being transformed from mainstream government departments into semi- autonomous government statistical agencies to make them more effective and efficient and also to enhance the impartiality and credibility of official statistics. This is particularly noteworthy from the perspective of provision of statistics to gauge compliance with macroeconomic convergence criteria. National statistical legislations are also being revised in many Member States to take on board emerging statistical trends and issues.

In addition, Member States are designing or implementing statistical plans to improve their official statistics. The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) is recognized internationally as the new standard in statistical planning. The NSDS is a second generation, statistical plan. Unlike the first generation, statistical plan that aims at improving the performance of the National Statistics Offices, the NSDS aims to improve performance of the entire NSS. The NSDS is a framework that, inter alia, aims to address data challenges including: effective assessment and prioritization of data needs at every level, integration of statistics into policy and decision-making, resource mobilization for statistics and their effective utilization, introduction of change and its management and capacity building across the entire National Statistical System.

#### **3.1.2 Institutional Framework**

The COMESA Committee on Statistical Matters (CCSM) is a Council approved technical committee charged with the oversight of statistical development in the region. The CCSM

approves annual work programs that are coordinated by the Secretariat and implemented at both the Secretariat and Member State level. The CCSM has a bureau which the Secretariat can call upon and consult in the implementation of its work program. CCSM comprises representatives from Member States and it meets once a year to review implementation of the work program for the past year and approves the work program for the coming year. The National Statistical Offices of Member States are the primary focal points for communication and coordination of the implementation of the strategy at the member State level. Ad hoc committees of experts play a technical advisory role with respect to specific statistical clusters. The CCSM plays a critical role to drive statistical development in the region. The fact that all Member States are represented in the CCSM gives a sense of country ownership of the regional programs and activities. Successful implementation of the strategy rests on the effective participation of all Member States and their continued support to the implementation of agreed activities at both regional and country levels.

Under the said subsidiarity principle, the COMESA Statistics Unit is responsible for coordination of the COMESA statistical system including production and promotion of regulations for data harmonization, capacity building in specific areas and resource mobilization. The Statistics Unit is placed directly under the Secretary General's Office and services all divisions, units and institutions and of COMESA and other stakeholders. The work of the Unit is guided by the Statistical Strategy which is implemented through annual work plans. The Statistics Unit is also responsible for compiling and disseminating regional COMESA statistics. The framework for implementation of the COMESA Statistical System is represented in table 2 below.

III.3. Table 2: The COMESA Statistical System by December 2020

Entity	Role and Responsibility
COMESA Council of Ministers	The Council of Ministers provides overall policy guidance and reviews and approves recommendations from the CCSM
COMESA Secretariat	The Secretariat's role involves coordination of the implementation of the strategy, coordination of technical aspects of strategy, financial mobilization, preparation of annual work plans, liaison with CCSM bureau, reporting on progress
COMESA Committee on Statistical Matters	The CCSM has oversight of the implementation of the strategy specifically annual work plans.
CCSM Bureau	The bureau's role is advisory and it has more regular communication with the Secretariat during the implementation of the annual work program until the CCSM approves a new bureau.
Technical Working Groups	Technical working Groups were formed to undertake specific work related to a specific area of statistics. These will comprise experts from statistical offices and any other organization whose membership the CCSM may deem necessary.

National Statistics Systems	The national statistical system is the composite of all data compilers in the Member States such as the NSOs, Central Banks, Revenue Authorities and relevant Ministries and government agencies. Their role is the implementation of CCSM and Council decisions related to their specific statistical clusters.
Focal Points	The National Statistical Offices of Member States will be the primary focal point for communication and coordination of the implementation of the strategy at the member State level.

Source: COMESA CCSM reports

## 3.2 Performance Assessment Highlights of the Statistics Strategic Plan 2017-2020

This section presents observations focusing on the successes, challenges and lessons learnt in the implementation of the COMESA RSDS 2017-2020

COMESA developed and adopted the COMESA Statistics Strategy (CSS) 2017-2020 primarily as a response to the COMESA MTSP 2016-2020 and to take into account the requirements of global and continental agendas and its role as a regional coordinator for the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa 2017-2026 (SHaSA 2) adopted by the Summit of the African Union Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa in January 2018.

As per good practice, an independent mid-term evaluation was undertaken by African Development Bank and PARIS21 in July 2019 and a final evaluation of the CSS 2017-2020 was undertaken by PARIS21 from September to October 2020. The results of the evaluation are outlined in the following sections.

### 3.2.1 Assessment of plan implementation at regional level

The COMESA Statistics Strategy 2017-2020 was developed through a participatory process within COMESA Secretariat and with Member States, in accordance with the PARIS21 guidelines.

The COMESA Statistics Strategy 2017-2020 was designed as a result-based strategy and had six strategic objectives:

- (i) Strengthen producer/user dialogue to boost the use of statistics in policy and decision-making;
- (ii) Strengthen statistics to support MTSP 2016-2020 strategic objectives;
- (iii) Strengthen strategic partnerships;
- (iv) Consolidate harmonization of statistics to ensure that statistics in the region are produced using harmonized frameworks that enable regional and international comparative analysis;
- (v) Enhance statistical technical skills, competencies, literacy and structures;
- (vi) Strengthen technologies and systems as enablers for the statistical system.



Notable achievements under each strategic objectives are outlined in the table below.

III.4. **Table 3: Summary of Performance Highlights of the CSS 2017-2020**

Strategic Objective	Highlights	Comments/ Recommendations
1.0 Strengthen producer/user dialogue to boost the use of statistics in policy and decision-making	<p>250 participants attended strategy awareness sessions</p> <p>1089 new users on COMSTAT</p> <p>Three Producer User forums held</p> <p>Data Transmission schedule adherence : IMTS (14 countries), HCPI (17 countries), BOP (19 countries), Agriculture (17 countries), Industry (4 countries).</p>	No activity under Environmental Statistics, Secretariat may need to seek assistance from AFDB to set up environmental statistics information systems.
2.0 Strengthen statistics to support MTSP 2016-2020 strategic objectives	<p>Undertook capacity building in various fields such as data quality, migration and International Comparison Program (ICP).</p> <p>Trained 363 experts (133 women and 230 men</p> <p>Undertook 25 subject specific technical assistance missions in ICP (national accounts and price statistics), Small Scale Cross Border Trade (SSCBT) statistics and International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS).</p> <p>Produced eight statistical bulletins: International Trade, Investment, Gender, Agriculture, Environment, FDI trends and Food staples</p> <p>Regional assessments and development of roadmaps for SSCBT was carried out successfully for Zambia, Malawi, DRC, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Ethiopia.</p> <p>A report on monitoring the progress made by Member States on compiling statistics SDGs indicators linked to statistics related to MTSP's strategic objectives was compiled in 2019.</p>	The SDG progress report revealed that many Member States require help in this area as several data gaps were identified

<p>3.0 Strengthen strategic partnerships</p>	<p>COMESA identified new and non-traditional strategic partners and signed 5 new MoU or cooperation agreements in the period under review. Notable new partnerships recorded include AUC-Statistics Sweden, Statistics Norway, and ILO-SAMM.</p> <p>COMESA developed 16 proposals for statistical development</p> <p>Continued participation in international statistical forums.</p> <p>Undertaken 5 joint statistical programmes with other RECs, AUC, EU and USAID.</p>	<p>COMESA strengthened ties with Pan African Institutions by becoming the Programme Implementation Unit for the AfDB Statistical Capacity Building V programme starting in 2021. The program covers the five regions of Africa and will build capacity in several statistical clusters.</p>
<p>4.0 Consolidate harmonization of statistics</p>	<p>Developed five country specific roadmaps on harmonization of SSCBT statistics for Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and DRC.</p> <p>Developed 23 regulations for compilation and dissemination of statistics.</p>	
<p>5.0 Enhance statistical technical skills, competencies, literacy and structures</p>	<p>Enhanced statistical skills of 307 experts (178 women and 129 men).</p> <p><i>Developed e-learning capacity building initiatives</i> in MS SQL Server (1), Eurotrace (1), and (PPPs Computation 1).</p> <p>Registered an additional twenty statistical experts in regional statistical database.</p>	<p>The human resource issue of staffing the statistical unit remains a major concern, as the staff structure recommended by CSS 2017-2020 and the 10<sup>th</sup> CCSM has not been put in place.</p>
<p>6.0 Strengthen technologies and systems as enablers for the statistical system.</p>	<p>Undertook two training on CSPro using CAPI where 18 experts were trained from five countries.</p> <p>Four workshops on use of appropriate database software for statistical database administration and querying were organized.</p> <p>One SDMX pilot project was initiated in Zambia.</p> <p>3 training workshops on SDMX were organized where thirteen 13 experts (8 men and 5 women) were trained.</p> <p>Undertook regular monitoring of the use of COMSTAT. The monthly average for January-December 2020 was estimated at 2,413 hits.</p>	<p>Due to COVID 19 Pandemic, only three out of five planned SDMX workshops were held. There is need to plan to provide capacity building and technical assistance online in view of the impact of COVID 19.</p>

The reports of the full assessments can be found at [insert hyperlink](#)

### 3.2.2 Budget Performance

The total budget amount of the CSS 2017-2020 was USD10,190,000. Senior Management partly committed some level of funding (3% of the total cost), and Development Partners totally committed their funding. The percentage of the actual funding against expected funding are 13% for COMESA domestic resources and 87% for the Development partners' resources. Weak own funding remained the biggest challenge during the implementation period. About 55% of the activities planned in the CSS 2017-2020 have been financed mainly with the support of Technical and Financial Partners (TFP)

### 3.2.3. Assessment of plan implementation at National level

#### 3.2.3.1 Statistical Strategy Awareness

Regarding the implementation of the CSS 2017-2020 at country level, countries affirmed to have a good understanding of this strategy and recognized its role as a strategic supporting tool in terms of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the MSTP. It is also a tool for coordinating and promoting integration through the provision of reliable statistics in various areas.

With regard to popularization of the strategy, responses are mixed. The strategy needed to be communicated at high levels in the countries.

#### 3.2.3.2 Statistical Capacity Building

NSOs' and Central Bank's participation in the development of the CSS 2017-2020 took place through workshops, capacity building and technical assistance missions and CCSM meetings. Regarding the implementation, countries participated by providing information required for monitoring and evaluation, by reviewing and implementing programs like HCPI program, trade statistics and FDI statistics programs, cross border statistics program.

#### 3.2.3.3 Consolidation and Harmonization of Statistics

Regarding the impact of CSS 2017-2020 on the development of statistics at the level of national statistical systems, positive impact was noted in the following areas HCPI program, trade statistics and FDI statistics programs, cross border statistics program.

#### 3.2.3.4 Impact of COVID 19 on statistical activities in Member States

In general, respondents indicated that COVID-19, especially during lockdown phases, had a negative impact on statistical activities in Member States and by extension on the implementation of the CSS 2017-2020, in particular with regard to data collection. ICBT surveys and capacity building workshops.

Concerning the CSS 2021-2025, respondents indicated their preference for a participatory and inclusive process through meetings and workshops. They also quoted participation and collaboration in the identification and implementation of statistical programs as well as mainstreaming those programs in Member States' NSDSs.

### 3.2.3.5 National Strategies for Development of Statistics (NSDS)

Introduced in 2004, the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) is a national framework, process and product for statistics development aimed at mainstreaming statistics into national policy and planning process; producing information responding to the needs of the various users; mainstreaming sectors and other players into the National Statistics System (NSS); coordinating the entire NSS; responding to data challenges; delivering a country-led data revolution; and building statistical capacity across the “the statistical value chain”. The process to elaborate and implement an NSDS is consultative and inclusive; it should involve all the major actors from the NSS: producers and users of statistics, decision makers, technical and financial partners, civil society, private sector, universities, etc.

The NSDS addresses data gaps and aligns data demand with supply, mainstreaming statistics within national development policy processes, introducing and managing change, and heralding a data revolution into countries. It provides a trajectory defining where the NSS as a whole should be in the medium-term and a “road map” and milestones for getting there. The NSDS covers all sectors and users. The NSDS is a framework for achieving improvements in data as well as both technical (conceptual harmonization) and inter- institutional coordination. All Member States except Somalia have designed an NSDS or national strategic plan for improving their NSSs as can be seen in the following table.

III.5. Table 4: Summary of the Status of NSDS in the COMESA region

		Existing Strategy	
Country	Status	Name	Time Span
Burundi	Implementation	Stratégie Nationale du Développement de la Statistique	2016-20
Comoros	Implementation	Stratégie Nationale du Développement de la Statistique	2015-19
Congo DR	Strategy expired	Stratégie nationale de développement de la statistique	2012/13-17
Djibouti	Implementation	Stratégie Nationale de Développement de la Statistique	2016-2020
Egypt	Implementation	National Strategy of Statistics	To be announced
Eritrea	Strategy expired	Master plan for development economics statistics	2010-14
Eswatini	Implementation	Strategic plan for central statistical office	2016-2020
Ethiopia	Implementation	The Ethiopian National Strategy for the Development of Statistics	2015/16- 2019/20
Kenya	Implementation	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics Strategic Plan	2018-2022
Libya*	Completed,	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics	2018-2022
Madagascar	Strategy expired	Stratégie Nationale de Développement de la Statistique	2007-17
Malawi	Implementation	National Statistical System Strategic Plan	2019-2023

Mauritius*	Implementation	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics	
Rwanda	Implementation	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics II	20014/15 - 2018/19
Seychelles	Implementation	NBS Strategic Plan	2014 - 2020
Somalia	Plans underway		
Sudan	Implementation	National Strategy for Development of Statistics	2017-2021
Tunisia*	Implementation	Le Programme National de la Statistique	2016-2020
Uganda		Extended Strategic Plan for Statistics	2018/19 – 2019/20
Zambia	Implementation	National Statistical System Strategic Plan	2014-2018
Zimbabwe	Implementation	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics II	2016-20

Source: PARIS21 May 2019 Report

There will be need to align the NSDS to the RSDS for the better coordination of the implementation of SHaSA2 and global development agenda objectives. COMESA is prepared to facilitate and participate in peer reviews of the NSDS.

### 3.2.3.6 Gaps and challenges at Member State level

#### Awareness and understanding the value of quality statistics:

In order to increase awareness of the importance of statistics, and of the need for additional resources to implement various activities within NSS, there is need to develop and implement an effective communication and advocacy strategy. Innovations on data collection, processing, dissemination and use should be introduced, such as the use of tablets for data collection and data processing, use of online dissemination tools for disseminating raw data from surveys and censuses, establishment of data dissemination policy, and promotion open access to data.

#### Quality statistics for evidence-based decision making and planning:

The NSS needs to develop new systems in addition to strengthening existing administrative data collection systems, including the civil registration and vital statistics system to complement the census and survey data. The major surveys need to be carried on time and there are gaps in some areas, such as quarterly GDP statistics. Further improvements are needed in the quality and timelines of statistics across the NSS. There is a need to improve record keeping and management systems, revamping the website to make it more user friendly, enhance financial and administrative management systems, and increase frequency of meetings of the Data for Development Group.

#### Effective development, management and coordination of the NSS:

Though coordination mechanisms for NSDS have been established between National statistical offices and other NSS institution to varying degrees, the coordination efforts within the sectors are still weak, mainly due to the lack of capacity and absence of statistics units within member institutions of NSS. Overall, within NSS, coordination is still a challenge. Line Ministries should be encouraged to fill statistical positions and to provide adequate resources to the statistical units.

## Capacity of the NSS:

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Within NSS, the gap in terms of statistical capacity still exists. There is still a limited number of professional statisticians both at NSOs and within other NSS institutions. Furthermore, the lack of appropriate infrastructure facilities, such as well-resourced training centers has hindered the rapid transfer of skills and knowledge. Equipment and resources for logistics and carrying out censuses and surveys is inadequate.

Also, many users are not equipped with skills to effectively use statistics and enhanced professional trainings for both NSO and other NSS staff is required, upgrade statistical systems and infrastructure, including international classifications and national standards. There is a need to compile a data quality assessment framework for application throughout the country and strengthen the storage and security of data for some member states.

Addressing these gaps and challenges in a holistic manner is a prerequisite for a robust NSS and, given their scope, it is expected to be a gradual process. Hence, it is essential that the RSDS takes these issues into account and devise comprehensive assessments and strategies to address them.

### 3.3 Impact of the COVID-19 on the implementation of the CSS 2017-2020

The last year of the strategy's implementation was marked by the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic disrupted activities in all statistical areas at regional and national levels. As a result of the lockdown imposed to curb the proliferation of the corona virus, many statistical activities came to a standstill. As a result, it was necessary to find suitable means to reorganize the work at the personal level, at the Secretariat/ Statistics Unit level and at Member States.

The Statistics Unit aligned itself with the instructions given by the Top Management of COMESA and in this regard, each staff has been called to work from home and the coordination of tasks was also aligned with this approach. Another challenge was to safeguard the achievements at the Member States level. This involved working remotely using appropriate communication software.

This required the development of a platform at the level of the Secretariat which made it possible to organize videoconference meetings with Member States and partners. It should also be noted that some partners like PARIS21 assisted COMESA by facilitating the organization of videoconferences with their own platforms.

Thus, due to the support from development partners, remote work was integrated into Statistical Unit's daily work. This allowed the continuation of statistical capacity building activities by organizing online workshops. Most of the difficulties encountered were found in countries where internet connection is very weak and expensive.

Obviously, the COVID-19 -19 pandemic had a negative impact on the implementation of the CSS 2017-2020 at least during the last nine months of the strategy. While appreciating the measures put in place to mitigate this negative impact, it is necessary to take this phenomenon into account in order to plan the appropriate measures within the framework of the development of the CSS 2021-2025.

Concerning the CSS 2021-2025, respondents indicated their preference for a participatory and inclusive process through meetings and workshops. They also quoted participation and collaboration in the identification and implementation of statistical programs as well as mainstreaming those programs in Member States' NSDSs.

