Republic of Rwanda
Ministry of Trade and Industry

Enhanced Integrated Framework
Trade for LDC development

Country Programme Document for EIF Phase Three

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SUMMARY PAGE

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EIF Enhanced Integrated Framework
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
BIT	Bilateral Investment Treaty
B2B	Business-to-Business
BRD	Development Bank of Rwanda
CMIS	Cooperative Management Information System
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CPD	Country Programme Document
DPoA	Doha Programme of Action
EAC	East African Community
EIF	Enhanced Integrated Framework
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IP	Industrial Park
ITC	International Trade Centre
KLP	Kigali Logistics Platform
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MINAFFET	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
MINICOM	Ministry of Trade and Industry

MINIJUST	Ministry of Justice
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
NIRDA	National Industrial Research and Development Agency
NST2	Second National Strategy for Transformation
NTFC	National Trade Facilitation Committee
OAG	Office of the Auditor General
PAM	Priority Action Matrix
PDO	Project Development Objective
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PSEAH	Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment
PSF	Private Sector Federation
QMS	Quality Management System
RCA	Rwanda Cooperative Agency
RDB	Rwanda Development Board
RRA	Rwanda Revenue Authority
RSB	Rwanda Standards Board
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SPIU	Single Project Implementation Unit
TFA	Trade Facilitation Agreement
ToC	Theory of Change
VfM	Value for Money
WTO	World Trade Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Country Programme Document (CPD) sets out Rwanda's strategic engagement under Phase Three of the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) for the period 2026–2031. It provides a coherent, nationally owned programme for leveraging trade and investment as a driver of structural transformation, private sector development and inclusive growth, while supporting Rwanda's preparation for and transition from Least Developed Country (LDC) status.

Building on achievements and lessons from EIF Phases I and II, the CPD reflects on a strategic shift from foundational capacity-building towards results-oriented and catalytic interventions. Earlier EIF support enabled Rwanda to mainstream trade into national development policies, planning and budgetary structures, strengthen trade-related institutions and pilot value chain interventions linked to private sector development. However, evaluations and stakeholder consultations highlighted the need to scale successful pilots, strengthen market linkages and more effectively translate institutional gains into tangible competitive outcomes for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Aligned with the National Strategy for Transformation (NST2), Rwanda's LDC graduation trajectory, the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), The programme aims to enhance the competitiveness and market access of Rwandan SMEs in domestic, regional, and international markets. It focuses on addressing binding constraints along value chains, improving compliance with quality and standards, reducing trade-related costs and strengthening linkages between SMEs and domestic, regional and international markets integrating digital solutions. The programme will also support the strengthening of investment policy frameworks to improve investor confidence and attract quality investment.

The programme adopts a dual-track and mutually reinforcing approach under EIF Phase Three: (i) institutional and policy strengthening under Funding Facility 1 (FF1), and (ii) catalytic interventions to enhance trade competitiveness and expand market opportunities using digital platforms for market access and access to finance under Funding Facility 2 (FF2). EIF resources will be used strategically to leverage additional financing, crowd in private sector investment and scale up successful models, while ensuring SME graduation, inclusivity, sustainability, digital transformation and resilience. The programme will also strengthen trade facilitation systems through the implementation of priority WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement measures, alongside initiatives to develop investment-ready SMEs and leverage private sector investment.

The programme is structured around two complementary pillars: (i) strengthening trade governance, coordination, and analytical systems; and (ii) enhancing SME competitiveness and market access, ensuring that systemic improvements translate into tangible results at enterprise level. Implementation will follow an integrated enterprise development pathway whereby participating SMEs progressively move from enterprise diagnostics and export readiness support to quality upgrading, certification, branding, logistics strengthening, investment readiness and access to finance. This phased approach is intended to improve enterprise competitiveness while creating a pipeline of investment-ready enterprises capable of attracting public and private investment.

1. COUNTRY CONTEXT AND STRATEGIC RATIONALE

1.1 Macroeconomic, Trade and Investment Context

Rwanda has recorded strong economic progress over the past decade, underpinned by sound macroeconomic management, structural reforms, strong institutions, and sustained public and private investment. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy grew at an average rate of over 7% per year, driven by expansion in services, construction, manufacturing, and agriculture. The 2020 reduction, due to disruptions in tourism, trade, and supply chains, exposed structural vulnerabilities like external dependence and supply chain risks, but Rwanda rebounded strongly, with growth exceeding 10% in 2021 and stabilizing thereafter through fiscal stimulus, vaccination drives, and recovery programs. In FY 2024/25, real GDP grew by 6.3% amid global uncertainty, led by industry (22% of GDP), services (over 44%), and manufacturing (up 8% in agro-processing, chemicals, plastics, construction materials, and light manufacturing).

Trade and investment remain central to Rwanda's development under the National Strategy for Transformation (NST2), prioritizing export diversification, private sector growth, and industrialization. In FY 2024/25, total exports of goods and services reached approximately USD 4.2 billion, representing a significant increase from the previous year and reflecting growing diversification across agriculture, manufacturing, and services, while imports hit USD 5.4 billion, yielding an improved export-to-import ratio of 78%.

As a Landlocked Developing Country (LLDC), Rwanda continues to face structural constraints related to its geography. The country relies on long and costly transit corridors through neighboring countries to access seaports, primarily via the Northern and Central Corridors. Transport and logistics costs remain among the highest in the region, significantly affecting the competitiveness of exports, particularly for SMEs. High freight costs, limited economies of scale, and complex border procedures disproportionately affect SMEs, which account for the majority of firms but contribute a relatively small share of total export value. In addition, gaps in investment policy frameworks and institutional capacity for managing investment agreements limit the country’s ability to attract and retain quality investment. These constraints are compounded by gaps in trade and Investment coordination, limited use of data for decision-making, and challenges in accessing finance and investment. Addressing these systemic and enterprise-level constraints is essential to unlocking SME competitiveness and export growth.

Despite these challenges, Rwanda has made substantial progress in strengthening its trade facilitation environment. Investments in OSBPs, such as at Rusumo, Rubavu and Rusizi districts, have significantly reduced clearance times, while digital trade facilitation tools and streamlined customs procedures have improved efficiency. The country has also deepened its engagement in regional and continental integration frameworks, notably the East African Community (EAC), COMESA, and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Rwanda was among the first countries to operationalize AfCFTA trading, including piloting exports under the Guided Trade Initiative, positioning itself as an early mover in continental market integration.

The Government has responded to these challenges through targeted industrial policies, investment in industrial parks and special economic zones, expansion of export promotion instruments, and reforms aimed at improving the business environment. Notable initiatives include the development of industrial parks and special economic zones, expansion of quality infrastructure and certification services, digitization of trade-related processes, and targeted support to export-oriented SMEs. These efforts are complemented by strategic investments in logistics, energy, and transport infrastructure to reduce the cost of doing business.

In this context, the programme is strategically positioned to address persistent structural constraints, deepen productive capacities, and support Rwanda's transition toward a more diversified, competitive, and resilient economy. By aligning with national priorities under NST2 and leveraging regional and global trade frameworks, the programme seeks to strengthen SME competitiveness, expand market access integrating digital tools, and enhance Rwanda's integration into regional and global value chains, thereby contributing to inclusive and sustainable economic transformation.

1.2 Opportunities under AfCFTA and Digital Trade

Rwanda's engagement in AfCFTA offers a strategic opportunity to mitigate LLDC-related constraints by leveraging proximity to regional markets, expanding scale and benefiting from regulatory convergence. In particular, the AfCFTA Protocols on Trade in Goods, Investment and Digital Trade provide a framework to reduce non-tariff barriers, facilitate cross-border transactions and promote investment into productive sectors.

Digitalization is a critical enabler for Rwanda as an LLDC. Digital trade platforms, e-commerce solutions, digital customs and trade information systems can reduce transaction costs, improve predictability and partially offset physical distance from markets. Harnessing these opportunities requires targeted institutional capacity, SME readiness and supportive ecosystems, public private sector collaboration areas where EIF Phase Three support will be very catalytic.

1.3 Lessons from EIF Phases I and II

EIF Phases I and II supported Rwanda in strengthening trade policy frameworks, enhancing national coordination mechanisms, increasing awareness of trade opportunities, and supporting the development of cross-border trade infrastructure. While these interventions delivered important institutional gains, lessons learned underscore the need for a more integrated, programmatic and market-oriented approach, one that strengthens market linkages, scales up successful pilot interventions, and delivers measurable competitive outcomes for SMEs.

