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# Bolstering Nigeria's Agricultural Export and Intra-African Trade: A Conceptual Discourse on AFCTA Policy

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**Abstract**

This study evaluates Nigeria's agricultural export policy and readiness to implement the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), highlighting challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited access to finance, and support for smallholder farmers. The methodology for the study is desktop review and archival design, where secondary data and reports were explored. The study concluded that Nigeria needs to strengthen its institutional capacity to implement the AfCFTA, including building the capacity of its trade negotiators and improving its trade facilitation infrastructure policies, in order to address the significant challenges in agricultural export policy. It recommends a coordinated approach involving the government, private sector, non-governmental organisations, and civil society to strengthen institutional capacity. The private sector should also increase investment in agriculture, improve product quality, and develop value chains.

**Keywords:** AfCFTA; Nigeria agricultural export policy; Institutional capacity; Private sector

**Abbreviations:** AfCFTA: African Continental Free Trade Area; NIRSAL: Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending; APP: Agricultural Promotion Policy; NAFDAC: National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control; CSOs: civil society organisations; SMEs: small and medium-sized enterprises

## Introduction

Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, has struggled to diversify its economy, which heavily relies on oil exports. According to Adesina [1], the agriculture sector has the ability to significantly impact the country's economic growth and development. Agriculture accounts for about 15% of Africa's total GDP and employs more than 60% of the continent's workforce (UNCTAD, 2019) [2]. Africa's agricultural exports are dominated by a few key commodities like coffee, cocoa, and cotton, underscoring the need for more diversification. Despite Africa's significant agricultural potential, its proportion of global agricultural exports remains low, at around 3-4% (World Bank, 2020) [3]. However, the sector's potential remains largely untapped, with Nigerian agricultural exports contributing only a small fraction of total exports. Consequently, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement, which came into force in 2019, marks a significant milestone in Africa's economic integration efforts (UNECA, 2020) [4]. It is a historic trade agreement agreed in 2018 by 54 of 55 African Union member nations with the goal of establishing a single continental market for goods and services, as well as a customs union (AfDB, 2020b) [5]. The agreement went into effect in 2019 and has the potential to significantly improve intra-African trade and economic integration. The central objective of this agreement is the objective of building a unified continental market for products and services with free movement of businesspeople and investments Tralac [6]. This historic agreement intends to unite 1.3 billion people from 54 African countries, becoming the world's largest free trade region Briones [7]. One critical area of focus for the AfCFTA is to boost intra-African trade, notably in agriculture,

which is a critical driver of economic growth and development in many African nations throughout the continent.

Therefore, studies such as Odularu; Anseeuw & Boche; Adeniran & Ogunkola [8-10] have noted that AfCFTA has the potential to expand intra-African agricultural trade by 20–35%. Currently, the intra-African trade in agricultural products amounts to just around 20% of total agricultural trade in Africa, implying significant untapped potential. It can be argued that inadequate infrastructure, such as poor road networks and limited cold storage facilities, causes post-harvest losses of up to 40% for various agricultural commodities in Africa (World Bank) [11]. It is critical to note at this point that Nigeria is a major agricultural producer in Africa, producing a wide range of agricultural goods with export potential. Nigeria's agricultural sector is a critical section of the economy, accounting for a sizable portion of the country's GDP and employing a large percentage of the workforce. The sector exports accounted for approximately 4.3% of total national exports (NBS, 2020) [12]. According to the International Trade Centre (2020), cocoa beans make up 23.6% of total agricultural exports, sesame seeds 20.5%, and cashews 14.1%. Nigeria's agricultural exports rose from $1.4 billion in 2015 to $2.3 billion in 2020 (Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2020) [13]. The AfCFTA facilitates intra-African trade, which allows Nigeria to grow its agricultural exports throughout the continent. The AfCFTA establishes a single market for goods and services, allowing free movement of people and investments, ultimately leading to greater economic integration throughout Africa. However, Nigeria's agricultural exports have been impeded by a variety of challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, restricted access to capital, and regulatory barriers. Nigeria's trade with other African nations was $3.8 billion in 2020, with a trade deficit of $1.4 billion (NBS, 2020) [12].