### 3.4 SWOT Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Based on the assessment the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified:

III.6. **Table 5: SWOT Analysis**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Existence of a Statistics Unit at Secretariat</li> <li>□ Expertise in various statistics areas</li> <li>□ Existence of National Statistical Systems that are a source of COMESA statistics</li> <li>□ Existence of statistical plans in member states including National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)</li> <li>□ COMESA has developed expertise in international trade statistics and which is well recognised and leveraged by Member States and other RECs including SADC and EAC.</li> <li>□ Closeness of Member States which makes COMESA a convenient channel for statistical development in Member States by development partners.</li> <li>□ COMESA has coordinated and facilitated capacity building and technical assistance to Member States</li> <li>□ Commitment by Executive management to statistical development in the region.</li> <li>□ Most Member States have NSDS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Inadequate awareness creation about the COMESA Statistics Strategy and COMSTAT</li> <li>□ Insufficient human capacity at Secretariat.</li> <li>□ Poor and inconsistent funding of National Statistical Systems</li> <li>□ Poor quality of some data from Member States</li> <li>□ Inadequate tracking of demand especially at the level of the Member States</li> <li>□ Over dependence on donor funding on censuses and surveys.</li> <li>□ There are data gaps on important development areas that need to be filled.</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ High demand for quality statistics</li> <li>❑ Presence of statistical training programmes in the region.</li> <li>❑ Possibilities to establish new partnerships with various organisations in statistical development</li> <li>❑ Agreement to mainstream SHaSA2. Guidelines into RSDS and NSDS by the ASS – increased coordination and harmonization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Over- dependence on donor funding</li> <li>❑ Inadequate coordination of National Statistical Systems</li> <li>❑ Inadequate funding of statistical budgets at all levels</li> <li>❑ Uncoordinated donor interventions which lead to duplication of effort</li> <li>❑ High Staff turnover</li> <li>❑ Delayed responses to global pandemics that hinder statistical activities.</li> </ul>
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### 3.4.1 Main Challenges

Based on the SWOT analysis the main challenges confronting the COMESA statistical system are as follows:

- Over- dependence on donor funding
- Underutilisation of available statistics by policy- and decision-makers due to lack of statistical culture.
- Low prioritization of investment in statistics, resulting in limited resources for regional statistical system development and overdependence on external funding.
- Disparities in the capacities of NSS's, capacity limited for some of the Member States to deliver required data for regional statistical series.
- Low quality outputs and significant data gaps (e.g., for SDG's and emerging areas such as blue economy statistics).
- High staff turnover and Inability to attract and retain statistical staff, high calibre staff at NSO's.
- There is need for increased coordination of activities and synergies of resource mobilization across donors, COMESA Institutions, Divisions, Units and Programmes.

### 3.5 Lessons learnt.

A solid and enlarged core of long-term staff will be essential, complemented by bringing in additional experts for specific tasks or projects as needed. Investment is needed to meet the statistical demand both quantitatively and qualitatively. Without sharing knowledge and building statistical capacity, it is not possible to build a sustainable statistical base in any entity.

In order to play its role as SHaSA2 regional coordinator, COMESA needs to expand and improve its capacity in other key areas such as agricultural statistics, industrial statistics, statistics on gender, environment statistics, infrastructure statistics, monitoring and evaluation,



In order to involve development partners more closely in the processes of statistical systems, they will be invited to second staff to the Secretariat on a regular basis albeit for specific, limited periods. The Secretariat will need to maintain flexible engagement processes to allow it to adapt quickly to a changing environment and take on board new activities when necessary – and when financing can be secured – reacting quickly to the new demands from the international community and its partners.

The Secretariat should continue to strengthen the communication strategy, so as to trumpet successes more, advertise best practices, and generally make policy-makers and a broader public aware of COMESA's work through its website, newsletters, and other means.

If the management of COVID-19 or any other pandemic is not taken into account in the strategy for the development of statistics, it will be very difficult to effectively run the statistical system at national and regional levels. COMESA must therefore capitalize on its current experience and strengthen the measures taken.

On the basis of these lessons, important actions are needed at the political level, human resources, budget allocations, knowledge sharing in house and with other regional and continental statistical partners, training, etc.

All of these concerns should be addressed in the CSS 2021-2025 under preparation.

## **4. The Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics Plan**

### **4.0 Introduction**

Statistics is recognized as an integral part of the regional development process and needs to be mainstreamed into regional and national development plans as an enabler to decision and policy formulation. Any regional statistics strategy is driven by the data needs for regional policymaking. Hence this involves supporting the 2021-2025 MTSP strategic objectives through capacity development and provision of the following regional statistics;

- a. Trade integration – International merchandise trade statistics, small scale cross border trade statistics, statistics of international trade in services, labour migration statistics, price statistics, balance of payments statistics, monetary and financial statistics and statistics on emerging issues related to trade integration.
- b. Productive integration – Business and industrial statistics, agriculture statistics, national accounts, blue economy statistics and climate change statistics, innovation surveys and statistics on emerging issues related to the productive pillar.
- c. Physical Integration and Connectivity – infrastructure statistics i.e., transport, energy and ICT statistics and statistics on emerging issues related to this pillar.
- d. Gender and Social Integration – Gender statistics and engendered statistics related to each of the pillars above.

## Statistical Priority Areas by Cluster

The COMESA MTSP 2021-2025 identified four pillars for the next five years regional integration agenda, as identified above. A consultation with stakeholders identified the following statistical clusters as being priority areas for statistical development in the region as shown in figure 1. The top four priority areas identified Agricultural, SITS, Balance of Payments (BOP) and National Accounts statistics.

### III.7. Figure 1 Priority areas by statistical cluster

Other statistical areas identified are shown in the figure 2 below, areas that scored highly were the need for continued statistical training and capacity building, continued enhancement of statistical skills and competencies as well as funding for statistical activities. A well-coordinated COVID-19 response was identified due to the significant impact COVID-19 has had on statistical activities especially in the year of 2020.

III.8.

### III.9. Figure 2 Priority Statistical Activities

#### 4.1 Envisioning

##### 4.1.1 COMESA Vision and Mission Statement

###### COMESA's Vision

The Vision of COMESA is, "To have a fully integrated internationally competitive regional economic community with high standards of living for its entire people, ready to merge into the African Economic Community".

###### COMESA's Mission

The Mission of COMESA is, "To endeavour to achieve sustainable economic and social progress in all Member States through increased co-operation and integration in all fields of development particularly in trade, customs and monetary affairs, transport, communication and information, technology, industry and energy, gender, agriculture, environment and natural resources".

##### 4.1.2 The CRSDS Vision

To be the most reliable source of high quality, harmonized and consolidated regional statistics that support the COMESA regional integration agenda.

##### 4.1.3 The CRSDS Mission

The mission of COMESA Statistics Strategy is to provide highly relevant policy responsive statistics on the COMESA region through strengthening regional statistical capacity and partnerships on statistical development.

##### 4.1.4 Core Values

The core values that we espouse are derived from the principles in the African Charter on Statistics and UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics:

“Professional independence: Scientific independence, Impartiality, Responsibility and Transparency and accountability.

Quality: Relevance, Sustainability, Accuracy and reliability, Continuity, Coherence and comparability, Timeliness, Topicality, Specificities: Statistical data production and analytical methods shall take into account African peculiarities; Awareness-building on the importance of statistics.

Dissemination: Accessibility, Dialogue with users, Clarity and understanding, Simultaneity, Correction.

Protection of individual data, information sources and respondents: Confidentiality, Giving assurances to Data providers, Objectivity and Rationality “

## **4.2 Strategic Directions: Strategic Goals, Strategic objectives, implementation initiatives and expected outcomes**

The strategic goals outlined below respond to the key challenges and issues that require attention over the strategy period. The strategic directions reflect the priorities in terms of the strategic objectives and initiatives. For these objectives to be realized there is need to have the following preconditions.

- Subsidiarity principle, each implementing agency in Member States, COMESA Institutions, Secretariat, Development Partners and Pan African Institutions undertake their roles in cooperation and not competition towards the production and use of statistics.
- Policy Organs desire to have statistics as a key driver in the decision-making process and therefore provide for appropriate organization structures and budgets for statistics systems. It is also important that there are proper coordination mechanisms to facilitate quality control in statistics production.

### **4.2.1 Strategic Goals**

The COMESA statistics regional strategic plan has two main goals namely (i) To strengthen statistics that support the COMESA Medium Term Strategic Plan 2021-2025 in order to respond to the statistical requirements of the regional development agenda. This will ensure harmonized and comparable data in all member states, using harmonized conceptual frameworks, methods and tools for ensuring data comparability and to pool statistical skills, expertise and resources at the regional level. (ii) The other strategic goal of this plan is to strengthen strategic partnerships in particular to facilitate, coordinate and strengthen external partnerships whilst highlighting south-south collaboration at the regional and national levels. The main outcome of the strategic plan will be statistics that are harmonized and of good quality that will help monitor and implement regional, continental and global frameworks such as Agenda 2063 and Sustainable development goals Agenda 2030.

### **Strategic Goal 1: Strengthening Statistics that Support the COMESA MTSP 2021-2025**

Under this goal, statistics is recognised as a vital part of the development process and needs to be mainstreamed into regional and national development plans as an enabler to decision and

policy formulation in the regional integration programme. The Strategy assessment recognised that a lot of work has been done in all of the areas identified in the MTSP to varying degrees but unless COMESA, which has reached a significant and recognized technical level in the field of foreign trade statistics, expands and improves its capacity in other key areas such as agricultural statistics, industrial statistics, statistics on gender, environment statistics, infrastructure statistics, monitoring and evaluation, it will not be able to play its role of SHaSA 2 Coordinator in the region. Whilst some Member States are facing statistical challenges, collectively there is ample statistical capacity in the region and through south-south cooperation, that needs to be harnessed to support regional statistical development. This new strategy proposes that human, technical and financial resources be put in place to facilitate production of policy responsive statistics in support of the MTSP 2021-2025.

**Strategic Goal 2: Strengthening strategic partnerships**

Partnerships help to enhance the process of regional statistical development by providing much needed technical and financial resources. The increased demand for MTSP responsive statistics implies that COMESA needs to continue to seek and cement partnerships to be able to deliver results within the tenure of the MTSP.

4.2.1.2 Strategic objectives, implementation initiatives and expected outcomes

III.10. Figure 3 Strategic Objectives



The Strategic objectives that have been identified for each strategic goal are as follows:

### **Strategic Objectives 1: Consolidation and harmonization of statistics from the Member States**

Harmonization of MTSP relevant statistics in the COMESA region consolidated through development of national implementation roadmaps and statistical regulations and guidelines following international standards.

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#### **Specific Objective**

1.1. The harmonization of MTSP relevant statistics in the COMESA region will be consolidated through the following initiatives:

- i. Assisting Member states develop national implementation roadmaps for areas of statistics relevant to the MTSP based on international statistical recommendations;
- ii. Developing statistical regulations following international standards;
- iii. Developing implementation manuals following international standards;
- iv. Participation in statistical expert group meetings such as AUC specialized technical working groups
- v. Conducting COMESA Statistical technical working group meetings
- vi. Leveraging funding for activities to assist member states produce harmonized statistics.
- vii. With the support of the AUC and UNECA, assisting requesting Member states on the implementation of National Quality Assessment Frameworks on statistics that are supporting the MTSP.

OUTCOME	ACTIVITIES	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
STRATEGIC GOAL 1 Strengthening Statistics that Support the COMESA MTSP 2021-2025			
<b>Strategic Objective 1 Consolidation and harmonization of statistics</b>			
<b>Specific Objectives: 1.1.: Harmonization and consolidation of MTSP relevant statistics in the COMESA region</b>			
Harmonized and consolidated statistics relevant to COMESA MTSP: IMTS, SSCBT, SITS, Labour & Migration, Price, BoP, Monetary and Financial Statistics, Business and Industrial, Agricultural, National Accounts, Blue Economy, Climate Change, Innovation surveys, Transport, Energy, ICT, Gender, CRVS, Administrative Data	Assist Member states in developing national implementation roadmaps for areas of statistics relevant to the MTSP based on international statistical recommendations	2021-2025	COMESA, UNECA, AFDB, AUC
	Develop statistical regulations following international standards.	2021-2025	COMESA, Member States
	Participation in statistical expert group meetings such as AUC specialized technical working groups	2021-2025	COMESA
	Conduct COMESA Statistical technical working group meetings	2021-2025	COMESA, Member States
	Leverage funding for activities to assist member states produce harmonized statistics.	2021-2025	COMESA
	Develop implementation manuals following international standards.	2021-2025	COMESA
	Assist requesting Member states on the implementation of National Quality Assessment Frameworks on statistics that are supporting the MTSP.	2021-2025	COMESA, AUC UNECA.

## Results

- National implementation roadmaps for areas of statistics relevant to the MTSP in the areas of SSCBT, TIS and Industrial statistics based on international statistical recommendations developed
- Statistical regulations following international standards developed in SSCBT, TIS and Industrial statistics and environmental.
- Participated in AUC specialized technical working groups namely STG-GPS (Governance, Peace and Security), STG-ES. External Sector (External Trade and Balance of Payments), STG-MF (Money and Finance), STG-NA&P (AGNA) (National Accounts and Price Statistics), STG 2&T. (Infrastructure, Industries & Tourism), STG-PFPS&I. (Public Finance, Private Sector and Investment), STG-So. Demography, Migration, Health, Human Development, Social Protection & Gender), STG-Env. (Agriculture, Environment, Natural Resources, & Climate

Change), STG-CB (AGROST) Statistical Training and Capacity Building, STG-Labour and Informal Sector Statistics, STG-Classification, STG-Emerging Statistical Issues, STG-Statistics on Civil Registration, STG-National Strategies

for the Development of Statistics, when the STGs are revitalized.

- COMESA Statistical technical working groups for Agricultural Statistics; Blue Economy Statistics; Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and Statistics of International Trade in Services (SITS); Harmonized Consumer Price Indices (HCPI)/International Comparison Program (ICP); National Accounts; International Trade Statistics: International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) and Small-Scale Cross Border Trade (SSCBT) statistics; Industrial Statistics; Infrastructure-Energy; Infrastructure- Transport; and Migration Statistics operationalized and meeting to promote harmonization and consolidation of statistics.
- Production of harmonized regional statistics in the following clusters Agricultural Statistics; Blue Economy Statistics; Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and Statistics of International Trade in Services (SITS); Harmonized Consumer Price Indices (HCPI)/International Comparison Program (ICP); National Accounts; International Trade Statistics: International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) and Small-Scale Cross Border Trade (SSCBT) statistics; Industrial Statistics; Infrastructure-Energy; Infrastructure- Transport; and Migration Statistics.
- Member States using implementation manuals following international standards in Migration and Blue Economy
- Member States implementing national DQAF on statistics that support the MTSP

## Strategic Objectives 2 Enhanced coordination in statistical production in the region

Specific Objectives 2.1 National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) and COMESA Statistics Strategy aligned.

1.2.2 South-South Cooperation in Statistical Development enhanced.

- i. Contribute to the annual report on the implementation of SHASA II by Member States in the development of their NSDS.
- ii. With the support of the African Union Commission, provide technical assistance on alignment of new NSDSs to the COMESA RSDS and SHaSA II.
- iii. With the support of the African Union Commission, facilitate peer review of NSDS

OUTCOME	ACTIVITIES	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
STRATEGIC GOAL 1 Strengthening Statistics that Support the COMESA MTSP 2021-2025			
<b>Strategic Objective 2: Enhanced coordination in the production of statistical production in the region</b>			
<b>Specific Objective 2.1: Alignment of NSDS to COMESA RSDS</b>			
National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) and COMESA Statistics Strategy aligned:	Contribute to the annual report on the implementation of SHASA II by Member States in the development of their NSDS.	2021-2025	COMESA, MEMBER STATES AUC, PARIS21
	With the support of the African Union Commission, provide technical assistance on alignment of new NSDSs to the COMESA RSDS and SHaSA II.	2021-2025	AUC COMESA
	With the support of the African Union Commission, facilitate peer review of NSDS	2021-2025	AUC COMESA ACBF
<b>Specific Objective 2.2: South-South Cooperation in Statistical Development enhanced.</b>			
South-South Cooperation in Statistical Development enhanced	Facilitate south-south technical cooperation among Member states and RECs.	2021-2025	COMESA, NSOs, RECs
	Create platforms for statistical knowledge exchange	2021-2025	COMESA, NSOs, RECs
<b>Results</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Assist MS on the alignment of NSDS to COMESA RSDS and SHASAI			
<input type="checkbox"/> Uptick in Peer reviews of NSDS undertaken			
<input type="checkbox"/> Increased south-south technical cooperation between member states			
<input type="checkbox"/> Platforms for statistical knowledge exchange created and used by RSS			



### Strategic Objective 3 Strengthen the building of statistical capacity in the region

Strengthening the Human Resource Capacity for the production, compilation and use of statistics is vital both at the Secretariat and Member State level. Capacity building pitched towards statistical production should be directed more towards Member States level given they represent the production centres for data that is later consolidated into regional statistics. Analytical training focused on key users of official statistics should be targeted at both Secretariat and the Member State to ensure the effective utilisation of statistics for result-based management in respect of programmes at the regional, continental and national level.

#### Specific Objectives:

3.1. Capacity building for Member states on statistics that support the MTSP

3.2: Provision of technical assistance to Member states on statistics supporting the MTSP.