1.4 Strategic Fit with NST2 and LDC Graduation

NST2 emphasizes private sector-led growth, export diversification, job creation, particularly for youth and women, resilience and innovation. At the same time, Rwanda's LDC graduation requires a deliberate focus on strengthening competitiveness, mitigating potential preference erosion and enhancing resilience to external shocks. This CPD responds to prioritizing SME competitiveness and resilience, value chain development and market access using digital solutions and within a coherent policy framework and public- private partnership.

2. PRIORITIZED ACTION MATRIX (PAM)

The Prioritized Action Matrix underpins this Country Programme Document (CPD) has been developed through an evidence-based and inclusive consultative process led by the Ministry's Single Project Implementation Unit. It draws on the Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS) and DTIS Update, sectoral and value chain analysis, SME competitiveness assessments, and national development priorities articulated under the National Strategy for Transformation (NST2). The PAM reflects inputs from key public and private sector stakeholders and serves as a consolidated expression of Rwanda's priority trade and investment-related reform and support needs.

The PAM identifies and sequences priority actions across five interlinked and mutually reinforcing areas: (i) strengthening trade and SME-related institutions and coordination mechanisms; (ii) improving SME productive capacity and compliance with quality, standards and certification requirements; (iii) improving SME export competitiveness and expand market opportunities (iv) reducing trade logistics, transit and market entry costs; and (v) strengthening market linkages, branding and investment readiness of Rwandan enterprises. Together, these priority areas address the most binding constraints to SME competitiveness and export growth, particularly in the context of Rwanda's landlocked geography, LDC graduation and opportunities arising from regional and continental integration, including the AfCFTA.

As the foundational planning instrument under EIF Phase Three, the PAM provides the strategic basis for aligning interventions over the programme period. It guides the design and implementation of CPD interventions under both Funding Facility 1 (institutional and policy strengthening) and Funding Facility 2 (catalytic competitiveness and market access interventions). The PAM is a living framework that will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure continued alignment with Rwanda's evolving priorities, institutional capacity and market opportunities. Periodic PAM reviews will also be used to identify emerging financing opportunities, update implementation priorities where required, strengthen development partner coordination and support resource mobilization for unfunded priority interventions. The full PAM is presented in **Annex 1.**

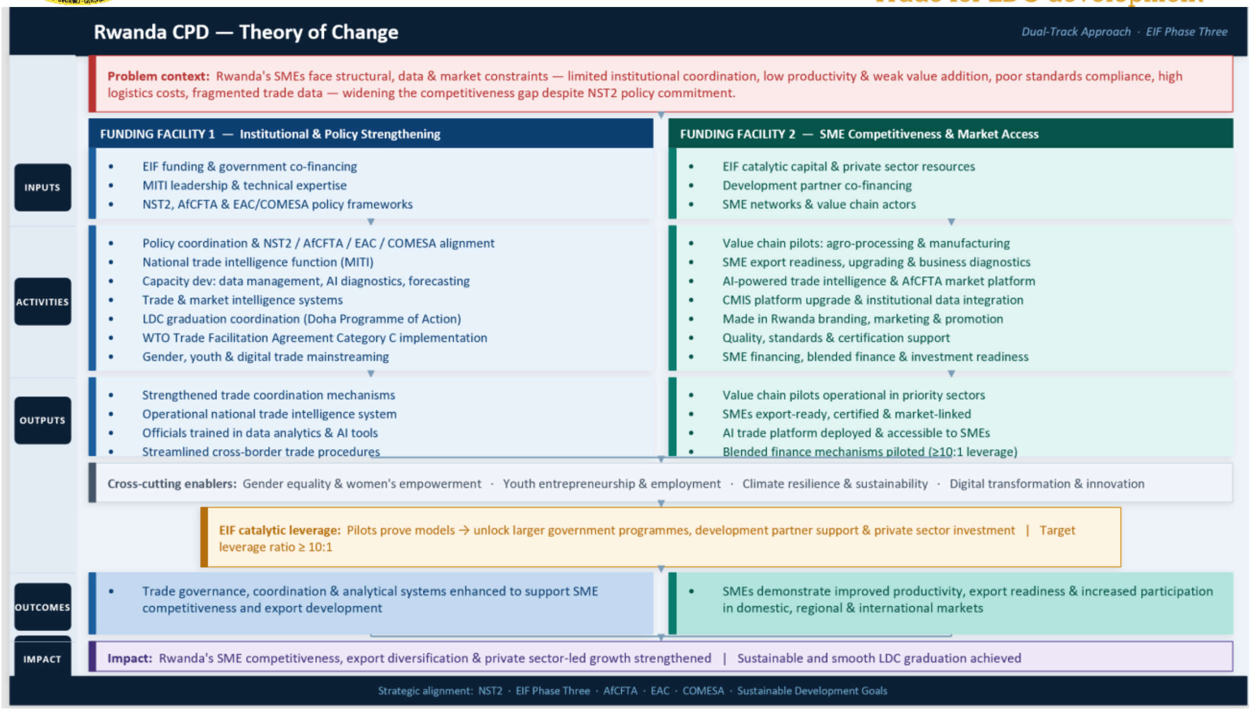
3. THEORY OF CHANGE AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Despite strong policy commitment under NST2, Rwanda's SMEs continue to face structural, data and market-related constraints that limit competitiveness and market access. These include limited coordination and implementation capacity of trade- and SME-related institutions; low productivity and weak value addition; limited compliance with standards and certification requirements; high logistics and market entry costs; fragmented market linkages and fragmented trade data, not translated into policy and export decision-making. As global trade becomes more data-intensive and policy-sensitive, these constraints widen Rwanda's competitiveness gap.

The CPD's Theory of Change is based on the premise that institutional strengthening alone is necessary but not sufficient to deliver trade competitiveness. Sustainable results will be achieved only if policy and institutional reforms are deliberately linked to targeted, market-oriented and catalytic interventions that address firm-level and value chain constraints.

Accordingly, the CPD applies a dual-track approach: Funding Facility 1 strengthens institutional, policy and coordination foundations, while Funding Facility 2 translates these gains into tangible competitiveness and market access outcomes through catalytic SME and value chain interventions. EIF-funded pilots will serve as proof-of-concept initiatives designed to unlock larger-scale government programmes, development partner support and private sector investment, targeting a leverage ratio of at least 10:1. Resource mobilization and strategic partnerships will be pursued throughout implementation to scale successful EIF-supported interventions and maximize development impact.

The results framework aligns with NST2, EIF Phase Three objectives and the Sustainable Development Goals. A visual Theory of Change is presented below and the detailed Logical Framework is presented under **Annex 2.**



3.1. Programme Outcomes

Outcome 1 (Funding Facility 1):
Trade governance, coordination, analytical systems, and investment pipeline enhanced to support SME competitiveness and export development.

Outcome 2 (Funding Facility 2):
SMEs demonstrate improved productivity, export readiness, and increased participation in domestic, regional, and international markets.

4. PROGRAMME COMPONENTS

Pillar 1: Strengthening Trade Governance and Institutional Systems (Funding Facility 1)

Objective:

To strengthen trade and investment-related governance, coordination mechanisms and institutional capacity in order to effectively support SME competitiveness, market access, and Rwanda's integration into regional and continental markets.

Description and Key Interventions:

Under Funding Facility 1, the programme will focus on reinforcing policy coordination and institutional capacity required for effective trade and SME support. Interventions will prioritize implementation capacity, coherence across government, and service delivery to the private sector, in line with the National Strategy for Transformation II (NST2), AfCFTA commitments, and Rwanda's LDC graduation priorities. Particular emphasis will also be placed on strengthening coordination and coherence between trade-related institutions and investment promotion agencies to ensure a more integrated approach to trade and investment development, and enhance evidence-based decision-making through improved trade intelligence and analytical systems, and supporting the development of a pipeline of bankable trade and investment projects. The programme will also strengthen Rwanda's engagement with the World Trade Organization (WTO) by supporting the implementation of relevant WTO agreements, leveraging WTO instruments and technical cooperation mechanisms, and enhancing institutional capacity to advance Rwanda's trade and investment priorities.

Key interventions include:

- ✓ Support to the implementation and coordination of trade, export and SME-related policies, ensuring alignment with NST2, AfCFTA, and regional trade frameworks under the EAC and COMESA, and strengthening policy coordination and implementation coherence across government institutions.
- ✓ Support the establishment and operationalization of a national trade market intelligence function within the Ministry of Trade and Industry to coordinate trade intelligence-related interventions.
- ✓ Capacity development for government officials and trade support institutions in: Trade data management and analytics, market demand forecasting methodologies, Tariff, rules of origin and trade agreement analysis, AI-supported trade diagnostics.
- ✓ Strengthening the capacity of the Ministry to coordinate trade and investment-related programmes, facilitate stakeholder engagement, monitor results, and mobilize complementary resources.
- ✓ Develop feasibility studies for selected Integrated Craft Production Centers (ICPCs) to assess their technical, economic, financial, environmental, and market viability and support the development of investment-ready projects aimed at strengthening MSME productive capacity, value addition, and competitiveness.
- ✓ Capacity-building for public institutions and business support organizations involved in trade facilitation, export promotion, investment facilitation and SME development, including targeted training of staff supporting the national trade and SME ecosystem.
- ✓ Development and operationalization of trade and market intelligence systems, including expanded access to regional and continental market information platforms, to support evidence-based policymaking and informed decision-making by SMEs.

