AUDA-NEPAD
AFRICAN UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

AfCFTA Secretariat

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In partnership with:

JICA
Japan International Cooperation Agency

Country Impact Assessment Report:

Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA) & the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

The Republic of Namibia

March 2026

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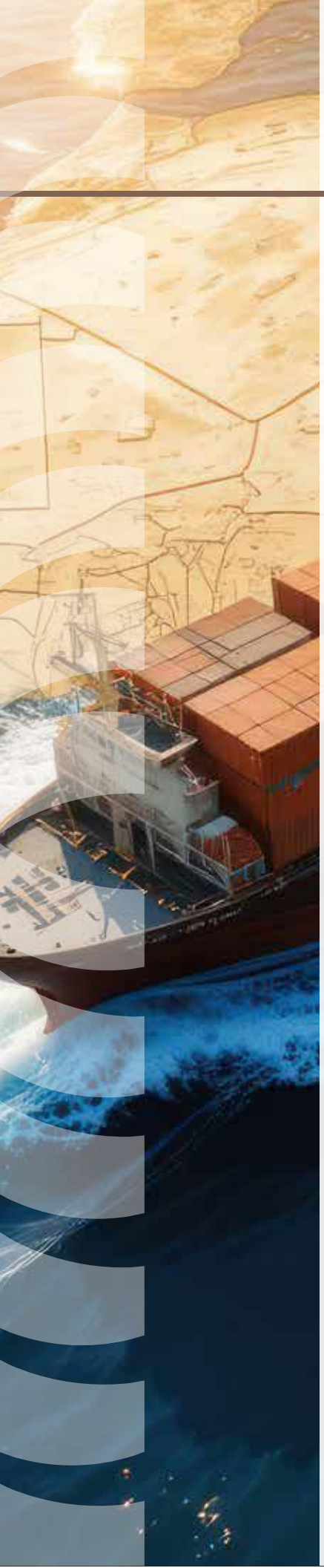

Table of Contents

Message from the CEO of AUDA-NEPAD

Message from the DG, Africa Department - JICA

Message from the DG, National Planning Commission - Namibia

Acknowledgement

Preface

List of Abbreviations

Glossary

Executive Summary

1. Context
    - 1.1 Continental industrialisation and Trade integration Framework
    - 1.2 Specific Objectives of the Pilot Phase
    - 1.3 Pilot Country Selection Criteria and Process
    - 1.4 Country Brief
2. Methodology and Assessment Tools
    - 2.1 Overall Approach and Principles
    - 2.2 Assessment Tools
    - 2.3 Evidence base and validation
3. Assessment Results by Tool
    - 3.1 Summary of Assessment Findings
    - 3.2 AfCFTA Future Impact Assessment
    - 3.3 AfCFTA Enabling Environment Monitoring
    - 3.4 Industrialisation Progress Assessment
4. Key Recommendations and Implications
5. Country Experience
    - 5.1 Senior-level leadership strengthens institutional alignment
6. Bibliography
7. Appendix

7.1 Overall Approach and Principles
7.2 Quality Assurance
7.3 Assessment Tools
7.4 Primary and secondary data
7.5 Limitation and mitigation

Message from the CEO of AUDA-NEPAD

H.E. Mrs. Nardos Bekele-Thomas
Chief Executive Officer, AUDA-NEPAD

I am pleased to present some of the key deliverables of the continental flagship project, "AfCFTA/AIDA Impact Assessment," coordinated by the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) in close collaboration with the AfCFTA Secretariat, the African Union Commission (AUC), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and a wide range of other key national, regional, continental, and international stakeholders.

We are now reaching a stage where our joint work is translating into a growing portfolio of high-value knowledge products; comprehensive country reports, forward-looking policy briefs, and robust, evidence-based insights. These are not simply reports. They are strategic policy-oriented tools, designed to illuminate opportunities, sharpen priorities, and guide impactful action and decision-making at every level across our continent.

Since its launch in Kigali in September 2023, this flagship project has been a commitment, rooted in the shared aspirations endorsed by our Heads of State and Government in Niamey in November 2022, and translated into structured, measurable action. Today, we mark a defining milestone as we move decisively into implementation, turning ambition into meaningful and lasting impact.

Advancing this flagship project would not be possible without the encouragement and steadfast support of our co-partners. Equally important, I wish to pay heartfelt tribute to the remarkable commitment and visionary leadership demonstrated by the participating AU Member States. Their dedication has helped turn a shared continental ambition into tangible progress, and their example continues to inspire our collective journey toward lasting impact.

While we take pride in the progress achieved so far, we recognise that the road ahead remains ambitious. Meeting the scale of our vision will require sustained commitment, shared responsibility, and renewed continental resolve.

To realise this inspiring vision, AUDA-NEPAD reiterates its firm commitment to rally more partnerships across all levels to accelerate the rollout of the AfCFTA/AIDA Impact Assessment across the remaining AU Member States—achieving full coverage and ensuring no country is left behind. The invitation is now open for all countries to join.

At the same time, we must move decisively from assessment to implementation of country-specific recommendations. The assessment is not the destination—it is our compass. We have laid a strong foundation. Now, together, we must build on it and deliver tangible impact.

Message from the DG, Africa Department - JICA

Mr. Iwama Hajime
Director General of the Africa Department - JICA

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA) represent a defining step in advancing Africa's economic integration and structural transformation. Anchored in Agenda 2063, these frameworks seek to strengthen competitiveness, expand intra-African trade, and accelerate industrial development across the continent.

Translating these continental commitments into measurable national outcomes requires practical tools, institutional coordination, and sustained capacity. The AfCFTA/AIDA Impact Assessment initiative responds to this need by providing a structured, evidence-based methodology to evaluate trade opportunities, industrial readiness, and enabling conditions. Through this approach, Member States are equipped to identify priority reforms, sequence interventions, and align industrial policy with emerging regional market opportunities.

Japan has long viewed industrial development and trade integration as mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable growth. Through JICA's partnership with AUDA-NEPAD, the African Union Commission, and the AfCFTA Secretariat, we have supported the development of the AfCFTA/AIDA Impact Assessment Guide launched in July 2024 and pilot implementation of this Assessment framework since August 2025. The pilot phase has demonstrated the value of data-driven policymaking, rigorous analysis, and country-led engagement. The participating countries have served as pathfinders, showing how evidence can inform policy sequencing, strengthen institutional coordination, and align industrial policy with emerging trade opportunities.

The distinguishing strength of this initiative lies in its operational focus. The Assessment is designed to inform real policy decisions, guide investment prioritisation, and support evidence-based dialogue among public and private stakeholders. The Country Assessment Reports and Policy Briefs presented here reflect that objective — translating data into strategic direction.

Under the framework of TICAD 9, JICA reaffirms its commitment to supporting Africa's industrialisation and AfCFTA regional trade integration agenda. JICA remains dedicated to working alongside African partners to strengthen implementation capacity, enhance trade facilitation systems, and promote inclusive participation in regional value chains.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the African Union Commission, AUDA-NEPAD, the AfCFTA Secretariat, and the participating Member States for their leadership and collaboration. We trust that this report will serve as a practical reference for advancing AfCFTA and AIDA implementation at continental and national levels.

Message from the DG, National Planning Commission - Namibia

Ambassador Kaire Mbuende, PhD
Director General, National Planning Commission – Republic of Namibia

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA) present Namibia with a significant opportunity to advance economic diversification, deepen regional integration, and strengthen its participation in continental value chains. This Country Impact Assessment provides a structured, evidence-based analysis of Namibia's positioning under these frameworks.

It examines trade opportunities, industrial readiness, and the enabling environment, drawing on both quantitative modelling and extensive engagement with national stakeholders. As such, it offers a grounded perspective on how AfCFTA-related opportunities translate into practical outcomes for firms and sectors.

The findings point to a clear conclusion. While Namibia's opportunity under AfCFTA is significant, realised gains will depend on execution. Expanding exports, strengthening competitiveness, and increasing value addition will require sustained focus on delivery economics, corridor performance, and the effectiveness of trade and industrial systems. In this context, Namibia's existing strengths, particularly in resource-based sectors and established regional trade corridors, provide a strong foundation for scaling participation.

At the same time, the Assessment highlights areas where targeted action will be critical. These include strengthening firm-level competitiveness, improving operational efficiency across trade systems, and enhancing the alignment between industrial policy, investment, and skills development. Addressing these factors will be central to translating market access into sustained and inclusive growth.

The National Planning Commission remains committed to ensuring that continental frameworks such as AfCFTA and AIDA are effectively integrated into national planning processes. This includes aligning implementation with Namibia's broader development objectives, strengthening coordination across institutions, and supporting evidence-based decision-making.

We extend our appreciation to AUDA-NEPAD, the African Union Commission, the AfCFTA Secretariat, and JICA for their continued partnership. We also acknowledge the contributions of national stakeholders whose engagement has been essential in shaping this Assessment.

It is our expectation that this report will serve as a practical reference for policy prioritisation and implementation, supporting Namibia's transition from readiness to scale in advancing its trade and industrialisation agenda.

Acknowledgement

This publication was developed through a joint effort involving the Namibian Coordination Team, the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), the AfCFTA Secretariat, the African Union Commission (AUC), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the Boston Consulting Group (BCG).

Throughout the development of this report, extensive technical engagements were undertaken from the inception of the process through to its finalisation, including weekly check-ins and report review with the Coordination Team.

The project is directed by Dr. Mustafa Sakr, Head of the Trade and Market Unit at AUDA-NEPAD, and Mr. Toru Homma, Senior Advisor to the AUDA-NEPAD Chief Executive Officer, with technical leadership provided by Mr. Amine Idriss Adoum, Director of Infrastructure, Industrialization, Trade and Regional Integration at AUDA-NEPAD, under the supervision of H.E. Mrs. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, Chief Executive Officer of AUDA-NEPAD.

Numerous highly skilled and experienced professionals from Namibia, stakeholders, and relevant partners provided vital comments, technical advice, guidance, and suggestions throughout the course of this project.

We are particularly grateful to Dr. Michael Humavindu, who served as the sole Namibia Country Focal Point and played a leading role in coordinating and developing the report.

In addition, we extend special appreciation to colleagues from JICA, namely Misaki Asari, Ryo Sarashina, Yoko Shimura, Motohiro Matsumura, Naoki Mine, and Shunsuke Yamashita, for their significant contributions to the implementation of the assessment pilot phase. We also acknowledge Mc Neil Chimusi Mhango for his valuable support throughout the pilot implementation.

Preface

The accelerated industrial development and economic diversification of Africa remain central objectives of the African Union's Agenda 2063. Recognising the need for targeted, evidence-based policy action, the Declaration of the Seventeenth Extraordinary Session of the Assembly (Niamey, November 2022) called for country impact assessments to evaluate the implementation of the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa (AIDA) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

In response, AUDA-NEPAD, in partnership with the AfCFTA Secretariat, the African Union Commission, and JICA, developed a Standard Assessment Guide to support Member States in undertaking structured national assessments. The Guide was launched in Accra in July 2024 and is now being applied through a pilot phase to validate its methodology and practical application.

The AfCFTA & AIDA Country Impact Assessment initiative is country-led. Participating countries retain ownership of the assessment process and outcomes, while continental and development partners provide technical support. The pilot phase serves three key purposes: to assess the national impact of AIDA and AfCFTA, to generate policy-relevant insights, and to refine the Standard Assessment Guide through field application.

Pilot countries were selected from Member States that formally confirmed their willingness to participate. Readiness was assessed based on implementation status, operational feasibility, and data availability, with final selection ensuring regional balance and diversity across economic and institutional contexts.

Both the Country Assessment Report and the accompanying Policy Brief were reviewed and validated by the respective national authorities through dedicated consultation and validation processes, ensuring that the findings and recommendations reflect country ownership and consensus.

This Country Assessment Report is a product of that pilot effort. It applies the Standard Assessment Guide's three analytical tools to diagnose national strengths, constraints, and opportunities related to industrial policy and regional trade integration. The results are intended to inform the alignment of national strategies with continental frameworks and to support the identification of policy actions that can accelerate inclusive industrial transformation and intra-African trade.

List of Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AIDA	Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa
AII	African Industrialisation Index
AMDC	Africa Minerals Development Centre
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AMV	African Mining Vision
ARSO	African Organisation for Standardisation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ATO	African Trade Organisation
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUDA-NEPAD	African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for Africa's Development
BIAT	Boosting Intra-African Trade
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CEMAC	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CIP	Comprehensive Investment Plan
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States

ESCP	Economic and Social Council for Africa
ESF	Economic and Social Fund
ESIA	Environmental and Social Impact Assessment
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FPIC	Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTI	Guided Trade Initiative
IDDA	Industrial Development Decade for Africa
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IP	Intellectual Property
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
ITC	International Trade Centre
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LPI	Logistics Performance Index
NIC	National Implementation Committee
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NTBs	Non-Tariff Barriers
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSBP	One-Stop Border Post
PAPSS	Pan-African Payment and Settlement System
PMPA	Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa
PIDA	Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa
REC	Regional Economic Communities
RoO	Rules of Origin
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
STISA	Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa

TFI	Trade Facilitation Index
TiM	Trade in Employment
UMA	Union du Maghreb Arabe (Arab Maghreb Union)
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
WITS	World Integrated Trade Solution
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Glossary

AIDA	A framework initiated by the African Union to promote industrial growth and economic diversification across the continent. AIDA aims to enhance the manufacturing sector, create job opportunities, and reduce dependence on primary commodities by fostering value addition and sustainable industrialisation.
AfCFTA	A trade agreement established by the African Union to create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of businesspersons and investments. The AfCFTA aims to boost intra-African trade, promote industrialisation, and achieve sustainable economic development across Africa.
AU Agenda 2063	A strategic framework by the African Union for Africa's socio-economic transformation over 50 years. It aims for an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful continent, driven by its citizens, focusing on inclusive growth, sustainable development, and good governance.
AfDB	A regional multilateral development bank that aims to contribute to the economic development and social progress of African countries.
Afrochampions Initiative	A public-private partnership designed to galvanise African resources and institutions to drive Africa's economic integration - notably through the implementation of the AfCFTA.
Afrexim Bank	A pan-African multilateral financial institution that aims to finance and promote intra- and extra-African trade.
AUDA-NEPAD	African Union's development agency tasked with promoting regional integration, supporting member states with advisory and technical assistance, and coordinating priority projects to achieve Agenda 2063 goals.
ATO	A digital platform under the AfCFTA that provides up-to-date trade data to support informed decision-making and monitor intra-African trade integration.
GTI	An interim solution to kick-start meaningful trade among interested State Parties that have met the minimum requirements for commencing trade under the Agreement, to test the readiness of the private sector, and to test the operational, institutional, legal and trade policy environment under the AfCFTA
IDDA	A United Nations initiative that aims to accelerate sustainable development and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals.

Institute for Security Studies	A think tank focused on enhancing human security in Africa, aiming to conduct research, provide policy advice, and deliver capacity-building programmes in areas of security and justice.
International Futures	A global integrated assessment model that aims to forecast and analyse long-term trends in demographics, economics, and other areas to inform policy decisions.
ITC	A joint agency of the World Trade Organisation and the United Nations that aims to foster sustainable economic development and enhance the export capabilities of developing countries.
JICA	A governmental agency that coordinates official development assistance for the government of Japan, aiming to promote economic and social development in developing countries.
LPI	A benchmarking tool created by the World Bank that aims to measure the ease of logistics and supply chain management across countries.
PAPSS	A cross-border payment and settlement system that aims to facilitate and streamline trade within Africa by enabling instant payments in local currencies.
REC	An economic grouping of African countries that aims to promote economic integration and development within specific regions of Africa.
SAIIA	A think tank based in South Africa that aims to provide insights and analysis on international affairs and policy issues affecting Africa.
Trade Map	An online trade data tool designed by ITC that aims to provide international trade statistics and market access information for better decision-making in trade and investment.
UNECA	One of the UN's regional commissions that aims to support economic and social development in African countries and promote regional integration.
UNIDO	A specialised agency of the UN that aims to promote industrial development for poverty reduction, inclusive globalisation, and environmental sustainability.
WITS-SMART	A trade software tool developed by the World Bank that aims to analyse trade flows, tariffs, and non-tariff measures for policy formulation and analysis.

Executive Summary

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA) together constitute the African Union's core framework for trade-led industrial transformation. AfCFTA provides access to a unified continental market, while AIDA defines the supply-side conditions required for countries to benefit from that access, including productive capacity, value addition, skills, infrastructure, standards, and sustainable industrialisation. The degree to which these two frameworks are aligned and operationalised at the country level will shape the extent to which AfCFTA supports deeper industrial transformation and expanded intra-African trade opportunities.

This report presents the findings of **Namibia's pilot assessment of its readiness for and the expected impacts of, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**, with a particular focus on how AfCFTA implementation can support Namibia's industrial development objectives. The assessment is a country-led, implementation-focused exercise grounded in Namibia's policy priorities and current institutional and market realities. To inform this assessment, the report leverages a set of standardised analytical tools developed by AUDA-NEPAD and partners to examine Namibia's position across three core dimensions:

- (i) Prospective export and import opportunities and adjustment pressures arising from AfCFTA implementation
- (ii) The strength of the enabling environment for trade, with particular emphasis on trade facilitation, infrastructure, and trade finance
- (iii) Progress towards industrialisation, assessed using AIDA's enablers framework to evaluate sector readiness and constraints

The analysis focuses on a selected set of **illustrative products**, used to examine export growth opportunities and import-side adjustment dynamics. These products are **not intended to represent official government priority sectors** but rather serve as practical case studies to understand the broader trade dynamics shaping Namibia's export and import performance. On the export side, **unworked diamond, frozen mackerel and uncooked pasta** are assessed to examine Namibia's potential to expand value-added exports within Africa. On the import side, **pineapples and worn clothing** are analysed to assess price effects, competitiveness dynamics, and implications for domestic producers and consumers. Together, these products provide insights into how AfCFTA market access interacts with Namibia's industrial capacity, competitiveness conditions, and inclusion objectives in line with AIDA priorities.

Based on ITC Trade Map, Namibia's AfCFTA opportunity is significant, estimated at approximately **$816 M in unrealised export potential within Africa and nearly $3.9 Bn globally**. This potential is concentrated in products aligned with Namibia's existing production and export structure, particularly **fisheries and resource-linked exports**, and is largely located in markets where Namibia already trades. As such, AfCFTA-related gains are expected to arise primarily from **deepening and scaling existing trade relationships**, while also creating a foundation for gradual diversification over time.

