

**World Customs Organization
East & Southern Africa Region
Regional Private Sector Group**

**WORKPLAN PROGRESS
2022**

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Executive summary:

This document outlines the planned activities for the East & Southern Africa Regional Private Sector Group (WCO-ESA-RPSG) during 2022. However, the program will maintain flexibility to combat any changes in what the future holds.

The five priorities will help us build a resilient, intact regional private sector, which can add valuable insights per our Terms of Reference and guide us with Regional Customs in the ever-changing trade landscape. These include disseminating new technology and revised workflows, focusing on AfCFTA and Category commitments under the WTO-TFA. Our five projects include:

- 1. Governance Meetings**
 - a. Four virtual meetings for 2022
- 2. Focus areas as per our Work Groups/Portfolios**
 - a. AEO Programme. (Create an awareness, share insights, and monitor update)
 - b. Implementation and Monitoring of Projects as per ESA-WCO-RPSG
 - c. Communication: Strengthen the awareness in Private Sector
 - d. Digitalization of value-added workflows
 - e. Coordinated border movement: Land borders – Vienna convention
 - f. Linkage in the Policies, ensure if we comment as Regional Private Sector, we are aware of the linkage in the different policies. Bring the core principle back into harmonization and simplification
 - g. All regions link with Transit Bureau, which will give an implementation flavour to number “e.”
 - h. Focus and priority setting in East (EAC & COMESA)
 - i. Focus and priority setting in South (SACU & SADC)
- 3. Elections of the new Chair**
 - a. Term 2023
- 4. Projects and objectives (webinars)**
 - a. NTBs (with a focus on land borders)
 - b. Disruptive Technologies in the ESA Region (with a focus on removal of old, outdated workflows)
 - c. AfCFTA Update (bring our Continent together in a cohesive trading environment)
 - d. eCommerce & Digital Trade in the ESA Region (including lessons learned from COVID-19)
- 5. Publications and other deliverables**
 - a. Survey – gain insights or assist with priority settings
 - b. Four (quarterly) situation reports – give an overview on COVID-19 impact, lesson learned and progress
 - c. Newsletters
 - d. Research-based on any survey results of ad hoc request receive
 - e. Case studies based on Coordinated Border Management – we will draw from FESARTA’s investigations in the region
 - f. Corridor Management (we have 11 corridors and can establish a grid on the lessons learned to foster a more integrated and harmonized approach)

We will unpack the main categories to align and harmonize our workplan for 2022.

1. Governance meetings

According to the TOR, “the RPSG-ESA will meet at least twice a year. The sub-working groups will meet more regularly to ensure the key deliverables are communicated and stay relevant to the region.” Therefore, the RPSG proposes to have four (4) governance meetings in 2022. The dates are set as follows:

Table 1 – Governance meeting dates

Schedule dates
10 March
9 June
8 September
8 December

The meetings are scheduled for the first Thursday of the last month of each quarter. The alternate date is scheduled for the following Thursday. All meetings are proposed to take place at 14:00 CAT (UCT + 02:00) and will be scheduled for approximately two hours. We will make sure of virtual platforms to connect in the current operating environment, and a Microsoft Teams invitation will be sent in advance.

2. Focus areas as per our Working Groups/Portfolios

At the 2nd Governance Meeting held on 4 November 2021, the following members were elected to the respective portfolios:

Table 2 – Respective Work Groups/Portfolios

Election of portfolios	Portfolio/ESA Regional specific focus (key deliverables, structure)
a. AEO Programme	Davilyne Busuru, John Mumba & Paul Koyi
b. Implementation and Monitoring of Projects as per ESA-WCO-RPSG	Hilary Woelk & Rooma Narrainen
c. Communication, Awareness, and Training	Everson Bandawe & Joseph Musariri
d. Digitalization	Desiderio Fernandes
e. Coordinated border movement: Land borders – Vienna convention	Nico Oberholzer
f. Policies (harmonization, simplification)	Trudi Hartzenberg, Jason Blackman, Barbara Mommen
All regions link with Transit Bureau	
g. East (EAC & COMESA)	Chancellor Kaferapanjira & Hussein Kidedde
h. South (SACU & SADC)	Barbara Mommen, Bastile Nwako, Lin Botha

The key deliverables for each portfolio will be discussed at the first governance meeting. After that, a concept note will be circulated.