- ✓ Strengthening national coordination mechanisms for LDC graduation, including support for monitoring, reporting and implementation of the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA), and enhanced coordination among key national stakeholders.
- ✓ Support the implementation of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) Category C measures through the simplification of cross-border trade procedures, in collaboration with relevant institutions, to reduce transaction costs and improve predictability for SME exporters.
- ✓ Mainstreaming cross-cutting priorities, including the empowerment of women and youth to participate in AfCFTA trade, and the digital trade integration of environmentally sustainable considerations into production and trade-related processes.
- ✓ The programme will also strengthen investment policy and regulatory frameworks to enhance investor confidence and support the development of a pipeline of bankable investment projects. This will include capacity building for the negotiation, implementation, and monitoring of Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) and other bilateral, regional, and international investment agreements, as well as technical support to relevant institutions to improve the effectiveness and coherence of investment-related policies.
- ✓ In this context, the programme will support Rwanda's engagement in the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment, including technical and institutional support for the ongoing negotiation process, where appropriate. Following the Protocol's entry into force for Rwanda upon ratification, support will focus on its domestication and implementation, including strengthening relevant legal and policy frameworks, building institutional capacity, mainstreaming the Protocol across business support organizations, raising private sector awareness, addressing investment-related barriers, and facilitating investment promotion and business-to-business initiatives to advance intra-African investment under the AfCFTA.

Through these interventions, Component 1 will strengthen the institutional and policy environment necessary for effective implementation of catalytic competitiveness interventions under Funding Facility 2, while ensuring sustainability, coordination and long-term impact across Rwanda’s trade and SME support ecosystem.

Pillar 2: Enhancing SME Competitiveness and Market Access (Funding Facility 2)

Objective:

To translate strengthened institutional and policy capacity into tangible competitiveness gains, expanded market access, and increased investment for SMEs, with a focus on priority value chains, digital trade, regional continental and global markets.

Description and Key Interventions:

Under Funding Facility 2, the programme will support targeted, catalytic, and market-oriented interventions that directly address firm-level and value chain constraints. These interventions will build on the institutional foundations established under Funding Facility 1 and are designed to generate demonstrable results, crowd in complementary financing, and support the scaling-up of successful models.

Participating SMEs will be selected through transparent and documented eligibility criteria aligned with the programme objectives. Selection will consider factors such as value chain relevance, export potential, growth potential, commitment to programme participation, and the expected development impact of the proposed support.

Key interventions include:

- ✓ Value chain development pilots in priority sectors, including Horticulture, edible oil, essential oils, steel, textile manufactures, with a focus on increasing productivity and production processes, strengthening backward and forward linkages, improving access to inputs, and integrating SMEs into domestic, regional and AfCFTA value chains.
- ✓ Targeted capacity development for SMEs, focusing on export readiness, trade facilitation procedures, export documentation, quality and standards compliance, enabling Rwandan products to meet international market requirements such as AfCFTA, EAC and COMESA.
- ✓ Development and deployment of an AI-powered trade market intelligence platform with trade demand forecasting, tariff and trade agreement impact analysis covering AfCFTA and key preferential regimes, Export product–market recommendations integrating demand, competitiveness and feasibility criteria.
- ✓ Upgrade and enhance the CMIS platform to serve as a centralized national data system by integrating modules on cooperative production capacity, SME export potential, and participation in priority value chains, and strengthening data collection, management, and sharing across institutions.
- ✓ SME export readiness and upgrading programmes, encompassing business diagnostics, productivity enhancement, packaging and labelling, compliance with market requirements, and preparation for entry into regional and international markets. The programme will build on Rwanda's Zamukana Ubuziranenge Maturity Model, which provides a structured pathway for progressively assessing and upgrading SMEs towards compliance with quality and standards requirements, certification, and improved market readiness.
- ✓ Marketing, branding and promotion of Made in Rwanda products, including collective branding initiatives, product differentiation, storytelling, and targeted promotion in regional and continental markets to improve visibility, perception and competitiveness.
- ✓ Support for quality, standards and certification, including testing, conformity assessment and certification support, to enable SMEs to meet EAC, COMESA, AfCFTA and selected international market requirements.
- ✓ Strengthening logistics and raw material supply networks, including aggregation models, coordination mechanisms and trade facilitation-related interventions that

reduce input supply disruptions and lower time and cost to market for SME exporters.

- ✓ SME financing and investment readiness support, including business plan development, financial literacy, investment pitching, and pilot blended finance and de-risking mechanisms to crowd in private sector and development partner financing.

The interventions under Funding Facility 2 are designed to operate as an integrated support pathway. Participating SMEs will progressively receive support through enterprise profiling and diagnostics, export readiness, product upgrading, quality standards and certification, branding and market promotion, logistics strengthening, digital market access, investment readiness and access to finance. This phased approach is intended to improve enterprise competitiveness while translating EIF support into sustainable commercial outcomes, increased exports and stronger participation in domestic, regional and international markets.

EIF resources under Funding Facility 2 will be deployed strategically as catalytic capital to pilot and demonstrate scalable models that can be taken up and expanded by private sector initiatives targeting youth led enterprise and women owned businesses Interventions will prioritize women- and youth-led SMEs, promote climate-resilient and sustainable production practices, and leverage digital solutions to enhance inclusivity, resilience, and long-term impact. Through this catalytic approach, Component 2 will deliver measurable improvements in SME competitiveness, export performance, and digital market access, while contributing to Rwanda's broader objectives of export diversification, private sector-led growth, and a smooth and sustainable graduation from LDC status.

5. CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITIES

The CPD integrates cross-cutting priorities throughout its design and implementation, ensuring that interventions under both Funding Facility 1 and Funding Facility 2 contribute to inclusive, resilient, and sustainable trade-led growth. In line with EIF Phase Three principles and Rwanda's NST2, the programme mainstreams gender equality, youth employment, climate resilience, and digital transformation as core enablers of SME competitiveness and market access.

Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment:

Women-owned and women-led SMEs continue to face structural barriers to trade, including limited access to finance, markets, information, and standards compliance support. The CPD adopts a gender-responsive approach by prioritizing women-led enterprises in SME upgrading, export readiness programmes, market linkage initiatives, and access to certification and finance. Capacity-building under Funding Facility 1 will also strengthen institutional ability to design and implement gender-responsive trade and

SME policies. Gender-disaggregated data and indicators will be used to monitor participation and results, ensuring that women meaningfully benefit from EIF-supported interventions.

Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship:

Youth represent a significant share of Rwanda's entrepreneurial and labour force potential, yet they continue to face constraints in accessing productive opportunities, skills, markets.

Despite a relatively high labour force participation rate of 60.2% among youth and an employment-to-population ratio of 52.1% (compared to 61% for adults), youth unemployment remains a concern at 13.4%, higher than the overall unemployment rate of 11%. These highlights persistent gaps in access to quality employment opportunities and labour market absorption for young people.

The programme promotes youth inclusion by targeting youth-led SMEs for export readiness support, digital trade and e-commerce initiatives, and value chain development in high-potential sectors. Skills development and capacity-building interventions will strengthen youth participation in trade-related activities, while improved market linkages and access to finance will support sustainable youth-led enterprise growth and job creation.

Entrepreneurial spirit will be further developed through skills development for startups in digital trade, trade advisory services, and tailored startup support interventions aimed at addressing systemic challenges related to skills, quality, standards, and market access.

Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability:

Recognizing Rwanda's vulnerability to climate-related shocks and the importance of sustainable production for long-term competitiveness, the programme integrates climate resilience and environmental sustainability across its interventions. Support to SMEs will promote climate-resilient production practices, resource efficiency, and compliance with environmental standards increasingly required in regional and international markets. Institutional support under Funding Facility 1 will strengthen the integration of environmental considerations into trade and SME support policies, contributing to enhanced resilience, reduced environmental impact, and sustained market access.

The programme will further promote the adoption of climate-smart and low-carbon solutions in priority value chains, including sustainable production practices, energy-efficient technologies, environmentally compliant packaging, and green logistics solutions such as electric mobility. These interventions will contribute to Rwanda's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Strategy by supporting low-carbon development, sustainable value chains, and climate-resilient trade systems. Overall, they will enhance SME competitiveness while reducing environmental impact and supporting Rwanda's transition towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy.