ITC's Export Potential Map estimates are derived from current trade patterns and revealed comparative advantage and therefore reflect export opportunities that can be realised within Namibia's existing industrial and production structure. They provide a conservative baseline of export potential, indicating where Namibia could expand exports by more effectively matching current supply capabilities with demand in target markets.

Unworked diamonds remain the country's largest export, anchored in a strong natural resource endowment and established institutional systems. While current trade is highly concentrated within existing regional corridors, AfCFTA offers scope to deepen participation in regional value chains and expand downstream activities over time, particularly where beneficiation and trading demand evolve within Africa.

Frozen mackerel represents a major intra-African opportunity linked to Namibia's industrialised fisheries sector and its established role in regional food supply. With existing production and processing capacity already oriented toward African markets, AfCFTA-related gains are likely to arise from strengthening reliability, corridor performance, and market penetration within current high-demand destinations.

Uncooked pasta illustrates a smaller but scalable manufactured export, based on an existing domestic production base and concentrated regional trade footprint. Here, expansion under AfCFTA depends less on new capacity and more on improving competitiveness and reducing non-tariff frictions in neighbouring markets.

Taken together, these products demonstrate that Namibia's near-term AfCFTA gains are most likely to emerge from scaling and deepening trade in existing export-active and regionally integrated sectors, rather than from immediate diversification into new product categories.

On the import side, AfCFTA-related effects are expected to be targeted and limited. For the products assessed (pineapples and worn clothing), existing regional arrangements and domestic policy frameworks already shape import patterns, meaning that AfCFTA liberalisation is more likely to reinforce current sourcing structures than to generate disruptive adjustment pressures.

Assessment of Namibia's enabling environment indicates that the core foundations for AfCFTA implementation are in place. Trade facilitation systems are functional, with average customs clearance times of around four days relative to African and global averages of seven days, supported by established customs procedures and the use of digital platforms for declarations and processing. Trade infrastructure provides a strong backbone for regional trade, anchored by well-developed trans-corridor networks linked to the Port of Walvis Bay, which support Namibia's role as a regional gateway economy. Trade finance also offers a stable baseline, with good access to financing. At the same time, the effectiveness of the enabling environment depends on how these systems function in practice. Operational gaps remain in the completeness of end-to-end digitisation, the coordination of border processes across agencies, the practical ease of obtaining Certificates of Origin under AfCFTA rules, and the limited availability of trade-finance instruments specifically tailored to AfCFTA-linked trade. These factors influence how smoothly firms can convert market access into realised exports.

Findings from the Industrialisation Progress Assessment indicate that Namibia has a functional baseline of industrial readiness across its mining and fisheries sectors. Core enablers such as access to raw materials, electricity supply, and port infrastructure support continuous operations in mining and fisheries, while existing processing facilities and industrial equipment provide a platform for domestic value addition. At the same time, moving from baseline capacity to sustained scale depends not just on infrastructure but also on capability. Skills depth, workforce competence, and the effective use of investment and finance will determine whether firms can expand and compete in regional markets.

From an inclusion and sustainability perspective, AfCFTA implementation in Namibia has the potential to reinforce positive employment outcomes, particularly for MSMEs, women, and youth, who are already meaningfully represented across firms' workforces. Trade expansion is likely to support job continuity and gradual improvements in labour conditions within existing regulatory frameworks. However, sustaining inclusive and responsible outcomes as trade scales will require stronger attention to labour standards, transparency, and environmental and social risk management, particularly as financial intermediation and cross-border activity expand.

Overall, the assessment indicates that Namibia is well positioned to benefit from AfCFTA within its existing economic and industrial structure. The country enters AfCFTA with identifiable export potential, functional trade systems, and established regional connectivity. Translating this potential into outcomes will depend on how effectively existing trade corridors, delivery systems, and industrial capacity are leveraged in practice, with AfCFTA outcomes shaped more by execution quality and coordination across trade, infrastructure, and finance than by market access alone.

01 Context

1.1 Continental industrialisation and Trade integration Framework

The accelerated industrial development and economic diversification of Africa have emerged as essential strategic priorities for the African Union (AU), firmly anchored in its continental agenda and endorsed at the highest political level. This commitment was formalised in 2008 when the AU Assembly adopted the Action Plan for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa (AIDA) during its 10th Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa and later strengthened with the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), whose founding agreement was signed at the AU's 10th Extraordinary Session in Kigali in March 2018. Together, AIDA and the AfCFTA reflect a concerted continental effort to foster economic integration, promote industrialisation, enhance competitiveness, and drive sustainable development across Africa.

1.1.1 The Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA)

Launched in 2008 through collaboration between the AUC, UNIDO, UNECA and partners, AIDA aims to accelerate Africa's industrialisation in four priority sectors: agroprocessing, mining, pharmaceuticals, and textiles. Its implementation is guided by seven action clusters that shape national, regional, and continental policies:

- Industrial Policy and Institutional Direction: Establishing coherent industrial frameworks aligned with local strengths.
- Upgrading Production and Trade Capacities: Enhancing productivity, quality, and competitiveness.
- Infrastructure and Energy for Industrial Development: Ensuring adequate infrastructure and reliable energy for industrial growth.
- Human Resource Development for Industry: Addressing skill gaps and promoting relevant training.

- Industrial Innovation Systems, Research and Development (R&D), and Technology Development: Creating focused innovation systems to generate necessary know-how for industrial development.
- Financing and Resource Mobilisation: Building financial mechanisms to support key industrial sectors.
- Sustainable Development: Promoting environmentally responsible industrialisation[1]

1.1.2 The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

Established in 2018, the AfCFTA is the world's largest free-trade area by membership. It seeks to liberalise trade, enhance economic integration, diversify economies, and support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The general objectives of the AfCFTA are to:

- Create a single market for goods and services, facilitating mobility and deeper economic integration in line with Agenda 2063.
- Promote inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development and structural transformation.
- Strengthen competitiveness within African and global markets.
- Advance industrialisation through diversification, value chain development, and food security.
- Simplify regional integration and address overlapping memberships.
- Create a liberalised market for goods and services.
- Facilitate capital movement and investment.
- Lay the foundation for a future Continental Customs Union.

To operationalise these aims, the AfCFTA employs a suite of instruments:

- Rules of Origin: Define the African origin of goods to prevent trade deflection.
- AfCFTA E-Tariff Book: Outlines phased tariff reductions across member states.
- Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) Online Reporting Mechanism: Identifies and resolves trade obstacles.

[1] *AIDA plan of action*, *AIDA implementation strategy*, *AU website*

- **Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS):** Enables local-currency transactions.
- **African Trade Observatory (ATO):** Provides trade data and market intelligence.
- **AfCFTA Adjustment Fund:** Mitigates fiscal and competitiveness impacts of liberalisation.1F2
- **AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative (GTI):** Pilots trade readiness among early participants.2F3

1.1.3 The AfCFTA & AIDA Impact Assessment Project

The **AfCFTA & AIDA Impact Assessment Project**, mandated by the African Union's Seventeenth Extraordinary Session and reaffirmed at the 36th Ordinary Session (2023), aims to evaluate the implementation impact of both frameworks at the **national**, **regional**, and **continental** levels.

Rather than ranking countries as "winners" or "losers," the project provides actionable insights to enhance evidence-based policymaking, implementation capacity, and cross-continental learning.

1.1.4 National Levels

- At national level, the assessment enables:
- Informed policy decisions through data-driven insights into economic, social, and environmental impacts.
- Identification of key sectors with growth potential or challenges.
- Development of mitigation strategies for potential negative impacts.
- Enhanced monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- The findings will also support African countries in securing the technical and financial resources needed to ensure the successful implementation of AfCFTA/AIDA at the national level.

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[2] According to the AfCFTA Adjustment Fund Portal
[3] According to *The Guided Trade Initiative: Documenting and Assessing the Early Experiences of Trading under the AFCFTA* by UNECA

1.1.5 Regional and Continental Levels

At regional and continental levels, the assessment enables:

- Enhanced Operationalisation Tools: The development of more effective implementation instruments, managed by continental and regional stakeholders, to strengthen coordination, ensure consistency, and maximise impact across Member states.
- Accelerated Peer Learning Process across Africa: Foster a peer learning environment by sharing lessons learned, best practices, and success stories to encourage mutual growth and collaboration.

1.2 Specific Objectives of the Pilot Phase

In 2024, AUDA-NEPAD, the AfCFTA Secretariat, and the African Union Commission (AUC) jointly developed the Standard Assessment Guide; a comprehensive framework designed to help Member States generate actionable, policy-oriented insights on the implementation of AfCFTA and AIDA. The Guide integrates three complementary tools:

- AfCFTA Future Impact Assessment
- AfCFTA Enabling Environment Monitoring
- Industrialisation Progress Assessment

In line with the overarching objectives of the AfCFTA–AIDA Impact Assessment Project, the **Pilot Phase** marks a critical shift from strategic design to field-level implementation. It applies the Standard Assessment Guide in five countries, testing its tools and processes while generating country-specific evidence across trade, industry, and enabling-environment dimensions. The lessons and experiences gained will refine both the methodology and delivery model, laying the foundation for continent-wide scale-up.

The Pilot Phase aims to:

- Empower participating countries to **independently conduct impact assessments** using the Standard Assessment Guide and its three tools.
- Produce **national reports, policy briefs, and action plans** tailored to each country's development priorities.

- Strengthen **institutional capacity** through structured Train-the-Trainer programmes.
- Identify priority sectors, highlighting growth opportunities, challenges, and risk-mitigation strategies.
- Generate **data-driven, evidence-based insights** to support policymaking on economic, social, and environmental outcomes.
- Develop targeted advocacy materials to enhance stakeholder awareness, engagement, and buy-in.
- Facilitate **mobilisation of technical and financial resources** for effective national implementation of AfCFTA/AIDA
- Enhance **monitoring and evaluation systems** to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

1.3 Pilot Country Selection Criteria and Process

The pilot phase prioritised a focused group of volunteer countries drawn mainly from those that had already signed and ratified the AfCFTA agreement, particularly through participation in the Guided Traded Initiative (GTI). A total of ten countries initially expressed interest in participating in the pilot. From this long list, five countries were selected based on their readiness to drive implementation at the national level.

Readiness was assessed across three key dimensions:

- AfCFTA Implementation Status – the degree of legal and institutional alignment with AfCFTA commitments, including the establishment of national coordination mechanisms and evidence of early trade activity under AfCFTA rules.
- Operational Feasibility – the availability of logistical support, national focal points, and institutional coordination to facilitate data collection, validation workshops, and field activities.
- Data Availability and Quality – the accessibility of credible trade, industrial, and socio-economic data needed to apply the Standard Assessment Guide tools effectively.

Once readiness was confirmed, the Steering Committee further optimised selection to ensure diversity and representativeness across the continent. The final selection considered the following factors:

- **Economic structure and level of industrialisation**, ensuring inclusion of both resource-based and diversified economies.

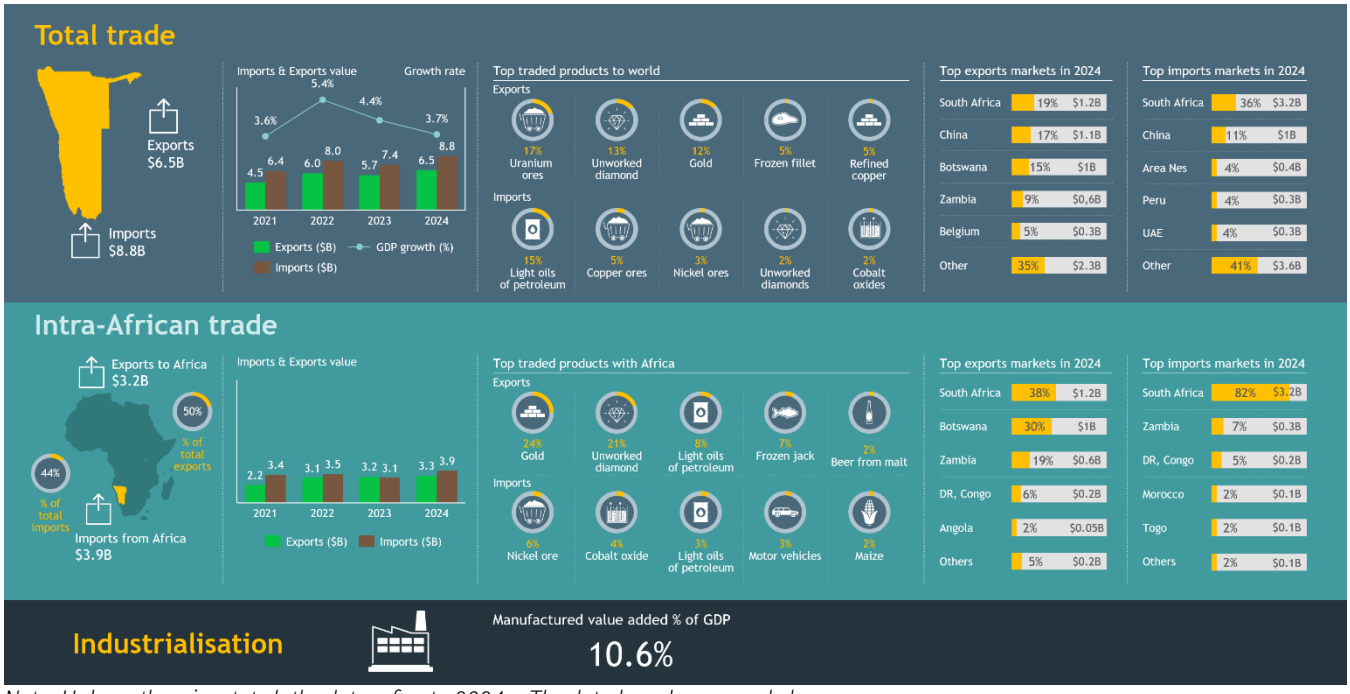
- **Trade openness and regional integration**, reflecting different stages of participation in continental and regional value chains.

- **Geographical balance**, covering all major African regions (North, East, West, and Southern Africa); and

- **Linguistic and institutional diversity**, incorporating Anglophone and Francophone systems to test applicability across varied regulatory environments.

Based on these criteria, **Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia and Seychelles** were selected to participate in the Pilot Phase. This composition provides a robust and representative sample for testing the Standard Assessment Guide, ensuring that its methodology and tools are adaptable to diverse national contexts and implementation capacities.

1.4 Country Brief



Note: Unless otherwise stated, the data refers to 2024 – The data have been rounded

Source: Trade Map, The World Bank Group

Deep regional integration provides a strong platform for broader continental engagement

Namibia's trade profile is characterised by a high degree of regional integration, underpinned by long-standing participation in Southern African value chains. **In 2024, exports to African markets accounted for approximately 50% of Namibia's total exports, while imports from Africa represented about 44% of total**

imports. This level of intra-African trade engagement is high by continental standards (intra-African trade accounts for about 16% of total exports and 12% of total imports) and reflects Namibia's deep integration within regional markets, particularly under the Southern African Development Community (SADC) framework. Beyond trade volumes, Namibia occupies a strategic position within Southern Africa as a gateway economy, linking regional production systems to global markets through established logistics corridors and port infrastructure, particularly at Walvis Bay.

Namibia's intra-African exports have grown steadily in recent years, increasing from approximately USD 3.1 billion in 2022 to around USD 3.3 billion in 2024, underscoring the central role of regional markets in Namibia's trade structure. These markets function both as primary destinations for exports and as key sources of intermediate and finished goods that support domestic consumption and production, providing a solid foundation for broader continental engagement.

At the same time, Namibia's intra-African trade remains highly concentrated geographically. Around 90% of intra-African trade is conducted with neighbouring Southern African countries, reflecting proximity, established trade corridors, and long-standing commercial relationships. South Africa, Botswana, and Zambia account for the bulk of regional export demand, alongside smaller flows to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola, while imports are dominated by South Africa with additional sourcing from Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Morocco, and Togo. This pattern highlights the depth of Namibia's regional integration, while also pointing to scope for gradual diversification beyond neighbouring markets as continental trade integration deepens.

Within this broader context, Namibia recorded total merchandise exports of approximately $6.5 Bn and imports of about $8.8 Bn in 2024, resulting in an overall trade deficit of roughly $2.3 Bn. Intra-African trade similarly reflects a modest deficit of around $0.7 Bn, driven primarily by imports of finished and semi-finished products from South Africa. These trade balances reflect Namibia's current position within regional value chains and reinforce the importance of industrial upgrading and value addition in strengthening export performance over time.

Steady industrial growth, anchored in natural resources and guided by national value-addition priorities

Namibia's economic structure is anchored in natural-resource-based activities. Around 50% of Namibia's exports to African markets consist of unrefined or minimally processed mineral products, notably gold, diamonds, and other primary mineral outputs. A similar pattern characterises exports to non-African

markets, where unrefined minerals and ores, including nickel, remain prominent, indicating that Namibia's trade, both regionally and globally, continues to be oriented toward upstream resource flows rather than processed or manufactured goods.

The industrial sector, including mining, manufacturing, construction, and utilities, **contributes about 30%[4] of GDP**, **while manufacturing value added accounts for about 11% of GDP.** This reflects a sizeable industrial base, but still relatively narrow in terms of diversified manufacturing and processing activity. Mining continues to be the dominant driver of industrial output and export earnings.

Mining forms the backbone of industrial activity and external trade in Namibia. In 2024, **mining accounted for 13.3% of GDP[5]**, with sector performance closely linked to global demand for Namibia's major mineral exports, particularly **diamonds and uranium**. **Namibia is internationally recognised as a leading producer of diamonds and uranium, ranking as the 3rd largest producer of uranium[6] from mines and 8th largest producer of rough diamond[7] by volume.** At the same time, Namibia has begun to advance a more explicit value-addition agenda. **The share of worked diamond exports increased from about 10% of total diamond exports in 2020 to 22% in 2024[8]**, signalling sustained expansion of domestic cutting and polishing capacity.

Outside mining, primary sector activities continue to contribute significantly to the economy, despite constraints affecting upgrading and scale. Agriculture contributes 7.7%[9] of GDP, with **fisheries** representing Namibia's most important non-mineral export base. In 2024, fisheries and fish processing on board contributed **2.8% of GDP**, and the sector is strongly export-oriented, with around **90% of output** destined for external markets. Fisheries export earnings are supported by established landing and processing hubs, particularly around Walvis Bay and Lüderitz, with onshore processing forming a key source of employment and domestic value retention.

