



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa



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Capacity Building on the Use of Digital Technologies under the AfCFTA to Foster Intra-African Trade and Regional Value Chains

25 – 27 November 2025 | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
(hybrid format)

Module 2 :Preparing Your Business for the AfCFTA (Simulation) 40 min

1. Simulation (part 1) : Preparing your business for the AfCFTA: Group Exercise (30 min)

1.1 Objective:

Help participants identify the type of business they represent (hybrid, digital, or startup) and understand the applicable rules of origin and preferences under the Protocol.

1.2 Procedure:

Group division (5 min)

Participants are divided into three groups:

- **Group 1:** Hybrid SMEs (physical products sold online)
- **Group 2:** Digital service SMEs (content, training, etc.)
- **Group 3:** Digital startups (platforms, software, fintech, hosting, etc.)

Each group appoints: a rapporteur, a secretary, and a moderator.

- **Group work: Filling in the interactive grid (15 min)**
- **Quick feedback (10 min)**

Each group briefly presents: its business category, the applicable rule of origin, and the potential AfCFTA benefits.

Table : Interactive Classification Grid – Where Does Your Business Fit within the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol? (Module 2, group activity)

Analytical Elements	Guiding Questions for Participants	Your Answers / Observations
1. Type of Business	Which of these categories best describes your business? - Hybrid SME (physical products sold online) - Digital service SME (content, training, etc.) - Digital startup (platform, app, software)	
2. Concrete Example of Activity	Describe what you sell or provide online (e.g., cosmetics, e-book, training, mobile app, online service...).	
3. Nature of Product or Service	Is your product or service: - a physical good shipped to customers? - a digital content sold or distributed online? - a technological solution (platform, software, coded service)?	
4. Applicable Rules of Origin	☞ Which rules of origin apply to your business? ◆ Rules of Origin for Trade in Goods (AfCFTA – Protocol on Trade in Goods). ◆ Digital Rules of Origin (AfCFTA – Protocol on Digital Trade).	
5. Type of AfCFTA Preference	Do you know if your business can benefit from: - Tariff preferences (reduction or elimination of customs duties on physical and digital goods)? - Non-tariff preferences (non-discrimination, free movement, recognition of African content)?	
6. Expected Benefits	What concrete benefits could the AfCFTA offer to your business? (e.g., lower transport costs, access to new African markets, digital visibility, equal treatment, legal certainty, etc.)	
7. Rights and Obligations under the Protocol	Which rights or obligations apply to your business? Examples: - Protection of source code or digital content? - Compliance with data-governance rules? - Secure transactions and consumer protection?	

8. Needs and Desired Public Policies	What public measures would help your business grow in digital trade? (e.g., African hosting, financing, digital training, interoperability, African-content certification, data protection, etc.)	
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Now that participants know where their businesses fit within the Protocol, let's see whether they are ready to practically benefit from AfCFTA preferences.

2. Simulation (part 2): Preparing your business for the AfCFTA. SME Compliance Checklist & Online Origin Verification (30 min)

2.1 Objective:

Verify participants' understanding and practical readiness to apply AfCFTA rules of origin (for physical or digital products).

Through this digital link, participants can complete the exercise online, automatically obtain their score, and verify their compliance with the AfCFTA rules of origin, for both digital products and physical goods.

Digital link: <https://trade-policy.com/>

2.2 Procedure:

- **Checklist presentation (5 min)**

The trainer explains that the checklist is a self-assessment tool to evaluate the company's compliance: general understanding of rules of origin, practical application, and mastery of origin proofs.

- **Individual completion (15 min)**

Each participant ticks the columns **Yes / No /** for each of the three sections. Trainers may help clarify certain concepts (e.g. cumulation, tolerance, certificate of origin).

- **Collective debrief (5 min)**

The trainer invites 2 or 3 participants to share: the points they have mastered, the areas they need to strengthen, and the support they would require (training, technical assistance, information).

3. Expected Outcome at the End of the Session

Each participant:

- Knows which business category they belong to under the Digital Trade Protocol;
- Understands the applicable rules of origin (physical or digital);
- Has identified their strengths and weaknesses to benefit from AfCFTA preferences.