

Project-Framing Questions

AfCFTA Implementation & Trade Readiness

AfCFTA Implementation & Trade Readiness is an independent PHC Public Interest project established to monitor the gap between the African Continental Free Trade Area’s legal and policy framework and its practical commercial usability.

The project will maintain evidence concerning the conditions that determine whether businesses can actually make use of AfCFTA across specific countries, sectors, products and trade corridors.

Rather than treating AfCFTA as a single continent-wide condition that is either “ready” or “not ready”, the project will examine the practical factors that determine usability, including tariff schedules, Guided Trade Initiative participation, rules of origin, services offers, customs and documentation processes, national implementation structures, payment systems, domestic regulation, infrastructure and business awareness.

PHC will use Concerns, evidence, actions, proposals and periodic assessments to maintain a continuously updated picture of implementation progress, obstacles and opportunities.



PROGRAMME DEFINITION AND GOVERNANCE

BIQ01 - What is the official project or programme name, who is the sponsoring organisation, and who is the accountable executive contact?

The project is AfCFTA Implementation & Trade Readiness. It is an independent PHC Public Interest project initiated through PHC Service by Order Efficiency Ltd. The accountable executive contact is David Winter, Director of Order Efficiency Ltd and creator of PHC.

BIQ02 - What strategic need or business problem is the project intended to address?

The project addresses the gap between the legal and policy existence of AfCFTA and its practical commercial usability. It is intended to maintain evidence on the administrative, regulatory, documentary, infrastructure, payment, market-awareness and implementation conditions that determine whether businesses can actually use AfCFTA across specific countries, sectors, products and trade corridors.

BIQ03 - What are the principal project objectives, and how will success be measured?

The principal objectives are to maintain a transparent evidence base on AfCFTA implementation; identify and track Concerns that prevent practical use; monitor readiness by country, sector and corridor; convert analysis into controlled actions; support visibility of trade opportunities; identify credible trade-chain participants; and develop later PHC assessment services. Success will be measured through maintained evidence, resolved Concerns, usable readiness information, participation by businesses and stakeholders, and evidence of improved practical trade usability rather than by publication volume alone.

BIQ04 - What is included within the approved scope, and what is explicitly excluded?

Initial scope includes public-interest monitoring of AfCFTA implementation readiness, evidence collection, Concerns, actions, implementation indicators, country/sector/corridor observations, stakeholder feedback and the development of PHC assessment propositions. It does not include acting on behalf of the African Union or AfCFTA Secretariat, providing legal or customs certification, guaranteeing trade eligibility, or representing any contributor or subscriber as an official AfCFTA authority.

BIQ05 - What lifecycle stage is the project currently in, and what are the next formal decision or approval gates?

The project is at initial definition and mobilisation stage. The immediate next steps are to establish the public Project Plate, confirm the initial framing questions and evidence structure, identify a manageable starting country/corridor focus, and seek one or two founding subscription supporters. Formal decision gates have not yet been established.

BIQ06 - What governance structure applies, including boards, delegated authorities, decision rights and escalation routes?

A formal governance structure has not yet been established. Initial accountability sits with PHC Service through Order Efficiency Ltd. Governance is expected to develop as the project gains contributors, subscribers and defined workstreams, with PHC retaining control of evidence standards, Concerns, conclusions and escalation. Subscriber support must not confer control over findings.

BIQ07 - Which legal, regulatory, contractual, safety, security or policy obligations most strongly shape the project?

The project is shaped by the AfCFTA legal and policy framework, country-level tariff schedules, rules of origin, customs and certification requirements, national implementation arrangements, services offers, payment systems and relevant domestic regulation. The project itself must also avoid implying affiliation with or endorsement by the African Union, AfCFTA Secretariat, Salefu Ngbede, Adaln Technologies Limited or The Liquidity Desk unless separately agreed.

BIQ08 - What are the most important assumptions, constraints and external dependencies?

Key assumptions include continued public availability of relevant Secretariat and national evidence and stakeholder willingness to contribute practical experience. Constraints include the continental scale of AfCFTA, uneven data quality, changing implementation status, limited initial PHC resources and the need to avoid overclaiming. Dependencies include access to current public records, national implementation information, subject-matter contributors and, later, subscription or commercial funding.