Consequently, it is important to state at this juncture that the Nigerian agricultural exports have historically been focused on a few countries, frequently outside of Africa. It can be argued that Ghana is the top African country for Nigeria's agricultural exports in 2020, accounting for 23.2%, followed by Côte d'Ivoire (17.1%) and South Africa (12.5%) (AfDB, 2020a; International Trade Centre, 2020) [14,15]. Meanwhile, a lack of access to the larger African market has hampered Nigeria's agricultural export development and diversification Odularu [8]. Furthermore, trade restrictions such as high tariffs and non-tariff barriers, as well as poor trade logistics, have hindered Nigerian agricultural products competitiveness in the regional market. It is important to state at this juncture that the differences in standards, laws, and certification processes between African nations present additional challenges for Nigerian exporters. Nigerian agricultural producers are under stiff competition from more efficient and subsidised farmers in other African nations Adesina [1]. It is evident that many small-scale Nigerian farmers lack access to finance, technology, and expert support, restricting their capacity to improve productivity and quality. Small-scale farmers' integration into national and regional value chains has hampered their participation in intra-African commerce Deloitte [16]. From the above analysis, it can be argued that the lack of investment in productivity-enhancing technology and infrastructure has undermined the competitiveness of Nigerian agricultural enterprises. It is important to state at this juncture that there is a lack of systematic and sufficient academic or published research works on Nigeria's agricultural export policy and intra-African trade under AfCFTA that address inadequate institutional capacity, infrastructure constraints, limited product diversification, and competition from other African countries. Evidence from the existing literature and credible scholarship indicates that more needs to be done to address this literature gap. Consequently, this study investigates Nigeria's agricultural export policy and intra-African trade on AfCFTA. This is the gap this study tends to fill. In view of this, the gaps in the study seek to evaluate the alignment of Nigeria's agricultural export policy and effective implementation of the AfCFTA. It examines the institutional capacity that undermines the country's ability to leverage the opportunities presented by the AfCFTA and proposes policy interventions that would unlock the potential of the AfCFTA for the Nigerian agricultural sector and boost its intra-African trade performance.

## Literature Review

This section of the study reviewed previous studies on Nigeria's agricultural export policy and effective implementation of the AfCFTA. A review was done on the institutional capacity that undermines the country's ability to leverage the opportunities presented by the AfCFTA. The study was anchored on institutional theory.

### Nigeria's Agricultural Export Policy and Effective Implementation of the AfCFTA

Nigeria's agricultural export policy aims to boost the country's agricultural exports, diversify the economy, and reduce its reliance on oil exports. The policy focusses on promoting the production and export of high-value crops, livestock, and agricultural products Olorunfemi [17]. It is evident that the policy aims to reduce Nigeria's dependence on oil exports, which is a significant step towards diversifying the economy and perhaps creating jobs in the agriculture sector, both directly and indirectly. This would assist Nigeria's government in increasing the nation's foreign exchange earnings from agricultural exports, which can help stabilise the currency Ojo [18]. Nigeria has identified agriculture as a critical sector for economic diversification and growth. The government has implemented several policies and programs to boost agricultural productivity and exports. Policies include the Agricultural Promotion Policy (2016-2020), the Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL), and the Anchor Borrowers' Programme Deloitte; Afdb [16,14]. It


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is important to state at this juncture that these policies seek to increase productivity, improve access to inputs and financing, and promote value-added agricultural exports.