Specific Objective 3.3: Capacity building for Secretariat on statistics that support the MTSP

#### Initiatives:

- i. Capacity building for Member states on statistics that support the MTSP.
- ii. Conduct capacity building needs assessments.
- iii. Conduct capacity building workshops.
- iv. Monitoring capacity built in Member States.
- v. Develop e- learning capacity building initiatives.
- vi. Participate in NSDS reviews in Member States
- vii. Provision of technical assistance to Member states on statistics supporting the MTSP.
- viii. Conduct Technical Assistance Needs assessments;
- ix. Undertake subject specific technical assistance;
- x. Undertake South to South technical assistance;

OUTCOME	ACTIVITIES	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
STRATEGIC GOAL 1 Strengthening Statistics that Support the COMESA MTSP 2021-2025			
<b>Strategic Objective 3: Strengthen the building of statistical capacity in the region</b>			
Specific Objective 3.1: Capacity building for Member states on statistics that support the MTSP			
Capacity built for Member states on statistics that support the MTSP: IMTS, SSCBT, SITS, Labour & Migration, Price, BoP, Monetary and Financial Statistics, Business and Industrial, Agricultural, National Accounts, Blue Economy, Climate Change, Innovation surveys, Transport, Energy, ICT, Gender, CRVS, Administrative Data	Conduct capacity building needs assessments in Member states.	2021-2022	COMESA & MEMBER STATES
	Conduct capacity building workshops for Member states on statistics that support the MTSP.	2021-2022	COMESA & MEMBER STATES
	Monitor and evaluate COMESA statistical capacity building initiatives in Member States.	2021-2025	COMESA
	Develop e- learning capacity building initiatives.	2021-2022	COMESA
Specific Objective 3.2: Provision of technical assistance to Member states on statistics supporting the MTSP.			
Improved statistical capacity in Member States.	Conduct technical assistance needs assessments in Member states	2021-2022	COMESA
	Provision of technical assistance to Member states on statistics supporting the MTSP.	2021-2025	COMESA
	Promote South-South technical assistance.	2021-2025	COMESA & Member States
Specific Objective 3.3: Capacity building for Secretariat on statistics that support the MTSP			
Improved Statistical Capacity at Secretariat	Build capacity of Secretariat on emerging issues related to statistical clusters relevant to the MTSP.	2021-2025	COMESA
	Participate in international statistical fora.	2021-2025	COMESA
COMESA articles published in statistical Journals and Publications	Contribute articles to statistical journals and publications.	2021-2025	COMESA

**Results:**

- Capacity building needs assessments undertaken for all MS by 2022
- Technical assistance needs assessments in Member states conducted by 2022
- More efficient and effective Secretariat with full complement of skilled staff
- Statistical capacity built across RSS
- E-learning initiatives in place supported by appropriate hardware and software
- Increased presence in international fora in statistical related activities

### **Strategic Objectives 4 Strengthen technological adoption as enablers for the statistical system**

When properly harnessed, ICT's can be transformative and significantly bring down the cost of doing business, and the elements of this strategy will provide a means of enhancing COMESA's capacity to achieve its objectives by ensuring a strategic application of ICTs as an enabler. Several initiatives and innovations have been developed which have led to the tools and applications being less costly and more available and accessible to a wider section of the population through various sectors of development such as trade in services, capacity building (online courses), environment, public sector operations, agriculture and mining, among many others. In the recent past there has been a greater shift towards Cloud computing which has also positively impacted on the storage of massive data and adoption and use of ICT's.

For COMESA to ensure that ICTs increasingly become an effective enabler for the region's statistical development, it means adoption of modern systems and technologies to support production, compilation and dissemination of statistics.

#### **Specific Objectives**

- 4.1 Technological adoption as an enabler of the COMESA region statistical system strengthened.
- 4.2 Enhancement of statistical skills and competencies for Secretariat in order to continually respond to the changing needs of the statistical landscape.

#### **Initiatives**

- i. Strengthen and/or build capacity on use of tablet/mobile based data collection for surveys in member states.
- ii. Undertake capacity building on the use of appropriate database software for statistical database administration and querying.
- iii. Undertake capacity building on Statistical Data and Meta Data Exchange (SDMX) capacity at Secretariat and in the Member States.

OUTCOME	ACTIVITIES	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
STRATEGIC GOAL 1 Strengthening Statistics that Support the COMESA MTSP 2021-2025			
<b>Strategic Objective 4: Strengthen technologies as enablers for the statistical system</b>			
Specific Objective 4.1 Technological adoption as an enabler of the COMESA region statistical system strengthened.			
Establish an effective technological environment	Strengthen and/or build capacity on use of tablet/mobile based data collection for surveys in member states.	2021-2025	COMESA
	Undertake capacity building on the use of appropriate database software for statistical database administration and querying.	2021-2025	COMESA
	Undertake capacity building on Statistical Data and Meta Data Exchange (SDMX) capacity at Secretariat and in the Member States.	2021-2025	COMESA
<b>Results</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Capacity built on the use of tablets and mobile based data collection surveys</li> <li>□ Facilitate the use of Tablets and mobile based data collection surveys in some member states</li> <li>□ Capacity built in Member States on the use of appropriate database software for statistical database administration and querying and SDMX</li> </ul>			

### Strategic Objectives 5 Promote a culture of quality policy and decision making

Specific Objectives 5.1 Statistical user engagement strengthened in order to render regional statistics more responsive to policy making.

This objective aims to boost the use of statistics in policy and decision making so that the efforts undertaken in statistics production are fully realized. The result of this will be increased statistical advocacy to enhance data demand and use as well as investment in statistical production and development.

#### Initiatives

- i. Monitor COMSTAT data portal and related mobile platforms usage analytics and user feedback.
- ii. Promote use of COMSTAT portal at COMESA technical meetings and conferences, regional and international conferences.
- iii. Undertake promotion of COMSTAT through social media and other digital platforms.
- iv. Enhance the COMSTAT users' database and feedback mechanisms.

OUTCOME	ACTIVITIES	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
STRATEGIC GOAL 1 Strengthening Statistics that Support the COMESA MTSP 2021-2025			
<b>Strategic Objective 5: Promote a culture of quality policy and decision making</b>			
Specific Objective 5.1: Statistical user engagement strengthened in order to render regional statistics more responsive to policy making			
Statistical user engagement strengthened	Monitor COMSTAT data portal and related mobile platforms usage analytics and user feedback.	2021-2025	COMESA
	Promote use of COMSTAT portal at COMESA technical meetings and conferences, regional and international conferences.	2021-2025	COMESA
	Undertake promotion of COMSTAT through social media and other digital platforms.	2021-2025	COMESA
	Enhance the COMSTAT users' database and feedback mechanisms	2021-2025	COMESA
<b>Results</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical user engagement strengthened in order to render regional statistics more responsive to policy making			

## Strategic Objective 6: Strengthen Strategic Partnerships in Statistical Development

### Specific Objectives

- 6.1 Implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHASA II) strengthened at regional and national levels
- 6.2 Strategic partnerships in statistical development identified and where already existing, strengthened and expanded

### Initiatives

Strategic partnerships in statistical development identified and where already existing, strengthened and expanded

- i. Under the umbrella of the COMESA Resource Mobilization Strategy, develop proposals targeted at new partners for statistical development in areas related to the MTSP.
- ii. Develop cooperation and funding proposals targeted at existing partners for statistical development in new areas related to the MTSP.
- iii. Participate and network at all partner fora including the Committee of Directors General (CODGs), the Executive Committee of SHaSA II, the African Statistical

Coordination Committee (ASCC), the Statistical Commission for Africa (STATCOM Africa) and UN Statistical Commission meetings etc.

- iv. Engage and undertake joint statistical programs with partners including other RECs.
- v. Draft best practice proposals on statistics related to the MTSP and discuss with Member states, STATCOM Africa and AUC CODGs for potential adoption.

OUTCOME	ACTIVITIES	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
<b>Strategic Goal 2: Strengthen Strategic Partnerships in Statistical Development:</b> Strategic partnerships in statistical development identified and where already existing, strengthened and expanded			
Strategic Objective 6 Strengthen Strategic Partnerships for increased coordination in the development of statistics in the region			
Specific Objective 6.1: Implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHASAI) strengthened at regional and national levels			
Undertake role as SHaSA2 Regional coordinator	Coordinate the implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHASA II) strengthened at regional level	2021-2025	AUC COMESA
	Monitor the implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHASA II) strengthened at national levels	2021-2025	AUC COMESA Member States
Strategic Objective 6.2 Strengthen and expand Strategic partnerships in statistical development			
Specific Objective 6.2.1: Strengthen and expand existing Strategic partnerships in statistical development			

Existing partnerships expanded to other clusters of statistics relevant to the MTSP: IMTS, SSCBT, SITS, Labour & Migration, Price, BoP, Monetary and Financial Statistics, Business and Industrial, Agricultural, National Accounts, Blue Economy, Climate Change, Innovation surveys, Transport, Energy, ICT, Gender, CRVS, Administrative Data	Develop cooperation and funding proposals targeted at existing partners for statistical development in new areas related to the MTSP.	2021-2025	COMESA
	Participate and network at all partner fora including the Committee of Directors General (CODGs), the Executive Committee of SHaSA II, the African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC), the Statistical Commission for Africa (STATCOM Africa) and UN Statistical Commission meetings etc.	2021-2025	COMESA Development Partners
	Engage and undertake joint statistical programs with partners including other RECs.	2021-2025	COMESA RECs
	Draft best practice proposals on SSCBT, SITS, migration, IMTS  statistics related to the MTSP and discuss with Member states, STATCOM Africa and AUC CODGs for potential adoption.	2021-2025	COMESA
Specific Objective 6.2.2. Identify new strategic partnerships in statistical development			
New partnerships identified in areas of statistics relevant to the MTSP.	Under the umbrella of the COMESA Resource Mobilization Strategy, develop proposals targeted at new partners for statistical development in areas related to the MTSP.	2021-2025	COMESA
<b>Results</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Existing Strategic partnerships in statistical development strengthened and expanded</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> New partnerships identified in new areas related to the COMESA MTSP 2021-2025</li> </ul>			

### 4.3 Risks and mitigation measures

Risks that could stand in the way of effective implementation of the plan have been identified and described. These together with mitigation measures are presented in the following table.

III.11. Table 6: Risks and mitigating measures

Risk	Description	Level	Mitigation measures
Inadequate funding for statistical activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Limited appreciation of importance of statistics by Secretariat and member State governments</li> <li>□ Limited commitment to the plan by member states</li> </ul>	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Undertake extensive awareness creation about the plan.</li> <li>□ Mainstream statistics in policy and development plans at the COMESA and in Member States</li> <li>□ Create partnerships with various organizations (national and international)</li> </ul>
Production of poor-quality data especially in sectors in Member States	Inadequate, inaccurate, and incomplete data produced by sectors	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Design and promote standards for data collection and management in Member States</li> <li>□ Promote the standards across sectors</li> <li>□ Build capacity in statistical production across sectors</li> </ul>
Continued disruption of Statistical Activities	The negative impact of COVID-19	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ E-learning systems in place</li> <li>□ Provision of online Technical Assistance on demand driven basis</li> <li>□ Provision of Statistical Capacity Building activities online.</li> <li>□ Virtual Meetings held regularly</li> </ul>

### 4.4 The Response to the current COVID 19 pandemic

The impact of COVID-19 continues to be felt beyond 2020. The new normal has been characterized by remote working and an increase in the use of the virtual space due to lock downs and restricted travel. This entails a change to the plan that incorporates activities that will be done virtually. The proposed activities that will be undertaken virtually include the following:

- Virtual Workshops and Meetings
- Virtual Trainings



- Remote Technical Assistance
- Remote south to south cooperation
- Remote Needs assessments
- Remote Technical assistance assessments
- Webinars
- E-learning courses
- Remote Producer-User Forums

## **5. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **5.0 Plan Implementation**

Plan implementation is a crucial aspect of the strategic planning process as this is the stage when plan benefits are realized. All other stages are, dependent on the implementation stage. Plan implementation is an operational process that focuses on efficiency and judicious use of funds, special motivation and leadership skills, and involves co-ordination among many people.

The purpose of plan implementation is to:

- deliver the results, achieve purpose and contribute effectively to the overall plan goals;
- manage the available resources efficiently; and
- monitor and report on progress to support performance management.

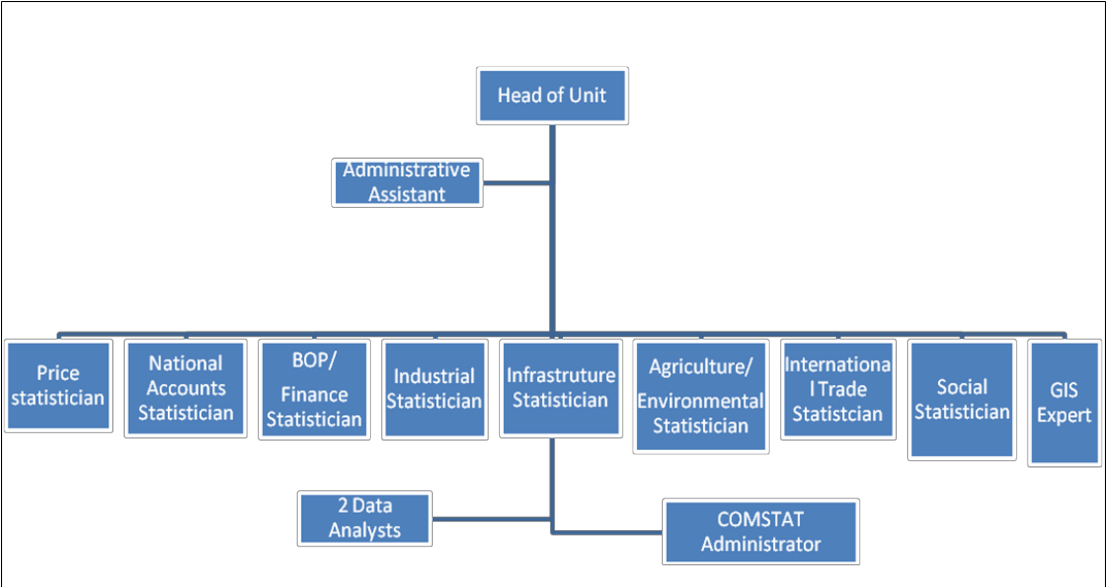
To ensure effective implementation of this plan, a logical framework with initiatives covering the entire plan period has been prepared and is presented in the Annex. The Action Plan gives expected outputs, activities to be undertaken, baselines, targets, sources of verification and assumptions.

### **5.1 Human resources Management**

Human Resource is central towards the implementation of the strategy and as such it calls for adequate, knowledgeable and skilled capacity both at Member State and Secretariat level. Human Resource Management is therefore a strategic component that requires support with adequate financial resources and human resource development initiatives. Consequences of not addressing this strategic issue include COMESA not being able to deliver on its mandate as well as loss of confidence among stakeholders on the regional integration agenda. COMESA will endeavour to improve its organisational capacities by establishing the human capital requirements. This will include deployment of a talent management system to recruit, develop and retain competent staff at all levels, improving knowledge and skills through training and capacity building initiatives and institutionalization of the Balanced Scorecard performance management system.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of Statistics Strategy and the overarching mandate of the Treaty, the required human resource complement at the Secretariat is proposed as shown below:

III.12. Figure 4 Organizational Structure



5.2 Communication and Advocacy

The assessment showed that there is need to increase awareness of the strategy at every level within the regional statistical system. In addition, COMESA also recognizes that public awareness is a critical component of achieving the aspirations of the Treaty and the full realization of the role of statistics and statisticians towards regional integration agenda. This entails improving producer user dialogue in the dissemination of information and raising awareness and level of knowledge of the RSS which is a requirement in mobilizing their participation and effective use of the data produced in line with the objectives of this strategy. COMESA will use multiple communication channels to disseminate knowledge of statistical products using print and digital media platforms to popularize the MTSP 2021-2025 and the associated Statistics Strategy and advise stakeholders—including COMESA Secretariat and the public—of key activities and their benefits.

The assessment also highlighted the need for increased communication and advocacy of COMESA Statistical work. While it was observed that COMESA undertook a lot of work with respect to systems upgrade, capacity building and harmonisation of procedures and practices, little was attributed to COMESA. There was therefore a gap in attribution to bring out the work undertaken towards statistical development. In implementing the COMESA RSDS 2021-2025 Plan, there is a need for increased advocacy if the position and profile of statistics is to be upheld by stakeholders, resulting in ownership of the strategy.

### 5.3 Proposed Budget

This section provides an indicative cost of the plan implementation at regional level and also proposes funding arrangements. The costs are required to give an indication of the required level of investment for effective implementation of the plan at the regional level. It is expected that a lot of activities in this plan will be incorporated into the NSDSs of Member States and therefore funded accordingly. The following table provides the COMESA Secretariat based budget for the implementation of the Strategy by goals. A detailed multi annual work plan with budget is included in the Annex.

III.13. Table 7: COMESA Secretariat estimated budget for the CRSDS 2021-2025, US\$

	STRATEGIC GOAL	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total
Strategic Goal 1:	Strengthening Statistics to Support MTSP 2021-2025	\$1,020,600.00	\$1,020,600.00	\$1,020,600.00	\$1,020,600.00	\$1,020,600.00	\$5,103,000.00
Strategic Goal 2:	Strengthen Strategic Partnerships	\$108,800.00	\$108,800.00	\$108,800.00	\$108,800.00	\$108,800.00	\$544,000.00
Administrative Costs	Staff Costs	1,248,000.00	1,248,000.00	1,248,000.00	1,248,000.00	1,248,000.00	\$6,240,000.00
TOTAL		\$2,377,400.00	\$2,377,400.00	\$2,377,400.00	\$2,377,400.00	\$2,377,400.00	\$11,887,000.00

5.3.1 Financing and Funding arrangement

Statistics production is highly demanding on both time and financial resources and therefore this strategic plan makes it a prerequisite to undertake resource mobilisation. The result will be increased mobilized resources to fund the Statistical production, dissemination and capacity building. The sources of funds are usually but not limited to funds generated from Member States assessed annual contributions, development partners and any other resources that are generated from related activities that are carried out within the region. Resource mobilisation in this case will extend to include accountability and improved efficiency in delivery of donor resources. As noted in the assessment, there is need for increased coordination of activities and synergies of resource mobilization across donors, COMESA Institutions, Divisions, Units and Programmes.