Industrialisation is guided by a coherent policy framework that links production capacity directly to trade and regional integration outcomes. **The Growth at Home Strategy, National Development Plans (NDP5 and beyond) and Vision 2030** positions value addition, domestic processing, and export-oriented manufacturing as the engine to Namibia's growth and economic development. **These priorities are operationalised by the**

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[4] *World Bank, GDP and Sector contribution to GDP, Namibia, 2024, data extracted on 29 January 2026*
[5] *SADC Mining & Construction News, "Namibia: MINING SECTOR PUMPS OVER N$24 BILLION INTO LOCAL ECONOMY", 28 April 2025, Namibia: MINING SECTOR PUMPS OVER N$24 BILLION INTO LOCAL ECONOMY - SADC Mining & Construction News*
[6] *World Nuclear Association, "World Uranium Mining Production", updated 20 January 2026, World Uranium Mining Production - World Nuclear Association (accessed 9 Feb 2026)*
[7] *The Online Guide to the Namibian Economy, "Namibia's Diamond Industry", last updated 7 July 2025, Namibia's Diamond Industry - The Online Guide to the Namibian Economy (accessed 9 Feb 2026)*
[8] *ITC Trade Map, Namibia's Exports of Diamonds, 2024*
[9] *World Bank, GDP and Employment contribution, Agriculture, Namibia, 2023, data extracted on 29 January 2026*

National Policy on Sustainable Special Economic Zones (2022-2027), which provides the basis for industrial clustering, investment facilitation, and logistics-linked production hubs.

In the mining sector, Namibia's central policy direction is to shift from exporting minerals in raw or concentrate form toward greater domestic processing, refining, and intermediate production. This is formalised in the Mineral Beneficiation Strategy for Namibia 2021[10], which sets a roadmap to expand beneficiation and manufacturing within the country and explicitly targets higher-value outcomes across mineral value chains.

At the broader level, Namibia's National AfCFTA Implementation Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2027) explicitly identifies mineral beneficiation, agro-processing, and fisheries value addition as priority pathways for expanding manufactured and processed exports into African markets as tariff liberalisation advances. This aligns with the AIDA framework, situating Namibia's industrial agenda within broader continental efforts to deepen value addition and regional value-chain integration

In summary, Namibia's current trade structure captures a relatively small share of total value creation, as exports are concentrated in upstream segments of regional and global value chains, with higher-margin processing, trading, and distribution activities occurring outside the country. Namibia's industrial opportunity under the AfCFTA will be shaped not just by export diversification, but also by deepening value addition in resource-linked sectors, strengthening regional processing roles, and leveraging logistics connectivity to serve Southern and wider African markets.

MSMEs at the centre of employment, women's enterprise, and youth participation

Namibia's MSME landscape consists of a relatively small formal SME segment alongside a large informal enterprise economy. About 40,000 formal SMEs[11], contributes about 12% of GDP. At the same time, Namibia continues to face labour-market challenges, with around 29% of the working-age population currently in employment, reinforcing the importance of MSMEs and enterprise development in supporting broader economic participation.[12]

The informal economy substantially expands the scale and role of MSMEs in Namibia's economy and labour absorption. it accounts for about 25% of GDP, with more than half of employed persons engaged in informal employment, concentrated in agriculture, informal retail and trading, transport services, small-scale mining,

[10] *Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade (Namibia), "Mineral Beneficiation Strategy for Namibia 2021", Mineral Beneficiation Strategy for Namibia 2021*
[11] *"Business and economy", The Brief.*
[12] *"Labour Force Report", Namibia Statistics Agency*

and household enterprises. In a labour market with limited formal job absorption, MSMEs remain the primary entry point into economic activity for young people, with **youth unemployment estimated at about 46%**[13]. Women and youth are central to Namibia's MSME ecosystem. **Women lead more than 70% of Namibian SMEs**, making enterprise development the main channel for women's economic participation. Youth participation, while significant, remains constrained by high unemployment and underutilisation, reinforcing the importance of enterprise-led pathways for labour-market inclusion.

The scale and structure of the MSME sector also present persistent challenges, particularly in relation to access to finance, enterprise capability, and progression from informal to formal activity. To address these constraints, Namibia has implemented a national **SME Financing Strategy**, including a **Credit Guarantee Scheme**, a **Venture Capital Fund**, and **Mentoring and Coaching Programme**, aimed at improving access to finance and strengthening enterprise capability. In parallel, Namibia has advanced **women-focused and youth-focused MSME initiatives**, including a proposed **National Youth Fund** and dedicated programmes supporting women-owned and women-led enterprises. These initiatives align with Namibia's **AfCFTA National Implementation Strategy**, which positions MSMEs as vehicles for competitiveness, value addition, and participation in regional markets as AfCFTA liberalisation advances.

Realising this potential will depend on strengthening the productivity, formality, and market readiness of MSMEs, ensuring that enterprise participation translates into competitive supply under AfCFTA conditions.

[13] *"Diagnostic of informality in Namibia", Bank of Namibia, 9 September 2025, website*

Methodology and Assessment Tools

02

2.1 Overall Approach and Principles

2.1.1 Assessment Approach

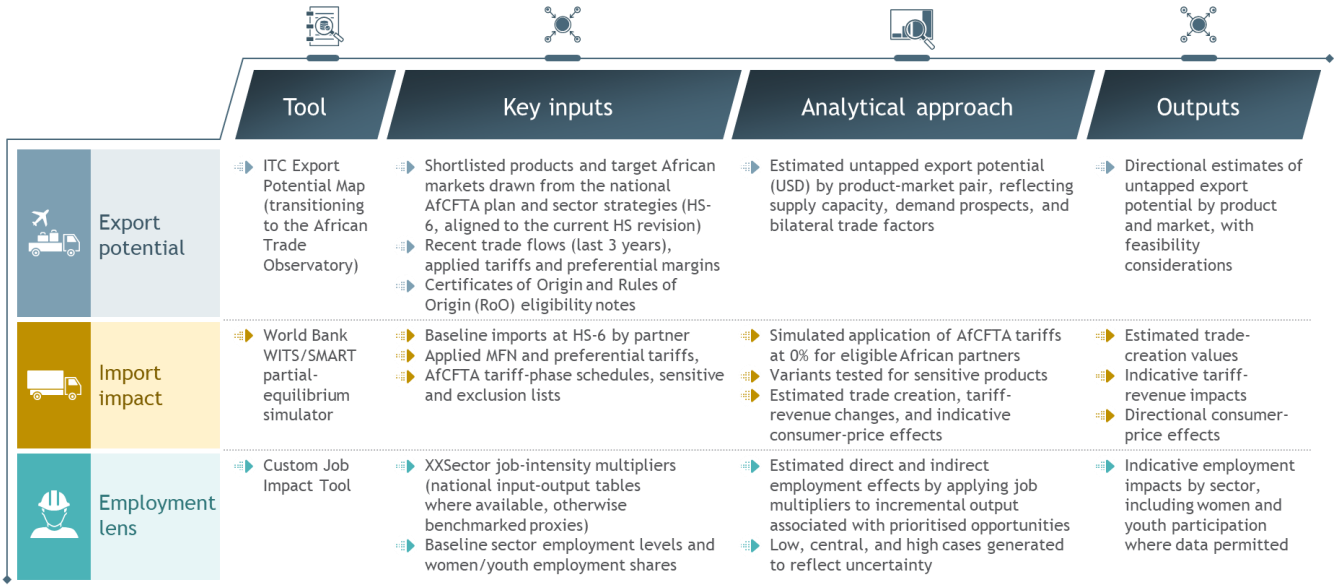
This assessment was designed as a country-led exercise to support policymakers in understanding Namibia's readiness for AfCFTA implementation and the implications for industrial development under AIDA. The approach combines quantitative analysis with firm-level evidence to link trade opportunities with competitiveness constraints, enabling conditions, and sector readiness.

- The assessment examines Namibia's AfCFTA readiness across three complementary dimensions:
- Trade opportunities and adjustment pressures, assessing where Namibia can expand exports and where increased competition may affect domestic producers.
- The enabling environment for trade, focusing on the effectiveness of trade facilitation, infrastructure, and trade finance in supporting AfCFTA implementation.
- Progress towards industrialisation, assessed through the lens of AIDA's core enablers to identify constraints affecting scale, competitiveness, and value addition.

2.2 Assessment Tools

2.2.1 AfCFTA Future Impact Assessment

Product-level analysis was used to assess export potential and import exposure for selected products. The focus was on identifying where Namibia's current trade performance falls short of attainable demand, and where tariff liberalisation may create opportunities or adjustment pressures. This analysis provides a structured basis for distinguishing between opportunities that can be pursued through improved utilisation of existing capacity and those that require deeper industrial upgrading.



2.2.2 AfCFTA Enabling Environment Monitoring

The assessment reviewed whether Namibia's trade-related policies and systems are effectively translating into lower trade costs and improved market access for firms. Attention was given to customs procedures, border performance, standards and certification, logistics connectivity, and payments and trade finance. The analysis highlights gaps between institutional frameworks and operational performance, helping to identify practical bottlenecks that limit firm-level uptake of AfCFTA preferences.

2.2.3 Industrialisation Progress Assessment

Sector-level analysis examined Namibia's progress across key AIDA enablers, including access to inputs and infrastructure, cost competitiveness, skills, finance, regulatory effectiveness, and value-chain integration.

This assessment distinguishes between sectors where core enabling conditions are broadly in place, but opportunities remain to strengthen scale and cost competitiveness, and sectors where longer-term competitiveness and upgrading challenges continue to affect industrial development outcome. The objective is to identify where targeted industrial interventions can most effectively support AfCFTA-related opportunities.

2.3 Evidence base and validation

Findings are grounded in a combination of quantitative analysis and primary evidence collected through firm-level surveys, interviews, and stakeholder consultations. This mixed-methods approach allows the assessment to capture both measurable trade effects and the operational realities faced by firms, ensuring that conclusions are robust and policy-relevant.

03 Assessment Results by Tool

3.1 Summary of Assessment Findings

3.1.1 Trade opportunities and competitiveness

The AfCFTA presents substantial trade opportunities for Namibia, supported by its existing production base and alignment with products experiencing sustained demand across African markets. Estimated unrealised export potential amounts to **$816 M within Africa** and about **$3.9 Bn globally** by 2030, underscoring the scale of opportunity associated with deeper regional integration.

To assess the dynamics shaping Namibia's import and export prospects under AfCFTA, three exemplar export products, unworked diamond, frozen mackerel and uncooked pasta, were selected for analysis, alongside two import products (pineapple and worn clothing).

Unworked diamonds represent Namibia's largest trade opportunity under the AfCFTA. Namibia exported approximately $1.0 Bn in unworked diamonds in 2024, reflecting a substantial natural resource base and established extraction and regulatory systems. With institutionalised sorting and valuation, expanding domestic cutting and polishing capacity, and strong traceability and ESG standards, AfCFTA creates scope for Namibia to deepen its participation in regional diamond value chains and to expand downstream activities such as beneficiation, jewellery manufacturing.

Frozen mackerel represents a significant regional trade opportunity anchored in Namibia's fisheries sector. Namibia exported approximately $30 M of frozen mackerel in 2024 and holds an estimated $42 M in unrealised intra-African export potential by 2030. Established industrial fishing and freezing capacity,

regulated access to fish stocks, and reliable port infrastructure provide a strong platform to scale intra-African exports as demand for affordable protein across the continent continues to grow.

Uncooked pasta presents a smaller but scalable value-added opportunity. Namibia currently exports around $7 M annually, with ITC estimating $27 M in unrealised intra-African export potential by 2030. An existing domestic manufacturing base and integrated milling and processing capacity position Namibia to expand exports of staple grain-based foods under AfCFTA as trade infrastructures beyond regional corridors becomes stabilised.

Overall, Namibia's AfCFTA-related trade opportunities are concentrated in products where strong production fundamentals already exist, but where realised gains will depend on deepening regional trade relationships, improving delivery competitiveness, and capturing greater value along regional value chains, rather than on market access alone.

3.1.2 Trade facilitation and infrastructure

Namibia's trade facilitation systems provide a strong platform for AfCFTA implementation. Average customs clearance times are around 4 days, performing better than the global average of 7 days, reflecting efficient core customs processes supported by digitised administration through ASYCUDAWorld and related electronic systems. Access to trade information has improved through national trade portals and e-tariff systems, while WCO-supported Rules of Origin training has strengthened the practical application of AfCFTA provisions at the border.

Namibia records a Logistics Performance Index score of approximately 2.9 out of 5, placing it above the Sub-Saharan African average and among the stronger logistics performers on the continent. This reflects relatively reliable transport infrastructure and corridor connectivity, anchored by one of Africa's most developed road networks and efficient port operations at Walvis Bay. High-quality trunk corridors, including the Trans-Kalahari, Trans-Caprivi, and Trans-Cunene routes, support Namibia's role as a regional gateway economy, facilitating the movement of goods between inland production zones and regional and global markets. At the same time, ongoing efforts to modernise border posts and expand digital trade systems are shaping the next phase of AfCFTA readiness. The initiation of One-Stop Border Post (OSBP) operationalisation and the expansion of paperless and digital trade processes, alongside the rollout of a national Instant Payment Programme, provide a foundation for deeper regional integration as AfCFTA implementation advances.

3.1.3 Industrial capacity and export execution readiness

Namibia has established industrial capacity across its priority sectors. Access to raw materials and core inputs is strong in both mining and fisheries. Electricity supply is reliable and supports continuous industrial operations. Port infrastructure supports processing and export activity at scale. Processing facilities and industrial equipment are in place across mining, fisheries and food manufacturing providing a solid base for value addition and export growth.

Export execution readiness reflects a functional baseline with scope to strengthen scale and consistency. Standards and certification systems are aligned with international benchmarks and support access to external markets. Firms are able to meet export documentation and compliance requirements. As trade volumes expand execution outcomes will increasingly depend on workforce capability skills depth and the effectiveness of investment in upgrading production and logistics processes to sustain quality and reliability.

Taken together, **Namibia has the industrial foundations required to support intra African trade under AfCFTA**. Strong input availability, infrastructure and standards alignment provide a platform for export participation. Larger and more durable gains will be shaped by how effectively existing industrial capacity is translated into consistent and scalable export execution within regional value chains.

3.1.4 Policy alignment and Institutional Coordination

Namibia has established a formal policy and institutional framework broadly aligned with AfCFTA objectives, including export development, industrial upgrading, and regional market integration. National strategies such as the AfCFTA Implementation Strategy, industrial and value-addition policies, and sectoral programmes provide a coherent policy direction. At the same time, evidence across the assessment points to the importance of coordinated delivery at the firm interface, rather than policy design alone, in shaping AfCFTA outcomes.

Survey evidence points to relatively strong awareness alongside variation in operational execution. Awareness of core AfCFTA provisions is high, with **80% of respondents familiar with rules of origin** and **79% with applicable tariff schedules**. Practical exposure is also well developed, with **78% of firms having participated in formal AfCFTA-related training** and **around 92% reporting engagement with AfCFTA operational tools**. At the same time, **59% of respondents indicate that clearer and more product-specific guidance on rules of origin and procedures for obtaining Certificates of Origin would further strengthen compliance**, suggesting that remaining gaps are concentrated in operational clarity rather than basic awareness.

This point to opportunities to strengthen coordination across the trade-support ecosystem. Improved alignment among customs and border authorities, standards institutions, export-support agencies, and financial intermediaries would help improve clarity, reduce duplication, and support more consistent uptake of AfCFTA opportunities, particularly where market-access conditions are already favourable.

3.1.5 Social and Environmental Outcomes

AfCFTA implementation in Namibia offers meaningful potential for positive social outcomes, particularly through employment participation and institutional engagement. Women and youth are already meaningfully represented across firms' workforces, and AfCFTA-related activity is expected to reinforce rather than disrupt existing employment patterns. Labour conditions are generally expected to improve as trade expands, reflecting the presence of established regulatory frameworks and sector-level oversight in key industries.

At the same time, preparedness to manage social and environmental considerations remains uneven. Awareness of international environmental and social standards is not yet consistently embedded across firms, and worker-level capacity building to adapt to evolving labour requirements remains limited. As financial intermediaries play a more prominent role in supporting AfCFTA-related activity, the effectiveness of transparency, disclosure, and oversight mechanisms will increasingly shape whether expanded trade translates into inclusive, well-managed, and sustainable outcomes.

Overall, Namibia's AfCFTA prospects are shaped less by the availability of opportunities and more by how effectively existing strengths are mobilised in practice. With solid production capacity, established regional trade links, and improving trade systems, the country is well positioned to benefit from AfCFTA. Realising these gains will depend on strengthening execution across value chains, ensuring coordinated delivery at the firm interface, and embedding inclusion and sustainability alongside expanding trade.

3.2 AfCFTA Future Impact Assessment

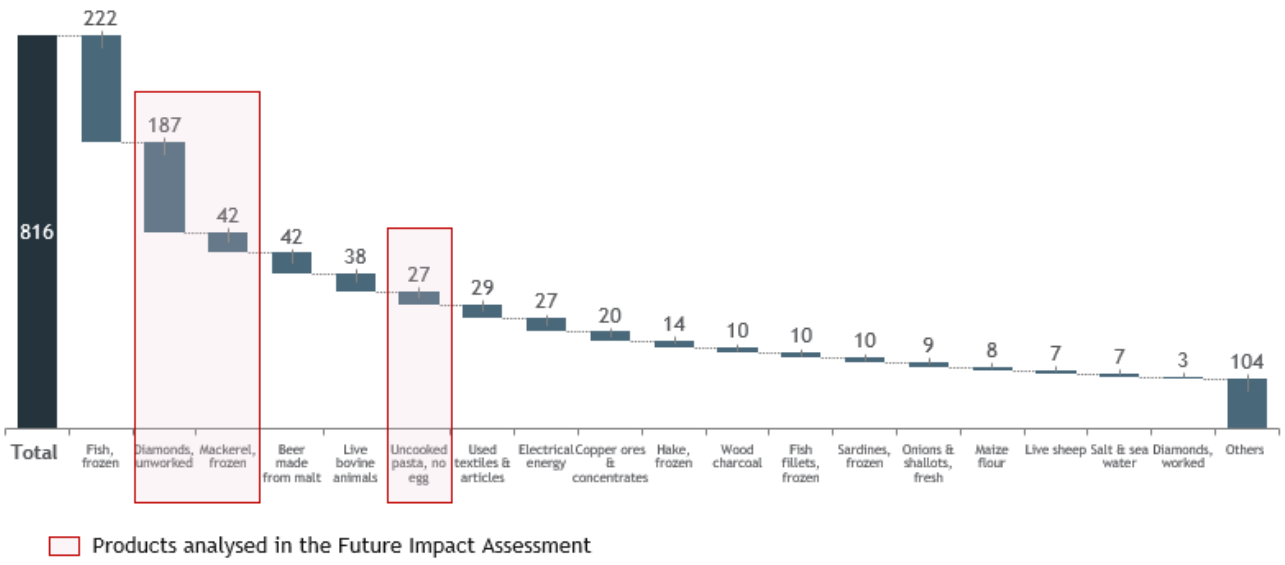
The AfCFTA Future Impact Assessment draws on quantitative analysis of export potential and import impacts to assess Namibia's prospective gains and adjustment effects under AfCFTA implementation. Export potential is assessed using product-level trade data from the ITC Trade Map, while import impacts are evaluated through partial-equilibrium analysis to estimate trade creation, tariff revenue effects, and indicative price changes for selected priority products.

