



INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST BY FIRMS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (AfCFTA) GUIDED TRADE INITIATIVE

This is a call for Expression of Interest (EOI) from product and service firms to participate in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Guided Trade Initiative (GTI). The AfCFTA is open to State Parties to conduct trade amongst themselves without charging each other customs duties. The Agreement is there to ensure that State Parties trade more amongst themselves and create wealth for Africa to benefit African populations. The GTI is one of AfCFTA's contribution to the establishment of a more sustainable and inclusive economic development model for Africa.

About AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative

AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative (GTI) is a solution-based approach to support the kick-starting of a commercially meaningful trade under the AfCFTA preferences. The initiative seeks to further test the operational, institutional, legal and trade policy environment under the AfCFTA. It was launched by the AfCFTA Secretariat in Accra, Ghana on 7 October, 2022, following an announcement of 1st January, 2021, as the official date to 'Start Trading' under AfCFTA Agreement. At the launch of GTI, there were 7 participating countries namely; Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda and Tanzania with over 100 potential traders in goods for 96 products some of which include, ceramic tiles, dried fruits, tea and processed meat, sugar, cornstarch among others.

Malawi has since applied to join the GTI Initiative after satisfying the required conditions. Therefore, the objectives of the AfCFTA GTI are to:

- (a) Demonstrate the efficiency of the legal framework of the AfCFTA instruments;
- (b) Obtain feedback on the effectiveness of the legal and institutional national systems in the participating countries;
- (c) Test the readiness of the private sector to participate in trade under the AfCFTA; and
- (d) Identify possible future interventions to increase intra-African trade and maximize the benefits of the AfCFTA.

In 2023, the AfCFTA Secretariat expanded GTI to materialise the benefits of the commencement of trade under the AfCFTA, to include trade in services and to introduce the concept of AfCFTA Trading Companies.

The Republic of Malawi has made substantive efforts towards implementing the AfCFTA Agreement, including ratifying the Agreement in 2021 and submission of Goods Market Access Offer in October 2023. Under the AfCFTA GTI, Malawi will have the opportunity to test the readiness of the private sector to participate in trade under the AfCFTA regime and identify possible future interventions to increase intra-African trade and maximize the benefits of the AfCFTA Agreement.

In this regard, the Ministry of Trade and Industry with support from the German Development Cooperation would like to invite eligible firms to submit Expressions of Interest to participate in the AfCFTA GTI. The prequalified firms will further be invited to a capacity-building workshop on how to participate in GTI.

Qualification of firms

To be part of the GTI list of pre-qualified participants from Malawi, firms should possess the qualifications below as applicable:

- (a) Be a duly registered firm with a minimum of five years' operating in Malawi
- (b) Be conversant with formal export and import procedures and documentation
- (c) Be ready to consistently export large volumes of priority products from Malawi to any part of Africa
- (d) Be capable of aggregating priority products from MSMEs for exportation

EOI process and timeline

Prospective firms should express in writing to the following address:

The Secretary for Trade and Industry
Ministry of Trade and Industry
P. O. Box 30366
Lilongwe,
Email: trademin@trade.gov.mw

The EOI should include the proposed product(s) or service(s), destination market and anticipated challenges that should be addressed for effective participation in AfCFTA GTI.

For further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the Ministry through Mr. Mayeso Msokera on 0999150618 (mayeso.msokera@trade.gov.mw) or Mr. Blessings Zitta on 0987255966 (blessings.zitta@trade.gov.mw).

All EOIs must be submitted not later than **Wednesday, 31st January, 2024**.