Digital Transformation and Innovation:

Digitalization is a critical cross-cutting enabler for reducing trade costs, improving efficiency, and expanding market access, particularly for SMEs in a landlocked context. The programme promotes digital transformation through support to AI-powered trade and market intelligence platforms. At the institutional level, digital tools will support data-driven policymaking, coordination, and monitoring.

AI will be leveraged as a cross-cutting enabler to strengthen programme implementation and evidence-based decision-making. Beyond AI-powered trade and market intelligence platforms, AI-enabled tools will support trade analytics, policy analysis, demand forecasting, and monitoring and learning, enabling institutions and SMEs to make more informed, timely, and data-driven decisions. The programme will promote the responsible and practical application of AI, complemented by capacity building to support its effective adoption across participating institutions and enterprises.

To ensure effective adoption, the programme will support digital skills development for SMEs, including training in digital marketing, use of trade information platforms, and data-driven decision-making tools. Targeted capacity-building interventions will be designed to enhance the ability of SMEs to access and utilize digital trade opportunities.

The programme will also leverage digital solutions to enhance inclusivity by promoting accessible and user-friendly platforms, and by prioritizing support to youth- and women-led enterprises, enabling them to participate more effectively in domestic, regional, and international markets.

These interventions align with AfCFTA's Protocol on Digital Trade and enhance Rwanda's capacity to compete in an increasingly digital global trading environment. Through the systematic integration of these cross-cutting priorities, the programme ensures that EIF Phase Three support delivers inclusive, resilient, and future-ready outcomes, while reinforcing Rwanda's broader objectives of export diversification, private sector-led growth, and sustainable LDC graduation.

6. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The implementation of the proposed activities will be coordinated through the Single Project Implementation Unit, (SPIU), within the Ministry of Trade and Industry, in close collaboration with relevant departments and Sub-Implementing Partners, including the Rwanda Standards Board (RSB), Rwanda Cooperative Agency (RCA), Financial Institutions and the Private Sector Federation (PSF), based on their respective mandates and technical expertise through framework arrangements.

The SPIU, established in 2011, provides a well-functioning institutional framework for managing externally financed projects across the full project cycle, including initiation, planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting, and closure. It works in close collaboration with the departments of Trade and Investment, Industry and

Entrepreneurship, and Planning and Monitoring to ensure coherence and effective coordination.

The SPIU will implement the programme using established Government financial, procurement and administrative systems, complemented by the fiduciary strengthening measures identified through the EIF Fiduciary Capacity Assessment. The institutional arrangements are designed to strengthen national ownership while ensuring that fiduciary responsibilities remain clearly defined, assigned and accountable throughout programme implementation.

The Rwanda Standards Board (RSB) will oversee the implementation of activities related to certification, compliance with export standards, and quality assurance requirements for targeted SMEs and value chains, while the Rwanda Cooperative Agency (RCA) will support the implementation and management of the Cooperative Management Information System (CMIS). The Private Sector Federation (PSF) will support SME mobilization, business outreach, and the organization of trade promotion events.

The financial institution, another competent institution, or MINICOM will be determined following the finalization of the MoU with the EIF. The designated institution will be responsible for beneficiary selection based on the approved eligibility criteria, grant administration and disbursement, performance monitoring, and technical oversight to ensure that the grants effectively enhance SME competitiveness, investment readiness, and access to domestic, regional, and international markets.

The institution responsible for administering grants and any related transfers to beneficiaries will be designated before the commencement of the relevant activity and prior to any transfer of EIF resources. The designation will be based on a documented assessment of the institution's legal mandate, technical capacity, fiduciary systems, operational readiness and ability to manage beneficiary selection, disbursement, monitoring and reporting requirements.
The proposed implementation modality, the designated institution and the corresponding partnership or implementation agreement will be submitted to the EIF Trust Fund Manager for review and clearance, as applicable, before funds are transferred. No transfer of EIF resources will take place until the required due diligence has been completed, the institutional responsibilities have been formally approved and the applicable fiduciary conditions have been satisfied.
The implementation agreement will clearly define the respective roles and responsibilities of MINICOM, the SPIU and the designated entity. It will include provisions covering eligible expenditures, beneficiary selection and approval procedures, conflict-of-interest requirements, disbursement arrangements, financial and programmatic reporting, record retention, monitoring and verification, recovery of ineligible or unused funds, audit access, suspension and termination arrangements, and programme closure responsibilities.

Beneficiary selection will be conducted through transparent, objective and documented criteria approved under the programme governance arrangements. The selection process will be supported by formal evaluation records, conflict-of-interest declarations, approval documentation and appropriate due diligence of the selected beneficiaries.
The SPIU will retain overall fiduciary accountability and will undertake regular financial and programmatic monitoring of the designated entity and grant beneficiaries. This will include verification of expenditures and results, review of supporting documentation, monitoring of compliance with the approved grant conditions, follow-up of identified issues and implementation of corrective measures where required.

The Rwanda Development Board (RDB) will collaborate closely with MINICOM in the implementation of investment-related interventions, leveraging its institutional mandate and expertise in investment promotion and facilitation. RDB will support the implementation of activities related to investment readiness, B2B linkages, investor outreach, trade promotion events, and the negotiation and implementation of bilateral, regional, and international trade and investment agreements, including BITs. The collaboration will also facilitate connections between investment-ready SMEs and potential domestic and international investors, thereby enhancing investment opportunities and supporting enterprise growth.

With regard to investment-related interventions, MINICOM will lead and coordinate activities related to the negotiation and implementation of bilateral, regional, and international trade and investment agreements, including the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment, in close collaboration with RDB, MINIJUST, MINAFFET, and other relevant institutions, in accordance with their respective mandates and areas of expertise. RDB will also support investment promotion, investor engagement, business-to-business linkages, and investment matchmaking activities under the programme.

The SPIU will serve as the central coordination and oversight mechanism for programme implementation, ensuring effective delivery, fiduciary management, stakeholder coordination, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting of all project activities in line with EIF guidelines and national priorities.

The first MoU under EIF Phase III will cover an initial implementation package of up to USD 350,000. This package will comprise priority activities selected based on implementation readiness, absorptive capacity and available EIF Trust Fund resources. A dedicated work plan, detailed budget and summary budget has been prepared for this initial package and will form the basis of the Trust Fund's initial financial commitment.

The broader CPD work plan and budget will continue to provide the overall strategic framework for the full programme. As additional EIF resources become available, subsequent implementation packages may be operationalized through updated work plans, budgets and, where appropriate, amendments to the MoU.

The SPIU/NIU will also coordinate periodic reviews of the Prioritized Action Matrix (PAM) to monitor implementation progress, identify financing gaps, update priority interventions where appropriate and strengthen coordination among government institutions, development partners and the private sector. The SPIU will actively pursue resource mobilization by preparing investment briefs, engaging financing partners and promoting complementary investment in priority interventions supported through the CPD.

The Government will provide in-kind contributions to support project implementation, including office space, furniture, information technology equipment, internet connectivity, utilities, and administrative services. The SPIU currently comprises 12 professional staff funded through various development partners, including the World Bank, African Development Bank, IOM, and WFP. These resources contribute to the sustainability and operational continuity of the implementation arrangements. The estimated value of the Government's in-kind contribution is reflected above.

The SPIU will be responsible for the overall coordination of trade and industry-related interventions, including the monitoring of sustainability outcomes of previous EIF-supported projects. The SPIU will also contribute to advancing the Ministry's mandate of promoting trade, industrial development, and private sector competitiveness, while supporting the mobilization of additional development resources.

Day-to-day project management will be carried out by the SPIU under the leadership of the NIU/SPIU Coordinator. Strategic oversight and policy guidance will be provided by the SPIU Steering Committee, chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The Steering Committee will ensure alignment with national development priorities and provide guidance on strategic and operational issues.

Specialized services expected to be subcontracted may include digital systems development, technical studies, certification support, enterprise advisory services, specialized market research and other expertise not available within Government. All subcontracted services will be linked to clearly defined programme activities and budget lines and will be subject to competitive procurement, technical supervision, verification of deliverables and formal acceptance before payment.

Procurement will be managed by the SPIU through its established procurement function, in accordance with applicable national regulations and EIF requirements. Annual procurement plans will be aligned with approved work plans, budgets and implementation schedules.

Procurement processes will apply competitive selection methods, documented market analysis, transparent technical and financial evaluations, and formal approval procedures. Contracts will include clearly defined deliverables, milestones and reporting requirements.