BIQ09 - What approved baselines currently exist for scope, schedule, cost, risk and benefits, and when were they last reviewed?

No approved scope, schedule, cost, risk or benefits baselines have yet been formally established. The current project definition, framing questions and

BIQ10 - What are the three most important decisions or control improvements required in the next 90 days?

The three most important near-term control improvements are: establish the minimum viable public AfCFTA Project Plate and evidence structure; define the initial monitored indicators and first country/corridor focus; and establish the founding subscription proposition without compromising project independence.

DELIVERY MODEL AND ASSURANCE

PSQ01 - What delivery model is proposed, and how is the programme divided into workstreams, projects or major packages?

The proposed delivery model is an independent PHC Public Interest project maintained through PHC Service. Initial workstreams are expected to cover implementation readiness indicators, trade-friction Concerns, country/sector/corridor evidence, stakeholder and business input, and development of later commercial PHC assessments. Detailed workstream boundaries are not yet fixed.

PSQ02 - What are the principal deliverables, and what acceptance criteria will demonstrate that each is complete and fit for purpose?

Initial deliverables are the public Project Plate, populated framing questions, a structured implementation-readiness evidence base, an initial Concern set, a repeatable readiness tracker, and an initial founding-subscriber proposition. Acceptance will require clear source evidence, explicit treatment of unknowns, traceability to Concerns/actions, and wording that does not imply authority or certainty beyond the evidence.

PSQ03 - What are the key milestones, schedule drivers and current critical or near-critical paths?

No formal integrated schedule or critical path has yet been created. Immediate milestones are project setup, first public evidence baseline, first defined country/corridor focus, first founding-subscriber approach, and first £1,000 company trust/readiness assessment invitation. Schedule drivers will include available PHC capacity, evidence availability and stakeholder response.

PSQ04 - How are risks and opportunities identified, assessed, quantified, owned, treated and escalated?

Risks and opportunities will be captured as PHC Concerns, supported by evidence, assigned owners where appropriate, reviewed for current status and followed through with actions. The detailed scoring and escalation approach for this project has not yet been formally baselined.

PSQ05 - How are scope, design, schedule, cost and organisational changes proposed, assessed, approved and incorporated into the baseline?

Changes to scope, structure, tracked indicators, project narrative and commercial propositions will be reviewed through PHC project control and incorporated into the maintained project evidence. A formal change-control procedure specific to this project has not yet been issued.

PSQ06 - What assurance reviews, stage gates, peer reviews or independent challenges are required, and who has authority to accept the findings?

PHC will provide the primary internal assurance structure through maintained evidence, Concerns and periodic review. Independent challenge from subject-matter contributors may be invited. No formal external stage-gate or assurance authority has yet been appointed.

PSQ07 - How will quality requirements, verification, validation, inspection, testing and non-conformance be controlled?

Quality will be controlled primarily through source traceability, explicit separation of fact from interpretation, visible treatment of information gaps, review of updates before publication, and correction when evidence changes. Formal inspection, testing and non-conformance procedures specific to this project are not yet established.

PSQ08 - What are the most important technical, organisational and contractual interfaces, and how are they managed?

Key interfaces include AfCFTA continental policy, national implementation bodies, customs and certification processes, domestic regulators, payment systems, logistics providers, exporters, manufacturers, SMEs, trade associations, financiers and potential subscribers. These interfaces will initially be managed through PHC evidence links, Concerns, stakeholder records and defined actions.

PSQ09 - What procurement and supply-chain strategy applies, particularly for specialist, long-lead or safety-significant items?

No major procurement programme is currently planned. Specialist inputs may later be required from trade, customs, legal, tax, logistics, payments or sector experts. Any procurement approach should preserve independence and avoid presenting paid contributors as validating conclusions automatically.

PSQ10 - How will commissioning, handover, operational readiness and benefits realisation be planned and evidenced?

Operational readiness for the public project will be demonstrated when the Project Plate, initial evidence base, first readiness indicators and first live Concerns are usable and maintainable. Benefits realisation will be evidenced through useful stakeholder engagement, trusted repeat use, resolved implementation Concerns and eventual paid PHC Service participation.

SYSTEMS, INFORMATION AND EVIDENCE CONTROL

PEQ01 - Which systems are the authoritative sources for scope, schedule, cost, risk, actions, changes, documents and evidence?