Initiatives:

- i. Develop funding proposals for the period of the Strategic Plan and hold targeted meetings to close the funding gap. For example, all projects and programmes in COMESA should allocate a fixed sum from the budget for statistics production;
- ii. Undertake studies that can help lower the cost of undertaking statistics work;
- iii. Engage governments of Member States and COMESA Secretariat to fund the programme from own resources progressively to avoid the donor- overdependence trap which can distort statistical priorities in the region.

## 5.4 Monitoring and Evaluation and Reporting

Among other reasons, periodic monitoring of progress in implementation of the RSDS will be crucial and important for the following reasons:

- (i) Ensuring that the plan is on track;
- (ii) Ensuring that the objectives are being met;
- (iii) Ensuring that corrective measures can be taken before things get out of hand; and
- (iv) Providing the essential link between the plan and actual activities of the implementation.

Monitoring will keep track of these factors and changes and enhance the ability to adapt successfully to these changes. It will, therefore, be done on a continuing basis.

At the end of the plan period, there will be an evaluation to assess the most significant constraints, the most successful activities and generally, to assess how well the Plan will have met the set objectives. Evaluation involves comparing expected results with actual results, investigating deviations from plans and measuring individual and organizational performance. Plan evaluation will therefore put emphasis on learning for the future. Both internal and external monitoring and reviews/ evaluation are necessary and will be done including:

### III.14. Table 8: Report and Monitoring Framework

Report	By Whom	When	Distributed to Whom
Annual Work Plan	COMESA Secretariat	October each year	CCSM/IC/CM
Annual Progress reports	COMESA Secretariat	October, each year	CCSM/IC/CM
Business Continuity Plans	Statistics Unit	Monthly	EM COMESA
Quarterly Progress Reports	Statistics Unit	End of every quarter	EM COMESA
Mid-Term Review	Independent Reviewers	2023	CCSM/IC/CM
Final Review	Independent Reviewers	2025	CCSM/IC/CM

**A1. Strategic objective, Outcome and Initiative implementation rates in 2019 and 2020**

Strategic objective / Outcome / Initiative		Implementation rate (%)	
N°	Heading	2019	2020
<b>SO1.1.</b>	<b>Strengthen Producer/User Dialogue</b>	<b>63.69%</b>	<b>64.80%</b>
Out.1.1	Increased user usage/ appreciation of statistical data	63.69%	64.80%
Init.1.1.1	Undertake strategy awareness sessions among stakeholders	91.78%	92.53%
Init.1.1.2	Hold user-Producer forums at regional level	33.33%	33.33%
Init.1.1.3	Develop feedback mechanisms to get information and proposals on areas of statistical improvements	33.33%	33.33%
Init.1.1.4	Follow up with Member state on the timely provision of Statistics	96.32%	100.00%
<b>SO1.2.</b>	<b>Strengthen Statistics to support MTSP 2016-2020 Strategic objectives</b>	<b>73.85%</b>	<b>83.39%</b>
Out.2.1	Statistics mainstreamed into the COMESA MTSP	73.85%	83.39%
init.2.1.1	Include Statistical activities in the objectives of the COMESA Annual Workplan	100.00%	100.00%
init.2.1.2	Regional and national capacity building	49.44%	67.05%
init.2.1.3	Undertake subject specific technical assistance	46.67%	83.33%
init.2.1.4	Undertake Regional analysis of aggregated national statistics	87.50%	100.00%
init.2.1.5	Regional assessments and development of road-maps for new areas of statistics	100.00%	100.00%
init.2.1.6	Participate in the evaluation and design of sector inclusive national statistics development strategies (NSDS) to improve statistics in Member States	33.33%	33.33%
init.2.1.7	Monitor progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) linked to statistics related to the MTSP's strategic objectives.	100.00%	100.00%
<b>SO1.3.</b>	<b>Strengthen Strategic Partnerships</b>	<b>93.75%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Out.3.1	Strategic partnerships strengthened	93.75%	100.00%
init.3.1.1	Identify new and non- traditional strategic partners	100.00%	100.00%
init.3.1.2	Develop proposals for statistical development in areas related to the MTSP.	75.00%	100.00%

Strategic objective / Outcome /Initiative		Implementation rate (%)	
N°	Heading	2019	2020
init.3.1.3	Participate and network at all partner forums including the annual UN Statistical Commission meetings and, the Statistical Commission for Africa	100.00%	100.00%
init.3.1.4	Engage and undertake joint statistical programs with partners including other RECs	100.00%	100.00%
<b>S01.4.</b>	<b>Consolidate harmonization of statistics</b>	<b>89.00%</b>	<b>89.00%</b>
Out.4.1	Statistics compiled using harmonized frameworks	89.00%	89.00%
init.4.1.1	Develop country specific roadmaps on harmonization of relevant statistics	90.00%	90.00%
init.4.1.2	Develop regulations for compilation and dissemination of statistics by Member states	88.00%	88.00%
<b>S01.5.</b>	<b>Enhance technical skills, competencies, literacy and structures</b>	<b>49.32%</b>	<b>72.28%</b>
Out.5.1	Regional statistical technical skills, competencies and structures enhanced	49.32%	72.28%
init.5.1.1	Capacity building workshops at Secretariat.	46.60%	61.40%
init.5.1.2	Development of e-learning capacity building initiatives.	0.00%	100.00%
init.5.1.3	Publication of statistical research materials	100.00%	100.00%
init.5.1.4	Strengthen database of regional statistical experts	100.00%	100.00%
init.5.1.5	Implementation of the proposed staff structure for the Statistics Unit recommended in the 2017-2020 Statistical Strategy	0.00%	0.00%
<b>S01.6.</b>	<b>Strengthen Technologies and systems</b>	<b>69.79%</b>	<b>76.67%</b>
Out.6.1	Use of technologies and systems to support statistical development and usage strengthened	69.79%	76.67%
init.6.1.1	Building capacity on use of tablet/mobile based data collection for surveys in member states	100.00%	100.00%
init.6.1.2	Building capacity on use of appropriate database software for statistical database administration and querying	40.00%	50.00%
init.6.1.3	Strengthen Statistical Data and Meta Data Exchange (SDMX) capacity at Secretariat and in the Member States on a pilot basis	53.33%	53.33%
init.6.1.4	Monitor the access to the COMSTAT Portal	100.00%	100.00%
init.6.1.5	Track COMSTAT portal user statistics	100.00%	100.00%

Strategic objective / Outcome /Initiative		Implementation rate (%)	
N°	Heading	2019	2020
init.6.1.6	Promote use of COMSTAT portal at all COMESA technical meetings and conferences, regional and international conferences, meetings of COMESA institutions, related missions, student competitions etc	5.00%	10.00%
init.6.1.7	Undertake promotion of COMSTAT through social media and other digital platforms.	60.00%	100.00%
init.6.1.8	Support increased usage of COMSTAT products to mobile platforms and monitor their use.	100.00%	100.00%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>72.10%</b>	<b>81.69%</b>



## ANNEX II: LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

STRATEGIC GOAL 1 Strengthening Statistics that Support the COMESA MTSP 2021-2025								
Strategic Objective 1.1 Consolidation and harmonization of statistics from the Member States								
Outcome	Initiatives	Indicators	Base-line	Target	Sources of Verification	Assump-tions	Risks/Mitigation measures	Responsi-ble Struc-tures
Harmonized and consoli-dated statis-tics relevant to COMESA MTSP	Assist Member states in developing national implementation road-maps for areas of statis-tics relevant to the MTSP based on international statistical recommenda-tions	Number of country specific roadmaps on the harmoniza-tion of relevant sta-tistics developed.	10	20	COMESA reports	Availability of country funding.  Appro-priate structures at Mem-ber States level to implement har-mo-nized frame-works	Risk: Lack of funding at country level.  Mitigation: Resource mobilization at MS level  Risk: Lack of appro-priate structures to implement har-mo-nized frameworks  Mitigation: Develop appropriate structures in MS	COMESA  MS
	Develop statistical regu-lations following interna-tional standards.	Number of regula-tions and guide-lines developed	25	30	COMESA reports	Legal drafting committee approves the drafts.	Risk: Non approval of legal drafting com-mittee  Mitigation: Engage legal drafting commit-tee to approve.	COMESA TWGs

	Participation in statistical expert group meetings such as AUC specialized technical working groups	Number of STGs attended	02	18		STG meetings are convened by AUC.	Risk: STG meetings are not convened Mitigation:	AUC, COMESA, MS
	Conduct COMESA Statistical technical working group meetings	Number of COMESA SA TWG meetings held Operationalize TWGs approved by CCSM held in 2019.	01	11	COMESA reports	Funding availability	Risk: Lack of adequate funding Mitigation: Convene virtual meetings at lower cost. Increased resource mobilization from cooperating partners to raise funding.	COMESA TWGs
	Leverage funding for activities to assist member states produce harmonized statistics.	Number of MS assisted to leverage funding.	08	13	COMESA reports	Funding availability	Risk: Lack of funding to undertake activity Mitigation:	COMESA MS
	Develop implementation manuals following international standards.	Number of implementation Manuals following international standards developed	04	06	COMESA reports	Funding availability	Risk: Lack of funding to undertake activity. Mitigation:	COMESA MS

	Assess Member states implementation of National Data Quality Assessment Frameworks on statistics that are supporting the MTSP.	Number of assessments undertaken.	00	10	COMESA reports	Funding availability  Member States feedback.	Risk: Lack of funding to undertake activity Mitigation: Resource mobilization enhanced  Risk: Member States do not give feedback Mitigation: Online feedback mechanism set up.	COMESA MS
<b>Strategic Objective 2: Enhanced coordination in statistical production in the region</b>								
<b>Specific Objective 2.1: Alignment of NSDS to COMESA RSDS</b>								
National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) and COMESA Statistics Strategy aligned	Contribute to the annual report on the implementation of SHASA II by Member States in the development of their NSDS.	Number of contributions to Annual report	2020 AUC Annual Report	05 AUC Annual Reports	AUC reports, COMESA reports	Data availability from MS	Risk: Lack of data from MS Mitigation:	COMESA MS

	With the support of the African Union Commission, provide technical assistance on alignment of new NSDSs to the COMESA RSDS and SHaSA II.	Number of technical assistance missions on alignments of new NSDSs to RSDS and SHASAIL.	0	10 MS whose NSDS expire within the tenure of the CSS 2021-2025	COMESA Reports AUC reports	MS launch a new NSDS during the tenure of the CSS 2021-2025 Funding availability	Risk: NSDS is not aligned to RSDS Mitigation: Work with MS to align NSDS with RSDS	COMESA MS AUC
	With the support of the African Union Commission, facilitate peer review of NSDS	Number of peer reviews facilitated/participated.	00	03	COMESA Reports AUC reports	Funding availability	Risk: Lack of funding to carry out activity Mitigation: Enhanced Resource mobilization from cooperating partners.	COMESA MS AUC
<b>Specific Objective 2.2:</b> South-South Cooperation in Statistical Development enhanced.								
South-South Cooperation in Statistical Development enhanced.	Facilitate south-south technical cooperation among Member states and RECs.	Number of south-south technical cooperation missions facilitated.	00	20 4 per year.	COMESA Reports	Funding availability Existence of common areas of interest and agreement by partner RECS and Member States.	Risk: Lack of funding to carry out the activity Mitigation: Facilitate online for a south-south cooperation	COMESA MS

	Create platforms for statistical knowledge exchange	Number of statistical knowledge platforms created	00	05	COMESA Reports	Funding availability	Risk: Lack of funding to carry out the activity  Mitigation: Seek technical assistance or support from cooperating partners to set up knowledge platforms.	COMESA MS
<b>Strategic Objective 3: Strengthen the building of statistical capacity in the region</b>								
Specific Objective 3.1: Capacity building in Member states on statistics that support the MTSP								
Capacity built in Member states on statistics that support the MTSP.	Conduct capacity building needs assessments in Member states.	Number of online Capacity Building Needs assessment undertaken in Member States	00	21	COMESA Reports	Feedback from Member States.	Risk: Low response rate from MS  Mitigation: Actively engage MS in activity.	COMESA MS
	Conduct capacity building workshops for Member states on statistics that support the MTSP.	Number of online capacity building workshops undertaken.	20	45	COMESA Reports	Robust IT structures in place in MS	Risk: Lack of robust IT infrastructure  Mitigation: Use of digital and online platforms for capacity building	COMESA MS
		Number of experts trained.	670	1500	COMESA Reports			

	Monitor and evaluate statistical capacity building initiatives in Member States and other countries.	Number of capacity building initiatives monitored and evaluated.	0	25	COMESA Reports	Country cooperation and feedback.	Risk: Lack of MS cooperation and feedback.  Mitigation: Digital feedback mechanisms in place.	COMESA MS
	Develop e- learning capacity building platforms.	Number of e- learning capacity building platforms developed IMTS- EUROTRACE, SITS, SSCBT, XMPIS, FBS, MIGRATION, MOBILE/TABLET APPS.  Number of experts trained.	00  00	07  735	COMESA Reports, COMSTAT	Funding availability to develop e- learning courses  Member States participating in the e- learning.	Risk: Lack of funding.  Mitigation: Resource mobilization to raise funds for e- learning courses. Partner with other agencies developing e- learning platforms.  Risk: MS not participating in e- learning courses  Mitigation: Incentivize participation.	COMESA MS
Specific Objective 3.2: Provision of technical assistance to Member states on statistics supporting the MTSP.								
Improved statistical capacity in Member States.	Conduct technical assistance needs assessments in Member states	Number of online technical assistance needs assessments undertaken.	00	21	COMESA Reports	Feedback from Member States on their technical assistance needs.	Risk: Lack of feedback from MS.  Mitigation: Engage MS regularly for feedback.	COMESA MS

	Provision of technical assistance to Member states on statistics supporting the MTSP.	Number of online technical assistance missions undertaken to MS.	25	60	COMESA Reports	Robust IT structures in MS	Risk: Lack of robust IT infrastructure in MS	COMESA MS
	Promote South-South technical assistance.	Number of online South-South technical assistance missions undertaken	00	20	COMESA Reports	Funding availability	Risk: Lack of funding to undertake the activity Mitigation: COMESA will reinforce its resource mobilization activity towards its partners and make and prioritize this activity in its action plan	COMESA MS
<b>Specific Objective 3.3: Capacity building for Secretariat on statistics that support the MTSP</b>								
Improved Statistical Capacity at Secretariat	Build capacity of Secretariat on emerging issues related to statistical clusters relevant to the MTSP.	Number of staff trained.	5	10	COMESA Reports	Funding availability	Risk: Lack of funding to undertake the activity. Mitigation: COMESA will reinforce its resource mobilization activity towards its partners and make and prioritize this activity in its action plan	COMESA

	Participate in international statistical fora.	Number of International statistical fora participated in. (Virtual or in person)	10	25	COMESA Mission Reports	Funding availability	Risk: Lack of funding to undertake the activity. Mitigation: COMESA will reinforce its resource mobilization activity towards its partners and make and prioritize this activity in its action plan	COMESA
COMESA articles published in statistical Journals and Publications	Contribute articles to statistical journals and publications.	Number of articles published in statistical journals.	03	08	Statistical Publications, COMESA Reports		Risk Statistical articles not published. Mitigation:	COMESA
<b>Strategic Objective 4: Strengthen technologies as enablers for the statistical system</b>								
<b>Specific Objective 4.1 Technological adoption as an enabler of the COMESA region statistical system strengthened.</b>								
Establish an effective technological environment	Strengthen and/or build capacity on use of tablet/mobile based data collection for surveys in member states.	Number of capacity building initiatives using tablet/mobile based data collection for surveys	06	12	COMESA Mission Reports	Funding availability Robust IT infrastructure; IT competent staff in MS	Risk: Lack of funding to undertake the activity. Mitigation: COMESA will reinforce its resource mobilization activity towards its partners and make and prioritize this activity in its action plan	COMESA MS



	Undertake capacity building on the use of appropriate database software for statistical database administration and querying.	Number of online capacity building activities undertaken  Number of experts trained	04  18	14  48	COMESA Mission Reports	Funding availability Robust IT infrastructure; IT competent staff in MS	Risk: Lack of funding to undertake the activity.  Mitigation: COMESA will reinforce its resource mobilization activity towards its partners and make and prioritize this activity in its action plan	COMESA MS
	Undertake capacity building on Statistical Data and Meta Data Exchange (SDMX) capacity at Secretariat and in the Member States.	Number of online capacity building initiatives on SDMX undertaken  Number of experts trained in SDMX  Number of SDMX projects initiated	03  13  01	23  33  06	COMESA Mission Reports	Funding availability Robust IT infrastructure; IT competent staff in MS	Risk: Lack of funding to undertake the activity.  Mitigation: COMESA will reinforce its resource mobilization activity towards its partners and make and prioritize this activity in its action plan	COMESA MS
<b>Strategic Objective 5: Promote a culture of quality policy and decision making</b>								
<b>Specific Objective 5.1: Statistical user engagement strengthened in order to render regional statistics more responsive to policy making</b>								
Statistical user engagement strengthened	Monitor COMSTAT data portal and related mobile platforms usage analytics and user feedback.	Number of visits/hits to portal		3500 hits	COMSTAT user analytics	Consistent functionality of the portal	Risk: Non-functioning of the portal  Mitigation	COMESA