ITC's Export Potential Map estimates are derived from current trade patterns and revealed comparative advantage and therefore reflect export opportunities that can be realised within Namibia's existing industrial and production structure. They provide a conservative baseline of export potential, indicating where Namibia could expand exports by more effectively matching current supply capabilities with demand in target markets.

These quantitative assessments are complemented by primary consultations with **432** private-sector individuals active in AfCFTA-relevant value chains, as well as targeted interviews and focus group discussions. This qualitative evidence captures firm-level perspectives on export readiness, constraints, and anticipated adjustment challenges. Together, the assessment links projected AfCFTA trade effects with the operational realities faced by Namibian firms, thereby strengthening the policy relevance of the findings.

3.2.1 Overview of results

Figure 1: Namibia's top products with unrealised potential to Africa by 2030 (estimations in $M)



Source: ITC Export Potential Map

The AfCFTA Future Impact Assessment provides a set of broader insights on Namibia's trade and industrial competitiveness under the AfCFTA, using diamonds (unworked), frozen mackerel and uncooked pasta as illustrative export examples. Namibia's unrealised export potential is substantial, **estimated at $816 M in**

Africa and $3.9 Bn globally by 2030[14], reflecting strong demand for products aligned with Namibia's resource base, agricultural output and selected light-manufacturing activities. This potential is reinforced by Namibia's expanding regional integration, diversified production base, and growing momentum in industrial policy and export-promotion efforts, positioning Namibia to deepen participation in continental value chains as AfCFTA implementation progresses.

Alongside this potential, survey evidence indicates relatively strong private-sector readiness to operationalise AfCFTA opportunities. **Awareness of core AfCFTA provisions is high, with 80% of respondents reporting familiarity with rules of origin and 79% with applicable tariff-reduction schedules**, suggesting that most firms understand the main market-access parameters of the agreement. **Practical readiness is also relatively advanced: 78% of respondents have participated in formal AfCFTA-related training, and around 95% report some level of engagement with AfCFTA operational tools**. At the same time, 66% of respondents indicate that **clearer, more product-specific guidance on rules of origin and on procedures for obtaining Certificates of Origin would further strengthen compliance with AfCFTA requirements**, highlighting that remaining constraints are concentrated at the level of operational clarity rather than basic awareness[15].

3.2.2 Export Potential

3.2.2.1 Diamonds, unworked[16]

3.2.2.1.1 Product overview and strategic relevance

Unworked diamonds are Namibia's most significant export commodity, underpinning both the mining sector and the broader economy. The country is consistently ranked among the **top five global producers of gem-quality diamonds** by value, behind Russia, Botswana, Angola and Canada.[17]

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[14] *The ITC Export Potential Map estimates export opportunities based on current trade patterns and revealed comparative advantage, capturing potential expansion within a country's existing export structure. The methodology focuses on scaling existing products and does not account for future diversification or value-chain upgrading*

[15] *Results reflect multiple-response survey questions in which respondents could select more than one option; as a result, percentage totals exceed 100%*

[16] *Diamonds (HS 710231) refers to natural diamonds in their unworked state, including stones that are simply sawn, cleaved, or bruted, prior to cutting or polishing.*

[17] *The Online Guide to the Namibian Economy, "Namibia's Diamond Industry", last updated 7 July 2025,* [*Namibia's Diamond Industry - The Online Guide to the Namibian Economy*]

Figure 2: Global diamond production in 2024

S/N	Key markets	Value ($)	Proportion of total value (%)
1	Russia	3,335 M	29%
2	Botswana	3,308 M	29%
3	Angola	1,412 M	12%
4	Canada	1,075 M	9%
5	Namibia	967 M	8%
6	Others	1,385 M	12%
	Total	11.5 M	100%

In 2024, Namibia exported approximately $828 million in unworked diamonds, with trade flows concentrated overwhelmingly in one destination. **Botswana alone imported $668 M**, representing **over 80% of Namibia's total exports of unworked diamonds**. South Africa accounted for a much smaller share, importing $4 M over the same period. Beyond the continent, Namibia's remaining exports were distributed across a small group of established global trading centres, including the United Arab Emirates ($78 M), Belgium ($45 M), India ($21 M), Israel ($6 M), and the United States ($4 M).[18]

Diamonds accounted for over 20% of Namibia's total exports,[19] underscoring their central role in external trade and fiscal revenues. Namibia's diamond sector is defined by a unique combination of onshore alluvial and offshore marine production, with the latter accounting for about 80% of current output[20]. **Offshore production is led by Debmarine Namibia**, a specialised marine diamond mining company that operates as **a 50/50 joint venture between the Government of the Republic of Namibia and the De Beers Group. Onshore diamond mining is undertaken by Namdeb**, similarly structured as a joint venture between the Namibian Government and De Beers.

Namibia is distinguished globally by the quality of its gem diamonds. In 2024[21], Namibia recorded an average export unit value of **~$417 per carat**, significantly higher than other major producers such as Botswana

[18] *ITC Trade Map, Export of Unworked Diamond (HS 710231), Namibia, 2024, data extracted on 20 Jan 2026*
The ITC Export Potential Map estimates export opportunities based on current trade patterns and revealed comparative advantage, capturing potential expansion within a country's existing export structure. The methodology focuses on scaling existing products and does not account for future diversification or value-chain upgrading.
[19] *ITC Trade Map, Export of Unworked Diamond (HS 710231), Namibia, 2024, data extracted on 20 Jan 2026.*
[20] *Further Africa, "Namibia: Diamond Production Up 9% in 2023", 18 February 2024, Namibia diamond production up 9% in 2023 - FurtherAfrica*
[21] *Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, "Annual Global Summary: 2024 Production, Imports, Exports and KPC Counts", 2024GlobalSummary.pdf*

($75/ct), Russia ($89/ct), Canada ($81/ct), and Angola ($101/ct). **With production of over 2.3 million carats**, this performance is anchored in Namibia's **marine-dominated production base**, which accounts for the majority of national output and consistently yields high-value gem-quality stones.

Beyond extraction, Namibia has institutionalised domestic control over the sorting, valuation, and initial marketing of its rough diamonds. **The Namibia Diamond Trading Company (NDTC),** another joint venture between the Government of Namibia and De Beers, is mandated to sort and value all Namibian diamonds and to allocate supply for export and for domestic beneficiation.

Under this framework, approximately **15-20% of annual production is allocated to local sightholders** to support in-country cutting and polishing, while a further **15% is sold to Namib Desert Diamonds (Pty) Ltd (NAMDIA)** for independent government marketing[22]. Most of the **production is routed through De Beers' global sales system**, with primary rough-diamond sales largely conducted from Botswana, which functions as the main aggregation and buyer hub for unworked diamonds rather than a point of ownership transfer.

Diamonds fall within Namibia's priority mineral value chains, as outlined in **Vision 2030**, the **Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6)**, and the **Growth at Home strategy**. While beneficiation through cutting and polishing has expanded only gradually in absolute terms, recent performance indicators point to a **material strengthening of domestic processing utilisation**. In 2023[23], the Namibia Diamond Trading Company (NDTC) sold approximately **77% of its total offering to NDTC sightholders**, with **88% of sales to those sightholders were fully processed in Namibia**, compared to an industry average of around **38% a few years earlier**. This shift reflects improved alignment between allocation, factory capability, and processing compliance, even as unworked diamonds continue to anchor Namibia's foreign exchange earnings, fiscal revenues, and employment in mining.

In the AfCFTA context, Namibia's diamond exports are strategically relevant. The country benefits from established production capacity, export infrastructure and institutional oversight across the value chain. AfCFTA creates scope to strengthen linkages between upstream mining and regional value chains in cutting, polishing, and jewellery manufacturing. Namibia's strong geological base, transparent regulatory regime, and high ESG standards further position the country to expand its participation in intra-African diamond trade and support the development of regional mineral value chains.

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[22] *Chamber of Mines of Namibia, "Diamonds",* Diamonds – Chamberofmines *(accessed 9 Feb 2026)*
[23] *Mayotte Wire, "NDTC Markets Over 2.3 Million Carats in 2023", NDTC markets over 2.3 million carats in 2023 - Mayotte Wire*

3.2.2.1.2 Export Potential Analysis

ITC's Export Potential Map indicates that Namibia holds **$187 M in unrealised intra-African export potential** and **$826 M worldwide by 2030[24],** for unworked diamonds.

Figure 3: Namibia's unworked diamond export opportunities within Africa, by 2030

S/N	Key markets	Unrealised demand ($)	Share of unrealised demand (%)
1	South Africa	186 M	99%
2	Mauritius	1 M	1%
	Total	**187 M**	**100%**

South Africa accounts for the vast majority of Namibia's unrealised intra-African export potential for unworked diamonds, estimated at approximately **$186 M, or 99**% percent of the total. Mauritius follows distantly, with an additional $493,000 in potential. South Africa's role as a regional hub for beneficiation, regulation, and trade infrastructure suggests a pathway for deeper commercial integration under AfCFTA's liberalised trade regime, however, beyond South Africa, diamond beneficiation capacity in Africa remains limited.

Despite the concentration of export potential to South Africa, prevailing trade structures suggest that this demand may not translate into direct Namibia – South Africa exports. Namibia's diamond trade is historically integrated with Botswana through the De Beers aggregation and sales framework, under which production is consolidated and channelled through Botswana's trading system prior to onward export. In 2024[25], Botswana exported approximately **$120 M** in unworked diamonds to South Africa, compared with only about **$3 M** exported directly from Namibia to South Africa, illustrating that trade is likely to continue being routed through Botswana unless regional aggregation and trading arrangements evolve.

Namibia-Botswana diamond trade corridor dominates regional flows

In 2024, Namibia exported approximately $668 M in unworked (rough) diamonds to Botswana, accounting for nearly all of Namibia's intra-African diamond trade and around 80% of its global rough-diamond exports. **While recorded as exports in trade statistics, these flows function primarily as part of a vertically integrated regional aggregation system rather than as final-market sales to Botswana**. The corridor reflects Namibia's integration into the De Beers–led Southern African diamond economy, underpinned by joint-venture

[24] *ITC Export Potential Map, Export of Unworked Diamond (HS 710231), Namibia, 2024, data extracted on 20 Jan 2026.*
[25] *Trade Map, Export of Unworked Diamond (HS 710231), Namibia, 2024, data extracted on 2 Feb 2026*

production arrangements in Namibia (Namdeb and Debmarine Namibia, both 50/50 Government–De Beers) and Botswana's role as the principal aggregation and sales hub through DTC Botswana (DTCB).

Namibian diamonds not allocated to domestic beneficiation or government marketing channels are routed to the international sorting and sales centre in Gaborone, Botswana for aggregation, sorting, and primary sale to global sightholders. Ownership typically transfers only at the point of international sale, after which stones are exported onward to cutting and polishing centres in India, Belgium, or the United Arab Emirates. The corridor therefore delivers scale, liquidity, and price stability, but does not materially advance regional beneficiation or downstream industrialisation.

In this context, the estimated $186 M in unrealised export potential to South Africa signals a structural opportunity rather than an immediate commercial shift. AfCFTA could support diversification of continental diamond trade only where alternative regional value-chain nodes, including trading platforms, processing capacity, or specialist services, are actively developed. Absent such developments, diamond trade is likely to remain concentrated within the existing aggregation model, with AfCFTA affecting routing margins rather than value capture.

Shifting demand and market pressures reposition Namibia towards ESG compliant premium segments

The global diamond industry is facing a sustained demand downturn. In 2023 and 2024, rough diamond inventories across the value chain rose sharply due to weak downstream sales, triggering deliberate production cuts by major players. Namibia's diamond exports declined by about 20%[26] in 2024, following four years of consistent export growth, while De Beers reduced output volume by 22%[27]. The adjustments reflect both inventory overhang and continued softness in key consumer markets, particularly China and the United States

At the same time, lab-grown diamonds have emerged as a structural challenge to natural diamond demand. Once largely confined to industrial or niche segments, lab-grown stones have expanded rapidly into mainstream bridal and fashion markets. With price discounts commonly estimated at 50–70%[28] relative to

[26] *Trade Map, Export of Unworked Diamond (HS 710231), Namibia, 2024, data extracted on 2 Feb 2026*
[27] *De Beers Group, "Production Report for the Fourth Quarter of 2024", Production Report for the Fourth Quarter of 2024 – De Beers Group*
[28] *Diamonds.pro, "Lab Created Diamonds: Prices, Value and Guide", Lab-Grown Diamond Prices & Value Analysis*

natural diamonds, they are increasingly displacing demand in the mid-range segments, particularly among younger and more price-sensitive consumers.

In response, major African diamond-producing countries have launched coordinated initiatives to support demand for natural stones. The Luanda Declaration[29], signed by major producers including Namibia, commits a portion of rough diamond revenues to global marketing campaigns emphasising origin, authenticity, and community impact, with the aim of reinforcing the differentiated value of natural diamonds

Within this shifting market context, Namibia is increasingly positioned to compete in premium segments that prioritise provenance, ethical sourcing, and traceability. The country's strong regulatory framework, full Kimberley Process compliance, and adoption of De Beers' Tracr blockchain system provide verified origin assurance. Producers such as Debmarine and Namdeb operate under independently audited ESG standards, reinforcing credibility in high-end markets. Combined with Namibia's consistently high gem-quality output, these attributes support differentiation in segments where authenticity and responsible sourcing command price premiums.

For AfCFTA, the implications highlight the need to strengthen regional value chains that reward traceable, responsibly sourced stones. As intra-African luxury retail and jewellery markets develop, Namibia's ESG positioning provides a competitive advantage that can be leveraged within emerging continental trade networks

3.2.2.2 Frozen mackerel[30]

3.2.2.2.1 Product Overview and Strategic Relevance

Frozen mackerel is an important part of Namibia's fisheries sector and remains essential to both the country's export portfolio and regional food security. It is a staple protein source across many African markets, particularly in West and Central Africa, where cold chain infrastructure and dietary preferences sustain high demand for affordable, frozen pelagic fish. The fisheries sector plays a critical role in Namibia's economy, contributing approximately 3 to 4%[31] of GDP and ranks among the world's top 10 due to its robust governance and architecture, with about 12% of total merchandise export earnings in 2024.

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[29] *Idex Online, "Milestone Luanda Accord", Milestone Luanda Accord: 1% of Rough Revenue to Promote Natural Diamonds*
[30] *Frozen mackerel (HS 030354) refers to frozen fish of the species Scomber scombrus, Scomber australasicus, and Scomber japonicus, typically traded whole or in basic frozen form for human consumption.*
[31] *The Brief, "Fishing Sector's N$10 bn GDP Contribution Falls Short — NPC", 24 July 2024, Fishing sector's N$10bn GDP contribution falls short – NPC - The Brief | Namibia's Leading Business & Financial News*

Namibia is Africa's 2nd largest exporter of frozen mackerel, and the 12th largest exporter worldwide, preceded only by Norway, China, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Iceland, Ireland, South Korea, Mauritania, Japan, and Oman[32]. **However, export volumes are about 10x smaller than top large players** like China (~316,000 MT) and Norway (~300,000 MT). In 2024, **Namibia exported approximately 30,000 MT** of frozen mackerel, valued at around **$30 million**. Of this, **94% was exported to African markets**, with Côte d'Ivoire ($10 M), Zambia ($9 M), and the Democratic Republic of Congo ($8 M) accounting for over 90% of total export value. These figures highlight Namibia's role as a key intra-African supplier of affordable, high-protein seafood.

Namibia's strength in small pelagic fisheries is mainly in horse mackerel (Trachurus capensis), which accounts for the largest share of landings by volume. The sector operates within the **Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem[33],** supporting high levels of biomass and **enabling Namibia to sustain large-scale industrial fishing**. Horse mackerel alone contributes over 50%[34] of Namibia's total fish landings, with annual total allowable catches (TACs) of about 200,000 MT[35]. These are harvested primarily by midwater trawl vessels operating from Walvis Bay and Lüderitz, **many of which are equipped with onboard freezing and processing capabilities suited for direct export**.

Frozen mackerel exports from Namibia are enabled by an industrialized capture and freezing system that links regulated access to quotas and total allowable catches, industrial vessels and onshore plants with blast/freezing capacity, and distribution channels that move frozen whole fish efficiently into Southern, Central and parts of West African markets. The product's competitiveness is therefore by unit cost, availability/consistency of supply, freezing and cold-chain reliability, and speed-to-market for a perishable protein product.

[32] ITC Trademap, *Export of Frozen Mackerel (HS 30354), Namibia, 2024, data extracted on 2 Feb 2026*
[33] Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME): A major ocean ecosystem off the south-western coast of Africa, stretching along the coasts of Angola, Namibia, and South Africa
[34] *The Brief, "Namibia's Fish Export Earnings Decline as Horse Mackerel Tops Landings", 28 March 2025*, *Namibia's fish export earnings decline.*
[35] *Africa-Press, "Horse Mackerel Sustainability Worries Grow"*, *Horse mackerel sustainability worries grow - Namibia*

3.2.2.2.2 Export Potential Analysis

ITC Trade Map estimates that Namibia has **$47 M in unrealised global export potential** for frozen mackerel, majority of this opportunity stems from intra-African trade[36].