Meanwhile, Nigeria's agricultural exports have struggled due to low productivity, non-tariff barriers, and inadequate infrastructure in export markets Adeyemi [19]. These challenges are compounded by infrastructure challenges, such as inadequate transportation networks, storage facilities, and irrigation systems. Climate change poses a significant challenge to Nigeria's agricultural sector, as changing weather patterns can impact crop yields and livestock productivity Akande, Shimeles, Verdier-Chouchane & Boly [20,21]. It is worth saying that many farmers and agricultural businesses in Nigeria lack access to financing, limiting their capacity to invest in their operations and increase productivity. It is critical to also note at this point that the high demographic patterns, which represent the smallholder farmers who will drive Nigeria's agricultural export commodities such as cocoa, cashew nuts, sesame seeds, ginger, and hibiscus flowers, are not providing adequate support and policy incentives (Adesina, 2020; UNECA, 2020) [1,4]. Consequently, Nigeria's large domestic market and diverse agricultural products could make it a major exporter to the African continent under the AfCFTA. According to Olorunfemi [17], the AfCFTA's single continental market for goods and services, which includes free movement of people and investments, has yet to boost intra-African trade, including agricultural trade, because the Nigerian government institution failed to address supply-side constraints, logistics and infrastructure, and the competitiveness of its agricultural exports in order to fully benefit from the AfCFTA. Further, the AfCFTA that was supposed to provide a significant opportunity for Nigeria to increase its agricultural exports to other African countries based on the continental demand for agricultural products driven by population growth, urbanisation, and changing dietary patterns failed to develop a comprehensive strategy that outlines the agricultural production and trade priorities, goals, and timelines for AfCFTA implementation in Nigeria Omotesho; Tralac [22,6]. It is important to state at this juncture that the challenges have hindered Nigeria's potential to diversify its agricultural exports beyond traditional commodities like cocoa and cotton.

## Strategic Assessment of Nigerian Agricultural Policy and Programmes in Nigeria from 2016-2020

The Nigerian government has developed several policies aimed at promoting agricultural growth and productivity, improving food security, and encouraging private sector investment (Olorunfemi, 2020). The policy's emphasis on value chain development and mechanisation opens up opportunities for growth and employment generation. This strategic assessment evaluates the impact of three major policies: the Agricultural Promotion Policy (2016-2020) [], the Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL), and the Anchor Borrowers' Programme. Nigeria's key agriculture policies and programs from 2016 to 2020 have mixed results. According to Ojo [18], policies and programs have helped increase production, financing, and private sector engagement. However, more work is needed to drive transformative changes in the agricultural sector and achieve long-term food security, economic diversification, and inclusive growth through political and administrative will Adesina [1]. This would enhance the targeting, monitoring, and exit strategies required to boost the program. This might strengthen the implementation, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation stages of agricultural policies and programs if the country desires to capitalise on the opportunities created by the AfCFTA policy's exports (AfDB, 2020b) [5]. From the above review, Tralac [6] extensively examines each policy and recommends areas for improvement.

### Agricultural Promotion Policy (2016-2020)

The Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) was Nigeria's primary agricultural policy framework from 2016 to 2020. The policy aims to achieve food security, reduce import dependency, diversify the economy away from oil, and provide jobs and economic opportunities in agriculture Akande; Ogunleye [20,23]. It is critical to note at this point that the policy improves institutional capacity and coordination within the agricultural sector, as evidenced by increased productivity and yields of major agricultural commodities via input distribution, extension services, and irrigation infrastructure Deloitte [16]. The policy clearly promotes private sector investment in agriculture through incentives and public-private partnerships by developing agricultural value chains and improving storage processing, and marketing Adeyemi; Shimeles et al. [19,21]. Meanwhile, limited budgetary allocation, inadequate infrastructure, and inconsistent execution have hampered the policy's effectiveness. Climate change, insecurity, and ineffective monitoring and assessment procedures all pose serious risks to the policy's effectiveness. Despite these challenges, APP achieved considerable progress in increasing agricultural output and attracting private investment (Omotesho, 2019) [22]. However, the implementation was unequal among states and value chains. More effort is still needed to meaningfully transform Nigeria's agriculture sector to achieve the policy's ambitious objectives, since this would help in attaining full economic diversification and maximising on the opportunities arising from the export benefits created by the AfCFTA policies.

### Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL)

NIRSAL was launched in 2013 as a public-private initiative to de-risk agricultural lending and improve sector funding Ogunleye [23]. According to Adeyemi [19], risk-sharing facilities provide banks guarantees to boost agricultural lending, technical support and capacity building for financial institutions and farmers,


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and insurance products to mitigate agricultural risks. NIRSAL has improved farmers' credit access, reduced lending risks, and increased agricultural lending by commercial banks Olorunfemi [17]. NIRSAL can be scaled up to reach more farmers, and its risk-sharing model can be replicated in other sectors of the economy. NIRSAL has contributed to an increase in agricultural lending from banks, with over $100 billion in loans guaranteed as of 2020 Tralac [6]. However, uptake has been uneven, with more progress made in certain value chains and regions. Challenges remain in areas like effective risk assessment, monitoring, and stakeholder coordination. According to Akande [1], the program's impact has been hindered by high operational costs, limited coverage, and weak risk management. Insufficient funding, inadequate data management, and potential moral hazard risks threaten the program's sustainability, which form part of the major challenges.