Contract management will include performance monitoring, technical supervision, verification and formal acceptance of deliverables before payment. The SPIU will maintain a procurement and contract tracking system to monitor procurement timelines, implementation status and emerging risks.

Procurement activities will be prioritized and sequenced according to implementation readiness, criticality, and dependencies across programme components. Regular progress reviews will be conducted with technical teams to identify bottlenecks and implement corrective measures.

The higher expenditure anticipated during Years 2 and 3 reflects the transition from preparatory and institutional-strengthening activities to full implementation of enterprise support, systems development, certification, equipment provision and market-access interventions. Procurement and implementation activities will be phased to remain within the SPIU's operational capacity.

The concentration of expenditure during Years 2 and 3 reflects the planned transition from preparatory and institutional strengthening activities towards full implementation of enterprise support, systems development, certification, equipment provision and market-access interventions. Procurement and implementation activities will be phased to ensure that implementation capacity is not exceeded.

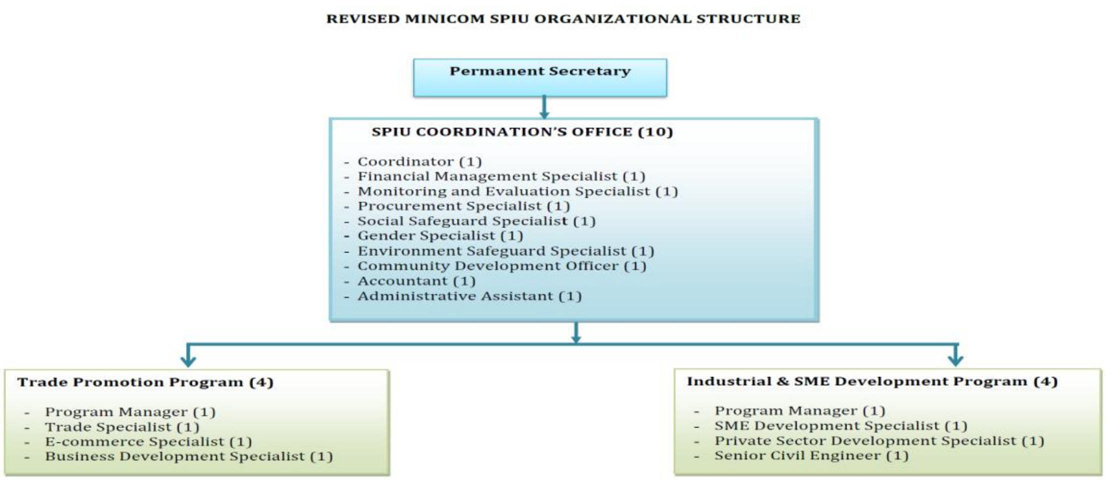
The Programme will apply a zero-tolerance approach to fraud, corruption, bribery, collusion and conflicts of interest. Allegations of prohibited practices will be managed in accordance with applicable national legislation, EIF requirements and UNOPS oversight arrangements, as applicable.

The SPIU operates under the overall supervision of the EIF Focal Point, who also serves as the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry. At the policy level, the Minister of Trade and Industry provides strategic oversight and direction. Annual work plans and budgets are fully aligned with national planning and budgeting processes led by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.

The SPIU Steering Committee will convene at least once per year to review implementation progress, assess semi-annual and annual reports, and provide strategic guidance on key implementation issues. All administrative and logistical support required for project execution, including office space, equipment, logistics, and related facilities, will be provided by the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The estimated value of these in-kind contributions constitutes part of the Government's contribution to the EIF-supported intervention.

Budget allocations have been designed to reflect the sequencing of programme interventions, implementation priorities and expected resource requirements across the different components. Resources are allocated according to the nature and complexity of planned activities, with particular emphasis on technical assistance, institutional capacity strengthening, private sector support and programme management functions necessary to ensure effective implementation. Budget allocations will be reviewed periodically during implementation to ensure continued alignment with programme priorities, implementation progress and available financing.

The programme will implement and monitor the recommendations arising from the EIF Fiduciary Capacity Assessment as part of its institutional strengthening approach.



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7. FIDUCIARY AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The implementation of the programme will be supported by a comprehensive fiduciary management framework designed to ensure transparency, accountability, value for money, effective oversight, and compliance with EIF requirements and the Government of Rwanda's public financial management framework.

Key agencies and private sector partners will be identified to implement on key project components and activities based on their scope of work, and disbursement modalities maybe defined in specific agreements.

Fiduciary Risk Management

The programme will apply a risk-based fiduciary management approach throughout implementation. Fiduciary oversight will extend beyond financial management and procurement to include contract management, implementation monitoring, supervision of implementing partners and service providers, quality assurance of deliverables, compliance monitoring, and timely implementation of corrective actions where required.

Key fiduciary risks relate to financial management, procurement, contract management, asset management, human resources, safeguarding and institutional capacity. These risks will be managed through the internal control framework described in the following sections and monitored throughout programme implementation.

The fiduciary risk management approach is informed by the findings and recommendations of the EIF Fiduciary Capacity Assessment, which identified priority areas for institutional strengthening, including PSEAH, Sub-Implementing Partner Management, Fixed Asset Management and Infrastructure Management. The corresponding mitigation measures are integrated throughout the programme's implementation arrangements and will be monitored during implementation

In this regard, SPIU staff involved in programme implementation will adhere to the applicable policies, guidelines, and procedures governing these areas and will receive the necessary orientation and capacity building to ensure full compliance throughout programme implementation. Fiduciary oversight and mitigation measures will continue to be reviewed and strengthened throughout implementation through regular monitoring, implementation support and risk-based capacity development.

Financial management procedures will include the maintenance of appropriate accounting records, periodic bank reconciliations, monitoring of commitments and budget execution, verification of expenditures against approved work plans and budgets, and regular review of supporting documentation before payment authorization. Financial reporting will be undertaken on a periodic basis in accordance with EIF and Government requirements, with appropriate controls to monitor budget variances and the application of exchange rates where applicable. EIF resources will be managed through designated project bank account(s) in accordance with Government financial management procedures and the requirements of the EIF Trust Fund.

To mitigate these risks, the programme will apply strengthened fiduciary oversight and compliance measures throughout implementation. Procurement processes will follow both national regulations and EIF requirements and will be supported through annual procurement planning, strengthened documentation and tracking systems, and enhanced contract management and monitoring arrangements. Financial management controls will include regular reconciliations, segregation of duties, dual signatory arrangements, periodic financial reporting, external audits, and progressively strengthened internal control procedures aligned with national public finance management regulations. The programme will also support capacity-building measures to strengthen financial management systems, procurement planning, and multi-donor compliance capacity within the SPIU.

Safeguarding and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) risks will be mitigated through the development and operationalization of SPIU-specific PSEA procedures, mandatory awareness and training measures, inclusion of PSEA clauses and codes of conduct in procurement and contractual arrangements, and the establishment of reporting and referral mechanisms. Implementation oversight will be strengthened through regular monitoring by the SPIU, review by the Project Steering Committee, periodic implementation support missions, and ongoing fiduciary monitoring by EIF and UNOPS in accordance with EIF Phase III SoPs and Quality-at-Entry requirements.

These mitigation measures will be reviewed and updated throughout programme implementation to ensure continued effectiveness.

Institutional and Legal Framework:

The Implementing Partner (IP) for the CPD is the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM), acting through the Single Project Implementation Unit (SPIU). The SPIU is an established institutional mechanism mandated to manage externally financed projects and is legally authorized to receive, manage, and account for donor funds in accordance with national laws and regulations. The SPIU operates under the oversight of the Ministry and in alignment with the Government of Rwanda's public financial management framework.

Overall accountability for the programme will remain with the Government of Rwanda through MINICOM, which will provide strategic oversight and ensure that programme implementation remains aligned with national policies, institutional priorities and the approved Country Programme Document. The SPIU will be responsible for the day-to-day management of programme activities, while providing regular technical and financial reporting to support informed decision-making and effective programme oversight.

The SPIU has a proven track record in implementing donor-funded programmes, including those supported by the World Bank, African Development Bank, and other development partners. Its institutional capacity and systems will be further assessed through the EIF fiduciary capacity assessment, as required, to confirm readiness and identify any capacity-strengthening measures needed prior to or during implementation.
Particular attention will be given to the recommendations related to Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEAH), Sub-Implementing Partner management, Fixed Asset Management and Infrastructure Management, which will be monitored through the Programme's implementation and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework.

The findings and recommendations of the Assessment will inform the programme's institutional strengthening approach and fiduciary risk mitigation measures. Agreed capacity-strengthening actions will be incorporated into annual work plans and monitored throughout programme implementation to reinforce institutional systems, strengthen fiduciary oversight, and support continuous improvement in programme management and compliance.