3. Elections of the new Chair

At the first Governance meeting, it was agreed that Dr Juanita Maree would hold the position of Chairperson for the first 18 months. This period comes to an end in December 2022. Members are encouraged to nominate a new chairperson for the subsequent period and complete the transition process for the new Chair-Elect to take over charge at the new term.

As per the TOR: “The RPSG-ESA Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall be elected by the RPSG-ESA members. The RPSG-ESA Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are subject to the same term of office and rotation policy as all RPSG-ESA members.”

The Regional Private Sector Governance structure will meet twice a year with the ESA Vice-chair and the ESA – ROCB to obtain an open dialogue on Region issues. Allow a platform to get alignment in priority settings and what the different Customs Administrations require from the Private sector. It might be diverse, but open dialogue can gain more insights. This approach will generate an excellent engagement to create insights and awareness of the regional challenges.

4. Projects and objectives

The RPSG focuses on six primary objectives, which are also well-articulated on our website (<https://www.wcoesarpsg.org/>). The projects will mature as the journey unfold and will be changed with more private sector participation, skills set and insights.

The six focus areas of the WCO-ESA-RPSG are:

- (1) SMART Borders (Secure, measurable, automated, risk-based and technology-driven)
- (2) AEO (Cargo owners and role players in the extended supply chain)
- (3) Education and awareness (of the most important WCO instruments)
- (4) Research in the region
- (5) Measurements; and
- (6) Non-tariff barriers.

These focus areas and related projects will continue to run throughout the year; however, the focus will be on **(1)** NTBs, **(2)** Disruptive Technologies in the ESA Region, **(3)** AfCFTA Update, and **(4)** eCommerce & Digital Trade in the ESA Region. Stakeholders have identified each focus area as a high-priority item for 2022. Nevertheless, the focus areas are not set in stone. Moreover, a poll will be launched in the next webinar to determine which webinar topic members would like to discuss next.

Nonetheless, as it stands, a webinar will be hosted on each of these focus areas, whereby the RPSG will invite experts in the field to address stakeholders on these issues. The proposed dates for the webinars are as follows:

Table 3 – Proposed webinar dates

Topic	Date:
NTB	24 February (done)
Disruptive Technologies in the Region	26 May
AfCFTA uptake, challenges	25 August
Digital Trade (coherent ecosystem)	24 November

Each webinar will last for approximately 90 min. The webinars will be recorded and uploaded on the website ([link](#)) and our YouTube Channel ([link](#)) afterwards. A summary report will also accompany the videos.

We are currently investigating different platforms, as the NTB webinar did not attract the numbers that we previously achieved (more than 100 participants). Furthermore, at the recently held Governance Meeting on 10 March, it was decided to engage with members through a poll to ascertain the most pertinent subjects to host webinars on.

a. NTBs

Despite the trade facilitation efforts throughout our region, many non-tariff barriers (NTBs) continue to impact trade. According to the joint SADC, COMESA, and EAC NTBs website - www.tradebarriers.org – there were 72 active NTB complaints at writing¹. These include – among others:

- Government Policy and regulations
- Issues related to transit
- Issues related to the rules of origin

Our goal:

1. Create awareness and encourage the private sector to list their NTBs when they occur.
2. Write an article on how NTBs can be overcome and slowly eliminated.
3. Host a webinar on NTBs. Identify areas in which we can collaborate to get a quicker closer.

b. Disruptive Technologies in the ESA Region

In a recent WCO report, several disruptive technologies were discussed in and around trade and customs. These technologies included:

1. Blockchain technology
2. Internet of Things
3. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML)
4. Biometrics
5. Drones
6. Virtual, augmented, and mixed reality
7. 3D printing

Our goals:

1. Investigate the role of these listed technologies on trade and customs in the ESA Region – with specific reference to new, updated workflows and possible capacity building blocks.
2. Host a webinar on the impact of these disruptive technologies on the future of trade in the ESA Region concerning our current landscape and what is required from Businesses to participate effectively
3. Write a report on the best practices of disruptive technologies in trade and customs.