**Anchor Borrowers' Programme**

The Anchor Borrowers' Programme was launched by the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2015 to provide farmers access to loans, agricultural inputs, and markets Deloitte [16]. It is critical to understand that ABP acts as a linkage between the smallholder farmers and large agribusinesses ("anchors") who provide inputs, extension services, and guaranteed off-take. The program has improved smallholder farmers' access to loans, with over 200,000 farmers benefiting from the program as of 2020 Adesina [1]. According to Adeniran and Ogunkola [10], the program improved smallholder farmers' access to credit, boosted agricultural production, and created jobs. Providing low-interest loans to farmers through participating financial institutions and leveraging the development bank's financing function to de-risk agricultural lending. The ABP has increased productivity and incomes for participating smallholder farmers, with an emphasis on staple crops like rice and wheat, with maize output growing by 15% between 2017 and 2019 (World Bank, 2020) [24]. The programs focus on staple crops, which has resulted in an increase in food production and improved food security. Meanwhile, the program has failed to reach more farmers due to poor implementation and limited coverage, while high operational costs have reduced the program's impact Anseeuw & Boche [9]. However, there are concerns about sustainability, elite benefit capture, and limited inclusion of women and youth. Inadequate monitoring and evaluation, potential corruption, and climate change pose significant challenges to the program's success. It is evident that the program's implementation has been hindered by inadequate institutional capacities, with several states struggling to implement the program effectively.

## AfCFTA and Institutional Capacity in Nigeria: Challenges and Opportunities

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents Nigeria significant opportunities to develop its trade and economic relationships across the African continent. Meanwhile, Nigeria's ability to effectively leverage on these opportunities is constrained by a number of institutional capacity challenges as the government institutions lack a coherent and well-coordinated trade policy framework to guide its engagement with the AfCFTA Deloitte [16]. It can be argued that there is frequent disconnect between trade, investment, and industrial policies, resulting in inconsistent implementation. According to the World Bank's Doing Business 2020 report, Nigeria ranks 131 out of 190 countries in the "Trading Across Borders" indicator, which measures the time and cost associated with the logistical process of exporting and importing goods. Regulatory institutions accountable for trade facilitation, such as the Nigerian Customs Service, the Nigerian Standards Organisation, and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), are frequently inefficient and hampered by bureaucratic red tape, lengthy clearance procedures, and corruption Adeniran & Ogunkola [10]. It is evident that inconsistent and unpredictable trade policies, such as the frequent imposition of import bans and restrictions, cause uncertainty for businesses and discourage investments. This argument can be supported by a survey carried out by the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry that found 73% of businesses in Nigeria cited "unfavourable government policies" as a major constraint to their operations.

Consequently, Nigeria's transportation infrastructure, which includes roads, railways, and ports, is inadequate and in a state of disrepair, preventing commodities from moving efficiently inside the country and across borders Shimeles et al. [21]. The 2019 Global Competitiveness Report rated Nigeria 116th out of 141 nations in the "Infrastructure" pillar, which includes the quality of roads, railroads, ports, and electricity supply. The country's energy sector is plagued by frequent power outages, unreliable supply, and high costs, which raise businesses operating costs and reduce competitiveness (NBS, 2020) [12]. According to the International Trade Centre (2020) [15], the weak logistics and supply chain management capabilities, including inefficient cargo handling, limited warehouse facilities, and poor intermodal connectivity, limit the Nigerian businesses ability to integrate into regional and continental value chains. A study by the Nigeria Economic Summit Group revealed that poor infrastructure costs the Nigerian economy over $15 billion per year in lost opportunities.