Financial Management and Oversight:

Financial management of the programme will be carried out in accordance with national public financial management regulations and EIF financial management guidelines. Dedicated finance personnel within the SPIU will be responsible for budgeting, accounting, disbursement processing, financial reporting, and internal controls related to EIF resources.

Key financial management arrangements include:

- ✓ Maintenance of separate project accounts and records to ensure clear traceability of EIF funds.
- ✓ Application of standardized accounting procedures and internal controls consistent with Government financial management systems.
- ✓ Regular financial reporting to the EIF Secretariat, including interim and annual financial statements.
- ✓ Segregation of duties between authorization, execution, accounting, and review functions to minimize fiduciary risk.
- ✓ Oversight by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning in line with national budget execution and control frameworks.

The programme will apply appropriate measures to prevent, detect and respond to fraud, corruption and conflicts of interest throughout implementation. All programme personnel, consultants, contractors and implementing entities will be expected to perform their responsibilities with integrity, impartiality and accountability, in accordance with applicable Government regulations and EIF requirements.

Financial and operational controls, segregation of duties, approval procedures, procurement oversight and periodic reviews will contribute to reducing fiduciary risks and strengthening accountability. Any suspected cases of fraud, corruption or conflicts of interest identified during implementation will be managed in accordance with the applicable national procedures and relevant EIF requirements.

Procurement and Value for Money:

Procurement and contract management will be implemented in accordance with the arrangements described under Section 6. Fiduciary oversight will focus on compliance with approved procurement plans, applicable procurement procedures, conflict-of-interest requirements, contract performance, deliverable verification and payment authorization controls.

Procurement risks and delays will be monitored through periodic reviews of procurement progress, contract implementation and corrective actions. Procurement methods will be proportionate to the value, complexity and risk of each assignment and will promote transparency, competition and value for money.

Asset Management

The asset management will be conducted in accordance with Rwanda's public financial management framework. Assets acquired under the programme will be recorded, safeguarded and managed in accordance with applicable Government procedures and EIF requirements. The SPIU will maintain an up-to-date asset register, assign responsibility for the custody and use of programme assets, and ensure that assets are used exclusively for programme purposes.

Periodic verification of programme assets will be undertaken to confirm their existence, condition and appropriate use. Any disposal or transfer of programme assets at the end of the programme will be carried out in accordance with applicable Government procedures and the provisions agreed with EIF.

Where programme-funded equipment, machinery or productive assets are provided to beneficiaries, beneficiary selection shall be based on transparent, objective and documented eligibility criteria approved by the Programme governance arrangements. The ownership arrangements for programme-funded assets shall be clearly defined prior to their transfer, including any conditions governing their use, maintenance and disposal. All asset transfers shall be supported by signed handover documentation, and the SPIU shall maintain an asset transfer register and undertake periodic monitoring to verify that assets continue to be used for their intended programme purposes.

Human Resources and Implementation Capacity

Human resource arrangements will leverage the existing and well-established Single Project Implementation Unit (SPIU), which is supported by several ongoing development partner-funded projects and therefore provides a stable institutional implementation framework. In line with the Government's SPIU framework for public institutions, SPIU positions are project-based, with contract durations aligned to the respective project funding periods. Accordingly, programme implementation will combine dedicated SPIU staff and technical staff from the relevant departments of the Ministry to ensure effective coordination, continuity, and sustainability. Functions including financial management, procurement, monitoring and evaluation, and technical coordination will be carried out by qualified staff with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

EIF resources will finance only the Programme Manager and Finance Manager positions required for programme implementation, provided these positions are not already financed through other development partner interventions. This approach leverages existing institutional capacity, avoids duplication of functions, and enhances value for money. The programme budget will clearly distinguish between programme management, fiduciary, monitoring and evaluation, technical, and operational support functions, specifying the responsibilities and implementation period associated with each position.

Where existing SPIU staff financed by other development partners contribute to programme implementation, their roles will be clearly defined to avoid duplication of funding while ensuring effective coordination across all programme activities.

Where additional expertise is required, the project will engage consultants or technical assistance and in accordance with national procedures and EIF requirements. Staffing arrangements will ensure adequate capacity for effective project implementation, supervision, and reporting, while promoting knowledge transfer and institutional sustainability.

The programme will engage specialized expertise through the most appropriate modality depending on the nature and complexity of the assignment, the availability of expertise in the national market, and value-for-money considerations. Expertise may be sourced through national or international individual consultants, consulting firms, academic or research institutions, or technical partnerships with development partners, as appropriate.

The selection of the appropriate modality will be based on documented market assessments, technical requirements and applicable procurement procedures, ensuring transparency, competitiveness and efficient use of programme resources.

Remuneration for consultants and project-funded personnel will be determined based on documented market assessments and, where applicable, aligned with Government remuneration frameworks and prevailing national market conditions. The SPIU shall maintain appropriate documentation supporting the basis for remuneration decisions to ensure transparency, consistency and value for money.

Management of Sub-Implementing Partners

Where programme implementation involves the transfer of EIF resources to Sub-Implementing Partners or other participating entities, the SPIU shall ensure that appropriate due diligence is undertaken prior to entering into partnership arrangements. Funding agreements shall clearly define roles, responsibilities, eligible expenditures, reporting obligations, monitoring requirements and accountability arrangements. The SPIU will undertake periodic financial and programmatic monitoring of Sub-Implementing Partners to ensure compliance with programme requirements and the effective use of programme resources.

Audit, Reporting and Accountability:

Financial oversight will be reinforced through multiple layers of control. The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) will conduct annual external audits of the project's financial statements in line with national audit standards and EIF requirements. In addition, the Internal Auditor within the Ministry will carry out regular internal audits and reviews to assess the adequacy of internal controls, verify compliance with financial procedures, and identify risks or corrective actions in a timely manner.
Recommendations arising from internal reviews, audits and other assurance activities will be reviewed by the SPIU and, where appropriate, translated into management actions to strengthen programme implementation and fiduciary controls. Progress in implementing agreed corrective actions will be monitored periodically to ensure that identified weaknesses are addressed in a timely manner and that institutional systems continue to improve throughout programme implementation. In addition, the status of implementation of significant audit recommendations will be reviewed as part of the programme's regular management and oversight processes.

Follow-up on outstanding recommendations will form part of periodic implementation review meetings and fiduciary monitoring exercises. Evidence of implementation, including revised procedures, training records, updated templates, approvals or system improvements, will be documented and retained for verification purposes. This approach will help ensure continuous improvement of fiduciary systems, strengthen accountability and reduce the recurrence of control weaknesses during programme implementation.

The fiduciary measures described in this chapter are informed by the findings and recommendations of the EIF Fiduciary Capacity Assessment. Their implementation will be monitored throughout programme implementation through the Programme's governance, risk management and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) arrangements to ensure that identified fiduciary risks continue to be effectively mitigated.

8. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL)

The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework for the Programme is designed to ensure systematic tracking of progress, accountability for results, and continuous learning throughout implementation. The MEL system will support evidence-based decision-making, adaptive management, and reporting in line with EIF requirements, national monitoring frameworks, and international good practice.

Monitoring Framework and Indicators:

Monitoring will be guided by a robust results-based framework aligned with the CPD's Theory of Change, logframe, and performance indicators. Clear output and outcome level indicators will be defined for each programme component to enable systematic tracking of progress against agreed targets. These indicators will be aligned with the National Strategy for Transformation (NST2) and the EIF Phase Three Results Framework.

Particular attention will be given to the disaggregation of data by gender, age, and enterprise size, in line with cross-cutting priorities on inclusivity, equity, and leaving no one behind.

The implementation of the CPD will be supported by a strong Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and planning team with proven experience in results-based management and programme oversight. A well-structured logical framework will guide implementation by clearly defining outputs, outcomes, indicators, baselines, and targets. This will enable systematic performance tracking, timely identification of implementation challenges, and evidence-based decision-making. The robustness of the M&E system will contribute to effective coordination, adaptive management, and the timely and efficient delivery of programme activities.

Roles and Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Single Project Implementation Unit/SPIU will have primary responsibility for coordinating M&E activities, consolidating data, and ensuring timely and accurate reporting. A dedicated M&E function within the SPIU, led by the M&E Specialist, will oversee the design and implementation of the M&E framework, including data collection, analysis, and performance tracking. The SPIU will work closely with implementing partners, line ministries, and relevant agencies to collect and validate data on outputs, outcomes, and performance indicators.