	Promote use of COM-STAT portal at COMESA technical meetings and conferences, regional and international conferences.	Number of virtual technical meetings where presentations on COM-STAT portal are made. (meetings include conferences, regional and international conferences, meetings of COMESA institutions, related missions, student competitions)	07	20	COMESA Reports	Buy-in from Divisions and Secretariat.	Risk Lack of buy-in from Divisions and Secretariat.  Mitigation: Sensitize Staff on importance of statistics for decision making through TQM	COMESA
	Undertake promotion of COMSTAT through social media and other digital platforms.	Number of promotional activities undertaken on social media.	00	100	COMSTAT COMESA FB PAGE EMAIL ALERTS	Functional website	Risk: Non-functional website.  Mitigation: Ensure website is fully operational.	COMESA
	Enhance the COMSTAT users' database and feedback mechanisms	Number of responses through user feedback.	00	500	COMSTAT	Feedback from users	Risk: lack of feedback from users.  Mitigation: Encourage MS to provide prompt feedback.	COMESA

Outcome	Initiatives	Indicators	Base-line	Target	Sources of Verification	Assumptions		
<b>Strategic Goal 2: Strengthen Strategic Partnerships in Statistical Development:</b> Strategic partnerships in statistical development identified and where already existing, strengthened and expanded								
<b>Strategic Objective 6 Strengthen Strategic Partnerships for increased coordination in the development of statistics in the region</b>								
Specific Objective 6.1: Implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHASAI) strengthened at regional and national levels								
Undertake role as SHaSA2 Regional coordinator	Coordinate the implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHASAI) strengthened at regional level	Number of virtual meetings held on mainstreaming SHaSA2 into NSDS.	00	10	COMESA reports	MS developing their NSDS actively participating in meetings	Risk: Lack of expertise at Secretariat level to facilitate meeting  Mitigation: Engage NSDS/RSDS expert	COMESA MS
	Monitor the implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHASAI) strengthened at national levels	Number of Member States that have ratified the ACS  Number of MS NSDS mainstreaming SHaSA2	06	10	COMESA reports	All MS have plans to ratify the ACS	Risk: Lack control over ratification process  Mitigation Liaise with MS regularly on the need to ratify the ACS.	COMESA MS AUC

Strategic Objective 6.2 Strengthen and expand Strategic partnerships in statistical development						
Specific Objective 6.2.1: Strengthen and expand existing Strategic partnerships in statistical development						
Existing partner-ships expanded to other clusters of statistics relevant to the MTSP	Develop cooperation and funding proposals targeted at existing partners for statistical development in new areas related to the MTSP.	03	05	COMESA Reports	Risk: Low	COMESA
	Participate and network at all partner fora including the Committee of Directors General (CODGs), the Executive Committee of SHaSA II, the African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC), the Statistical Commission for Africa (STATCOM Africa) and UN Statistical Commission meetings etc.	06	12	COMESA reports	Risk: Lack of funds to undertake the activity.  Mitigation: Ensure funds are available from Secretariat resources.	COMESA

	Engage and undertake joint statistical programs with partners including other RECs.	Number of joint statistical programs undertaken with partners including RECs	04	06	COMESA reports	Funding availability	Risk: Lack of funding to undertake the activity.  Mitigation: COMESA will reinforce its resource mobilization activity towards its partners and make and prioritize this activity in its action plan	COMESA RECs  Cooperating partners.
	Draft best practice proposals on statistics related to the MTSP and discuss with Member states, STATCOM Africa and AUC CODGs for potential adoption.	Number of best practices proposals on statistics related to MTSP developed  Number of best practices proposals adopted.	00  00	04  04	COMESA Reports	Funding availability	Risk: Proposals not developed or funded.  Mitigation: COMESA will ensure that proposals are developed prior to attending meetings.	
<b>Specific Objective 6.2.2 Identify new strategic partnerships in statistical development.</b>								
New partnerships identified in areas of statistics relevant to the MTSP.	Under the umbrella of the COMESA Resource Mobilization Strategy, develop proposals targeted at new partners for statistical development in areas related to the MTSP.	Number of MoUs signed between new partners.	03	06	COMESA reports	Resource Mobilization strategy in place	Risk: Non-inclusion in the COMESA Resource mobilization strategy.  Mitigation: Ensure that the Statistics programme is included in the COMESA resource mobilization strategy	COMESA

ANNEX 3: MULTI ANNUAL WORKPLAN CRSDS 2021-2025

OUTPUT	ACTIVITIES	TIME FRAME	RESPON- SIBILITY	Budget in USD					TOTAL
				2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
Strategic Goal 1: Strengthen statistics to support MTSP 2021-2025 Strategic objectives.									
Strategic Objective 1.1 Consolidation and harmonization of statistics from the Member States									
Harmonized and consolidated statistics relevant to COMESA MTSP	i. Assisting Member states develop national implementation roadmaps for areas of statistics relevant to the MTSP based on international statistical recommendations;	2021-2025	COMESA, MS, AUC	23,100	23,100	23,100	23,100	23,100	115,500
	ii. Developing statistical regulations following international standards;	2021-2025	COMESA, MS, AUC	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	40,000
	iii. Developing implementation manuals following international standards;	2021-2025	COMESA, MS, AUC	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	250,000
	iv. Participation in statistical expert group meetings such as AUC specialized technical working groups	2021-2025	COMESA, UC, MS	28,800	28,800	28,800	28,800	28,800	144,000
	v. Conducting COMESA Statistical technical working group meetings	2021-2025	COMESA, MS	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	250,000
	vi. Leveraging funding for activities to assist member states produce harmonized statistics.	2021-2025	COMESA	-	-	-	-	-	-

	vii. With the support of the AUC and UNECA, assisting requesting Member states on the implementation of National Quality Assessment Frameworks on statistics that are supporting the MTSP.		COMESA, MS, AUC, UNECA	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Strategic Objective 2: Enhanced coordination in statistical production in the region</b>									
National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) and COMESA Statistics Strategy aligned	Contribute to the annual report on the implementation of SHASA II by Member States in the development of their NSDS.	2021-2025	COMESA, AUC, MS						
	With the support of the African Union Commission, provide technical assistance on alignment of new NSDSs to the COMESA RSDS and SHASA II.	2021-2025	COMESA, AUC, MS	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000
	With the support of the African Union Commission, facilitate peer review of NSDS	2021-2025	COMESA, AUC, MS	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000
South-South Cooperation in Statistical Development enhanced.	Facilitate south-south technical cooperation among Member states and RECs.	2021-2025	COMESA, AUC, MS	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000

	Create platforms for statistical knowledge exchange.	2021-2025	COMESA, AUC, MS	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000
<b>Strategic Objective 3: Strengthen the building of statistical capacity in the region</b>										
Capacity built for Member states on statistics that support the MTSP.	Conduct capacity building needs assessments in Member states.	2021-2025	COMESA	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
	Conduct capacity building workshops for Member states on statistics that support the MTSP.	2021-2025	COMESA	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	750,000
	Monitor and evaluate COMESA statistical capacity building initiatives in Member States.	2021-2025	COMESA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Develop e- learning capacity building initiatives. IMTS-EUROTTRACE SITS, SSCBT, XMPIS, FBS, MIGRATION, MOBILE/TABLETS Apps	2021-2025	COMESA AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS	168,000	168,000	168,000	168,000	168,000	168,000	840,000
	E-learning implementation			105,000	105,000	105,000	105,000	105,000	105,000	525,000
Provision of technical assistance to Member states on statistics supporting the MTSP.	Conduct technical assistance needs assessments in Member states.	2021-2025	COMESA							



	Provision of technical assistance to Member states on statistics supporting the MTSP.	2021-2025	COMESA	54,000	54,000	54,000	54,000	54,000	270,000
	Promote South-South technical assistance.	2021-2025	COMESA, MS	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000	27,000	135,000
Improved Statistical Capacity at Secretariat	Build capacity of Secretariat on emerging issues related to statistical clusters relevant to the MTSP.	2021-2025	COMESA	37,000	37,000	37,000	37,000	37,000	185,000
	Participate in international statistical fora.	2021-2025	COMESA	28,800	28,800	28,800	28,800	28,800	144,000
	Contribute articles to statistical journals and publications.	2021-2025	COMESA	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Strategic Objective 4: Strengthen technologies as enablers for the statistical system</b>									
Use of technologies as enablers for the statistical system strengthened	Strengthen and/or build capacity on use of tablet/mobile based data collection for surveys in member states.	2021-2025	COMESA, MS	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000
	Undertake capacity building on Big data and data science skills including databases and other appropriate database software for statistical database administration and querying.	2021-2025	COMESA	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	300,000

	Undertake capacity building on Statistical Data and Meta Data Exchange (SDMX) capacity at Secretariat and in the Member States.	2021-2025	COMESA, AFDB	44,000	44,000	44,000	44,000	44,000	220,000
<b>Strategic Objective 5: Promote a culture of quality policy and decision making</b>									
Statistical user engagement strengthened in order to render regional statistics more responsive to policy making.	Monitor COMSTAT data portal and related mobile platforms usage analytics and user feedback.	2021-2025	COMESA	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Promote use of COMSTAT portal at COMESA technical meetings and conferences, regional and international conferences.	2021-2025	COMESA	120,000	120,000	30,000	20,000	10,000	300,000
	Undertake promotion of COMSTAT through social media and other digital platforms	2021-2025	COMESA						
	Enhance the COMSTAT users' database and feedback mechanisms	2021-2025	COMESA	-	-	-	-	-	-

Strategic Objective 6 Strengthen Strategic Partnerships for increased coordination in the development of statistics in the region									
Undertake role as SHaSA2 Regional coordinator	Coordinate the implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHASAI) strengthened at regional level	2021-2025	COMESA, AUC, MS	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000
	Monitor the implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHASAI) strengthened at national levels	2021-2025	COMESA, AUC, MS	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000
	Engage and undertake joint statistical programs with partners including other RECs.	2021-2025	COMESA, AUC, RECS	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000
	Draft best practice proposals on statistics related to the MTSP and discuss with Member states, STATCOM Africa and AUC CODGs for potential adoption.	2021-2025	COMESA, AUC, DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, MS	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Under the umbrella of the COMESA Resource Mobilization Strategy, develop proposals targeted at new partners for statistical development in areas related to the MTSP	2021-2025	COMESA, POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS	-	-	-	-	-	-

	Participate and network at all partner fora including the Committee of Directors General (CODGs), the Executive Committee of SHaSA II, the African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC), the Statistical Commission for Africa (STATCOM Africa) and UN Statistical Commission meetings etc.	2021-2025	COMESA	28,800	28,800	28,800	28,800	28,800	28,800	144,000
	With the support of the African Union Commission, facilitate peer review of NSDS implementation on areas of statistics supporting the MTSP among COMESA Member states and other Member states in Africa.			20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	100,000
<b>Administrative Costs</b>	Staff Costs	2021-2025	COMESA, DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS	1,248,000	1,248,000	1,248,000	1,248,000	1,248,000	1,248,000	6,240,000
	<b>STRATEGIC GOALS</b>									5,647,000
	<b>ADMIN COSTS</b>									6,240,000
	<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>									<b>11,887,000</b>

# ANNEX II

### TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON COMESA CUSTOMS AUTOMATION

#### I. BACKGROUND

1. In terms of Article 71 (1) of the COMESA Treaty, Member States undertook to, where appropriate, design and standardise their trade documents and the information required to be contained in such documents in accordance with internationally accepted standards, practices and guidelines, and taking into account their possible use in computer and other automatic data programming systems. In addition, Article 71 (2) of the COMESA Treaty stipulates that the simplification, harmonisation and standardisation of customs regulations, documents and procedures and their computerisation will be facilitated by the regional Automated System for Customs Data Centre at the Headquarters of the Common Market.
2. In relation to the implementation of the Treaty, the provisions of the Customs Management Regulations (CMRs) regarding the scope and use of information technology under the regulations 55 to 59, urge the competent authorities to, as far as is practicable, make use of information and communication technology in support of their prevailing customs procedures.
3. In 2013 the COMESA Secretariat signed a MoU with IUNCTAD related to developing and upgrading of ASYCUDA systems. Following on this initiative, in 2018, the Secretariat and UNCTAD signed a Co-delegation Agreement under EDF 11 – Trade Facilitation Programme to develop and implement a Customs Automation Regional Support Centre (CARSC) and Regional Trade Information Portal (RTIP) at the Head Quarters of the Secretariat. The objective was to standardize the Customs Management Systems environments in the region and to provide sustainable support to all Member States, through the expertise that will be enhanced in these Member States, in maintaining Customs automated systems and developing new solutions that will facilitate trade in the region.
4. The 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Council of Ministers, held in July 2018, decided that Member States should collaborate with the Secretariat in the establishment and implementation of the CARSC with the view to continue providing technical and functional training support, system analysis and development. The implementation of CARSC and other inter-connectivity platforms requires the Customs Automation Experts (Customs Procedures and IT Experts) at regional and national levels to work closely and collaborate with stakeholders from public and private sectors and share experiences and information through consultation meetings and other methods.
5. The COMESA Heads of Customs Sub-committee (HCSC) was re-instituted by the 33<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Council of Ministers that was held on 08 – 09 December 2014 in Lusaka, Zambia. The mandate of the HCSC is to provide institutional guidance on common customs activities linking the regional with national levels in coordinating the regional and national customs procedures and activities. Prior to the HCSC meeting, Customs Experts should discuss and agree on a comprehensive annual

work programme on customs and trade facilitation related area for consideration and possible adoption by the Heads of Customs.

6. Pursuant to the provisions of COMESA Treaty and CMRs, there are established technical work groups in different subject area that include TWG on Rules of Origin, TWG on capacity building, TWG on AEO.
7. It is against the above-mentioned backgrounds that the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for Technical Working Group on Customs Automation (TWG-CA) have been developed.

## **II. MANDATE**

8. The TWG-CA is established in order to initiate work and studies on all aspects of the use of Information Technology and the management of information systems in the Customs area, with a view to allowing for greater trade facilitation, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of Customs control and identifying potentials for improving existing systems and reducing costs of doing business.
9. The TWG-CA reports to the HCSC and supports the HCSC in its efforts to assist Member States in implementing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) related projects. The HCSC will co-operating with the COMESA Secretariat, other governmental and non-governmental international organizations, and promoting close co-operation with other international organizations, and international standards setting agencies for the interchange of Customs information among Customs administrations and between Customs administrations and trade participants. To this end the TWG-CA will take those actions which support the COMESA Strategic Plan, Customs and Trade Facilitation Work Programme, and related projects and Council Decisions.
10. At the conclusion of each meeting, the TWG-CA shall approve a list of proposals or recommendations to be submitted to the HCSC for consideration. The draft report of each session of the TWG-CA will be distributed to delegates after the session for their written / oral comments. The TWG-CA shall approve its report on the last day of each session.

## **III. MEETINGS SCHEDULE AND AGENDA**

11. The Members of the TWG-CA shall meet as and when required and subject to approval by the Secretary General provided that it holds at least one meeting per year either in person or virtually upon invitation from the Secretariat.
12. The TWG-CA shall elect the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Rapporteur from among the members of the TWG-CA for a period of twelve months. The outgoing Chairperson and Rapporteur shall be eligible for re-election for only one more term of office.

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13. The meetings will be held with simultaneous interpretation in Arabic, English and French and all working documents will be available in French and English.
  14. The general administrative arrangements for the TWG-CA including the date and duration of each session and the priorities to be fixed for the items on the TWG's Agenda, shall be the responsibility of the Secretary General in consultation with the Member States subject to adoption by the participants in each of the TWG-CA meetings.

#### **IV. COMPOSITION / MEMBERSHIP**

15. Membership of the TWG-CA shall be open to all COMESA Member States and the Secretariat shall provide secretarial service to the TWG-CA. The TWG-CA shall comprise Customs officials and IT Experts in Customs Automation of the Member States who are appointed by the Secretary General of COMESA from nominations submitted in writing by the relevant authority in each Member State. The experts shall serve in their individual capacities.
16. In addition, representatives of international organizations, business / private sector associations in their individual capacities, may attend sessions of the TWG as observers upon invitation by the Secretary General.

#### **V. RULES OF PROCEDURES**

17. The TWG-CA shall be bound by the same rules of procedure applicable to the HCSC.

#### **VI. SPECIFIC TASKS OF THE TWG-CA**

18. The specific tasks of the TWG -CA shall include the following:
  - a. prepare and implement an annual work plan which will also be informed by the work plan and decisions emanating from the HCSC.
  - b. undertake periodic reviews of the Customs Automation Systems and Implementation of Interconnectivity in the region to ensure that they remain consistent with the aims and objectives of the COMESA Treaty.
  - c. submit recommendations for improvements in Customs Automation Systems and Implementation of Interconnectivity in the region to the COMESA HCSC as appropriate.
  - d. develop, enhance and maintain tools and instruments related to the implementation of harmonized and standardized use of Customs Automation systems and exchange of electronic information in accordance with the provisions of the COMESA Treaty, CMRs, Revised Kyoto Convention and the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation and other similar standards.
  - e. promote, in close co-operation with other international organizations, the implementation of ICT, including the WCO Data Model, other international



standards (e.g., UN/EDIFACT), and emerging technologies for the exchange of Customs information among Customs administrations and between Customs administrations and trade participants including new and emerging stakeholders in the e-commerce supply chain.

- f. assist the region in conducting studies and exchanging of experiences on areas of customs automation and inter-connectivity platforms related to trade and transport facilitation instruments and provide improvement recommendations for consideration by the HCSC;
- g. provide advice and guidance to Member States on the frameworks and standards of interconnectivity platforms of the ASYCUDA systems and other Customs management systems in line with the international and regional standards.
- h. provide expert contribution in developing and implementation of a harmonized and standardized regional digital free trade area (FTA) instruments including customs management systems, trade facilitation portals, electronic certificate of origin, digital RCTG, e-cargo tracking system, and e-single window systems of all COMESA Member States.
- i. evaluate and keep Member States informed of new Information and Communication Technology (ICT) developments and their impact on Customs and provide assistance in streamlining current procedures, in progressively adopting new developments and upgrades in ICT;
- j. develop and implement a work plan for a Regional Fellowship Programme on Customs Automation to establish a sustainable capacity building programme that will enable the experts from Member States to develop, modify and maintain new developments in ASYCUDA System and other Customs Management Systems and enhance interconnectivity with aim to boost the trade facilitation and effective customs controls across the region;
- k. support in developing, validating and implementation of training and capacity building materials and programmes on customs automation and related areas to Customs and border officers and other key private stakeholders;
- l. examine specific technical problems arising from the day-to-day administration of the customs systems and electronic exchange of customs information and recommend solutions to the HCSC; and
- m. exercise such other responsibility as may, from time to time, be assigned to it by the HCSC.