It is evident that many Nigerian businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs), clearly lack the knowledge, skills, and resources to navigate the complexities of the AfCFTA and gain access to new markets Olorunfemi [17]. According to the World Bank's Enterprise Surveys, just approximately 15% of Nigerian firms have received internationally accepted quality certification, indicating a lack of capacity to satisfy international standards. They frequently lack information on trade agreements, export procedures, and market opportunities. It is important to state at this juncture that limited access to finance, particularly for SMEs, hinders their ability to invest in production capacity, technology upgrades, and export preparation (UNCTAD, 2019) [2]. A survey conducted by the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry,


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65% of businesses in Nigeria cited "access to finance" as a major constraint to their operations. Hence, weak entrepreneurial and managerial capabilities within Nigerian businesses constrain their ability to scale up, improve product quality, and meet the standards and requirements of regional and continental markets.

It is important to note at this point that the lack of coordination and fragmentation among various government agencies and ministries responsible for trade and economic development, such as the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Investment, the Nigeria Export Promotion Council, and the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission, hinders the development of a cohesive and effective national strategy for the AfCFTA Odularu; Tralac [8,6]. Adesina [1] alluded that poor collaboration between the public and private sectors in policy formulation and implementation reduces the effectiveness of trade-related initiatives, as the private sector's input and concerns are not adequately incorporated. Weak monitoring and evaluation mechanisms make it difficult to measure the impact of AfCFTA-related interventions and make necessary changes to improve their effectiveness (UNECA, 2020) [4]. It is critical to state at this juncture that Nigeria's institutional capacity challenges, particularly in the areas of policy and regulatory environment, infrastructure and logistics, business competitiveness, and inter-agency coordination, are significant impediments to the country's ability to fully capitalise on the opportunities presented by the AfCFTA.

## Theoretical Framework

### Institutional Theory and AfCFTA

The institutional theory was developed in the 1950s and 1960s by scholars such as Talcott Parsons, Philip Selznick, and Alvin Gouldner Meyer, Rowan & Scott [25]. The theory is now a widely used framework in the social sciences, notably in organisational studies and management. Institutional theory is a theoretical framework that examines the role of institutions in influencing the behaviour and outcomes of organisations and individuals. It is critical to note that this theory has been widely applied to investigate a variety of organisational phenomena, such as the diffusion of management practices, the emergence of new industries, and the dynamics of institutional change Aregbeshola [26]. It provides a valuable lens for a broader understanding of how the institutional environment, including cultural, political, and regulatory factors, can shape and restrict the behaviour of organisations and people. Thus, the theory seeks to understand how institutions shape and influence the behaviour of individuals, organisations, and societies Oyewole [27]. Institutions can be defined as the formal and informal rules, norms, and structures that guide and constrain human and organisational behaviour.

From the perspective of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), institutional theory can help us understand the institutional capacity and also analyse how the institutional environment in Nigeria, including its policy and regulatory framework, infrastructure, and business capabilities, is shaping the country's ability to leverage the opportunities presented by the free trade agreement Ogunrinde & Adebayo [28]. It can be argued that institutional capacity refers to the ability of institutions to perform their functions effectively and efficiently. In the context of AfCFTA, Nigeria's institutional capacities are critical to its ability to leverage the opportunities presented by AfCFTA Deloitte [16]. However, the country's institutional capacities are often lacking, limiting its ability to take advantage of the agreement. Nigeria's institutions often lack the resources needed to perform their functions effectively. This may involve a lack of funding, manpower, and infrastructure. Corruption poses a significant challenge to Nigeria's institutional capacity growth Oyewole [27]. Corruption leads to a lack of transparency and accountability, which hinder the effective operation of institutions. Nigeria's bureaucracy is often inefficient, resulting in delays and inefficiencies in the implementation of policies and programs. Despite the challenges, Nigeria can reform its institutions to make them more efficient and effective. This can be achieved by seeking technical assistance from international organisations, such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank, to build its institutional capacities and capacity-building programs Briones [7]. This would help by capitalising on the possibilities provided by AfCFTA by investing in Nigerian capacity-building programs like building the skills and knowledge of its institutional personnel [29-32].