PHC Port is intended to be the authoritative project repository for Concerns, actions, evidence, narratives and maintained project information. External official sources remain authoritative for the underlying AfCFTA, national regulatory and trade data they publish. Additional systems for finance, scheduling or specialist datasets have not yet been designated.

PEQ02 - How are documents numbered, reviewed, approved, revised, distributed, retained and withdrawn from use?

Project information will be maintained within PHC Port using its existing entity, evidence and version-control conventions. Formal document-numbering and withdrawal rules specific to this project have not yet been defined and should be added if the volume of controlled documents grows.

PEQ03 - What evidence is required to substantiate reported progress, completed actions, accepted deliverables and closed risks or concerns?

Reported progress, closed Concerns and accepted conclusions should be supported by identifiable evidence such as Secretariat materials, national government records, published regulations, documented stakeholder input and recorded PHC actions. Assertions without adequate support should remain identified as unverified, provisional or open.

PEQ04 - How are configuration, version and baseline changes controlled so that teams know which information is current?

Current information should be controlled through PHC Port versioning and maintained entity records. Baseline changes should be recorded rather than silently overwritten. A project-specific configuration-management procedure has not yet been issued.

PEQ05 - What data-quality rules apply, and who is responsible for checking completeness, consistency, timeliness and accuracy?

Data should be checked for source, date, completeness, consistency, timeliness and relevance to the exact country, sector, product or corridor being assessed. PHC is responsible for maintaining the project evidence standard; specialist contributors remain responsible for the accuracy of information they provide.

PEQ06 - How are confidentiality, security classification, access permissions and personal or commercially sensitive information managed?

The public project should maximise transparency while protecting personal data, confidential commercial information and any restricted material supplied by participants. Public, subscriber-only and client-specific information boundaries have not yet been fully designed and will require explicit access rules.

PEQ07 - What reporting cycle is used, which dashboards or reports are produced, and who relies on each output for decisions?

An initial reporting cycle has not yet been fixed. The project concept anticipates continuously maintained information with periodic, potentially quarterly, readiness updates and concise project-health reporting once the evidence base is established.

PEQ08 - How are schedule, cost, risk, actions, changes, decisions and evidence linked so that impacts can be traced across the programme?

PHC entities will be linked so that Concerns, actions, evidence, decisions, changes and relevant project participants can be traced to one another. More detailed cost and schedule integration will be introduced only where those controls become material to the project.

PEQ09 - What backup, disaster-recovery, cyber-resilience and business-continuity arrangements protect project information?

The project will rely on the existing PHC Port hosting and backup arrangements. Project-specific disaster-recovery, cyber-resilience and business-continuity requirements have not yet been reviewed and should be assessed before reliance on the platform becomes commercially significant.

PEQ10 - What current information gaps, duplicated systems or manual workarounds create the greatest control risk?

ORGANISATION, CAPABILITY AND INTERFACES

PQ01 - Who holds the principal accountable roles, and what are their responsibilities and delegated authorities?

David Winter currently holds the principal PHC project accountability through Order Efficiency Ltd. Other accountable, advisory or contributor roles have not yet been appointed. Salefu Ngbede and his organisations are not project participants unless a separate relationship is agreed.

PQ02 - What organisation structure is currently in place, and which key posts are vacant, interim, duplicated or unclear?

The initial organisation is deliberately minimal, centred on PHC Service through Order Efficiency Ltd. No formal advisory board, subscriber group or specialist workstream structure has yet been established.

PQ03 - What capabilities and experience are essential for the current phase, and where are the most significant gaps?

Important capabilities include project governance, evidence control, risk/Concern management, AfCFTA policy interpretation, trade facilitation, customs, rules of origin, logistics, payments, SME operations and relevant country/sector knowledge. PHC provides the governance and evidence structure; specialist trade-domain gaps will need contributors or advisers.

PQ04 - What resource plan exists, including mobilisation dates, demand peaks, scarce skills and reliance on contractors or secondees?

No formal resource plan has yet been established. Initial work will be carried out on a limited PHC-hours basis, with later resource demand dependent on subscriber support, company assessments and the number of countries, sectors and corridors brought into active monitoring.

PQ05 - How are contractors, consultants, delivery partners and suppliers selected, instructed, supervised and held accountable?