## VII. COSTS AND EXPENSES

19. Subject to availability of funding, the Secretariat shall bear the costs and expenses of the nominated and approved delegates from the Member States, the Secretariat and invited guests who will participate in the TWG-CA Meetings. However, other

participants or delegates shall bear their own costs to participate in the meetings of the TWG-CA. The same shall apply to all delegates where the Secretariat may not be able to sponsor the delegates.

# ANNEX III

## Rules of Procedure for Technical Working Group on Capacity Building

**PURSUANT TO COUNCIL DECISION OF ITS FORTY-FIRST MEETING OF 26 NOVEMBER 2020,  
THE RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP (TWG) ON CUSTOMS  
CAPACITY BUILDING ARE HEREBY MADE:**

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**Rule 1**

**Background**

The Thirty-Fifth Council of Ministers in its meeting of 7- 8 December 2015 in Lusaka, Zambia, decided that there should be a regional approach to the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).

In line with the said Council decision, the Forty-First Council of Ministers, in its virtual meeting of 26 November 2020, established the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Customs Capacity Building (CCB) with the view of assisting the region in developing capacity in customs.

These Rules may be cited as the Rules of Procedure of the Technical Working Group on Customs Capacity Building.

**Rule 2**

**Election of Members of Bureau and Meetings**

1. The TWG - CCB shall elect, from among its members, members of the Bureau consisting of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur, who shall hold office for a term of one year.
2. If the Chairperson is absent from a meeting, the Vice-Chairperson shall preside over the meeting.
3. If both the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are absent from meeting, the Rapporteur shall preside over the meeting.
4. If the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Rapporteur are absent from a meeting, the members present shall elect a member from amongst them to preside over the meeting.

**Rule 3**

**Frequency, Venue of Meetings and Costs**

1. The TWG - CCB shall meet at least twice a year and as often as their mandate to complete assigned work as required.
2. All meetings of the TWG - CCB shall be convened by the Secretary General by order of the Chairperson. Invitations for the meetings of the TWG - CCB to members, advisors and observers shall be issued by the Secretary General in consultation with the Chairperson.
3. The meetings of the TWG - CCB shall be held at the Headquarters of COMESA except where a member has offered to host a meeting and the offer has been accepted.

4. The costs for holding meetings of the TWG - CCB shall be supported by the EDF funded Trade Facilitation Programme during its implementation period and the Secretariat will arrange for on-going funding for operations of the TWG at the end of the TFP.

## **Rule 4**

### **Voting**

1. The TWG will endeavour to approach matters expertly and objectively and only as a last resort and when all other avenues have failed, The Bureau may decide that a matter under consideration by the TWG - CCB be voted by secret ballot.
2. Every member shall have one vote.
3. Observers invited to meetings of the TWG -CCB shall have no right to vote.

## **Rule 5**

### **Conduct of Business of Meetings of TWG – CCB**

1. At the beginning of each meeting, the TWG - CCB shall adopt its agenda and work programme.
2. The Chairperson shall open and close the meetings, direct discussions, give speakers the floor in the order in which it is requested, submit matters under discussion for decision and announce the decision and rule on questions of procedure in accordance with these Rules.

## **Rule 6**

### **Secretariat Services of the Meetings of the TWG - CCB**

The Secretariat services of the meetings of the TWG - CCB shall be provided by the Secretary-General who shall keep the minutes of the meetings of the TWG - CCB and shall as soon as possible, transmit copies thereof to the members.

## **Rule 7**

### **Languages**

The working languages of the TWG - CCB shall be Arabic, English and French and will be guided by the current membership of the TWG.

## **Rule 8**

### **Amendment**

These Rules may be amended at a meeting of the TWG - CCB.

## **Rule 9**

### **Entry into Force**

These Rules shall enter into force once they have been adopted by the TWG - CCB.

## **Rule 10**

### **Miscellaneous**

If there is any doubt as to the procedure to be followed in any particular case, or if no procedure is prescribed by or under these Rules, the procedure to be followed shall be determined by the TWG - CCB.

# ANNEX IV

**Technical Working Group on COMESA Customs Automation**

# Technical Working Group on COMESA Customs Automation

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### BACKGROUND

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1. In terms of Article 71 (1) of the COMESA Treaty, Member States undertook to, where appropriate, design and standardise their trade documents and the information required to be contained in such documents in accordance with internationally accepted standards, practices and guidelines, and taking into account their possible use in computer and other automatic data programming systems. In addition, Article 71 (2) of the COMESA Treaty stipulates that the simplification, harmonisation and standardisation of customs regulations, documents and procedures and their computerisation will be facilitated by the regional Automated System for Customs Data Centre at the Headquarters of the Common Market.
2. In relation to the implementation of the Treaty, the provisions of the Customs Management Regulations (CMRs) regarding the scope and use of information technology under the regulations 55 to 59, urge the competent authorities to, as far as is practicable, make use of information and communication technology in support of their prevailing customs procedures.
3. In 2013 the COMESA Secretariat signed a MoU with IUNCTAD related to developing and upgrading of ASYCUDA systems. Following on this initiative, in 2018, the Secretariat and UNCTAD signed a Co-delegation Agreement under EDF 11 – Trade Facilitation Programme to develop and implement a Customs Automation Regional Support Centre (CARSC) and Regional Trade Information Portal (RTIP) at the Head Quarters of the Secretariat. The objective was to standardize the Customs Management Systems environments in the region and to provide sustainable support to all Member States, through the expertise that will be enhanced in these Member States, in maintaining Customs automated systems and developing new solutions that will facilitate trade in the region.
4. The 38th Meeting of Council of Ministers, held in July 2018, decided that Member States should collaborate with the Secretariat in the establishment and implementation of the CARSC with the view to continue providing technical and functional training support, system analysis and development. The implementation of CARSC and other inter-connectivity platforms requires the Customs Automation Experts (Customs Procedures and IT Experts) at regional and national levels to work closely and collaborate with stakeholders from public and private sectors and share experiences and information through consultation meetings and other methods.
5. The COMESA Heads of Customs Sub-committee (HCSC) was re-instituted by the 33<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Council of Ministers that was held on 08 – 09 December 2014 in Lusaka, Zambia. The mandate of the HCSC is to provide institutional guidance on common customs activities linking the regional with national levels in coordinating the regional and national customs procedures and activities. Prior to the HCSC meeting, Customs Experts should discuss and agree on a comprehensive annual work programme on customs and



trade facilitation related area for consideration and possible adoption by the Heads of Customs.

- 6 Pursuant to the provisions of COMESA Treaty and CMRs, there are established technical work groups in different subject area that include TWG on Rules of Origin, TWG on capacity building, TWG on AEO.
- 7 It is against the above-mentioned backgrounds that the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for Technical Working Group on Customs Automation (TWG-CA) have been developed.

## **MANDATE**

- 8 The TWG-CA is established in order to initiate work and studies on all aspects of the use of Information Technology and the management of information systems in the Customs area, with a view to allowing for greater trade facilitation, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of Customs control and identifying potentials for improving existing systems and reducing costs of doing business.
9. The TWG-CA reports to the HCSC and supports the HCSC in its efforts to assist Member States in implementing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) related projects. The HCSC will co-operating with the COMESA Secretariat, other governmental and non-governmental international organizations, and promoting close co-operation with other international organizations, and international standards setting agencies for the interchange of Customs information among Customs administrations and between Customs administrations and trade participants. To this end the TWG-CA will take those actions which support the COMESA Strategic Plan, Customs and Trade Facilitation Work Programme, and related projects and Council Decisions.
10. At the conclusion of each meeting, the TWG-CA shall approve a list of proposals or recommendations to be submitted to the HCSC for consideration. The draft report of each session of the TWG-CA will be distributed to delegates after the session for their written / oral comments. The TWG-CA shall approve its report on the last day of each session.

## **MEETINGS SCHEDULE AND AGENDA**

11. The Members of the TWG-CA shall meet as and when required and subject to approval by the Secretary General provided that it holds at least one meeting per year either in person or virtually upon invitation from the Secretariat.
12. The TWG-CA shall elect the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Rapporteur from among the members of the TWG-CA for a period of twelve months. The outgoing Chairperson and Rapporteur shall be eligible for re-election for only one more term of office.
13. The meetings will be held with simultaneous interpretation in Arabic, English and French and all working documents will be available in French and English.
14. The general administrative arrangements for the TWG-CA including the date and duration of each session and the priorities to be fixed for the items on the TWG's Agenda, shall be the responsibility of the Secretary General in consultation with the Member States subject

to adoption by the participants in each of the TWG-CA meetings.

## **COMPOSITION / MEMBERSHIP**

15. Membership of the TWG-CA shall be open to all COMESA Member States and the Secretariat shall provide secretarial service to the TWG-CA. The TWG-CA shall comprise Customs officials and IT Experts in Customs Automation of the Member States who are appointed by the Secretary General of COMESA from nominations submitted in writing by the relevant authority in each Member State. The experts shall serve in their individual capacities.
16. In addition, representatives of international organizations, business / private sector associations in their individual capacities, may attend sessions of the TWG as observers upon invitation by the Secretary General.

## **RULES OF PROCEDURES**

17. The TWG-CA shall be bound by the same rules of procedure applicable to the HCSC.

## **SPECIFIC TASKS OF THE TWG-CA**

18. The specific tasks of the TWG -CA shall include the following:
  - a) prepare and implement an annual work plan which will also be informed by the work plan and decisions emanating from the HCSC.
  - b) undertake periodic reviews of the Customs Automation Systems and Implementation of Interconnectivity in the region to ensure that they remain consistent with the aims and objectives of the COMESA Treaty.
  - c) submit recommendations for improvements in Customs Automation Systems and Implementation of Interconnectivity in the region to the COMESA HCSC as appropriate.
  - d) develop, enhance and maintain tools and instruments related to the implementation of harmonized and standardized use of Customs Automation systems and exchange of electronic information in accordance with the provisions of the COMESA Treaty, CMRs, Revised Kyoto Convention and the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation and other similar standards.
  - e) promote, in close co-operation with other international organizations, the implementation of ICT, including the WCO Data Model, other international standards (e.g., UN/EDIFACT), and emerging technologies for the exchange of Customs information among Customs administrations and between Customs administrations and trade participants including new and emerging stakeholders in the e-commerce supply chain.
  - f) assist the region in conducting studies and exchanging of experiences on areas of customs automation and inter-connectivity platforms related to trade and transport facilitation instruments and provide improvement recommendations for consideration by the HCSC;
  - g) provide advice and guidance to Member States on the frameworks and standards of interconnectivity platforms of the ASYCUDA systems and other Customs

- management systems in line with the international and regional standards.
- h) provide expert contribution in developing and implementation of a harmonized and standardized regional digital free trade area (FTA) instruments including customs management systems, trade facilitation portals, electronic certificate of origin, digital RCTG, e-cargo tracking system, and e-single window systems of all COMESA Member States.
  - i) evaluate and keep Member States informed of new Information and Communication Technology (ICT) developments and their impact on Customs and provide assistance in streamlining current procedures, in progressively adopting new developments and upgrades in ICT;
  - j) develop and implement a work plan for a Regional Fellowship Programme on Customs Automation to establish a sustainable capacity building programme that will enable the experts from Member States to develop, modify and maintain new developments in ASYCUDA System and other Customs Management Systems and enhance interconnectivity with aim to boost the trade facilitation and effective customs controls across the region;
  - k) support in developing, validating and implementation of training and capacity building materials and programmes on customs automation and related areas to Customs and border officers and other key private stakeholders;
  - l) examine specific technical problems arising from the day-to-day administration of the customs systems and electronic exchange of customs information and recommend solutions to the HCSC; and
  - m) exercise such other responsibility as may, from time to time, be assigned to it by the HCSC.

## **COSTS AND EXPENSE**

19. Subject to availability of funding, the Secretariat shall bear the costs and expenses of the nominated and approved delegates from the Member States, the Secretariat and invited guests who will participate in the TWG-CA Meetings. However, other participants or delegates shall bear their own costs to participate in the meetings of the TWG-CA. The same shall apply to all delegates where the Secretariat may not be able to sponsor the delegates.

# ANNEX V

## **Customs and Trade Facilitation Work Programme (2021-2023)**

1. The Secretariat is currently finalizing the Medium-Term Strategic Plan for 2021 to 2025 which will have an impact on key interventions under the next 3-year cycle customs and trade facilitation work programme.
2. The Revised MTSP has accounted for strategic environmental drivers such as the shift to automation for cross-border regulatory clearance processes as a response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the experience of Member States in mobilizing technical and financial resources and implementation of WTO TFA Measures and the continued low levels of intra-regional trade and high costs for cross-border trade and prevalence of non-tariff barriers.
3. The draft MTSP has identified the following Results/ Outcomes under the Customs and Trade Facilitation component with attendant indicators of performance:

**Implementation Plan of the MTSP2021-2025 under Market integration pillar (Selected interventions)**

Result/outcome	Indicator
<b>1.1.2 Enhanced regional trade environment through implementation of customs union and trade facilitation instruments in line with the international standards and best practices</b>	1.1.2.1: Number of priority Customs union and trade facilitation instruments implemented by Member States (MS) in the region
	1.1.2.2: COMESA market integration policy domestication Index
	1.1.2.3: % of policies and programs on regional trade that are domesticated by at least 15 MS
	1.1.2.4: Average time for clearing of import goods across borders in COMESA
	1.1.2.5: Average clearance time to export along major trade corridors within COMESA
	1.1.2.6: Average cross border trade costs in the region
	1.1.2.7: % of reported non-tariff barriers (NTBs) among the Member States that are eliminated
	1.1.2.8: Number of official border points that have support desks to ease movement of COMESA citizens across MS.
	1.1.2.9: Number of Member States issuing Visas at the point of entry for citizens from all the 21 MS of COMESA
	1.1.2.10: Number of MS implementing at least one aspect of the protocol on free movement of persons and services
	1.1.2.11: Number of signatures and ratifications received for the protocol on free movement of goods and services
	1.1.2.12: Number of cases concerning compliance with the COMESA treaty that are referred to the courts
	1.1.2.13: Number of COMESA Member States that have promulgated and be applying Anti Counterfeit legislation to combat trading in counterfeit commodities

<b>1.1.3 Improved Digital economic integration through implementation of digital FTA instruments supported by modern ICT infrastructure</b>	1.1.3.1: Value of exports and imports transacted through online market platform(e-commerce)
	1.1.3.2: Number of Member States connected to COMESA Trade Information Portal (TIP)
	1.1.3.3: Number of Member States implementing the electronic certificate of origin (eCO)
	1.1.3.4: Number of Member States implementing electronic Single Window Systems (eSWS)
	1.1.3.5: Number of Member States Connected to the Customs Automation Regional Support Center (CARSC) and harmonized their customs documents
	1.1.3.6: Number of Member States Implementing electronic Cargo Tracking and Monitoring System (ECTS)
	1.1.3.7: Number of Member States utilizing the REPSS as their transaction platform
	1.1.3.8: % of Border Posts supported by modern ICT infrastructure
	1.1.3.9: Number of women led business enterprises transacting through COMESA digital platform
	1.1.3.10: Number of Member States with programmes to raise awareness and enhance ICT skills among small scale cross border traders to enable them use COMESA digital platforms and services

<b>1.1.4 Strengthened regional, continental and international partnership, cooperation, collaboration and networking on issues of trade and customs</b>	1.1.4.1: Number of market integration events/ forums held jointly between COMESA and other regional and international partners
	1.1.4.2: Number of public-private initiatives on regional customs and trade facilitation matters undertaken
	1.1.4.3: Number of Regional Fora for COMESA National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFC)
	1.1.4.4: Gender composition in the COMESA National Trade Facilitation Committees
	1.1.4.5: Number of policy decisions on market integration that have been made following collaborative engagement between COMESA and other regional and international partners
	1.1.4.6: Concluded Negotiations on Phases I and II of the Tripartite FTA Agreement (TFTA)
	1.1.4.7: Number of Member States that have ratified the TFTA Agreement and deposited their instruments of ratification with the Tripartite Task Force Chair.
	1.1.4.8: Concluded Negotiations on Phases I and II of the African Continental FTA Agreement (AfCFTA)
	1.1.4.9: Number of Member States that have ratified the AfCFTA Agreement and deposited their instruments of ratification with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission
<b>1.1.5 Enhanced Capacity for implementation of regional market integration agenda, by Member States and COMESA Secretariat</b>	1.1.5.1: Number of priority capacity building training programmes on customs and trade related matters that are facilitated by COMESA
	1.1.5.2: Number of Students graduated from the COMESA Virtual University in regional integration
	1.1.5.3: Number of men and women trained on trade and customs
	1.1.5.4: Number of Member States receiving capacity building support to implement regional market integration agenda
	1.1.5.5 Number of regional integration implementation programs (RIIP)/ aid for trade programs adopted and implemented by the MS

4. Under the next work programme cycle, the Secretariat recommends that the following focus areas be given top priority:
- (a) Implementation of Customs Union;
  - (b) Implementation of regional trade facilitation instruments including digital FTA action plan in line with the international standards and best practices such as the WTO TFA and WCO;
  - (c) Support for implementation of priority WTO TFA Measures that have an impact on regional trading arrangements such as transit, AEO (including risk management

and PCA) and requisite capacity building programme.