Figure 4: Namibia's frozen mackerel export opportunities within Africa, by 2030

S/N	Key markets	Unrealised demand ($)	Share of unrealised demand (%)
1	Mozambique	21 M	50%
2	Zambia	12 M	28%
3	DR Congo	5.6 M	13%
4	Nigeria	1.8 M	5%
5	Others	1.6 M	4%
	Total	**42 M**	**100%**

Within Africa, ITC's Export Potential Map identifies $42 M in untapped regional potential, highly concentrated in a small number of markets that together account for 96% of the opportunity by 2030. This concentration creates a clear and manageable pathway for targeted export expansion, and Namibia's existing market presence positions the country to scale rapidly in markets where demand for frozen fish remains strong.

This highlights that Namibia's unrealised regional export potential of $42 M is significant relative to its current export level of around **$30 M**[37]. If realised, this gap would represent a material expansion of Namibia's frozen mackerel exports to African markets. The opportunity is highly concentrated, with Mozambique, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo accounting for over 90% of the estimated gap. This concentration reduces the complexity of market expansion and supports a targeted commercial and logistics strategy focused on a limited number of priority destinations.

Private-sector survey responses suggest that Namibia has strong competitive position, with **about 90% of industry respondents indicating that Namibian frozen mackerel meets standards** required by African markets. **Over 60% of respondents also agree that AfCFTA will lead to an increase in exports of frozen mackerel**. Although, it is good to note that **operational and production costs pose the most constraint to this growth, with about 46% indicating so.**

Looking ahead, Namibia's frozen mackerel export prospects under AfCFTA are shaped by a combination of established regional demand, strong existing market presence, and a concentrated set of priority destinations. With unrealised regional export potential significant relative to current export levels, near-term

[36] *ITC Export Potential Map, Export of Frozen Mackerel (HS 30354), Namibia, 2024, data extracted on 20 Jan 2026.*
[37] *ITC Trade Map, Export of Frozen Mackerel (HS 30354), Namibia, 2024, data extracted on 20 Jan 2026*
The ITC Export Potential Map estimates export opportunities based on current trade patterns and revealed comparative advantage, capturing potential expansion within a country's existing export structure. The methodology focuses on scaling existing products and does not account for future diversification or value-chain upgrading.

growth will depend less on market discovery and more on Namibia's ability to improve cost competitiveness, logistics reliability, and volume consistency in a small number of established African corridors.

Namibia's well established commercial fishing industry reinforces supply readiness for AfCFTA markets

Namibia's frozen mackerel supply is rooted in a well-established commercial fishing industry that has long been a significant contributor to the national economy. Over the past decade, fishing has accounted for about 20% of export earnings, underscoring its structural role in economic output and foreign exchange generation.[38] The sector is strongly export-oriented, with about 90% of Namibia's fish output exported[39], supported by a regulated quota framework, an established industrial fleet, and integrated freezing and cold-chain infrastructure centred on Walvis Bay.

Within the pelagic fisheries mix, however, Frozen mackerel is not the dominant volume species. Sector throughput is more heavily anchored by other pelagics, shaping fleet allocation, quota utilisation, and processing capacity. As a result, while Namibia consistently exports frozen mackerel, export volumes are shaped by the relative size of Scomber landings within the broader pelagic fisheries mix. Supply expansion therefore depends primarily on species availability and allocation patterns, rather than on downstream industrial capacity.

Export execution is concentrated across a limited number of established routes. Approximately 35% of African-bound frozen mackerel exports are directed to Côte d'Ivoire, while Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo together account for roughly 60%. This concentration reflects a supply model built on repeat shipments, defined corridors, and established buyer relationships, rather than broad geographic dispersion.

Taken together, Namibia's is well positioned to supply Scomber mackerel into selected African markets where logistics, pricing, and buyer relationships align, but it does not have the species scale or export orientation to displace the large, extra-African suppliers that dominate West African imports.

Demand potential lies in deepening penetration in existing high-demand corridors

[38] *International Trade Administration (U.S. Department of Commerce), "Namibia – Commercial Fishing", Namibia - Commercial Fishing*
[39] *New Era, "Fishing contributes N$15b to GDP", 25 March 2025, Fishing contributes N$15b to GDP – New Era*

Africa represents a **major global demand centre for frozen "true" mackerel (Scomber spp.)**, accounting for **approximately 30% of total global imports**. Demand is **geographically concentrated**, with **West Africa forming the core consumption belt**. Large coastal economies such as **Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire** import frozen mackerel at very substantial scale, with **annual import volumes over 100,000 tonnes per country**[40] in recent years. These markets serve both domestic consumption and wider regional redistribution, supported by mature cold chain, wholesale, and open-market distribution systems.

Frozen mackerel plays a critical role in African food systems as a **low-cost and widely accessible protein source**, particularly for urban and peri-urban populations. Despite the presence of small pelagic fisheries in African waters, imports continue to play an important role in meeting demand for Scomber mackerel across many African markets. Regional supply remains insufficient in both scale and consistency to meet consumption needs in the largest markets. As a result, African importers rely heavily on **extra-African suppliers** capable of delivering **large, standardised consignments** with consistent size grading, predictable pricing, and year-round availability. These commercial requirements continue to shape sourcing decisions, particularly in the largest West African markets.

Demand is relatively stable at the consumer level due to its role as a low-cost protein source. However, sourcing decisions at the importer level are highly sensitive to landed price, supply reliability, and shipment consistency. These commercial dynamic favours supplier that can deliver volume predictably and at competitive cost.

Within this structure, Namibia participates primarily as a complementary intra-African supplier. While active in both West African coastal hubs and inland Southern African corridors, Namibia operates at a scale that supports targeted penetration rather than dominance in the largest continental markets.

3.2.2.3 Uncooked pasta[41]

3.2.2.3.1 Product overview and strategic relevance

Uncooked pasta is an established grain value-add export for Namibia. It forms part of the country's broader grain-processing sector, which includes wheat flour and other wheat-based products. According to the Namibia Agronomic Board's Market Intelligence Report on Grain Value-Added Products, Namibia participates in the production and export of pasta alongside other grain-derived food products, even though

[40] *ITC Trademap, imports of Frozen Mackerel (HS 30354), Namibia, 2024, data extracted on 20 Jan 2026*

[41] *Uncooked pasta (HS code 190219) refers to uncooked pasta, not containing eggs, not stuffed or otherwise prepared*

the sector remains small relative to imported processed foods and overall national grain use. Local processors rely on domestically milled wheat and import grain to produce pasta, bread flour, and related products, reflecting Namibia's position as a modest but meaningful producer of value-added grain product

In 2024, Namibia exported approximately **$7M**[42] worth of uncooked pasta, nearly all of which was destined for markets within the SADC. **South Africa was the dominant destination, representing about 85% of total exports**, followed by Botswana, Zambia and Angola, together absorbing almost 100% of Namibian uncooked pasta exports. Pasta exports are integrated into Southern African retail and wholesale food systems, rather than oriented toward continental and distant global markets.

Namibia's pasta exports are underpinned by a domestic agro-processing base, led primarily by Namib Mills, which manufactures pasta alongside other staple food products. The existence of local pasta manufacturing distinguishes Namibia's exports from simple re-exports and embeds domestic value through milling, processing, packaging, branding and distribution, supporting Namibia's role as a Southern African supplier of processed staple foods rather than a primary commodity exporter.

Pasta offers Namibia a scalable platform for regional market deepening. The country already exports competitively into neighbouring SADC markets, suggesting that AfCFTA's incremental value lies in expanding beyond existing corridors by reducing non-tariff frictions, improving customs predictability for packaged foods, and supporting firms in operationalising rules of origin.

3.2.2.3.2 Export Potential Analysis

ITC estimated Namibia's global unrealised export potential for uncooked pasta at $34 M by 2030. From this, **unrealised export potential within Africa is $27 M by 2030, representing approximately 80% of total export potential.**[43]

[42] *ITC Trade Map, Namibia's Exports of Uncooked Pasta (HS 190219), 2024*

[43] *ITC Export Potential Map, Namibia's Exports of Uncooked Pasta (HS 190219), 2024*
The ITC Export Potential Map estimates export opportunities based on current trade patterns and revealed comparative advantage, capturing potential expansion within a country's existing export structure. The methodology focuses on scaling existing products and does not account for future diversification or value-chain upgrading.

Figure 5: Namibia's uncooked pasta export opportunities within Africa, by 2030

S/N	Key markets	Unrealised demand ($)	Share of unrealised demand (%)
1	South Africa	11 M	41%
2	Zimbabwe	5.8 M	21%
3	DR Congo	2.7 M	10%
4	Zambia	2.1 M	8%
6	Others	5.4 M	20%
	Total	**27 M**	**100%**

Similar to other export products, it has **high concentration of export potential in neighbouring and SADC countries, including South Africa and Zimbabwe**. South Afirca is also the current top export destination for Namibia, meaning that unrealised trade potential could be more due to optimising processes and capacity to output than to have established trade corridors. These countries have high import dependence for staple grain-based foods and offer commercially viable access points under AfCFTA, particularly if trade facilitation and price competitiveness can be strengthened.

Africas largest exporters of uncooked pasta are Egypt ($129 M), **Cote d'Ivoire** ($44 M), **Tunisia** ($43 M), **Morocco** ($34 M), **South Africa** ($16 M), **Mauritius** ($9 M) and **Namibia** ($7 M). While Namibia's export volumes are modest compared to North African producers, its trade is highly concentrated within the SADC region, giving it a strong operational foothold in Southern Africa. This regional orientation, combined with established logistics and quality standards compliance, positions Namibia to defend and potentially expand its market share in a growing intra-African processed foods sector.

Private-sector survey evidence reinforces the reason for trade concentration in neighbouring countries, with about **40% of respondents highlighting high tariff and non-tariff barriers as main barrier to growth of Africa-wide exports**, second to limited financing. **About 60% of respondents also expect exports to increase as AfCFTA operationalises across Africa.**

Local manufacturing exists, but import dependency for inputs causes limitations

Namibia's uncooked pasta export supply is anchored in a domestic, industrial staple-food manufacturing platform rather than opportunistic re-export activity, with output concentrated in a small number of large facilities and scaled through established regional distribution channels. **The backbone of this supply system is Namib Mills, producing about 65,000 tons[44] of pasta per year and positions Namibia with one of the largest pasta manufacturing capacity in SADC**. This indicates that Namibia's export supply is not constrained by small-plant limitations but can support sustained regional export volumes when operating conditions are stable.

[44] *Prisma Reports, "Interview with Ian Collard, CEO, Namib Mills", Sep 2022, Interview with Ian Collard, CEO, Namib Mills - PRISMA REPORTS*

Namibia's pasta export capability is distribution- and corridor-enabled. Pasta is shelf-stable, but export supply at scale still depends on reliable packaging availability, warehousing, and high-frequency dispatch into neighbouring markets. Namib Mills presents its business model as having built a substantial distribution, sales and merchandising network over time, which is important because it means export supply is not just factory output but also the ability to place product consistently across regional retail and wholesale channels.

A defining feature of pasta supply dynamics in Namibia is that production is structurally linked to cereal input availability and import dependency, which shapes both the cost base and the stability of output. Namibia is a net cereal importer, and its cereal imports accounts, on average, for about two-thirds[45] of national consumption requirements, underscoring the economy-wide reliance on imported grain supply chains. As a result, Namibia's pasta sector is intrinsically connected to regional logistics and supply cost structures; efficient access to imported wheat flour helps reduce production costs and supports consistent output for both domestic sale and cross-border export. Stability and competitiveness of export supply depend on securing affordable wheat-based inputs and moving finished product efficiently through Southern African corridors.

Despite import dependence, Namibia's processing infrastructure and regional logistics integration provide a solid platform for scaling uncooked pasta exports. The strong existing trade flows into neighbouring SADC countries demonstrate that Namibian processors can meet regional demand competitively.

Uncooked pasta demand is rising across Africa

Demand for uncooked pasta in Africa is high and growing. In 2024[46], the continent consumed nearly 6.9 million tonnes, with market value reaching approximately $9 billion. Imports accounted for around 950,000 tonnes, underscoring the continued structural reliance on cross-border and extra-continental supply to meet demand, particularly in urban and inland markets where domestic production capacity, scale efficiencies, or consistent quality remain insufficient to fully satisfy consumption needs. Growth is driven by rapid urbanisation, rising food demand, and the increasing role of pasta as an accessible, shelf-stable staple in both low- and middle-income economies.

This demand is reflected across Namibia's high export potential markets. Countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, DRC, and Zambia remain heavily reliant on imports to meet domestic consumption needs.

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[45] *FAO GIEWS (Global Information and Early Warning System), "Country Briefs: Namibia", FAO GIEWS Country Brief on Namibia -*
[46] *IndexBox, "Uncooked Pasta in Africa — Market Overview 2024/25", Africa's Uncooked Pasta Market To Reach 7.5 Million Tons and $10.9 Billion by 2035 - News and Statistics - IndexBox*

Regional consumption is expected to rise steadily through 2030, supported by demographic trends and a shift toward processed cereal-based foods in urban markets. South Africa is the clearest anchor market. In 2024[47], it imported approximately $80 M of uncooked pasta (about 70,000 tonnes) and sourced from a mix of regional and global suppliers (notably Eswatini, Namibia, Italy, Latvia and Lithuania)

Consumer behaviour for uncooked pasta across African markets is shaped by the product's role as an affordable, shelf-stable staple, which makes purchasing decisions highly price- and availability-led rather than origin- or brand-led in most mass-market segments.

Uncooked pasta is not a niche product with thin regional consumption, but a continent-wide staple category with multiple high-volume import markets, where demand is already deep enough that competitive suppliers can scale through corridor-led trade. The benefit for Namibia under AfCFTA is therefore less about "creating demand," and more about AfCFTA-enabled reductions in trade friction and improved predictability to help Namibia expand its presence from its current SADC-centric footprint into additional African import corridors where the product category is already large and structurally resilient.

3.2.3 Import Impact[48]

3.2.3.1 Pineapples[49]

3.2.3.1.1 Product overview and strategic relevance

While pineapple is not among Namibia's largest horticulture import lines by value, it sits in the highly import-dependent fruit segment and is sensitive to cold-chain reliability. In 2024[50], Namibia's recorded imports of pineapple was $225k (about 95 tonnes), with about 70% of imports overwhelmingly supplied by South Africa at $156k, followed by Eswatini with 29% at $65k, together making up about 99% of total pineapple imports. This import structure indicates that Namibia's pineapple market is effectively integrated into Southern African supply chains, with South Africa functioning as the dominant regional sourcing and distribution hub.

This trade pattern aligns with Namibia's broader horticulture profile, where imports continue to play a significant role in meeting domestic demand across several product categories, with domestic production

[47] *ITC Trade Map, Namibia's Exports of Uncooked Pasta (HS 190219), 2024*
[48] *Import products were selected based on data availability, the existence of an established stakeholder base, and their classification under the country's AfCFTA sensitive product list due to potential import competition and/or fiscal relevance.*
[49] *Pineapple (HS code 200820) refers pineapples, prepared or preserved*
[50] *ITC Trade Map, Namibia's Imports of Pineapples (HS 200820), 2024*

meeting only 30–40%[51] of national demand over the past decade, while imports accounts for 60–70%. This reflects ongoing opportunities to strengthen domestic production capacity and support longer-term upgrading within the horticulture sector.

Fruit is the most import-reliant segment within this system with about 96%[52] of fruits being imported and only 4% produced locally, highlighting that fresh fruit imports (including pineapples) are driven by structural production constraints rather than temporary shortfalls.

Pineapple imports are strategically relevant for Namibia as a test case for efficient intra-African trade in perishable food products, where the main gains arise from reducing non-tariff barriers rather than tariffs. While South Africa currently dominates Namibia's pineapple supply, AfCFTA also provides a framework to diversify sourcing within Africa over time, strengthening regional value chains

3.2.3.1.2 Import Impact Analysis

3.2.1.1.2.1 Trade Creation

Namibia currently applies import duties of up to 55% on pineapples from non-preferential trading partners. However, **98% of Namibia's pineapple imports already originate from African countries**, and all of these are members of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), namely South Africa (69%), Eswatini (29%), and Botswana (0.1%). **As intra-SACU trade is fully liberalised, these imports already enter Namibia duty-free**. As a result, the implementation of AfCFTA does not generate any additional trade creation.[53]

3.2.1.1.2.2 Tariff Revenue Impact

Similarly, AfCFTA implementation is not expected to affect Namibia's tariff revenue from pineapple imports. Because all African pineapple imports originate from SACU member states and already benefit from full tariff liberalisation, there is no additional revenue loss associated with AfCFTA preferences. Existing import patterns mean that tariff revenue foregone has already been realised under SACU, and AfCFTA does not alter the fiscal position for this product category

[51] *HEI (Horticultural Enterprises of Namibia), Horticulture Report 2025, August 2025, Horticulture Industry Overview*
[52] *HEI (Horticultural Enterprises of Namibia), Horticulture Report (reviewed edition), August 2023, Hoticulture-Report-reviewed-MK-edited-002-002.pdf*
[53] *AfCFTA e-tariff book*

3.2.1.1.2.3 Consumer Price Impact

Given that pineapple imports from SACU countries already enter Namibia at **zero tariff**, AfCFTA implementation is not expected to generate further reductions in landed costs or consumer prices. Any price changes in the domestic market will therefore continue to be driven by non-tariff factors such as seasonal supply conditions, transport and logistics costs, exchange rate movements, and retail margins, rather than by changes in trade policy under AfCFTA.

3.2.3.2 Worn clothing and other worn textiles[54]

3.2.3.2.1 Product overview and strategic relevance

In 2024, **Namibia imported ~$235 K worth of worn clothing and other used textiles**. Imports were highly concentrated within the region, from **South Africa (63%)**, **Angola (14%)** and smaller volumes from Zambia. $54 K worth of imports came from outside Africa.

From a policy standpoint, **worn clothing is treated as a sensitive product** under the SACU tariff and Namibia's import control regime, and is subject to **both high tariffs and stringent non-tariff controls** in Namibia. Under the SACU tariff schedule, worn clothing attracts a **60% ad valorem duty** (or 2,500 cents per kilogram)[55] illustrating that the product is intentionally protected at the border. **Market access is further constrained by non-automatic import licensing:** Namibia's import requirements guidance notes that **worn clothing requires a Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade import licence, however, in practice the Ministry does not issue licences** for importing used clothing, **which functions as a de facto prohibition on commercial imports**.