Any contractors, consultants, contributors or specialist advisers will be selected for relevant capability and evidence quality. Their role, access, deliverables and accountability should be explicitly recorded. No such appointments have yet been made for this project.

PQ06 - Which organisational interfaces are most vulnerable to gaps, duplication, delay or conflicting authority?

The most vulnerable interfaces are likely to be between continental AfCFTA rules and national implementation, between policy data and real commercial experience, and between independent PHC conclusions and the interests of subscribers, contributors or assessed companies.

PQ07 - What is the formal meeting, review and decision-making rhythm, and how are actions and decisions recorded?

No fixed meeting or review rhythm has yet been established. PHC will record decisions and actions within the project structure, with a formal cadence introduced when contributors, subscribers or recurring reporting make it necessary.

PQ08 - What escalation routes and thresholds apply when safety, cost, schedule, quality, commercial or regulatory limits are threatened?

Formal escalation thresholds have not yet been set. Material evidence conflicts, reputational risks, legal/compliance uncertainties, major data-quality concerns and any threat to PHC independence should be escalated directly to project accountability for review.

PQ09 - What workload, continuity, succession or key-person risks could weaken delivery or assurance?

The main current continuity risk is key-person dependence on David Winter for project definition, evidence curation and PHC control. This should be reduced over time through documented processes, structured data, contributor roles and potentially additional PHC resources.

PQ10 - What behaviours, incentives or cultural factors may discourage challenge, delay escalation or distort reporting?

Potential cultural risks include enthusiasm outrunning evidence, pressure to promote particular organisations, reluctance to publish inconvenient findings about supporters, and a tendency to treat continental policy ambition as equivalent to commercial usability. The project should reward challenge, evidence and explicit uncertainty.

COMMERCIAL, FUNDING AND COST CONTROL

FQ01 - What funding sources, approvals and financial commitments currently support the project?

No committed external funding currently supports the project. It is being established initially as an independent PHC Public Interest project. Early revenue is expected to be sought from one or two founding subscription supporters, followed by commercial PHC Service assessments for participating organisations.

FQ02 - What is the current estimate or budget, what is its basis, and what level of confidence or maturity does it have?

No approved project budget or mature cost estimate has yet been established. Initial cost will primarily consist of PHC consultant time and existing platform usage, with expenditure deliberately constrained while the minimum viable public project and first revenue sources are tested.

FQ03 - How are the cost baseline, contingency, management reserve and quantified risk exposure established and controlled?

No formal cost baseline, contingency, management reserve or quantified financial risk allowance has yet been established. These controls should be proportionate to the project's initial low-cost mobilisation and developed if recurring subscription income or larger delivery commitments arise.

FQ04 - How are actual cost, commitments, accruals, forecast outturn and variance reported and reconciled?

Actual cost, commitments, accruals and forecast outturn arrangements have not yet been defined for this project. They should initially be kept simple and based on identifiable PHC time and direct project expenses.

FQ05 - Which contract and commercial models are proposed, and where do liability, incentive or risk-allocation concerns remain?

The intended commercial model distinguishes Public Interest subscription support from paid PHC Service client work. A founding subscription supports the shared public evidence base; a £1,000 company trust/readiness assessment provides an entry into PHC Service; continuing maintenance may then be delivered on a reduced PHC-hours basis. Detailed contract terms remain to be developed.

FQ06 - What major procurement commitments or long-lead decisions must be made before full certainty is available?

No major procurement commitments are currently required. The principal early commitment is PHC time to establish and maintain the public project before significant revenue is proven. Specialist services should not be committed beyond available funding without an explicit decision.

FQ07 - What current or foreseeable changes, claims, disputes or commercial exposures could materially affect the project?

Foreseeable exposures include insufficient subscriber take-up, underpricing of ongoing maintenance, uncontrolled scope growth across countries and sectors, disputes over published findings, and possible confusion between independent PHC assessment and official AfCFTA compliance or certification.

FQ08 - How are value, affordability, whole-life cost and alternative options challenged before major commitments are approved?

Value will be challenged by starting with a minimum viable public project, limiting initial scope, testing willingness to pay through founding subscriptions and £1,000 assessments, and adding more complex services only after evidence of demand. The project should avoid building a large information system before its usefulness is demonstrated.