- (d) Most of the interventions included in the above Revised MTSP Monitoring matrix are already part of the Customs and Trade Facilitation Work Programme (2018-2020) and most of the activities are on-going and have been rolled over into the next cycle of the Work Programme. Some of the indicators in the Work Programme have been updated to be consistent with the provisions of the Revised MTSP.

Annex V: Draft Customs and Trade Facilitation Work Programme (2021-2023)			
Item	Description	Performance Indicator	Comments
<b>Overall Goal:</b>  To improve the customs cooperation and trade facilitation across the region that can help member states enhance intra-regional trade and attract investments into the region and accelerating the economic growth and development of the region and further progressively move towards an integrated common market and customs union.			
<b>STRATEGIC FOCUS 1: SIMPLIFYING AND HARMONIZING CUSTOMS LEGISLATION AND PROCEDURES</b>			
<b>Output</b>	Simplified and harmonized customs legislations and procedures implemented in all member States in line with the COMESA Treaty and the international standards and best practices.	85% Implementation of a simplified and harmonized customs legislations in all member States is achieved by 2020	
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>			
1.1	Facilitating adoption and implementation of Regional Initiatives of modernization and reforms of Customs and trade facilitation procedures such as Transit, Yellow Cards, Harmonized Road user charges, RCTG, Advance Rulings (BTI and BOI), Digital FTA Management and Electronic Certificate of Origin, Single Window, Coordinated Border Management and OSBP.	8 types of Common Customs procedure on conditions for application of customs legislation simplification developed and adopted by 2020	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity



1.2	Prepare Regional Implementation Directives and Guidelines for key areas of the CMR such as Standard Customs Declaration Formats (SAD), Valuation, BTI, BOI, Single Window, AEO and Mutual Recognition and Customs Clearing Agents Certification/ permission Procedures based on the CMRs and the Treaty.	10 implementation directives and guidelines for key areas of the CMR are developed by 2023	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
1.3	Facilitate Operationalizing of the COMESA Custom Union by Supporting Member States to align and implement their laws and procedures with the COMESA CMRs, CTN and CET, and RKC and other International Conventions and agreements so that they can expedite their accession process and implement their commitments.	Policies and programmes on regional trade that are domesticated by at least 15 MS	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		All Member states are assisted to align their laws and procedures with the COMESA regional standards by 2023	
		100% of CMR is domesticated by MS by 2023	
		MS Tariff book is aligned with 90% of CTN by 2023	
		MS tariff book is aligned with 80% of CET by 2023	
1.4	Support Member states to fully implement the COMESA FTA and protocol on rules of origin, including the electronic application and issuance of Certificate of Origin and electronically exchange the eCO between MS.	ALL MS implemented the protocol on rules of origin including the electronic certificate of origin system by 2022	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		Number of MS implementing the electronic certificate of origin (eCO)	

1.5	Develop and implement a comprehensive COMESA Risk Management System (CRMS) Strategy to allow Customs administrations implement harmonized procedures.	COMESA Risk Management Strategy (CRMS) strategy is developed by 2023	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
1.6	Establish harmonized COMESA Authorized Economic Operators (CAEO) legal framework and implementing Program and procedures which promotes Mutual Recognition of authorized traders among the MS in line with the CMRs and international best practices	COMESA AEO legal framework and implementing procedures are developed and ratified by MS by 2023	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		AEO Program and procedure is established in all Member States in line with the regional framework by 2023	
		Compliance cost is reduced for the accredited AEOs	
1.7	Develop Regional Framework on Establishment of CBM and OSBP including modalities on sharing of common facilities through establishment of joint controls at the major borders and align working days and hours	Regional Framework on Establishment of CBM and OSBP developed by 2021	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		Number of Border Posts supported by modern ICT infrastructure	
1.8	Develop COMESA Self-Assessment Guide and Conduct a study to monitor and evaluate the uniform enforcement of the COMESA customs union instruments and tools by Member States	COMESA Self-Assessment Guide for Customs union instruments and tools is developed and implemented by 2021	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		Regional Survey is conducted every 2 years starting 2022	
		Number of Member States with national  Laws and procedures implemented aligned with regional laws and procedures by 2023	

1.9	Develop and implement a regional single window strategy and activities aimed at supporting the establishment of national and regional single window platforms in countries where these do not yet exist or improving their operations where they exist.	Regional single window strategy is developed and implemented by 2022	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		Number of MS implementing Electronic Single Window Systems (eSWS)	
1.10	Organize meetings, workshops, dialogues at national and regional level to promote and review implementing provisions of the customs union instruments and tools as well as the council of ministers' decisions.	National and regional meetings, workshops, dialogues are conducted by 2021-2023	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
<b>STRATEGY FOCUS 2: ENHANCE AUTOMATED AND DIGITALIZED CUSTOMS SYSTEMS</b>			
<b>Output</b>	Ensured automated and digitalized customs procedures at borders and along international trade supply chains based on international standards and best practices.	80% of implemented customs automation system in the region is being harmonized by 2020	

ACTIVITIES			
2.1	Assess the current situations of automation and Develop a Regional ICT Policy and Strategy (COMESA ICT Master Plan for Customs Automation) to allow harmonized exchange of Customs information and intelligence and to develop harmonized regional customs automation systems in line with the WCO ICT Guidelines, WCO Data Model and other best practices.	Regional IT Policy (Master Plans for Regional Customs Automation) is developed and implemented by 2022	Updated and carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		Regional Customs information and intelligence database is developed by 2023	
		Number of Member States connected to COMESA Customs Automation Regional Support Centre (CARSC)	
		% increase in number of customs procedures executed in a harmonized automation system	
2.2	Enhance use of information technology, including publication and Information available through the Internet (Website of Customs Administration) to ensure that the regulations allow data to be transmitted electronically	Member states assisted to set customs websites and avail Trade and customs information via internet by 2022	
2.3	Support MS to develop and implement Automated Systems for AEO application and decision and provide authorization for the economic operators electronically with a view of establishing a harmonized AEO system in the region.	MS implemented an automated AEO procedures by 2023	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
2.4	Develop and Operationalize Regional Digital FTA System that encompasses FTA Agreements, Origin criteria and procedures of application, and Management of issuance and verification of Certificate of Origin in all the Member States.	The regional digital FTA System and eCO system is designed and ready for use by 2021	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		All MS use the regional digital FTA System and eCO system by 2022	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity

2.5	Support Member States to develop implementation plan of Digital Customs and Single Window with view of harmonized national trade data and operationalizing the regional Single window strategy based on internationally standardized data sets and best practices.	Strategic Plan is developed to establish Regional Single Window system	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		All MS have national SW in line with Regional SW by 2022	
2.6	Establish Regional Technical Working Group on Customs Automation and Single Window (TWG-CSW) under the COMESA Head of Customs Sub-Committee (CHCSC) that will serve as regional consultative group of Customs Experts and IT experts deal with the regional ICT and Customs Automation matters to assess and propose the possible recommendations to the attention of the CHCSC.	Regional TWG on Customs Automation and Single Window is established by 2022	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
2.7	Mobilize Resources to Provide Capacity building assistance in Customs Automation and interconnectivity to Member States	Capacity built in MS	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
<b>STRATEGY FOCUS 3: IMPROVE CUSTOMS COOPERATION AND TRADE FACILITATION</b>			
<b>Output</b>	Increased volume and reduced cost/time of intra-COMESA trade and international trade through improving customs cooperation and trade facilitation in the region.	% Increased volume of intra-COMESA trade	
		% reduced cost/time of intra-COMESA trade	
		% trade facilitation instruments implemented in the Member States	

ACTIVITIES			
3.1	Adopt COMESA Regional Approach on Trade Facilitation Strategy to assist MS in conducting self-assessment and implementation of their obligations under the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement in pursue of strengthen regional integration.	Uniform application of the WTO TFA is implemented in Members States by 2023	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		Regional For a for COMESA National Trade Facilitation Committees	
		Gender composition in the COMESA National Trade Facilitation Committees	
3.2	Develop a program to publish and update regulatory information relating to import and exportation of goods and procedures on their websites for all Member States to meet the requirements of the WTO TFA	MS are assisted to publish and update their information relating to rules and regulations of import and exportation of goods on their websites by 2022	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		Number of Member States connected to the COMESA Trade Information Portal (TIP)	
3.3	Promote bilateral transit agreements between MS that could lead to implementation of a harmonized regional transit agreement and systems.	Harmonized regional transit agreement and systems are implemented in MS by 2022	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		Member States implementing electronic cargo tracking monitoring system (eCTS)	

3.4	Conduct and publish Customs Clearance Time release Studies in Member States including for those MS who were not covered in 2016/2017	TRS Studies conducted in 9 Member States by 2022	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
3.5	Prepare and implement Action Plans to improve the trade facilitation based on the results and recommendation of COMESA TRS conducted in MS	Improvement Action Plan is prepared and implemented in all MS by 2022	
3.6	Develop and implement a program under which Member States would undertake their TRS periodically at least every 3 year and share their findings at Meetings of the Trade and Customs Committee.	All Member States Conducted and Shared their TRS every year at Meetings of the Trade and Customs Committee starting by 2022	
STRATEGY FOCUS 4: IMPROVING CUSTOMS CONTROLS AND COMPLIANCE			
Output	Improved enforcement of customs laws and procedures through common customs controls and compliance measures implemented in all Member States	% increased revenue collection by 20% in the region by 2023	
		% decreased volume of smuggling and counterfeited trade by 30% in the region by 2023	
ACTIVITIES			
4.1	Review the efficacy and overall operations of existing One Stop Border Posts across the COMESA region to improve the customs control and facilitation.	75% of the existed OSBP in the region are reviewed by 2022	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
4.2	Develop a Streamlined Strategy and Action Plan for implementation of the regional CBM and OSBP at bilateral level with specific roles and responsibilities for all relevant stakeholders.	Regional Strategy and Action Plan is developed for implementation of CBM and OSBP by 2022	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
4.3	Supporting MS to have better Coordinated Border management and OSBP focusing on priority regional corridors	All Member States having strategy to implement (CBM, Single window, border agency connectivity) by 2022	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity

4.4	Improve cooperation between the customs and other regulatory bodies to ensure application of the COMESA regional SW, CBM, OSBP and Customs interconnectivity concept and developing of common customs facilities.	Support is provided with establishing of 8 CBM and OSBP practices in the region by 2022	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		National Single Window(NSW) is Operational in all Member States by 2023	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		The Regional Single Window (CSW) legal framework is established and is Operational by 2022	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
4.5	Supporting MS to develop and implement Common Framework and guidelines of RMS and PCA, including common criteria and priority control areas supported by application of new information technologies in line with the CMRs	Regional Common framework/guideline of RMS and PCA developed by 2022	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		MS implemented the regional framework of RMS and PCA by 2023	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
4.6	Develop and operationalize regional Enforcement and Compliance database systems for intelligence and information exchanges such as IPR, smuggling, Commercial frauds, the prohibited and restricted goods imported and to exported from the MS based on the CMR	Regional database systems for intelligence and information exchanges are developed and operationalize by 2022.	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		Number of COMESA Member States that have promulgated and are applying anti-counterfeiting legislation to combat trading in counterfeit commodities	
4.7	Strengthen cooperation and knowledge sharing with and among enforcement authorities	Studies and Reports published and shared among the MS Annually	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity



STRATEGIC FOCUS 5: ENHANCE HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING			
<b>Output</b>	Developed and implemented a Common regional Capacity and Training program and activities to enhance customs cooperation and trade facilitation across the region.	The institutional and human capacity of COMESA Customs administrations are enhanced	
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>			
5.1	Develop and implement a Common Regional Capacity building and Training Strategy and program in the fields of Customs administration to ensure that the training programs using various approaches respond to national and regional needs, both in terms of relevance and quality and utilizing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at Secretariat and Member States level.	Regional Capacity building and Training Strategy and program in the fields of Customs administration is developed by 2022	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
5.2	Promoting capacity building initiatives on Customs and Trade facilitation targeting policy makers, regulatory institutions, operators, manufacturers, importers, exporters, clearing agents, forwarding agents, transporters and academia in all the priority areas of the region and individual Member states (i.e., based on dual approach of overall and tailor-made track).	Increase number of capacity building programs implemented across the region and at individual MS by 2023. Priority capacity building training programmes on customs and trade related matters that are facilitated by COMESA Public-private initiatives on regional customs and trade facilitation matters undertaken Number of women and men trained on trade and customs	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity

5.3	Carryout training as a Training of Trainers (TOT) for Customs experts from MS and develop a database of regional training experts to provide training in respective customs areas	Number of programs of Training of Trainers (TOT) conducted in the region by 2022	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		% of Increase the number of subject matter experts in the database	
5.4	Prepare and implement Standardized Training manuals in selected areas of Customs laws and procedures such as regional integration, Transit, Rules of Origin, Tariff Classification, Valuation, PCA, Risk management, AEO, CBM and OSBP, TRS, ICT and Customs Automation and Customs leadership and Management.	4 types of Training manuals in selected areas of Customs laws and procedures are developed and implemented by 2021-2023	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
5.5	Strengthen collaborating and strategic partnerships with leading policy think tanks, research institutions, universities and institutions of higher learning in capacity building and awareness activities	Increase number of trainings and awareness workshops facilitated through partnerships	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
5.6	Strengthen the Exchange programs on knowledge and skills capacity among the COMESA Member States	Number of exchange programs by 2023	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
5.7	Institutionalize the TRS by establishing Units or departments within the Customs Services and building the capacity of staffs so that a sustainable TRS is undertaken periodically at least every 3 years and the finding is published at website of national and regional level	Capacity is built and TRS is institutionalized in all MS by 2022.	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
		MS conducted their TRS and published the findings every 3 years starting 2022.	

5.8	Conduct Study of best practices and benchmarks in Customs matters to strengthen the experience sharing among the Member States	10 Best experiences in Customs matters are studied and shared among the Member States by 2023.	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
5.9	Assist Member States to align and implement their national laws and procedures in line with the COMESA Treaty, laws and protocols and the council decisions and the Medium-Term Strategic Plan (2016-2020).	Number of MS assisted to align their national laws and procedures in line with the COMESA laws and procedures.	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
5.10	Strengthen the COMESA E-learning platform to provide a uniform and standard training on Customs related topics to government officials and private sectors in the region in all official languages (i.e., English, French and Arabic) of COMESA.	government officials and private sectors from all MS participated in the E-learning program	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
5.11	Promoting the establishment and operationalizing the COMESA School of Regional Integration offering residential, online and executive courses including the Customs related courses.	Percentage of MS receiving relevant certification	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activity
<b>STRATEGIC FOCUS 6. STRENGTHEN THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS</b>			
<b>Output</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improved internal technical capacity and skills transfer, access to resources, lower transaction and finance costs,</li> <li>2. Increased use of uniform standards and practices</li> <li>3. Collective ownership of decisions and obligations</li> <li>4. Reduction of overlap in use of available resources</li> </ol>	Strategic partnerships are increased among member states and with dev't partners, business sectors and universities and institutes.	

ACTIVITIES			
6.1	Fostering the regional customs cooperation and trade facilitation agenda through collaboration between COMESA institutions, Secretariat, Member States, the private sector and other stakeholders	% increase in the implementation of council decisions on Customs and trade facilitation issues	Carried over from 2018-2020 and an-going activities
6.2	Strengthen partnership and provide a consolidated platform for effective coordinating needs and priorities of all stakeholders in building capacity of the region	Needs and priorities of all stakeholders is assessed and consolidated by 2022	
		Required resource is mobilised in collaboration with development partners by 2021-2023	
6.3	Collaboration on surveys, need assessment and impact assessment in selected program areas	Number of baseline surveys and impact Assessment by 2022	
6.4	Collaborating with respect to access and development of information systems (databases) to implement regional integration programs either through donor funding or through international cooperation	Number of recorded signed MOUs with development partners to access and development of information systems (databases) by 2022	
6.5	Organizing national and regional Workshops on AEO Program with the business sector to promote customs-business partnership, particularly in technical features of AEO program and discuss their readiness to implement the program properly; to develop common selection criteria and benefits; and to establish common mutual recognition Agreement of AEO Program	Number of Regional Workshop on AEO Programme is conducted by 2023	
		Regional Framework for Mutual Recognition Agreement of AEO Program is established by 2022	
6.6	Strengthen partnership with Universities and Research institutes to upgrade the capacity of Knowledge and Education in Customs Administration field in the region in line with the WCO Partnership in Customs Academic Research and Development (PICARD) Program 2020.	A partnership agreement on Customs education and training is established with ten Universities and Research Institutes by 2022	
		Percentage of MS receiving relevant certification	

6.7	Promoting use of performance measurement and results-based management to improve the implementation of programs and the benefits of partnership in capacity building.	Results-based Performance management is implemented	
6.8	Develop database of responsible bodies and focal persons in Customs Administrations of MS and Improve close contacts with MS through national focal points to facilitate and achieve the regional programs	Database of responsible bodies and focal persons in Customs Administrations of MS is developed and shared among MS	
		Improved level of implementation of regional programs.	