Even where inflows occur within SACU, they are framed as non-commercial, tightly capped exceptions. Imports of worn clothing are capped at **N$10,000 per year per individual[56]**, reinforcing the non-commercial nature of permitted inflows.

Including worn clothing in Namibia's AfCFTA country assessment is strategically important precisely because **it illustrates a case where tariff liberalisation alone is unlikely to change trade outcomes**. Unlike other import products where tariff liberalisation may generate trade creation, price effects, or adjustment pressures, worn clothing illustrates the limits of tariff-based analysis when **domestic regulatory controls are**

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[54] *Coats (HS code 630900) refers to worn overcoats, car-coats, raincoats, anoraks, ski- jackets, duffle-coats, mantles, three-quarter coats, greatcoats, hooded caps, trench coats, gabardines, padded waistcoats and parkas*
[55] *Freight News, "Other Worn Clothing - Customs Tariffs Overview", Other worn clothing | Freight News*
[56] *Namibia Trade Portal, "General Export, Import and Transit Procedures", General Export, Import and Transit Procedures :: Namibia Trade Information Portal (accessed 9 Feb 2026)*

the binding constraint. The product positions how national industrial policy objectives, particularly the **protection of domestic textile and apparel industries**, **and control over informal markets**, can override regional trade liberalisation commitments.

3.2.3.2.2 Import impact analysis

3.2.1.2.2.1 Trade Creation

Eliminating the **60% Common External Tariff** on imports of worn clothing is estimated to generate approximately $**89 K** in trade creation, based on a GSIM-style partial-equilibrium simulation. The modest scale of this impact is due to imports of worn clothing remaining subject to extensive **non-tariff controls under the Import and Export Control Act No. 30 of 1994**, including restrictive licensing and product prohibitions, which significantly limit market access. As a result, even under full tariff liberalisation, trade expansion would remain constrained, as worn clothing continues to be treated as a **highly sensitive product** in Namibia.

3.2.1.2.2.2 Tariff Revenue Impact

Namibia currently applies a 60% tariff on worn clothing imports, yielding approximately $140 K in tariff revenue**. Under AfCFTA liberalisation, this would fall by $109 K**, based on the share of African imports. Again, due to the high tariff and non-tariff barriers on this highly sensitive good, imports are modest and thus trade liberalisation will not have a meaningful impact on tariff revenue.

3.2.1.2.2.3 Consumer Price Impact

Eliminating the 60% tariff on worn clothing would reduce the landed price of South African imports from **$2.12/kg to $1.64/kg**, and Angolan imports from **$4.47/kg to $2.79/kg**. While these price reductions are substantial, they are unlikely to generate additional trade due to the binding **non-tariff restrictions** in place. However, lower landed prices may improve affordability for **charitable or non-commercial imports**, particularly for highly price-sensitive consumers who access these goods under exceptional or humanitarian exemptions.

3.1.1 Social and environmental impact

AfCFTA implementation in Namibia offers meaningful potential for inclusive economic outcomes, particularly through employment participation among women and youth. Realising these gains will depend on targeted actions to strengthen worker preparedness, reinforce labour-standards implementation, and

build firm-level capacity to manage environmental and social considerations, alongside improved information disclosure and accountability mechanisms as regional integration deepens.

Survey evidence indicates that women are meaningfully represented across the workforce, though participation levels vary across firms. 21% of respondents report that women comprise more than half of their workforce, while 40% indicate female representation of 26–50% and 28% report women accounting for 1–25% of employees. This distribution suggests that women's participation is established across a broad share of firms. Expectations regarding AfCFTA's impact on women's access to economic opportunities are positive. 35% of firms consider it likely that AfCFTA-related growth will improve women's access, while 36% expect the impact to be neutral, suggesting that gains are expected to strengthen progressively as AfCFTA implementation deepens.

Youth are widely represented across firms' employment structures. 21% of respondents report that youth comprise more than half of their workforce, while 34% indicate youth representation of 26–50% and 31% report youth accounting for 1–25% of employees, with only 2% of firms indicating no youth presence. This distribution reflects the important role of youth within Namibia's workforce across a broad range of firms. Expectations regarding AfCFTA's employment effects are generally positive, with firms anticipating gradual improvements in youth employment opportunities and workforce participation. 51% of respondents expect a moderate impact, while 20% anticipate a considerable impact

Survey evidence indicates varying levels of familiarity with the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) across firms. 31% of respondents report being very familiar with the framework, while 29% are somewhat familiar, suggesting that a majority have at least a basic level of awareness. At the same time, some firms report more limited familiarity, highlighting the importance of continued dissemination, awareness-building, and capacity-development initiatives as AfCFTA-related activity expands.

With respect to ESS2 Labour and Working Conditions, survey responses point to a strong expectation of positive labour outcomes under AfCFTA implementation, with 88% of respondents associating AfCFTA with improved labour conditions. At the same time, firms highlight the importance of continued attention to labour standards and workforce preparedness as AfCFTA-related activity expands. Expanding worker-focused capacity-building, awareness initiatives, and skills development programmes would help support adaptation to evolving labour requirements alongside trade growth. Existing labour inspection mechanisms also provide an institutional foundation for monitoring labour standards as regional integration deepens.

With respect to ESS9 Financial Intermediaries, survey responses indicate that financial institutions are expected to play a more prominent role as AfCFTA implementation deepens, with 73% of respondents anticipating an increased role for financial intermediaries in supporting trade-related activity. Firms also highlight the importance of continued strengthening of transparency and disclosure practices as regional financial activity expands. In this context, **further development of ESG-related guidance, disclosure practices, and oversight mechanisms for financial intermediaries would help support transparent, responsible, and sustainable financial intermediation as AfCFTA-related financial flows increase.**

With respect to ESS10 Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure, 46% of respondents expect stakeholder engagement under the AfCFTA to become more effective, with 41% indicating that stakeholder feedback will be incorporated primarily through public consultations. Firms also highlight the importance of improving the clarity and consistency of AfCFTA-related information. This suggests that continued strengthening of communication, stakeholder engagement, and information-sharing mechanisms will support more effective participation as AfCFTA implementation deepen.

Taken together, the findings indicate that AfCFTA implementation is expected to support positive socio-economic outcomes, particularly in employment participation and institutional engagement. Women and youth are already meaningfully represented across firms' workforces, and firms broadly expect AfCFTA to reinforce employment outcomes and economic participation as regional integration deepens. Expectations around labour conditions are also positive, while financial intermediaries are anticipated to play an increasingly important role in supporting trade-related activity. Stakeholder engagement is similarly expected to strengthen, with public consultations identified as an important channel through which feedback will be incorporated as implementation progresses.

At the same time, the assessment highlights several areas where continued strengthening and complementary support measures will be important as integration deepens. Awareness of international environmental and social standards continues to develop across firms, while worker-focused capacity-building and ESG-related guidance remain areas for further enhancement. The growing role of financial intermediaries also underscores the importance of continued strengthening of transparency, disclosure, and oversight mechanisms to support responsible and sustainable financial intermediation. In addition, firms highlight the importance of improving the clarity, consistency, and accessibility of AfCFTA-related information to support effective participation.

Strengthening awareness of social and environmental standards, expanding capacity-building support, and reinforcing transparency and accountability mechanisms will help support inclusive, responsible, and sustainable AfCFTA implementation in Namibia.

3.3 AfCFTA Enabling Environment Monitoring

3.3.1 Overview of results

An effective enabling environment is critical for Namibia to translate AfCFTA market opportunities into real export growth. The performance of Namibia's trade systems, standards infrastructure, and financial ecosystem will determine how quickly firms can integrate into regional value chains and compete across AfCFTA markets.

This assessment examines Namibia's enabling environment across three impact drivers:

1. Trade Facilitation - customs efficiency, trade information, and standards harmonisation, which directly influence the speed and cost of cross-border transactions.
2. Trade Infrastructure Development - transport networks and border-post infrastructure that underpin the reliability of regional trade flows.
3. Trade Finance - investment attractiveness, capital mobility, and access to credit, which enable firms, particularly SMEs, to participate in AfCFTA-linked trade.

Overall, Namibia's enabling environment is underpinned by strong institutional foundations for AfCFTA implementation. Efficient customs processes and well-developed road and rail corridors support regional trade, while continued improvements in digital integration at borders, operationalisation of One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs), and infrastructure quality beyond primary corridors will further strengthen the predictability and efficiency of cross-border trade.

Trade finance conditions are generally supportive at the firm level but less developed in terms of regional integration and AfCFTA-specific alignment. Limited capital account openness, the absence of PAPSS operationalisation, and the lack of AfCFTA-targeted MSME financing instruments constrain broader and more inclusive utilisation of AfCFTA opportunities.

Closing these operational gaps will be essential for Namibia to convert institutional readiness into tangible trade and industrial gains.

3.3.2 Trade Facilitation

Trade facilitation performance in Namibia reflects moderate overall readiness, with an OECD Trade Facilitation Index score of 0.964[57] out of 2. Access to information on trading under AfCFTA are improving, supported by a national Trade Information Portal and NamRA's (Namibia Revenue Agency) expanding suite of digital customs tools, including online procedural guidance and e-Tariff systems. Targeted capacity-building for customs officials, delivered through WCO-supported Rules of Origin[58] training, is strengthening the practical application of AfCFTA provisions and supporting more consistent implementation at the border.

Figure 6: Comparison of Trade Facilitation and Trade Implementation (2025)

Source: UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation

Customs and border management performance in Namibia is functional and continuing to evolve toward fuller integration. Average customs clearance times of around 4 days vs global average of 7 days[59] reflects efficient core customs processes, supported by digitised administration through ASYCUDAWorld[60] (A digitised customs management system) and targeted trade services. However, the current digital ecosystem, while improving transparency and efficiency, continues to evolve toward **fuller cross-agency integration through ongoing expansion of single-window and digital trade systems.**

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[57] *OECD, Trade Facilitation indicators, Namibia, website, 2022, Accessed on 20 January 2026*
[58] *World Customs Organization (WCO)–supported Rules of Origin capacity-building: technical assistance provided under the EU–WCO Rules of Origin Africa Programme, including Training-of-Trainers and specialised workshops*
[59] *The World Bank, Average clearance time, global, extracted on 27 January 2025*
[60] *ASYCUDAWorld (Automated System for Customs Data): web-based customs management system developed by UNCTAD to automates and integrates core customs processes*

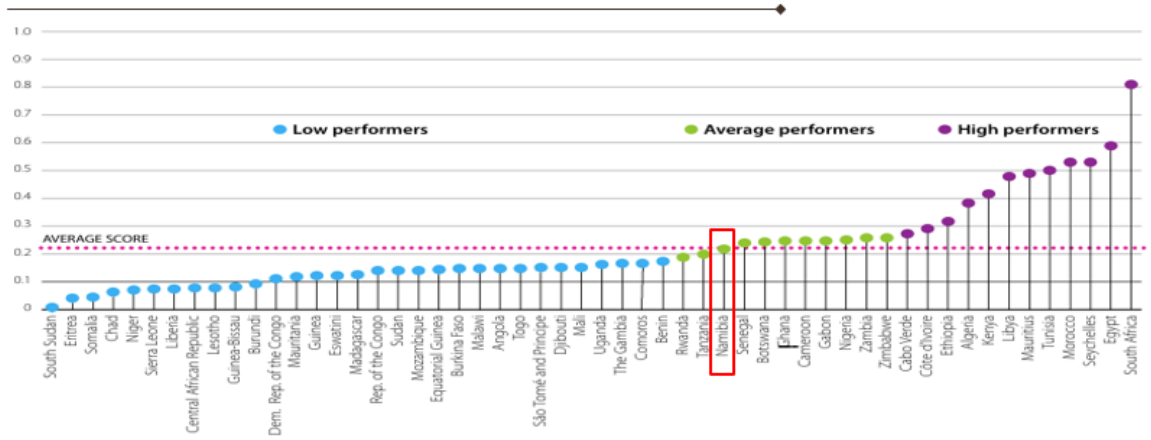
In parallel, deeper facilitation gains remain unrealised, as One-Stop Border Post implementation is just evolving through an operational pilot at the Trans-Kalahari/Mamuno crossing with Botswana and a structured bilateral operationalisation process underway at Katima Mulilo with Zambia.

Standards harmonisation in Namibia is moderately advanced, anchored in formal alignment with international, continental, and regional frameworks. Namibia's Standard Institution is recognised by ISO as Namibia's member body and leads the development, adoption, and publication of national standards in line with international good practice and WTO-related requirements, supported by standards training. Regionally, harmonisation is pursued through SADCSTAN under SADC's standards architecture, while Namibia's Standard Institution participation in African Organisation for Standardisation (ARSO) provides an additional continental channel for standards cooperation and convergence.

Overall, Namibia's trade facilitation environment is institutionally strong but still transitioning toward full operational integration. Digital customs systems and standards alignment provide a solid foundation, but incomplete single-window integration and the early stage of One-Stop Border Post implementation limit the consistency and depth of facilitation gains for traders under AfCFTA.

3.3.3 Trade Infrastructure Development

Figure 7: Namibia's score and ranking on infrastructure integration



Source: Africa Regional Integration Index 2019

Trade infrastructure is one of Namibia's enabling environment strengths, with an LPI score of around 2.9 out of 5, placing it among the stronger performers in Africa. The country is recognised for having one of the most developed road networks on the continent, anchored by high-quality trunk corridors linked to the Port

of Walvis Bay[61], including the Trans-Kalahari, Trans-Caprivi, and Trans-Cunene corridors. However, performance is uneven in practice, with road-condition bottlenecks such as potholes along key entry–exit routes slowing truck movements and contributing to delays.

By contrast, border-post modernisation remains limited, particularly in terms of ICT infrastructure. UN trade facilitation survey results shows that Namibia scores around 44%[62] on both Paperless Trade and Cross-border Paperless Trade, indicating that digital and cross-border interoperability remains partial.

Overall, Namibia's trade infrastructure provides a strong physical backbone for regional trade, but operational and digital gaps limit its effectiveness. High-quality road corridors support connectivity, yet maintenance bottlenecks and limited ICT-enabled border infrastructure continue to constrain logistics efficiency and the seamless movement of goods under AfCFTA.

3.3.4 Trade Finance and Resource Mobilisation

Namibia's trade finance environment reflects medium readiness for AfCFTA participation. Access to finance does not emerge as a binding constraint for most firms, with 22.7%[63] of firms reporting finance as a major challenge. Namibia's Global Opportunity Index business perception score of 83[64] places it in the medium range, reflecting a broadly stable financing environment alongside a measured investment environment. Several major commercial banks offer established trade finance instruments, including letters of credit, guarantees, and export and import finance, which are accessible to exporting firms.

> "It was easy to obtain trade finance for export orders as long as you have enough documents"

Constraints are more evident in regional financial integration and AfCFTA-specific policy support. Namibia's low Chinn–Ito (KAOPEN)[65] score (-1.25 out of 2.3)[66] points to limited capital account openness, and PAPSS is not yet operational through Namibian commercial banks, constraining efficient cross-border settlement under AfCFTA. In addition, the absence of AfCFTA-specific MSME financing instruments and targeted tax

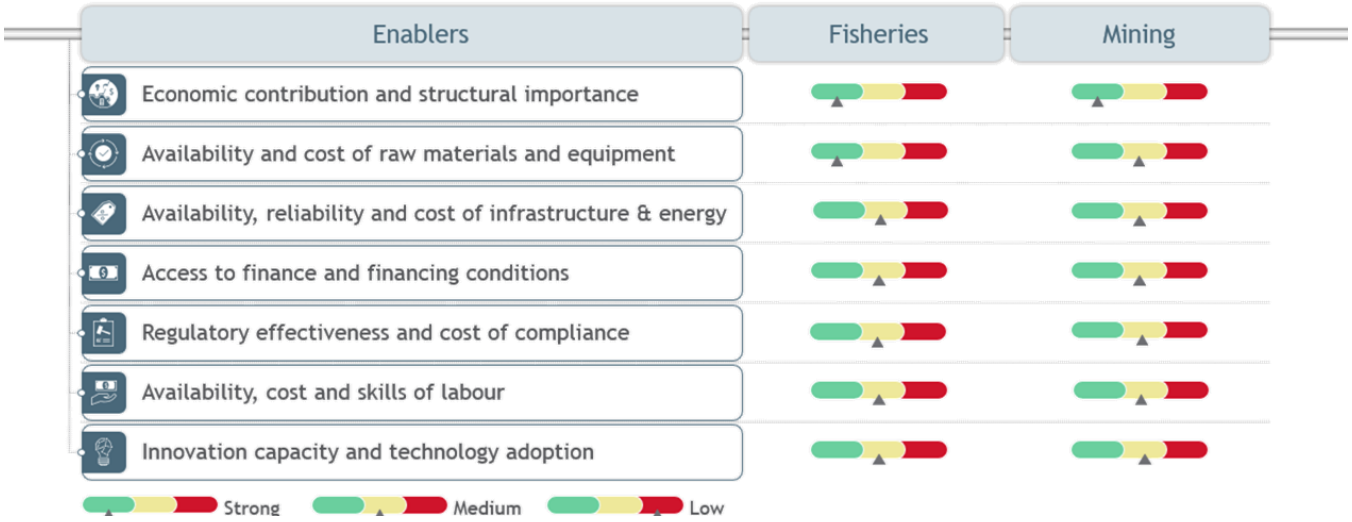
[61] *"Transport and logistics", NIPDB, 2024, Priority Sectors Transport and Logistics | Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board*
[62] *"Trade facilitation and paperless trade in Namibia", UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, 2025, website, (Accessed on 29 January 2026)*
[63] *The World Bank - Formal Sector Enterprise Surveys, percentage of firms reporting access to finance as a major constraint, Namibia, 2023, Extracted on 29 January 2026*
[64] *"Global opportunity index 2024", Milken Institute, website*
[65] *The Chinn–Ito KAOPEN index measures the degree of capital-account openness based on a country's legal and regulatory framework governing cross-border financial transactions*
[66] *The Chinn-Ito index, KAOPEN, Namibia, 2022, Extracted on 29 January 2026*

incentives continues to limit policy support for smaller firms seeking to scale participation in intra-African trade. However, Namibia is implementing a national Instant Payment Programme led by the Bank of Namibia to enable real-time, interoperable payments across banks and wallets, with system development supported through a partnership with NPCI International Payments Limited

Overall, Namibia's trade finance environment is independently strong, but not yet fully aligned with AfCFTA needs. While firm-level access to finance is generally adequate and core trade finance instruments are available, limited regional payment integration through PAPSS[67], and the absence of AfCFTA-specific MSME financing and fiscal support continue to constrain the depth and inclusiveness of cross-border trade participation.