The SPIU will provide technical oversight and quality assurance, ensuring consistency with national monitoring systems and EIF requirements. The EIF National Focal Point will provide strategic oversight and facilitate coordination with the EIF Secretariat and development partners.

At the implementation level, partner institutions and service providers will be responsible for routine data collection and reporting against agreed indicators, in accordance with approved monitoring plans. Clear roles and responsibilities will be defined to ensure accountability and avoid duplication.

Learning and Adaptive Management:

Learning is an integral component of the CPD’s implementation approach. Regular progress reviews, learning workshops, and stakeholder consultations will be used to assess what is working, identify challenges, and adjust implementation strategies as needed. Lessons learned will inform programme refinement, scaling of successful interventions, and policy dialogue.

Knowledge generated through implementation, including good practices, lessons learned, and innovation outcomes, will be documented and shared with relevant stakeholders, including government institutions, development partners, and the private sector, to support continuous improvement and evidence-based decision-making.

Reporting and Evaluation:

Progress will be reported through periodic narrative and financial reports, aligned with EIF reporting requirements and national planning cycles. Mid-term and end-of-project evaluations will assess performance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of the programme. Findings and recommendations from evaluations will be used to strengthen implementation and inform future programming.

The MEL system will also support accountability and transparency by ensuring timely reporting, facilitating independent verification, and enabling corrective actions where necessary. Through these mechanisms, the CPD will maintain strong results focus and contribute to sustained learning and improved development outcomes.

Implementation of agreed recommendations arising from the EIF Capacity Assessment will also be monitored through the programme's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework. Progress in implementing these institutional strengthening and fiduciary measures will be reviewed periodically and reflected, where appropriate, in programme progress reports to support continuous improvement and effective programme oversight. The detailed plan is provided in **Annex 3.**

9. COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The Country Programme Document (CPD) will use effective communication strategies to ensure visibility, transparency, stakeholder engagement, and accountability throughout the implementation period. The communication plan will support the dissemination of results, promote awareness of achievements, and strengthen engagement with national and international stakeholders, including government institutions, the private sector, and the wider public. It will also serve as a tool for knowledge sharing, and learning.

Objectives of the Communications Plan

The communications strategy will aim to:

- ✓ Increase awareness of the objectives, activities, and results of the CPD among key stakeholders;
- ✓ Showcase the contribution of EIF support to Rwanda’s trade competitiveness, SME development, and progress toward LDC graduation;
- ✓ Promote transparency and accountability through regular information sharing on progress and results;

- ✓ Strengthen stakeholder engagement and ownership, particularly among government institutions, and the private sector;
- ✓ Support advocacy by highlighting successful interventions, lessons learned, and impact stories.

Target Audiences

The communications plan will target a broad range of stakeholders, including:

- Government institutions and agencies involved in trade, industry, and investment;
- Private sector actors, including SMEs, business associations, and investors;
- Civil society organizations and academia;
- Media outlets and the general public.

Key Communication Channels

A mix of communication channels will be used to ensure wide outreach and effective dissemination of information, including:

- Official websites and digital platforms of the Ministry of Trade and Industry and partner institutions;
- Workshops and stakeholder consultations;
- Knowledge products such as case studies, success stories, and lessons learned.

Communication of Results and Learning

The CPD will place strong emphasis on communicating results and lessons learned throughout implementation. Progress updates will be shared regularly with stakeholders through structured reporting, knowledge products, and learning events. Key achievements, innovations, and good practices will be documented and disseminated to inform policy dialogue, support replication, and enhance programme learning.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Ministry of Trade and Industry, through the Single Project implementation, will lead the implementation of the communications plan, working in close collaboration with relevant government agencies, and communication focal points. The SPIU will ensure consistency of messaging, alignment with national communication policies, and compliance with EIF visibility and branding guidelines.

Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of communication activities will be monitored through indicators such as media coverage, stakeholder engagement levels, website, and feedback from beneficiaries. Lessons learned will be used to refine communication approaches throughout the implementation period, ensuring that the programme remains visible, transparent, and responsive to stakeholder needs. The detailed plan is provided in **Annex 4.**

10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION

Risk management will be integrated into the programme's overall governance, implementation and monitoring arrangements. Risks will be identified, assessed, monitored and reviewed throughout programme implementation to enable timely decision-making and the adoption of appropriate mitigation measures. The risk management process will remain adaptive, recognizing that implementation risks may evolve as programme activities expand and implementation arrangements mature.

Risk Category	Description of Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Institutional	Changes in policy direction, coordination challenges, or institutional capacity constraints may affect implementation effectiveness.	Low	low	Strong anchoring within national frameworks; active oversight by the SPIU and Steering Committee; regular coordination meetings and stakeholder engagement.
Institutional Sustainability Risk	Changes in institutional arrangements, staff turnover or insufficient institutionalization of programme functions may affect continuity of programme implementation, knowledge retention and long-term sustainability of programme results.	Medium	High	Maintain documented procedures, strengthen institutional ownership, ensure systematic knowledge transfer, build the capacity of government counterparts and progressively integrate programme

				systems and practices into existing institutional structures.
Economic	Market volatility, external economic shocks, or reduced demand may limit SME competitiveness and export performance.	Medium	High	Diversification of markets and value chains; promotion of regional and AfCFTA trade; support to productivity and value addition.
Institutional Capacity	Limited technical may delay implementation or affect quality of outputs.	Low	low	Targeted capacity-building, technical assistance, and clear role definition across implementing entities.
Financial / Fiduciary	Delays in fund disbursement, or weak financial controls.	Medium	High	Strong financial management systems, segregation of duties, internal controls, and regular external audits by the Office of the Auditor General.
Contract Management and Third-Party Oversight Risk	Weak contract management, inadequate supervision of consultants and service providers, insufficient verification of contractual deliverables, or ineffective oversight of third-party implementation arrangements may	Medium	High	Apply performance-based contracts with clearly defined deliverables, milestones and reporting requirements; maintain regular technical supervision and

	affect the quality, timeliness and accountability of programme implementation.			implementation reviews; verify contractual outputs before authorizing payments; ensure appropriate oversight of consultants, contractors and third-party service providers throughout programme implementation.
Social and Inclusion	Unequal participation of women, youth, and vulnerable groups in programme benefits.	Medium	Medium	Targeted outreach, inclusive selection criteria, gender-responsive programming, and disaggregated monitoring.
Environmental	Climate shocks and environmental degradation affecting production and supply chains.	Medium	Medium	Integration of climate-resilient practices, environmental safeguards, and sustainable resource management.
Operational	Delays in procurement, or coordination challenges.	Medium	Medium	Clear implementation schedules, procurement planning, regular coordination meetings, and performance monitoring.

Programme-funded assets	Assets provided to beneficiaries may not be allocated transparently, adequately safeguarded or used for their intended purposes	Medium	Low	Establish transparent and documented beneficiary selection criteria. Define ownership and asset transfer arrangements before distribution. Maintain signed asset handover documentation and an asset transfer register. Conduct periodic monitoring to verify the use and condition of transferred assets.
Resource Mobilisation Risk	Additional financing from development partners and the private sector may not materialize as anticipated, limiting the scaling-up of programme interventions beyond the initial funding package.	Medium	High	Develop a pipeline of investment-ready initiatives, strengthen engagement with development partners and financial institutions, support investment promotion activities and regularly review resource mobilisation

				opportunities throughout programme implementation.

The SPIU will review the programme risk register periodically as part of regular implementation and management review processes. Emerging risks, changes in the operating environment and lessons arising from implementation, monitoring missions, fiduciary reviews and audits will be reflected in updated mitigation measures where appropriate. Significant risks requiring strategic attention will be escalated through the established programme governance arrangements to support timely corrective action.

Early Warning Mechanisms:

Risk monitoring will be embedded within the programme's Monitoring and Evaluation framework. Regular progress reviews, periodic risk assessments, and early warning indicators will enable timely identification of emerging risks and corrective actions. The SPIU, in coordination with the departments and relevant stakeholders, will review risk status during implementation meetings and adjust mitigation measures as necessary.
Through this structured and proactive risk management approach, the programme will enhance resilience, safeguard results, and ensure effective and sustainable implementation.