c. AfCFTA Update

As of 17 January 2022,² 39 countries have deposited their instruments of ratification (ordered by date):

Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Niger, Chad, Eswatini, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Namibia, South Africa, Congo, Rep., Djibouti, Mauritania, Uganda, Senegal, Togo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Rep., Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, São Tomé & Príncipe, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Mauritius, Central African Rep., Angola, Lesotho, Tunisia, Cameroon, Nigeria, Malawi, Zambia, Algeria, Burundi, and Tanzania

Unfortunately, despite the optimism and furore around the AfCFTA, the potential successes have not yet been realized for the African Continent. Historically, Africa does not trade with itself. Indeed, many Member Countries' top trading partners are China, Euro Members, and the USA –

¹ Trade Barriers. 18/01/2022. [Non-tariff barriers](http://www.tradebarriers.org).

² Tralac. 17/01/2022. [AfCFTA Ratification](https://www.tralac.org/).

the typical global trading powerhouses. Additionally, Africa continues to trade predominantly in raw materials and intermediate goods, which partly illuminates the untapped potential.

Our goals:

1. Host a follow-up (to 2021) webinar on the progress of the AfCFTA in the region.
2. Write a position paper on the accelerated adoption of AfCFTA rules for the ESA Region.
3. Run a survey for ESA Members to ascertain the potential untapped African market for their domestic businesses.

Trudi Hartzenberg will guide us, and we will reply to her feedback on this project.

d. eCommerce & Digital Trade in the ESA Region

Digital trade will impact all of us and how business models are conducted, change, and grow with maturity. Therefore, the RPSG needs to be proactive in reporting trends and ensuring the WCO standards and instruments address the broad, holistic view of how trade in the ESA region evolves.

Our goals:

1. Host webinar on eCommerce and the role of digital trade in the ESA Region.
2. Do case studies on how technology has been effectively employed – incorporate in possible capacity building programs
3. Assess the reach and presence of technology in the ESA region.
4. Research different ways technology can be effectively utilized and complemented in Africa.

5. Publications and other deliverables

Besides the focus areas mentioned throughout this document, the RPSG aims to deliver:

1. **Survey**
 - a. Survey our members on Customs and Trade-related matters in the ESA Region
2. **Four (quarterly) status reports**
 - a. On customs, trade, and the impact of COVID-19 on the ESA Region
3. **Newsletters**
 - a. Best practice and customs stories to be published in the ROCB's Newsletters³
4. **Research and awareness**
 - a. Linked to Picard and share important case studies as we gain more insights into the regional workings, with active NTB monitoring and possible solutions.
 - b. Case studies based on Coordinated Border Management and link to all the different instruments ensure we are aligned in the cohesiveness of work on the ground - with SMART border concepts the aid of Single window and case management with relevant Time Release Studies
5. **Corridor Management**
 - a. We need to align with the Corridor Management Plan, the World Bank, and the African Union to ensure the strategic direction is well shared. The ESA RPSG plays an active role in planning, insights, and lessons learned best practices.
 - i. Beira Corridor
 - ii. Dar Corridor
 - iii. Maputo Corridor
 - iv. Mombasa – Addis Ababa Corridor
 - v. Mtwara Corridor
 - vi. Nacala Corridor
 - vii. Nairobi – Lusaka Corridor
 - viii. Northern Corridor
 - ix. North-South Corridor
 - x. Trans Kalahari Corridor
 - xi. Trans Oranje Corridor
 - xii. WBNDLC Corridor (Walvis Bay-Ndola-Lubumbashi Corridor)

Sign off on the concept of this workplan and its ambitious alignment in work performed:

RPSG Chair:



ESA Region Vice-Chair:



RPSG Vice-Chair:



ROCB Director:



³ The ROCB publishes their Annual and Half Year reports in early May and November. Furthermore, Quarterly Newsletters are published in Early April, July, October, and January, respectively. Therefore, RPSG Newsletters need to be sent to the ROCB two weeks before publication.

