



# **The AfCFTA's Influence on Southern Africa's Regional Supply Chains in Guinea-Bissau: A Qualitative Exploration**

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## **Abstract**

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) aims to create a single market for goods and services among its member states, facilitating increased trade within and beyond regional blocs such as Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). Guinea-Bissau is a small economy with significant integration potential in this context. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with key informants such as local business owners, government officials, and industry associations. These insights were analysed to understand how AfCFTA has affected the economic landscape of Guinea-Bissau in terms of market access, trade facilitation, and value chain development. Interviews revealed that while there is a growing interest in engaging with regional markets under AfCFTA, challenges related to infrastructure deficiencies and policy inconsistencies have constrained full participation. The proportion of businesses reporting increased exports has been modest, suggesting gradual adaptation rather than immediate transformation. The findings indicate that the AfCFTA's influence on Guinea-Bissau's supply chains is still in its nascent phase, with potential for future growth but significant hurdles requiring policy adjustments and investments to bridge existing gaps. To maximise the benefits of AfCFTA, Guinea-Bissau should prioritise improving infrastructure connectivity, harmonizing trade regulations, and fostering cross-border collaboration among stakeholders. This will facilitate smoother integration into regional supply chains and enhance economic diversification. AfCFTA, Southern Africa, Supply Chains, Guinea-Bissau, Economic Integration

**Keywords:** *African, regional, supply, integration, transformation, development, commerce*

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