PHC Business Case

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.

1. PROJECT CONTEXT

AfCFTA Implementation & Trade Readiness is an independent PHC Public Interest project established through PHC Service by Order Efficiency Ltd. It was inspired in part by Salefu Ngbede's article Africa's Free Trade Zone Has a Filing Cabinet Problem, particularly its distinction between the legal existence of AfCFTA and its practical commercial usability.

The project is not affiliated with, endorsed by, or operated in partnership with Salefu Ngbede, AdaIn Technologies Limited, The Liquidity Desk, the African Union or the AfCFTA Secretariat unless a separate relationship is explicitly agreed.

The project will use PHC to maintain a structured evidence base covering implementation readiness, trade-friction Concerns, actions, stakeholder input and changing conditions across countries, sectors, products and corridors.

2. CURRENT POSITION AND GAP TO TARGET

AfCFTA provides a continent-wide legal and policy framework for trade, but implementation remains uneven and practical usability varies significantly by country, sector, product and corridor.

The present gap is between policy intent and operating reality: tariff schedules, rules of origin, customs processes, certificates, payment systems, domestic regulation, infrastructure, business awareness and administrative capacity do not mature at the same pace.

Public analysis exists, but much of it is episodic. There is no PHC-maintained project evidence base yet showing, over time, which conditions are satisfied, which remain uncertain, what has changed and what action is needed.

The target position is a continuously maintained, evidence-led resource that can distinguish legal possibility from administrative readiness and practical commercial usability.

3. OPERATING OPPORTUNITY

The operating opportunity is to create a trusted Public Interest project that converts fragmented AfCFTA implementation information into a maintained project-control structure.

The public project can become useful to SMEs, exporters, manufacturers, logistics providers, fintech and payment organisations, industrial zones, chambers, investors, advisers and other stakeholders that need to understand where trade can actually work.

As trust develops, the project can support two commercial pathways for PHC: founding or continuing subscription support for the shared evidence base, and £1,000 PHC capability/trust assessments for organisations wishing to demonstrate and improve their readiness as trade-ecosystem participants.

A later AfCFTA Trade-Route Readiness Assessment may be introduced once sufficient evidence and assessed participants exist.

4. PROBLEM BEING SOLVED

The project addresses the practical problem that AfCFTA can appear open at a headline level while particular commercial routes remain blocked, uncertain or costly in practice.

Businesses may struggle to determine whether preferential treatment is actually available, whether rules of origin are settled, whether documents and certificates can be obtained efficiently, whether domestic regulations align, and whether the supporting payment and logistics systems are usable.

At the same time, useful evidence and analysis can disappear into reports, conferences and social-media discussion without being retained as controlled information, Concerns and actions.

PHC addresses that second problem by maintaining the evidence and follow-through rather than treating each observation as a one-off publication.

5. PROPOSED INVESTMENT LOGIC

The initial investment logic is deliberately modest. PHC effort should first establish a minimum viable public project with enough credible evidence, structure and visible usefulness to justify continued maintenance.

Early funding may be sought from one or two Founding Subscribers willing to support the shared Public Interest evidence base without acquiring control over findings.

The public project then acts as a trust and lead-generation platform for £1,000 PHC capability/trust assessments. Those assessments provide an entry point into the wider PHC Service, which may continue on a proportionate maintenance basis where the organisation is fundamentally in good shape.

The later Trade-Route Readiness Assessment should not be launched until the project has accumulated sufficient evidence and assessed ecosystem participants to make that service materially stronger than ordinary desk research.

Independent external organisations, including potentially AdaIn Technologies Limited, may provide specialist services to trade participants under their own arrangements; no commercial relationship with PHC is assumed unless separately agreed.

6. EXPECTED BENEFITS

Expected Public Interest benefits include clearer visibility of practical AfCFTA implementation conditions, retained evidence of change, better identification of trade barriers and opportunities, stronger SME awareness, improved stakeholder learning and greater accountability for unresolved Concerns.

Expected commercial benefits for PHC include subscription-supported maintenance of the shared evidence base, paid £1,000 company capability/trust assessments, and proportionate continuing PHC Service assignments.

Longer term, accumulated evidence may support a separate Trade-Route Readiness Assessment product. The project may also increase visibility of credible independent specialist providers where evidence demonstrates their relevance, while preserving PHC independence and avoiding implied endorsement.

7. COST AND RESOURCE NEEDS

Initial resource needs are intentionally low and consist mainly of PHC consultant time, use of the existing PHC Port platform, evidence review, stakeholder engagement and maintenance of project information.

No dedicated physical premises, specialist project office or major hardware investment is currently required. The main resource constraint is available PHC time, particularly while the project has no committed external funding.

Costs should therefore be tracked transparently and kept proportionate until subscription or assessment revenue demonstrates sufficient demand.

Specialist trade, customs, legal, tax, logistics, payments or sector expertise may later be required and should be commissioned only where justified by project need and available funding.

8. WHY GOVERNANCE SUPPORT IS NEEDED

Governance support is central because the project crosses multiple institutions, countries, regulatory systems and commercial interests. Without explicit governance, there is a risk that evidence becomes inconsistent, sponsor or contributor interests influence conclusions, changing implementation conditions are not controlled, or public commentary is mistaken for verified fact.

PHC provides the governance framework by maintaining source traceability, Concerns, actions, decisions, evidence, changes and role clarity. It also provides a structure for separating personal contributor roles from organisational roles. For example, Salefu Ngbede may, if agreed, contribute personally to the PHC project, while AdaIn Technologies Limited remains a separate external commercial organisation unless a distinct relationship is negotiated.

Subscription support must not purchase control over conclusions, and reference to an external organisation must not imply partnership, appointment or endorsement.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Proceed with the project on a controlled minimum-viable basis. Complete the PHC Project Definition documents, establish the initial public evidence structure and readiness tracker, and identify a manageable first country/sector/corridor focus.

Invite constructive review from relevant contributors while maintaining explicit independence.

Once the public project contains enough useful substance to demonstrate its value, approach one or two potential Founding Subscribers.

In parallel, identify suitable organisations for the £1,000 PHC capability/trust assessment as the principal early commercial entry point. Delay any formal AfCFTA Trade-Route Readiness Assessment, agency arrangement, partnership or specialist-provider commercial structure until evidence and demand justify it and the relevant parties have explicitly agreed the terms.