# ANNEX VI

**COMESA Regional Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Training Material**

Course Title: COMESA AEO TRAINING COURSE	
Course description	The COMESA AEO training course covers introduction to AEO concept, the legal framework, the global supply chain and its actors, AEO requirements, criteria and benefits, validation process and the post-validation management.
Overall goals:	<p>In furtherance of trade facilitation, the COMESA has adopted the AEO concept. In this regard, the AEO implementation guidelines have been adopted, AEO SOP manual developed. Whereas these instruments create the necessary enabling environment, capacity building for operationalization of the AEO is critical.</p> <p>The overall objective of the AEO training course is to build organisational capacity to carry out AEO validation.</p>
Learning outcomes	<p>At the end of this course the participants will be able to:</p> <p>Understand the background of the AEO Programme and the SAFE Framework of Standards</p> <p>Explain the supply chain environment and security standards;</p> <p>Explain in detail the AEO Programme (Eligibility requirements, Criteria, and Benefits);</p> <p>Describe the AEO Pre-Validation, AEO Validation and Post-Validation Process;</p> <p>Respond to complex or unclear cases in the area of Validation expertise;</p> <p>Describe the organizational framework needed for the implementation of the AEO programme within both Customs and business.</p>
<i>Module I: Introduction and background of AEO programme</i>	
<i>Module objectives</i>	<p>At the end of this module the trainee should be able to:</p> <p>Define the global supply chain and the role of Customs Administrations in it</p> <p>Describe the concept and purpose of an AEO programme from international (the WCO) perspective</p> <p>Describe the areas of cooperation with other border agencies in the implementation of an AEO programme</p> <p>Describe the existing supply chain security standards</p> <p>Describe the underlying principles for positive engagement of the trading community in the implementation of an AEO programme</p> <p>Define the concept of a Mutual Recognition Arrangement/ Agreement (MRA) and its application</p>
<i>Module II: Understanding the complexities of the global supply chain and its actors</i>	

	<i>Module objectives</i>	<p>At the end of this module the trainee should be able to:</p> <p>Describe the business models</p> <p>Define the IT business environments</p> <p>Describe the nature of the business, the modes of transport and company size</p>
	<i>Module III: AEO legal framework</i>	
	<i>Module Objectives</i>	<p>At the end of this module the trainee should be able to:</p> <p>Describe the COMESA regional integration process</p> <p>Outline the AEO legal Framework</p>
	<i>Module IV: AEO Requirements, Criteria, and Benefits</i>	
	<i>Module Objectives</i>	<p>At the end of this module the trainee should be able to:</p> <p>Describe the general requirements and eligibility criteria to apply to the AEO Programme</p> <p>Describe the compliance, satisfactory system for management of commercial records, financial, and security criteria for accession to the AEO Programme</p> <p>Describe the benefits granted under the AEO programmes</p>
	<i>Module V: AEO Validation Process – preparation phase</i>	
	<i>Module Objectives</i>	<p>At the end of this module the trainee should be able to:</p> <p>Describe the different steps of AEO Validation Process</p> <p>Undertake the preparatory phase of the Validation Process</p> <p>Describe the tools that can assist Customs</p> <p>Define Risk Management</p>
	<i>Module VI: AEO Validation Process – On-site visit</i>	
	<i>Module Objectives</i>	<p>At the end of this module the trainee should be able to:</p> <p>Prepare and carry-out an on-site validation</p> <p>Undertake Meeting company</p> <p>Describe validation techniques</p>
	<i>Module VII: Reporting and Decision</i>	



	<i>Module Objectives</i>	At the end of this module the trainee should be able to:  Identify analysis of findings for Customs management  Identify the necessary future actions  Describe the best practices throughout the validation process
	<i>Module VIII: Post-validation/authorization</i>	
	<i>Module Objectives</i>	At the end of this module the trainee should be able to:  Describe the Post-Authorization Management process of an AEO  Identify post-incident analyses  Prepare a performance management and improvement plan
Location:	COMESA Region	
Target Group:	AEO Validator profile as per the WCO AEO implementation and validation Guidance	
Training Methodology	Lectures, Examples, Case studies, Questions and Answers, Exercises, Ice breakers, Group Discussion and Presentation, simulations, role play, Job aids for facilitators	
Training mode	Physical (or virtual)	
Training Aids:	PowerPoint presentations  Handouts  Flip charts and Markers  Laptops, Projectors, Screen, Pointer  Videos	
Number of trainees	20	
Organizer:	COMESA Secretariat	
Reference	COMESA AEO Legal Framework  COMESA AEO Implementation Guidelines Manual  AEO Standard Operating Procedures Manual  COMESA Customs Management Regulations, 2009  COMESA Treaty	

# ANNEX VIII

## **Terms of Reference for the COMESA Regional Technical Working Group on Authorized Economic Operator**

### 1. Background

The Thirty Seventh Council of Ministers meeting adopted a three- year customs and trade facilitation work program (2018 – 2020) which prioritized the development of harmonised criteria for granting the status of authorised economic operator in line with the Customs Management Regulation (CMR) and WCO SAFE Framework of Standards. This work programme is being updated to run to 2023.

COMESA Member States have developed and adopted the COMESA Regional AEO Programme Implementation Guidelines. The main objective of the guidelines is to provide for regionally harmonised procedures and criteria for granting the status of AEO in line with the CMR, WCO SAFE Framework of Standards and WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, and to facilitate the implementation of harmonised and standardised AEO Programme and Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) throughout the region and facilitate and secure the intra-regional and international trade. The COMESA Regional AEO Guidelines were adopted by Council in November 2019.

In order to have a well-rounded implementation and management of an AEO programme, best practices require that an AEO Technical Working Group comprising of representatives from Customs to discuss AEO implementation related issues be established. Best practices further require the Technical Working Group to have Terms of Reference drawn up.

It is against this background that these Terms of Reference for Technical Working Group (TWG) on AEO have been developed.

### 2. Mandate

The Technical Working Group on Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) is established for the purpose of addressing issues in relation to the implementation of the COMESA Regional AEO programme. It will be guided by and report to the Heads of Customs Sub-Committee.

### 3. Purpose and Scope

The purpose and scope of the TWG on AEO is to discuss all relevant issues around the design and roll-out a globally recognized COMESA Regional AEO Programme within COMESA region and come up with proposals for practical solutions for the implementation of the Regional AEO programme.

The TWG on AEO shall advise, as appropriate, the Heads of Customs Sub-Committee on specific issues concerning AEO. Such issues may include, but are not limited to, the developments in the area of AEO implementation, the provision of enhanced benefits for participants in the COMESA regional AEO programme, and possible cost-saving opportunities for both the COMESA Member States and the regional AEOs. In addressing the above-mentioned issues, the following activities will be carried out:

- To provide guidance to the Directorate of Trade and Customs to fast track the implementation of the regional AEO programme;

- To monitor the developments under the COMESA Regional AEO programme;
- To promote visibility of the regional AEO programme;
- To develop monitoring and evaluation mechanism that provides feedback on whether the benefits have been met; and
- To develop a list of indicators of performance for the Regional Consultative Group.

#### **4. Membership**

Membership of the TWG shall comprise of the Representatives of all COMESA Member States Customs comprising of the National AEO nodal contact point. The TWG on AEO may invite partner international governmental and non-governmental organizations, and representatives of the Private Sector and other external stakeholders, to attend the meetings as necessary with the observer status.

#### **5. Key Deliverables**

The key deliverables of the TWG on AEO are to:

- explore, evaluate and suggest relevant actions and measures at both policy and technical levels for enhanced implementation of the AEO scheme within COMESA;
- develop guidelines/frameworks, as appropriate, on identified issues relating to AEO;
- submit progress reports after each meeting of the TWG on AEO, with concrete proposals and recommendations, to the Heads of Customs Sub-Committee, for consideration, endorsement and policy guidance, as appropriate.

#### **6. Means of operations**

Members of the TWG on AEO shall meet at least twice a year in person or virtually upon invitation from the Secretariat.

The TWG on AEO shall elect the Chairperson and Rapporteur from among the members of the TWG on AEO. The outgoing Chairperson and Rapporteur shall be eligible for re-election.

The meetings will be held with simultaneous interpretation in Arabic, English and French and all working documents will be available in Arabic, English and French.

The Secretariat, in consultation with the Chairperson, may on occasion extend an invitation to any relevant experts or organizations as required, including for consultations, contributions and/or presentations.

The time to be allocated for the sessions will be determined by the scope of issues to be discussed.

The location of the TWG sessions will be decided during the working session.

## **7. Secretariat Support**

The general administrative arrangements and provision of support services shall be the responsibility of the Secretariat in consultation with the host country.

# ANNEX VIII

## COMESA Regional AEO Implementation Roadmap

Activity	Expected output/outcome	Duration	Estimated starting/ Ending period
Organise a regional AEO workshop with the CBRAs	Sensitize the CBRAs on the COMESA AEO programme to raise awareness on AEO and seek their support to AEOs	2 days	January 2022
Organise a regional AEO workshop with the private sector stakeholders	Engage trade in the discussion and explanation of the programme and collect their views on the proposed list of benefits	2 days	January 2022
Develop a Customs-Industry Consultative Group on AEO	Developed Terms of reference for the Customs-Industry Consultative Group on COMESA AEO programme	2 weeks	January 2022
Conduct AEO diagnostics in COMESA Member States	<p>Identify gaps vis-a-vis COMESA AEO programme by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessing Members regulations related to the exchange of information with other cross-border regulatory agencies and foreign Customs administrations;</li> <li>- Assessing Members operational and technical procedures and practices in the areas of risk management, PCA, stakeholders' engagement and exchange of information;</li> <li>- Providing recommendations to address identified issues;</li> <li>- Draft AEO diagnostics report.</li> </ul>	4 months	February – May 2022
Develop the Regional Risk Management strategy and Regional Post Clearance Audit Manual to support the implementation of an AEO programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developed COMESA Risk management strategy;</li> <li>- Develop the COMESA PCA Manual.</li> </ul>	3 months	June – August 2022

Develop a centralized AEO IT platform (Electronic Operator System) interconnected with national systems for managing the Regional AEO process (application, vetting, authorization and post authorization management) and for ensuring that AEOs enjoy regional agreed benefits beyond countries where they were accredited;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developed regional IT system for the management of the AEO process, identification and exchange of information on AEOs and AEO transactions;</li> <li>- Regional and national administrators established;</li> <li>- Regional IT system development benchmarked</li> </ul>	3 months	June – August 2022
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Develop the Regional AEO programme pilot project and implement it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop the AEO pilot implementation plan, including the required structure for the COMESA AEO programme</li> <li>- Develop selection criteria for pilot regional AEOs;</li> <li>- Conduct awareness sessions on the commencement of the programme by operators;</li> <li>- Conduct an AEO training to Customs officers;</li> <li>- Start the pilot phase (test/walk through the requirements with selected pilot AEOs to see if it is workable);</li> <li>- Assess issues/success from the pilot and redefine AEO requirements and benefits, authorization and post authorization process based on all identified issues during the pilot;</li> <li>- Conduct AEO awareness activities to promote the programme to different stakeholders;</li> <li>- Develop the implementation plan of the full AEO programme, including the time frame to launch the programme;</li> <li>- Draft the AEO pilot project report.</li> </ul>	8 months	July 2022 – February 2023
Develop and implement the AEO communication visibility plan and ensure effective programme visibility, including AEO promotional materials	AEO requirements and benefits well understood by Customs officials and stakeholders	Continuous	July 2022

Implement the fully-fledged AEO programme	Launching ceremonies of the COMESA AEO programme	Continuous after the pilot phase	March 2023
Mobilize resource and provide demand driven technical assistance to Member States and oversee the implementation of regional decisions/outcomes in the framework of the project at national level;	Implementation of regional AEO decisions/outcomes by Member States	Continuous	Demand driven

# ANNEX XI

## **Modalities for Reallocation of Kenya Brown Sugar Unused Quota Shares**

1. Background information

The Council of Ministers at their 38<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Lusaka, Zambia on 14-15 July 2018 established the Kenya Sugar Safeguard Sub-Committee. The Inaugural meeting of the Sub-Committee was held on 13-14 November 2018 at the COMESA Secretariat. The main objectives of the meeting were to inaugurate the sub-committee and recall the Council decisions made on the Kenya sugar safeguard and their implementation.

The meeting recalled that Kenya sought and was granted a safeguard on sugar in 2002 as the Kenya sugar sector could not compete with the other sugar producing COMESA Member States following the commencement of the Free Trade Area. Directive No. 1 of 2007 set out the terms and conditions of the safeguard. Some of the conditions were but not limited to the following:

- ***The safeguard should continue as a Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ).***
- ***Sugar types (domestic and industrial) under HS Heading 1701 should be amalgamated into a single figure for the quota.***
- ***The size of the quota should be increased while the tariff rate applied on above quota imports of COMESA sugar should be lowered in each successive year as shown in the table below;***

Table: Quota size and above quota tariff

Year	Size of Quota (Metric Tons)	Tariff Rate above quota imports in %
2008/09	220,000	100
2009/10	260,000	70
2010/11	300,000	40
2011/12	340,000	10
1 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	No quota	0

- ***A framework for administering and monitoring the implementation of the safeguard and for liaison with the COMESA Policy organs should be established.***
- ***Kenya to submit periodic performance reports to Council through the Secretary General on all measures, activities, and improvements on the sugar sector competitiveness at least twice in each year.***

In 2015 Council underscored the importance of having a system that benefits all sugar exporting Member States and promotes intra-COMESA trade and supported the idea of Member States being given priority in bridging sugar deficit in Kenya.

The Thirty fifth Council agreed to include the following parameters in the formula for sugar quota allocation:

- SP = Sugar Production.
- SC = Sugar Consumption.

SS = Sugar Surplus (SP Minus SC); and

ST = Intra-COMESA sugar trade.

The Council noted that to promote intra-COMESA trade and local production of sugar it was important to give more weight to surplus sugar production in the formula for allocating quotas. Council agreed on the formula and requested that the adopted formula be reviewed again after a period of two years. The council decisions read ***“The formula for allocating sugar quotas should be: 70% for Sugar Surplus and 30% for Intra COMESA Trade, subject to review after two years and Kenya be requested to redistribute un-used quotas”. While the formula is***

$SQ = -0.3 ST + 0.7 SS$ .

## **2. Proposed modalities for un-used quotas of brown sugar**

As per one of the above stated decisions, the Council of Ministers has entrusted the Sugar Sub-Committee with full confidence and consideration for administering and monitoring the implementation of the safeguard and to deliver on its mandate. Following a set of Council decisions that have continuously extended the safeguards to Kenya including the latest 41st Council of Ministers meeting that granted a two (2) year extension of the Kenya sugar safeguard beginning March 2021- February 2023 based on the provisions of Article 61(2) of the Treaty, the 4<sup>th</sup> Kenya Sugar Sub-Committee Meeting held in April 2021, made recommendations among others that:

- ***Member States to submit to the Secretariat proposals on modalities to reallocate the unutilized quotas by 16th of May 2021.***
- ***The Secretariat be urged, based on the submitted proposals by the Member States, to prepare the draft modalities for reallocation of unutilized quota and circulate to Member States for comments / consideration in preparation for the extra-ordinary meeting by 1st of June 2021.***
- ***In collaboration with Member States, the Secretariat to convene an extra-ordinary meeting to discuss the proposed modalities.***

It is against this background that the following draft modalities have been developed by the Secretariat based on the submissions received from Member States for consideration by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Extra-ordinary meeting of the Kenya Sugar Safeguard Sub-Committee:

- 1) The quota year for COMESA tariff-rate brown sugar quotas runs from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December of each year.
- 2) Country quotas from brown sugar will be based on the latest available ISO statistics if available, while the Kenyan forecast deficit will be as determined by Kenya. Moreover, Kenya brown sugar quota allocations / reallocation be based on the disaggregated figures of deficit of the brown sugar only as per the council decisions issued in that regard, and accordingly the market for white refined sugar will be open to COMESA and non-COMESA exporters without quota restrictions.
- 3) Calculation of sugar surplus within the quota allocation formula (70%) be based on

brown sugar surplus figures only based on the template that will be provided by the Secretariat to member states to report statistics on brown sugar as per the council 39th council of minister decision held in November 2018.

- 4) These quotas will be calculated by the COMESA Secretariat as per the adopted formula and advised to Member States before 31<sup>st</sup> December of each year for the following year.
- 5) Kenya will issue import permits, to the extent possible, strictly in accordance with the country quotas and will be strictly controlled and managed by Kenya and the exporting country to avoid any country oversupplies that may impact on the allotted quotas of other member states. In the same spirit, for the purpose of transparency, effectiveness and efficiency, Kenya will develop and maintain an online system for issuing import licenses, in accordance with the decision of 41<sup>st</sup> meeting Council an online system to be developed should be interfaced with other systems to enable the Member States accessing the information of status of utilization of allocated quota and issuance the pre-shipment approval letter.
- 6) Quota holders shall devise mechanisms to ensure that supplies are within the quota limits. In order to effect the re-calculation, countries must submit to Kenya and copy to the Secretariat, the following information on quota reallocation in the template provided by the Secretariat by 31<sup>st</sup> August every year no later than 10<sup>th</sup> September of each year:
  - (a) Initial quota allocated;
  - (b) Quota utilization up to 30<sup>th</sup> August;
  - (c) Planned quota utilization for the remainder of the year from September to 31<sup>st</sup> December;
  - (d) Unutilized quota returned for re-allocation to countries with supply capacity;
  - (e) Country capacity to supply brown sugar to Kenya over the remaining quota period (September to 31<sup>st</sup> December) more than the country's remaining quota balance for the same period;
  - (f) By 20<sup>th</sup> September of each year, Kenya will submit to the COMESA Secretariat the status report of quota utilization as at end of August including notification of any adjustments to its deficit forecast. The unutilized quotas together with the adjustments to the deficit forecast if any will determine the quota reallocations and be notified to Member States by 30<sup>th</sup> September of each year; and
  - (g) The Secretariat to provide Member States with a template on brown sugar production consumption and surplus data needed for calculation of quota allocation and re-allocation by 31<sup>st</sup> August every year.
- 7) Member States will be subject to a penalty of 15% reduction of their annual allocation in the following year should their supply during the fiscal year is less than 80% of their adjusted allocated figure provided that:

- i. For countries not supplying the requested information by the required deadline date (10th September) it will be assumed that they will supply their quota in full;
  - ii. Should the information supplied by countries not be aligned with ISO figures on brown sugar if available, ISO figures will be regarded as correct.
- 8) Country re-allocations will be calculated pro rata for countries using the same formula and data used to establish the annual country quotas for any given year.









COMESA SECRETARIAT  
COMESA Center  
Ben Bella Road  
P.O. Box 30051



+260 211 229 725



[www.comesa.int](http://www.comesa.int)



[info@comesa.int](mailto:info@comesa.int)



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