11. VALUE FOR MONEY (VFM)

Value for Money will be applied as a programme-wide management principle and will inform planning, resource allocation, implementation, monitoring and decision-making throughout the programme lifecycle. The details are provided in **Annex 5.**

VfM Dimension	**Definition**	**Application in the CPD**	**Key Measures / Indicators**
Economy	Procuring inputs of appropriate quality at the lowest cost without compromising standards.	Use of national procurement systems and competitive bidding; leveraging existing government structures and in-kind contributions; coordination with development partners to avoid duplication.	✓ Cost-efficient procurement processes ✓ Share of resources allocated to core programme activities ✓ Timely procurement and contract execution

Efficiency	Maximizing outputs and outcomes from available resources.	Streamlined implementation through the SPIU; clear roles and responsibilities; integrated planning and coordination; use of digital tools for monitoring and reporting.	✓ Timely delivery of planned outputs ✓ Cost per output achieved ✓ Ratio of administrative to programme costs
Effectiveness	Achieving intended results and development outcomes.	Results-based implementation aligned with NST2 and EIF objectives; focus on SME competitiveness, market access, and value chain development; continuous monitoring and adaptive management.	✓ Achievement of output and outcome targets ✓ Improved SME performance and export outcomes ✓ Progress against logframe indicators
Equity	Ensuring fair and inclusive access to programme benefits.	Targeted support for women and youth-led enterprises; inclusion of MSMEs; geographically balanced interventions; use of disaggregated data to track inclusiveness.	✓ Share of women- and youth-led SMEs supported ✓ Regional coverage of interventions ✓ Gender and youth-disaggregated results

12. PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Effective implementation of the Programme will rely on strong partnerships and diversified resource mobilization mechanisms that leverage domestic, regional, and international support. The programme adopts a collaborative approach to mobilizing financial, technical, and institutional resources in support of its objectives, while ensuring alignment with national development priorities and long-term sustainability.

The programme will also strengthen engagement with the Donor Facilitator as a key partner in facilitating dialogue with the donor community, promoting coordination and complementarities among development partners, and supporting opportunities for additional resource mobilization around CPD priorities.

Mobilization of Financial and Technical Resources

The programme will leverage a mix of public, private, and development partner resources to scale up interventions and ensure sustainability beyond EIF financing. Public resources will include national budget allocations and in-kind contributions from the Government of Rwanda, particularly through the Ministry of Trade and Industry. These resources will support core implementation functions, coordination, and the delivery of key interventions.

In addition, the programme will actively pursue South–South and triangular cooperation, leveraging Rwanda's engagement with regional and global partners to share experiences, transfer knowledge, and mobilize technical expertise. Cooperation with peer countries and regional institutions will support learning, innovation, and the replication of successful models in areas such as trade facilitation, SME development, and value chain integration.

Private Sector Engagement

Recognizing the central role of the private sector in driving trade, investment, and job creation, the programme will promote private sector participation both as beneficiary and as active partners in implementation, including through platforms such as the National Trade facilitation Committee, where they play a key role in shaping and advancing trade facilitation reforms.

Engagement mechanisms will include public–private dialogue platforms, business forums, and targeted outreach to industry associations, financial institutions, and impact investors. Opportunities for blended finance, risk-sharing instruments, and co-investment will be explored to leverage private capital and enhance the sustainability of supported interventions.

The programme will also encourage private sector participation in value chain development, innovation, and market expansion initiatives, including partnerships that support technology transfer, skills development, and access to regional and international markets.

Domestic Resource Mobilization

In line with national priorities, the programme will strengthen domestic resource mobilization by aligning programme interventions with national budgeting processes and public investment frameworks. Emphasis will be placed on enhancing the efficiency of public expenditure, improving coordination among government institutions, and leveraging domestic financing mechanisms to support trade and private sector development initiatives. This approach will help ensure sustainability beyond the lifespan of external financing.

Institutional Coordination and Sustainability

The Ministry of Trade and Industry, through its Single Project Implementation Unit, will coordinate partnerships and resource mobilization efforts, ensuring coherence with national strategies and development plans. Collaboration with key stakeholders, including the private sector, and civil society will facilitate knowledge sharing, joint programming, and sustained impact.

During the CPD design and PAM development process, this collaborative approach has already been applied through consultations with key stakeholders. These engagements helped to identify priority interventions, ensure alignment with ongoing initiatives, and avoid duplication of efforts, thereby strengthening ownership and coherence from the outset. The SPIU will maintain an updated pipeline of priority interventions and investment opportunities derived from the Prioritized Action Matrix to facilitate engagement with development partners, financial institutions and private investors throughout programme implementation.

The CPD will promote sustainability through domestic resource mobilization and strategic partnerships, ensuring strong national ownership and continuity of results beyond the programme cycle.

13. BUDGET SUMMARY

Budget Overview and Allocation

Where relevant, the programme will finance productive assets and equipment required to support enterprise upgrading and value chain development. The type of assets, beneficiary categories, eligibility criteria and estimated scale of support will be determined during detailed implementation planning and reflected in the corresponding procurement plans, budgets and asset management arrangements. Ownership, transfer and post-transfer monitoring arrangements are described in the Asset Management section.

The proposed budget reflects the strategic priorities of the CPD and is structured to ensure efficient use of resources while maximizing development impact. Funding is allocated across two main components, institutional strengthening under Funding Facility 1 and catalytic interventions for SME competitiveness under Funding Facility 2, supported by programme management and monitoring functions.

The programme budget has been prepared taking into account the scope and sequencing of the proposed interventions, implementation readiness, absorptive capacity and expected implementation timelines. Budget estimates are based on documented costing assumptions, previous implementation experience, market assessments where applicable, and the scale of the expected programme outputs.

Higher-cost activities, including digital systems development, enterprise support, certification, specialized technical assistance, and market access interventions, reflect the technical complexity and resource requirements of these interventions and are considered necessary to achieve the expected programme results while ensuring value for money.

Cost Structure and Rationale

The largest share of resources is allocated to Component 2, reflecting the emphasis on direct support to SMEs, value chain development, and market access interventions. Component 1 focuses on strengthening institutional capacity, policy implementation, and coordination mechanisms essential for sustainable results.

Budget allocations have been designed to align with absorptive capacity, implementation timelines, and the scale of planned interventions. Cost efficiency is ensured through the use of existing institutional structures, pooled resources, and synergies with ongoing programmes.

The figures are presented below, with details provided under **Annex 6.**

Financing Sources and Cost Sharing

The programme will be financed through a combination of EIF funding, Government of Rwanda contributions (in-kind). Government contributions include staff time, office facilities, and operational support, demonstrating national ownership and commitment.

Programme management and operational costs have been designed in accordance with the EIF Phase III financial parameters and remain within the applicable ceiling for management costs. These costs are limited to the functions required to ensure effective programme coordination, fiduciary management, monitoring and reporting throughout implementation.

Components	**Key Cost Categories**	**EIF Funding**	**Total**
Component 1: Institutional & Policy Frameworks (FF1)	Technical assistance, capacity building, coordination, systems development	YES	USD 796,143

Component 2: SME Competitiveness & Market Access (FF2)	Value chain support, SME upgrading, market access, certification, digitalization	YES	USD 2,703,857
TOTAL			USD 3,500,000

The financing plan combines EIF resources with Government counterpart contributions and complementary support from development partners. Government in-kind contributions primarily comprise office facilities, staff time and operational support provided through existing Government structures. Any complementary financing from development partners will be distinguished between confirmed and indicative contributions and will be monitored throughout implementation to ensure transparency, avoid duplication of financing and support effective coordination of programme resources.

14. SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

The sustainability of the Programme is firmly anchored in the EIF Phase Three sustainability framework, which emphasizes institutional ownership, capacity development, domestic resource mobilization, and the long-term integration of programme outcomes into national systems. The programme is designed to ensure that the benefits generated through EIF support are sustained beyond the programme cycle and continue to contribute meaningfully to Rwanda's trade-led development agenda.

A central pillar of sustainability is the integration of CPD-supported interventions into existing national structures and processes. Implementation will be anchored within the Ministry of Trade and Industry and its affiliated institutions, ensuring that capacities developed under the programme are embedded within permanent government systems. Strengthening the SPIU and associated coordination mechanisms will enhance institutional continuity, enabling effective planning, implementation, and monitoring beyond the lifespan of the programme.

The programme places strong emphasis on institutional capacity building, ensuring that skills, systems, and knowledge developed through EIF support are retained and utilized over the long term. Policies, tools, and operational frameworks developed under the CPD, particularly those related to trade facilitation, SME development, and market access, will be mainstreamed into relevant ministries and agencies, reinforcing sustainability and national ownership.

In addition, sustainability will be reinforced through domestic resource mobilization and the alignment of programme interventions with national budgetary and planning frameworks. Government co-financing, alongside continued engagement with development partners and the private sector, will help sustain priority interventions beyond the duration of EIF funding.

Through these measures, the programme will ensure that investments made under EIF Phase Three generate lasting impact, strengthen institutional resilience, and support Rwanda's long-term objectives for inclusive growth, competitiveness, and economic transformation.

15. ANNEXES

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1k9HM9er84cZbi2b7rGHxYBUNQISBRe5E?usp=drive_link