## Methodology

The methodology entails doing a desk review of existing literature on AfCFTA, agricultural exports, and intra-African trade. The review focused on the critical analysis of Nigeria's agricultural export policy, the effective implementation of the AfCFTA, and institutional capacity in Nigeria. The data collection procedure includes gathering secondary data from various sources. The data sources include academic journals and reports on AfCFTA, agricultural exports, and intra-African trade. The research design is an archival study, which involves analysing data from a report. As a result, the archival study technique was used to compare and clarify policy documents related to the reports on the World Bank, Nigerian government, the World Trade Organisation, and the African Development Bank on AfCFTA, agricultural exports, and intra-African trade as metrics to measure Nigeria's institutional capacity and Nigeria's Agricultural Export Policy. The archival technique was chosen because it was appropriate for the selected research design and generalisable to similar subjects Kothari & Garg; Sallies et al. [33,34].

## Conclusion and Policy Implications

The evaluation of Nigeria's agricultural export policy and the proper implementation of the AfCFTA necessitate a multifaceted approach that involves various stakeholders, including the


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government, private sector, and civil society organisations. Based on the preceding research, the study highlights the African Continental Free Trade Area's (AfCFTA) strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to Nigeria's agricultural exports, diversification of its economy, and reduction in oil export reliance. However, the study concludes that Nigeria needs to strengthen its institutional capacity to implement the AfCFTA, including building the capacity of its trade negotiators and improving its trade facilitation infrastructure, in order to address the significant challenges in agricultural export policy.

To achieve this, Nigeria must implement the AfCFTA to reap the benefits of agricultural export policies that would boost agricultural trade and economic development. Based on this, the policy implications are as follows: The government should review and redevelop a comprehensive national policy outlining the country's priorities, goals, and deadlines for implementing the AfCFTA. This can be achieved by extensively reviewing Nigeria's agricultural export policy, identifying areas for improvement, and ensuring that it is consistent with the AfCFTA. This may be accomplished by establishing a robust institution to coordinate the implementation of the AfCFTA by involving all relevant stakeholders. It is critical to note at this juncture that this framework would strengthen the institutional capacity of relevant stakeholders, including the government, private sector, and civil society, to implement the AfCFTA. To properly implement the AfCFTA, the government must develop policies to strengthen the capacity of its trade negotiators, customs officers, and other stakeholders. This may be achieved by providing the resources, including required finance, to support the Acta's implementation. The policy must provide opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing in the private sector. Participation would help in trade facilitation operations such as customs clearance, cost reduction, bureaucratic red tape, and increased trade efficiency.

The government must be decisive in policy action by demonstrating massive investment in trade facilitation infrastructure through the national budget. This will boost Nigeria's trade facilitation infrastructure, which includes ports, highways, and storage facilities, so as to reduce transportation costs and increase trade efficiency. This can revive programs that would stimulate private sector investment in agricultural exports and encourage value addition in the agricultural sector. This can be achieved by collaborating with the relevant stakeholders in the private sector to implement value chain policies that would boost the value of Nigerian agricultural products. This policy would increase the value of Nigeria's agricultural exports under the AfCTA. It can be argued that the private sector can enhance the quality of Nigerian agricultural products to match international standards while also increasing agricultural investment to boost productivity and competitiveness. Consequently, the government, in collaboration with international partners, must develop a policy that will provide technical assistance to Nigerian farmers, as well as capacity building for Nigerian officials, private sector operators, civil society organisations, and smallholder farmers to improve their skills and knowledge in order to support the AfCFTA's implementation. It is critical to note at this point that collaboration among crucial stakeholders, notably farmers' groups and trade associations, would encourage a platform that exchanges best practices and funding to support Nigeria's implementation of the AfCFTA. It is important to state at this juncture that the work of civil society organisations (CSOs) cannot be underestimated in the policy process. CSO must provide technical support to smallholder farmers and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to improve their productivity and competitiveness. It is evident that CSO can promote awareness of the AfCFTA's benefits, advocate for policy reforms to support and monitor its implementation and give feedback to the government and private sector. Meanwhile, research institutes such as universities, polytechnics, and among others should conduct research and analysis to help the media raise awareness about the AfCFTA's benefits and the importance of its proper implementation.

**Limitations of the Study:** Further study can look into the area of transportation infrastructure, such as roads, railways, and ports, as it affects AfCTA operations in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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