FQ09 - What financial controls, segregation of duties, audit rights and record-keeping requirements apply?

Existing Order Efficiency Ltd financial controls and records will apply to PHC revenue and expenditure. Project-specific segregation, audit and subscription record-keeping arrangements have not yet been defined and should be documented before multiple external funders are accepted.

FQ10 - What affordability, cash-flow or funding thresholds could cause delay, rephasing or loss of project viability?

The principal threshold is whether sufficient revenue can be secured to justify continuing PHC hours beyond the initial setup. Lack of one or two founding supporters or insufficient conversion from £1,000 assessments into maintained PHC Service clients could require the project to remain small, pause expansion or be rephased.

STAKEHOLDERS, COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

MQ01 - Who are the principal internal and external stakeholders, and what authority, influence or exposure does each have?

Principal stakeholders include African businesses and SMEs, exporters and manufacturers, logistics and customs organisations, fintech and payment providers, industrial parks and processing zones, chambers and trade associations, investors and financiers, professional advisers, national AfCFTA implementation bodies, the AfCFTA Secretariat and African Union as external institutional stakeholders, and potential subscribers and PHC Service clients.

MQ02 - What are the principal expectations, concerns and potential points of conflict among those stakeholders?

Stakeholders are likely to differ over implementation readiness, regulatory interpretation, commercial opportunity, data transparency, cost, responsibility for delays and the pace of reform. Subscribers and assessed organisations may also prefer favourable findings, creating a need to protect PHC independence.

MQ03 - What communication and engagement channels are used, and how is feedback converted into controlled actions or decisions?

Initial engagement channels will include the public PHC Project Page, PHC comments/feedback mechanisms, direct professional outreach, published project updates and conversations with contributors and potential subscribers. Relevant feedback should be converted into evidence, Concerns, actions or decisions rather than left as transient commentary.

MQ04 - How are regulatory, governmental and local-authority relationships coordinated and documented?

Governmental and regulatory relationships have not yet been formally established. Relevant public information will be sourced from official bodies, and direct engagement may later be pursued with national implementation offices, regulators or the AfCFTA Secretariat while clearly maintaining PHC's independent status.

MQ05 - What impacts, benefits or burdens may be experienced by communities, workers, customers and the local economy?

Potential benefits include improved access to practical trade information, stronger SME participation, clearer visibility of trade blockers, better-informed investment and business decisions, and greater accountability for implementation. Potential burdens include additional evidence requests, scrutiny of participant capability and the risk that poorly interpreted readiness information could mislead users.

MQ06 - What consultation commitments, undertakings or stakeholder promises have been made, and how are they tracked?

No formal consultation commitments or stakeholder undertakings have yet been made. Any future commitments to contributors, subscribers, assessed companies or public bodies should be recorded explicitly and tracked through PHC actions.

MQ07 - What reputational risks, misinformation or unresolved public concerns could undermine confidence in the project?

Key reputational risks include any perception that PHC is formally affiliated with, endorsed by, or speaking for the African Union, AfCFTA Secretariat, Salefu Ngbede, Adaln Technologies Limited or The Liquidity Desk; overstating the accuracy or completeness of readiness conclusions; appearing to sell favourable assessments; or allowing sponsor interests to shape findings.

MQ08 - What information should be transparent, and what information must remain restricted for legal, commercial, privacy or security reasons?

Public information should include project purpose, methodology, non-sensitive evidence, open Concerns, readiness findings, sources and relevant updates. Personal data, commercially confidential client information, restricted subscriber material and legally sensitive information must remain protected according to defined access permissions.

MQ09 - How are lessons learned, stakeholder feedback and operating experience captured and incorporated into future decisions?

Lessons, stakeholder feedback and operating experience will be retained in PHC rather than left in transient communications. They should be linked to relevant Concerns, evidence, actions and revisions so that later decisions can show what was learned and why the project changed.

MQ10 - What concise evidence-based update could be issued regularly to demonstrate project health without overstating certainty?

A regular project-health update should state what AfCFTA implementation evidence changed during the period, which Concerns were opened, progressed or resolved, what remains uncertain, what actions are outstanding, and which country, sector or corridor conclusions have materially changed, while avoiding claims beyond the available evidence.