3.4 Industrialisation Progress Assessment

3.4.1 Overview



3.4.2 Fisheries

3.4.2.1 Industrial readiness

Survey results show that Namibia's fisheries sector exhibits **moderate-to-high industrial readiness**, anchored first and foremost in **exceptional access to raw materials and core production inputs**, which emerges as the sector's most decisive strength. Access to fish stocks and aquaculture inputs is rated **high by 69% of**

[67] *Pan-African Payment and Settlement System*

respondents, reflecting healthy stocks, regulated access, and reliable availability of seed and feed. This is reinforced by high availability of packaging materials for processed fish and seafood (66%), indicating that critical downstream inputs are readily available locally and aligned with export standards. Together, these results point to a sector where supply-side fundamentals are firmly in place, enabling consistent harvesting, processing, and export preparation without material input bottlenecks.

Industrial readiness is further strengthened by high-performing core infrastructure at critical nodes of the value chain, particularly ports and energy. 46% of respondents report that ports are efficient, clean, and provide services like reefer handling, warehousing, and fast customs clearance, supporting easy fish exports and imports and reflecting modern handling infrastructure, efficient customs clearance, and reliable export logistics. Energy reliability is a clear strength as 0% of respondents rate electricity supply for fish processing, freezing, and cold storage as insufficient, confirming that power availability fully meets industrial needs and does not constrain continuous operations. This combination of port efficiency and reliable energy provides a strong physical backbone for industrial-scale fisheries activity.

Namibia's fisheries sector also benefits from strong institutional and financial readiness, supporting stable industrial operations. On financing, 46% of respondents rate access to finance as easy, with funds readily available and favourable terms, reflecting readily available funding and a willingness among financial institutions to support fisheries operations. 60% rate the availability of insurance for vessels and operational risks as high, an important enabler in a capital-intensive and risk-exposed sector. Institutionally, 63% of respondents rate fisheries standards and certification systems as strongly aligned with international benchmarks such as FAO, ISO, and MSC, signalling full regulatory alignment with global best practices. These conditions provide firms with predictable compliance pathways and reinforce Namibia's credibility as a reliable, high-standard fisheries producer.

3.4.2.2 Opportunities to strengthen scale and competitiveness

Survey results indicate that the most significant opportunity to strengthen competitiveness in Namibia's fisheries sector lies in human capital capability and the depth of skills required for scaling and upgrading. While labour availability supports ongoing operations, workforce readiness is not yet sufficient to support higher-value processing and consistent export performance. Only 27% of respondents report that it is easy to find skilled workers for business needs, indicating that firms are able to staff operations but must invest further to provide trainings to workforce. In addition, 60% of respondents indicate that capacity-building programmes reach operators but are not consistently effective, suggesting that training systems exist but are not yet translating into firm-level upgrading, particularly for smaller processors.

Access to foreign exchange is largely predictable, but **51% report some uncertainty or delays**, which can affect imports of inputs and equipment. Financing for innovation and upgrading is uneven, with **57% indicating only partial ecosystem support**, suggesting sporadic rather than systematic backing for R&D, eco-gear, and digital tools. Interest rates and repayment terms are generally workable, with **54–57% describing them as moderate**, but collateral requirements remain a constraint for expansion, as **57% report collateral demands that are manageable but restrictive for some firms**. Finally, foreign investor appetite is cautious, with **69% indicating moderate interest**, signalling opportunity to crowd in investment if risks and processes are better addressed.

3.4.2.3 Implications for AIDA / AfCFTA

The findings indicate that Namibia's fisheries sector is **well positioned to capture near-term gains from AfCFTA market access**, supported by strong access to raw materials, reliable port and energy infrastructure, and high alignment with international standards. These conditions suggest that tariff liberalisation can translate into expanded exports without major structural adjustment. However, the scale and durability of AfCFTA-related gains will depend on reducing cost and efficiency frictions along the value chain, particularly in equipment imports, cold-chain coverage beyond core ports, and logistics reliability, which may otherwise limit firms' ability to respond to increased continental demand.

From an AIDA perspective, the fisheries sector shows **strong foundational readiness for industrial activity**, but further industrialisation will depend on enabling scale, upgrading, and value addition. While baseline conditions support current production and export participation, constraints related to investment-oriented finance, specialised skills, technology adoption, and distributed infrastructure limit the sector's capacity to deepen processing and diversify outputs. Addressing these constraints will be critical to moving the sector beyond sustaining existing activities toward achieving AIDA's objectives of competitive, resilient, and value-adding industrial development.

3.4.3 Mining

3.4.3.1 Industrial readiness

Survey responses indicate a moderate level of industrial readiness in the mining sector, underpinned by affordable and continuous electricity, broadly available resource base, and stable regulatory framework. Together, these factors provide a solid foundation for sustained production and market participation in AfCFTA markets.

Namibia's mining sector benefits from a **reliable, commercially viable resource base** that supports sustained extraction and processing activity. **35% of respondents report that known reserves are generally reliable with**

a further 48% highlighting only occasional disruptions, while a 43% indicate that a large share of required minerals is locally available, providing confidence in continuity of supply. Processing plants and equipment are widely available, with 74% of respondents indicating that facilities and machinery are in place but may require improvements or upgrading, suggesting that core production assets exist even if efficiency gains remain possible. Cost competitiveness of mining operations further reinforces readiness, with 61 percent of respondents indicating that extraction costs are moderate relative to international benchmarks, supporting economic viability under normal market conditions.

Electricity reliability is a clear strength, with 70% of respondents indicating that power supply is reliable and meets operational needs, supporting continuous mining and processing activity. Transport connectivity is also largely functional, with 65% reporting that road infrastructure provides reasonable connectivity between mines, processing facilities, and export routes, despite maintenance challenges. Port facilities stand out as a particular strength, with no respondents indicating that ports are inefficient or cause significant delays, suggesting that existing port infrastructure consistently supports mining-related import and export operations without major bottlenecks.

The regulatory framework for mining in Namibia provides a stable and predictable operating environment. 52% of respondents report that mining standards are fully aligned with international and regional benchmarks, supporting compliance and market access. Regulatory frameworks and industrial policies are viewed as sufficiently comprehensive to guide sector activity, while 48% indicate that compliance costs are low and manageable, supported by government oversight. Environmental and social safeguards are also embedded in sector operations, with 48% reporting that ESIA laws are comprehensive and enforced, reinforcing institutional credibility and investor confidence.

Innovation and technology efforts are underpinned by internal firm investment, with 78% of respondents indicating that resources are allocated to research and development, suggesting that innovation activity is present and sufficient to sustain operations, even if not yet translating into broad-based productivity upgrading or significant technological transformation.

3.4.3.2 Opportunities to strengthen scale and competitiveness

While labour availability supports current operations, skills are not yet fully aligned with scaling and beneficiation needs. 52% of respondents indicate that skilled labour is available but often requires additional training, signalling functional capacity rather than upgrade-ready capability. At the same time, 30% report difficulty finding skilled labour, particularly in specialised technical roles, directly constraining productivity improvements and automation.

Improving the efficiency of financing processes will better support investment and expansion. Access to finance is broadly workable, with 48% of respondents indicating that funding is available though sometimes constrained by terms, and 61% reporting that interest rates are similar to industrial averages and manageable for established ventures but not most ventures. However, procedural complexity slows investment execution, as 65% of respondents report that financing processes are somewhat complex, involving moderate paperwork that makes applications manageable but time-consuming.

3.4.3.3 Implications for AIDA / AfCFTA

Namibia's mining sector is well positioned to benefit from AfCFTA market access in the near term, given the presence of reliable reserves, established processing assets, functioning infrastructure, and a predictable regulatory environment. These conditions suggest that tariff liberalisation can translate relatively quickly into sustained export flows. However, the depth and durability of AfCFTA-related gains will depend on the sector's ability to strengthen workforce capabilities and improve the effectiveness of investment execution.

From an AIDA perspective, Namibia's mining sector has strong foundational conditions for industrial activity, but further industrialisation will hinge on enabling scale, upgrading, and value addition. While current capacity supports extraction and export participation, constraints in specialised skills, productivity enhancement, and the translation of investment into operational upgrades limit progress toward beneficiation and downstream processing. Aligning skills development, innovation, and investment facilitation with mining value chains will be critical to moving the sector from sustaining existing activities toward achieving AIDA's objectives of competitive, resilient, and value-adding industrial development.

3.4.4 Cross-sector synthesis

Across fisheries and mining, Namibia demonstrates a solid industrial base that supports participation in regional and export markets, underpinned by reliable operating conditions, access to core inputs, and broadly supportive institutional conditions. Both sectors can sustain production and engage in cross-border trade under AfCFTA conditions, with fisheries exhibiting a moderate-to-high level of industrial readiness and mining showing a moderate but functional readiness profile.

Access to raw materials and core inputs is a shared strength. In fisheries, readiness is anchored in exceptionally strong access to fish stocks and processing inputs, supported by effective quality and traceability systems that enable consistent export preparation. In mining, readiness is grounded in a broadly available and reliable resource base, with most firms reporting dependable reserves and widely available processing plants and equipment, even where upgrades are needed.

Infrastructure and operating conditions support baseline performance in both sectors, particularly at critical nodes. Fisheries benefit from reliable port interfaces and uninterrupted energy supply, which together provide a strong backbone for industrial-scale processing and exports. Mining similarly benefits from reliable electricity and effective port access, alongside functional road connectivity that supports movement between mines, processing facilities, and export routes.

Human capital emerges as the most significant cross-cutting area for development across both sectors despite moderate baseline. In fisheries, workforce availability supports operations, but skills depth and the embedding of food safety, quality management, and processing capabilities are not yet sufficient to support consistent upgrading and higher-value production. In mining, labour is available for current activity, but shortages in specialised technical roles and the need for additional training limit automation, beneficiation, and productivity improvements.

Finance, innovation, and institutional execution shape how effectively readiness translates into competitiveness. In fisheries, finance is available but underutilised, with sector-tailored instruments, investor activity, and innovation financing not yet activating scale. Regulatory and quality systems support compliance, but capacity constraints and procedural complexity slow expansion. In mining, financing is broadly workable for established ventures, but administrative complexity and alignment with capital-intensive investment cycles limit the pace of upgrading.

Beyond the assessment findings, Namibia's broader cost structure presents an additional structural constraint on industrial scaling. High energy, water, and communications costs increase unit production expenses and constrain economies of scale across both fisheries and mining. While baseline operations remain viable, these prevailing cost conditions limit the competitiveness of expansion, beneficiation, and value addition, particularly in price-sensitive regional markets.

Taken together, the cross-sector synthesis suggests that Namibia's industrialisation challenge lies less in foundational access and more in converting readiness into scale. Fisheries and mining are both positioned to benefit from AfCFTA market access and to advance AIDA objectives. Achieving stronger and more durable gains will depend on deepening specialised skills, improving the effectiveness of financing and administrative processes, and accelerating the translation of existing operational strengths into higher-value, more competitive industrial outcomes.

Key Implications

04

Namibia's AfCFTA assessment points to a clear and consistent conclusion. While Namibia's AfCFTA-related opportunity is meaningful, realising these gains will depend on more than tariff liberalisation alone. Outcomes will be shaped by the extent to which Namibia can l**everage existing regional trade corridors to deepen market reach, while progressively strengthening the midstream and downstream capabilities** required to capture greater value across key sectors beyond resource-linked exports.

The assessment draws on a selected set of export products, namely, **unworked diamond, frozen mackerel and uncooked pasta**, and import products including **pineapple and worn clothing**, to illustrate where execution quality and competitiveness conditions remain important determinants. Evidence from the AfCFTA Future Impact Assessment, AfCFTA Enabling Environment Monitoring, and Industrialisation Progress Assessment converges on a set of implications specific to Namibia's trade and industrial structure.

1. AfCFTA gains in diamonds are concentrated in premium value addition anchored in Namibia's high-quality gem advantage

Diamonds are Namibia's most important export and remain central to the mining sector, supported by a rich natural resource base and well-established extraction and regulatory systems. Namibia's current trade patterns reflect a regional value chain in which aggregation, trading, and downstream activities are concentrated in a small number of hubs, with a significant share of recorded intra-African trade serving global sales cycles.

AfCFTA gains in diamonds are anchored in Namibia's position as a globally leading producer of high-quality gem diamonds, reflected in its consistently high average value per carat and marine-dominated production profile. This strong quality advantage provides a clear pathway into premium polishing, origin-

assured stones, and specialised high-value sales segments. Within Southern Africa, Namibia is well positioned to supply higher-value polished stones into regional jewellery networks but requires predictable rough allocation aligned to factory capability, and productivity and technology upgrading.

2. Export growth in fisheries and light manufacturing under AfCFTA will be driven by corridor performance and delivery economics

Across frozen mackerel and uncooked pasta, export opportunities are shaped primarily by delivery economics. Production capacity exists, but export performance reflects logistics reliability, landed cost stability, and established distribution corridors. For frozen mackerel, maintaining cold-chain integrity, predictable border clearance, and shipment regularity remains central to securing repeat demand in price-sensitive markets. For uncooked pasta, competitiveness is determined by consistent landed costs, compliance discipline, and the ability to serve distributors reliably along established routes.

AfCFTA-related expansion is therefore likely to occur through the deepening of existing corridors, with geographic diversification unfolding incrementally over time as reliability and competitiveness strengthen.

3. Effective AfCFTA utilisation will require full operational integration of trade systems

Survey evidence indicates relatively strong private-sector readiness to operationalise AfCFTA opportunities in Namibia. Awareness of core AfCFTA provisions is high, with most firms reporting familiarity with rules of origin and applicable tariff-reduction schedules, alongside widespread participation in AfCFTA-related training and engagement with AfCFTA operational tools. This suggests that a broad understanding of AfCFTA market-access parameters is already in place among firms.

However, gaps persist between institutional frameworks and operational performance, particularly in the depth of end-to-end digitisation and interoperability across trade systems. Partial single-window implementation, uneven border-post modernisation, and continued reliance on parallel manual processes affect the predictability and consistency of trade facilitation in practice. As AfCFTA activity scales, outcomes will depend on strengthening digital integration, enhancing operational clarity, and improving the usability of trade processes as experienced by firms.

4. Execution readiness will determine the depth of Namibia's industrial integration under AfCFTA

Industrial foundations across fisheries and mining are well established, including strong access to raw materials, reliable electricity supply, effective port infrastructure, and regulatory and standards systems aligned with international benchmarks. However, translating AfCFTA market access into sustained export growth and deeper value addition will depend increasingly on firm-level competitiveness. Key determinants

include specialised skills depth, workforce readiness for higher-value processing and beneficiation, the efficiency of investment execution, and the alignment of finance and innovation support with upgrading needs.

5. Namibia's import structure will remain largely unchanged under AfCFTA liberalisation

Import-side analysis indicates that AfCFTA liberalisation is unlikely to generate significant adjustment pressures in Namibia. A substantial share of Namibia's imports already originates from SACU partners and enters duty-free under existing regional arrangements, limiting the incremental effect of continental tariff reductions. In products such as pineapple, regional arrangements already provide duty-free access. In others, including worn clothing, domestic licensing requirements and regulatory controls remain the primary determinants of import volumes. These patterns suggest that AfCFTA-related import outcomes will continue to be shaped by existing regulatory frameworks and regional trade structures.

6. Inclusive AfCFTA gains require strengthening workforce preparedness and improving employment quality for women and youth

Namibia's enterprise landscape is characterised by a large MSME base, significant informal activity, and strong participation by women and youth, providing a foundation for inclusive AfCFTA engagement. Firms expect AfCFTA-related activity to reinforce employment patterns, with most anticipating moderate improvements in job creation and labour conditions. However, these gains are unlikely to be transformative without strengthened workforce capability. Worker-level capacity-building remains limited as trade scales, and sustaining inclusive outcomes will depend on reinforcing workforce preparedness and supporting the transition toward more decent, formal, and stable employment as regional trade expands.

Overall, the assessment suggests that Namibia's AfCFTA trajectory will be shaped by how effectively corridor performance, delivery economics, enabling systems, and value-chain organisation are aligned. Where these elements converge, AfCFTA offers a pathway to deeper regional integration and industrial upgrading. Where they do not, outcomes are likely to remain incremental, even in the presence of strong demand and preferential market access.

05 Country Experience

The successful execution of the Namibia pilot phase was driven by senior-level leadership and sustained engagement throughout the assessment process. The focal structure enabled direct alignment with key ministries and facilitated timely engagement on data inputs and analytical scope. This high-level engagement generated practical insights that inform the following lessons for future scale and replication.

5.1 Senior-level leadership strengthens institutional alignment

5.1.1 What we observed

- The assessment was led by an Executive Director with strong trade and economics background, serving as national focal point and directly coordinating engagement across relevant institutions.

5.1.2 Why it matters

- Senior-level leadership strengthens institutional visibility and accelerates high-level alignment.
- Direct access to decision-makers facilitates efficient escalation and secures institutional buy-in.

5.1.3 Implication for scale

- Designate focal points with sufficient institutional authority to enable alignment across ministries and agencies.

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06

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07 Appendix

7.1 Overall Approach and Principles

7.1.1 Assessment Approach

The pilot applies a blended approach that integrates quantitative modelling with structured qualitative inquiry, aligned to the three tools of the Standard Assessment Guide. The approach enables a holistic view of AfCFTA and AIDA impacts, linking product-level trade dynamics to sectoral readiness and enabling-environment performance.

7.1.2 Quantitative Analysis

Standardised, re-runnable datasets and models were used to quantify AfCFTA opportunities and risks at the HS-6 product–market level, after which results were aggregated into sectoral and product insights and mapped to enabling-environment indicators over a 5-year horizon.

Core sources were drawn from pilot countries bureau of statistics, UN Comtrade/ITC Trade Map, UNCTAD TRAINS, official national tariff schedules, and the AfCFTA e-Tariff Book, while logistics and facilitation benchmarks (LPI, TFI), finance/payment metrics (including PAPSS), and sector KPIs (energy, inputs, certification) were incorporated.

Export-potential estimates from ITC/ATO were combined with WITS/SMART partial-equilibrium simulations to assess export potential and import exposure under a full liberalization scenario A quantitative logframe covering policy, institutional and infrastructural indicators, was populated to assess to assess each country's enabling environment for trade.

All Model parameters were logged, sensitivity analyses were conducted, confidence levels were graded, and outputs were generated in the form of ranked opportunity tables, sensitive-line flags, revenue/price effect estimates, and dashboard summaries to support downstream decision making.

7.1.3 Qualitative Research and Fieldwork

Two structured surveys were administered across exporters, importers, logistics providers, standards bodies, and financiers, with deliberate inclusion of MSMEs and public stakeholders including Ministry of Trade, Industry etc. This was complemented by key-informant interviews and focused group discussions in selected sectors. The primary research instruments were designed to probe awareness and use of AfCFTA tools (RoO, e-Tariff, NTB), border and standards experiences, logistics and payments (including PAPSS), sector enablers (inputs, energy, skills, finance, regulation), and inclusion and environmental–social consideration

Data collection was conducted through mixed modes and, where necessary, in translation; informed consent was obtained, datasets were anonymised, and secure storage and real-time quality controls were applied by trained enumerators. Responses were cleaned and coded, thematic patterns were identified and cross-tabulated by firm profile, and interview insights were used to validate or adjust model assumptions, thereby producing an integrated quantitative–qualitative evidence base.

7.1.4 Guiding principles for product and sector selection

The selection of export and import products, along with industrial sectors followed a pragmatic, evidence-based approach consistent with the pilot nature of the assessment.

- Export products were selected by pilot countries based on their **contribution to national output and employment, alignment with industrial and trade priorities, and potential to expand intra-African trade** under the AfCFTA, including consideration of rules of origin, eligibility for preferential trade under the AfCFTA and tariff liberalisation schedules.
- Pilot countries prioritised selected import products for their **economic sensitivity and strategic importance**; specifically, those expected to experience competitive pressures following tariff reductions, while remaining aligned with national industrialisation objectives.
- Industrial sectors were selected for their strong linkages to priority export products, ensuring coherence between trade opportunity and industrial readiness, and enabling focused analysis on sectors with tangible AfCFTA potential.

This selective and focused coverage was deliberate, reflecting the pilot character of the exercise, designed to test and refine methodologies, validate data sources, and generate actionable insights on a limited set of illustrative product categories before wider continental application.

7.2 Quality Assurance

7.2.1 Harmonisation

To ensure consistency and comparability across countries, the following harmonisation rules were applied:

- System of record: A primary data source was designated for each indicator (e.g., national customs for clearance times; TRAINS for ad-valorem tariffs; Comtrade/ITC for bilateral flows). Mirror or third-party data were used only to fill gaps and clearly flagged.
- Classifications: Product data were standardised to HS-2017 at HS-6 using official concordance tables.
- Currency and price: Nominal series were expressed in current USD; time series comparisons were converted to constant USD using standard deflators (CPI/GDP deflators) with the base year documented.
- Time coverage: The three most recent years of complete data were prioritised. Where the latest year was provisional, a confidence note was included.

7.2.1.1 Templates

Standardised Excel templates were used by all country teams to ensure uniformity and comparability.

7.2.1.2 Quality Controls

- Front-end controls: Survey instruments were piloted; enumerators were trained on skip-logic and consent protocols; device-level validation prevented impossible entries; and real-time progress dashboards flagged non-response and sample bias.
- Model Quality Assurance: For each WITS/SMART run, parameter logs (elasticities, partners, base year, tariff scenario) were generated; sensitivity tests were executed; and results were checked against historical baselines for reasonableness.
- Triangulation: Discrepancies between national and international series (e.g., Comtrade vs. customs) were reconciled and documented in reconciliation notes; facilitation indicators were cross-checked against stakeholder testimony and time-release studies.
-

7.3 Assessment Tools

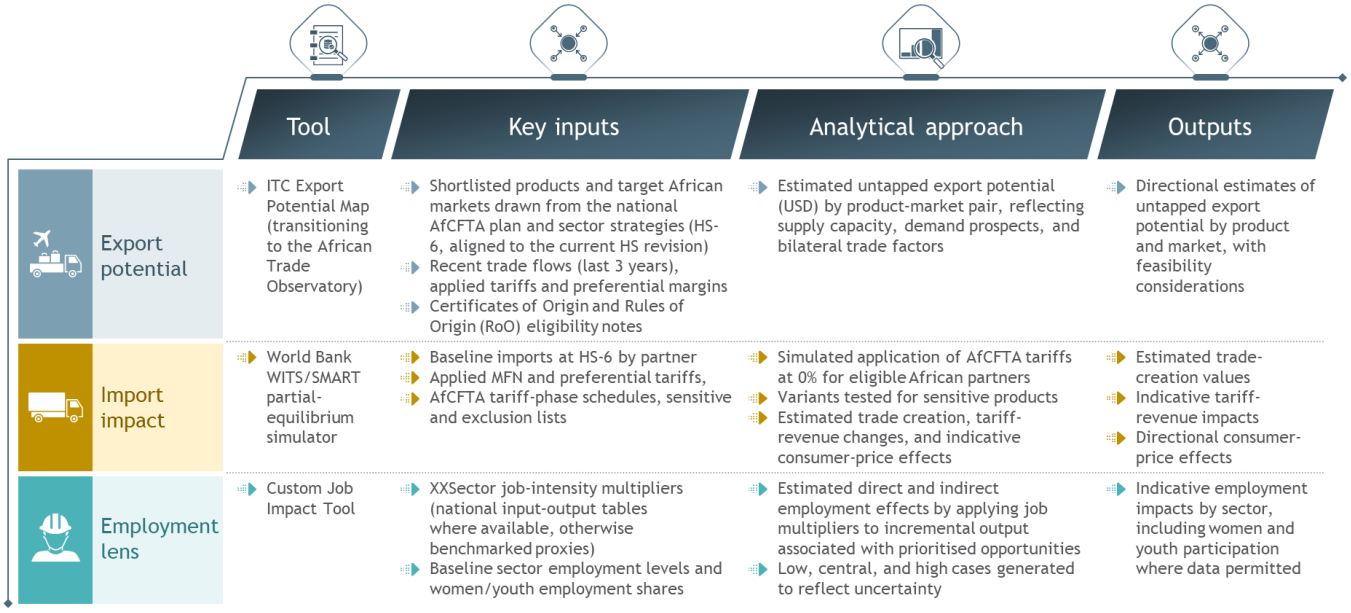
7.3.1 AfCFTA Future Impact Assessment

7.3.1.1 Purpose

This tool was designed to provide decision-grade evidence for countries on how to compete and safeguard domestic interests under the AfCFTA. It identifies priority products countries can scale competitively, the African markets where demand is attainable, and the domestic segments that may require cushioning as tariffs fall, with jobs, inclusion (women and youth), and environmental - social implications explicitly accounted for.

The assessment goes beyond broad opportunity mapping by producing a ranked and feasible portfolio of HS-6 product–market plays, paired with the precise enabling fixes (rules-of-origin readiness, standards/conformity, border processes, logistics, payments/trade finance) required to unlock these opportunities within a 5-year horizon.

7.3.1.2 Quantitative Approach



7.3.2 AfCFTA Enabling Environment Monitoring

7.3.2.1 Purpose

This tool assessed whether country policy and operational reforms, such as streamlined customs procedures, improved border-post efficiency, and enhanced payments and trade finance, were translating into measurable progress toward AfCFTA impact goals: higher intra-African trade and investment, reduced trade costs, and greater private-sector participation.

It provided a decision-grade dashboard for the National Implementation Committee (NIC) and line agencies by linking specific activities to observable results, identifying the binding constraints limiting AfCFTA uptake, and establishing a baseline for annual progress and course corrections.

Findings from this tool were triangulated with the AfCFTA Future Impact Assessment and Industrialisation Progress assessment, ensuring that enabling-environment fixes were sequenced alongside product-market opportunities and sector-readiness need.

7.3.2.2 Framework and Indicators

A logframe architecture was adopted in which Activities → Outputs → Outcomes → Impact goals were aligned across three drivers; each indicator carried a definition, unit, source, frequency, baseline year, target (12–24 months), and a responsible owner.

A. Trade facilitation (customs efficiency, trade information, standards harmonisation)

- **Outputs:** Development of One-Stop Border Posts, Implementation of Single Window Systems, Development of one-stop shop services trade information, Quality of training and technical support offered to customs officials and exporting and ARSO certification rates.
- **Outcomes:** Average customs clearance times (import and export), OECD Trade Facilitation Indicator Score, quality improvements of products traded.

B. Trade infrastructure development (transport network connectivity and quality, border post infrastructure)

- **Outputs:** Road/Rail connectivity between production zones and major borders and ports, proportion of intra-regional flight connections and percentage of borders supported by modern ICT infrastructure.
- **Outcomes:** World Bank LPI score – trade and transport infrastructure and quality and capacity of physical infrastructure at borders.

C. Trade finance and payments (capital movement, payment systems, SME finance)

- **Outputs:** Capital repatriation systems and process, implementation of systems and policies to facilitate ease of capital repatriation, availability of Instant Payment Systems (IPS) and adoption of Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS).
- **Outcomes:** Ease of cross-border financial transactions, Chinn-Ito (KAOPEN) score, ease and speed of intra-regional digital payments and attractiveness to international investors, Global Opportunity Index: Business Perception Score.

Where available, comparable indices (e.g., OECD TFI) and national metrics were incorporated; Where data gaps existed, structured qualitative rubrics captured implementation progress ("not initiated" → "fully operational with monitoring"), supported by evidence notes and links to administrative records. Countries were encouraged to include national KPIs (e.g., customs strategic indicators, central-bank payment statistics) to reduce duplication and strengthen ownership.

7.3.2.3 Data Collection and Scoring

The Excel tool was populated from official administrative sources (customs/revenue, standards bodies, border authorities, central bank/payment systems, transport agencies) and validated in working sessions with focal points.

- Quantitative indicators were normalised against continental distributions and classified into High / Medium / Low performance (tertiles).
- Qualitative indicators employed 5-point rubrics anchored in good practice ("not initiated" → "fully operational with monitoring").
- Missing values were flagged, imputed only where justifiable; all provisional data and seasonality considerations carried confidence notes.
- All assumptions and methodological choices were documented at indicator level for transparency and auditability.

7.3.3 Industrialisation Progress Assessment

7.3.3.1 Purpose

This tool was used to take stock of how continental industrialisation efforts, especially AIDA, were understood, embedded in national policy and budgeting, and translated into sector-level readiness to seize AfCFTA opportunities.

It was designed to identify binding enablers and institutional gaps that constrained scale-up, to align sector priorities with AfCFTA product–market plays (from the AfCFTA Future Impact Assessment), and to generate a sequenced package of interventions (12–24 months) with responsible agencies, budget hooks and monitoring indicators that could be re-run periodically for progress tracking.

7.3.3.2 Survey Lenses

A. Cross-cutting policy lens (government-led)

This lens assessed the degree to which AIDA principles were internalised across ministries and agencies reviewing policy alignment, dedicated programmes, budgetary provision, coordination mechanisms, data/feedback systems, and support received from RECs/continental partners. It also reviewed institutional roles (e.g., NIC, standards and quality infrastructure, investment promotion), inter-agency coordination, and the maturity of monitoring/evaluation arrangements.

B. Sector-based lens

For each selected sector, 7 industrial enablers were assessed using a common rubric:

- Raw materials & equipment (availability, import frictions, localisation prospects)
- Infrastructure & energy (reliability, quality, cost, industrial-park readiness, connectivity to borders/ports)
- Human capital (skills pipeline, managerial/technical gaps)
- Innovation, R&D & technology (firm-level adoption, extension services, IP/standards for technology transfer)
- Finance & resource mobilisation (working capital, long-term finance, guarantees, investor pipeline)
- Regulatory frameworks, standards & institutions (licensing, conformity assessment capacity, metrology, accreditation and mutual recognition readiness)
- Governance & macro stability (predictability of policy, FX access, dispute resolution, investment climate)

Each deep dive incorporated cross-cutting lenses for MSMEs, women and youth participation, and environmental and social safeguards to ensure that recommended actions were inclusive and responsible.

C. Sampling

A minimum sample of ≈100 firm responses per country was pursued, stratified by sector, firm size (MSME/large), region, with key informant interviews conducted to ensure depth. Non-response rates and coverage were monitored, with replacement rules applied to maintain representativeness.

D. Data Integrity

Survey instruments were piloted, enumerators trained, skip logic applied, and anonymised analysis files maintained.

7.3.3.3 Scoring and Interpretation

A. Scoring Approach

Each enabler received a High / Medium / Low score using a blended index: quantitative indicators were normalised against continental distributions (tertiles) and qualitative evidence was mapped to a 5-point rubric aligned to good practice, then collapsed to H/M/L. Default weights were equal; where national priorities justified it (e.g., power in energy-intensive sectors), transparent weight adjustments were applied and recorded.

B. Profiles and gaps

Results were presented as sector readiness profiles (radar/traffic-light visuals) highlighting binding constraints and quick wins. Each sector received: (i) a summary narrative of strengths and bottlenecks; and (ii) a gating-constraint list (e.g., certification throughput, grid reliability, working-capital availability).

7.4 Primary and secondary data

The assessment relied on a combination of primary and secondary data sources to ensure a comprehensive and evidence-based analysis.

7.4.1 Use of primary data

Primary data were collected through structured surveys, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions with stakeholders from government institutions, the private sector, and civil society. This approach allowed for the capture of current perceptions, implementation experiences, and contextual realities that are not available in published sources.

7.4.2 Use of secondary data

Secondary data, including national industrial and trade policies, statistical reports, database and existing AfCFTA/AIDA documentation were used to provide historical trends, macroeconomic context, and validation of findings.

7.4.3 Purpose

The use of both data types was essential to triangulate information, enhance the robustness of the analysis, and ensure that policy recommendations are grounded in both empirical evidence and stakeholder perspectives. This mixed-methods approach also aligns with the principles of the AfCFTA–AIDA Assessment Guide, which emphasises inclusive, data-driven, and country-led evaluations.

7.4.4 Country adaptation

While a minimum of ~100 survey responses is recommended to ensure statistical validity, a total of 273 responses were collected to adequately capture product- and sector-level perspectives. Data collection used mixed modes (online and in-person), and the purposeful inclusion of diverse actor groups ensured that multiple perspectives were represented.

7.4.5 Governance Architecture

The pilot phase governance was organised through four interlocking structures designed to set direction, enable rapid decision making, and ensure disciplined execution. and drive execution end-to-end. Mandates, composition, and meeting cadence were defined upfront to maintain accountability and momentum.

Steering Committee: An inter-Organisational body comprising the African Union Commission (AUC), AUDA-NEPAD, AfCFTA Secretariat, JICA and selected continental and global partners. The committee provided strategic direction throughout the pilot, approved the Inception Report and pilot country selection, and oversaw overall programme delivery.

Senior Project Leadership: The joint AUDA-NEPAD / JICA structure set the technical expectations for the assessment, reviewed interim outputs, validated recommendations prior to country-level endorsement, and served as the first escalation point for risks and blockers.

Project Execution Team: Comprised of BCG, country focal points and Aareton Blue.

BCG coordinated the overall programme, providing methodological guidance, conducting analytics and field research, synthesising findings, and supporting key events. Each government appointed a Country Focal Point, typically from the Ministry of Trade or Industry, to lead national implementation. The Focal

Point coordinated stakeholder engagement, data access, logistics, and validation of findings and policy recommendations. Aareton Blue led primary data collection across private-sector stakeholders.

7.4.5.1 Ethics, data protection and integrity

Ethics and data stewardship were treated as non-negotiable foundations for all fieldwork, analysis and reporting. Safeguards on consent, confidentiality, secure data handling, and independence were embedded end-to-end, with inclusion and environmental–social considerations reflected in all instruments. Key principles included:

Informed consent & confidentiality: All survey and interview participants were briefed, consent was obtained, and personally identifiable information was minimised and anonymised.

Data protection: Role-based access controls were applied; datasets were stored in secure, approved repositories; and versioning protocols ensured full auditability.

Independence & conflict of interest. Analysts declared potential conflicts; methodological choices and assumptions were transparently documented.

Compliance: All activities adhered to AU/AUDA-NEPAD ethics guidance, applicable national data-privacy laws and the programmes policy on anti-corruption and gifts/hospitality

7.5 Limitation and mitigation

7.5.1 Data availability

7.5.1.1 Limitation

For frozen mackerel (Scomber spp.), while trade data were available, species-specific information was limited compared to horse mackerel, which is more prominently reported in Namibia's fisheries statistics and public sector publications.

7.5.1.2 Mitigation

To address the limited availability of species-specific information for frozen mackerel (Scomber spp.), the analysis relied on cross-referencing multiple trade datasets and fisheries publications to isolate Scomber exports from the broader pelagic category.

7.5.2 Stakeholder identification and engagement challenges

7.5.2.1 Limitation

Identifying firms that are **effectively active or potentially active under the AfCFTA** proved challenging, as AfCFTA-related trade remains at an early stage and is not always clearly distinguishable from existing regional or extra-continental trade flows.

Obtaining firm-level feedback specific to export products was more difficult than anticipated (especially small companies).

7.5.2.2 Mitigation

National focal points were **mobilised to support the identification and outreach of relevant stakeholders**, particularly within the public sector.

To broaden coverage and mitigate individual availability constraints, **the assessment combined survey deployments with focus group discussions**, enabling engagement with a wider range of actors within the available timeframe.

7.5.3 Learning effects linked to the pilot nature of the assessment

7.5.3.1 Limitation

This assessment represented the **first operational application of the Standard Assessment Guide in Namibia**. As a result, a learning curve was observed among national teams and participating stakeholders, particularly with regard to the interpretation and practical use of some assessment tools.

7.5.3.2 Mitigation

Methodological **adjustments were introduced progressively over the course of the assessment** to improve applicability and clarity while maintaining overall consistency.

Operational lessons were **systematically documented** throughout the process and used to inform refinements.

These lessons are intended to be **integrated into future revisions of the Standard Assessment Guide**, strengthening its usability and relevance.

It is further recommended to **reinforce training and training-of-trainer sessions** to support smoother implementation in subsequent assessment rounds.

In partnership with: