

Frequently asked Questions about the AeTrade Group and the African Electronic Commerce Platform (ACEP)

1. What is the African Continental E-Commerce Platform (ACEP)?

It aims to bring a digital capacity building in order to boost intra-African trade. It is a tool that will bring real-time trade information, marketing information, logistics facilitation and payment options for all traders across the continent.

2. Who has developed this Platform and why did they do so?

The AeTrade Group is a collection of African Diaspora from various disciplines who wish to be a part of the grassroots transformation and sustainable development of the continent. They started engaging with the continental bodies to promote and empower African Governments with the technology and tools in order to respond to the needs of the citizens of today. The e-Government programme promotes transparency, efficiency in providing services which create a conducive environment for sustainable development. As the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) negotiations progressed, the Group was inspired to develop a new approach of doing business, that is, a platform that facilitates logistics, transactions and ultimately boosts trade in an accelerated manner.

3. Who are the promoters of this Platform?

The promoters are African leaders in the public and private sectors who are convinced that this Platform and related initiatives can accelerate Africa's development trajectory building on the successful conclusion of the AfCFTA negotiations. These Champions are active and can be found at national, regional, continental and global levels.

4. Where has this Platform been operating?

A similar Platform has been operated by various countries driven by the private sector, however this Platform is unique in that it is based on a social enterprise model and public-private partnership ethos. It is the first of its kind to be rolled in Africa on a comprehensive scale.

5. How many countries will be involved in the Platform? Is there a limit?

All African Union Member States will be involved on a principle of variable geometry. In other words, they will come on board as and when they are ready. It would be ideal if all African countries could be involved at the beginning in order to share the benefits of this innovation which is African designed, led and executed. It will be a platform that connects the African continental market with all regions across the world.

6. Why should the African continent establish a new Platform when there are existing e-commerce companies and large Platforms from around the world?

First, e-commerce in Africa, there are about 700 e-commerce companies on the continent. They are all facing challenges to penetrate the market. Second, there are over a billion e-

commerce companies in the world, however the most visible and successful e-commerce companies are less than ten. Africa needs its own visible Platform that can tackle the challenges of intra- African and inter African trade and negotiate with one voice with the rest of the world. In this way Africa can drive its own destiny with respect to the digital economy in general. Finally, what we are bringing is more than e-commerce platform, it is an integrated digital capacity building mechanism that includes the public and private sectors.

7. I am an SME operating for the last 20 years, I have a fixed income of 10,000USD per year, how can I grow my business using the platform?

One of the AeTrade Group services is capacity building, using training material that focuses on changing the mindset to enhance productivity, competitiveness and sustainable growth. This continuous learning enables you to access new markets and grow your business whilst taking it to the next level.

8. I am starting a new business, with no previous business experience, how can the Platform help me to get started?

The Platform gives you the guide to immediately become familiar with the dynamics of intra-African trade. The Platform continuously guides you on your strengths and weaknesses therefore with the support and guidance your chance of success will be higher. It has a digital personal assistant which is built into the Platform which you can access in Arabic, English, French and Portuguese. In the future, African languages should be available.

9. I am a new start up in the manufacturing sector, how can the Platform assist me to start?

Welcome to the AeTrade Group. The AeTrade Group's main objective is to empower African industries to focus on the production of quality goods whilst we provide you with a state-of-the-art marketing support. In other words, you can produce to your maximum potential and let us deal with finding the right market, price and distribution channels for you.

10. What impact will the Platform bring to my country?

The Platform will create new industries such as electronic trade, logistics, IT services, and so forth. It will create new decent jobs and with proper utilisation of the Platform the national GDP will increase significantly.

11. What impact will the Platform bring to the continent?

It will help the continent meet and exceed its Agenda 2063 targets including the level of intra-African trade. Africa can be a major shareholder in the digital economy. It will accelerate job creation for all citizens with a specific focus on youth and women.

12. Besides the E-Commerce Platform, what else is the AeTrade Group bringing as part of this programme?

The AeTrade Group brings a digital economy capacity building that includes cloud computing infrastructure (African data storage in Africa), the grassroot transformation on the digital economy (the young student who has graduated from high school who wishes to explore his

curiosity on application development or a PhD researcher for his/her research or a fintech start up) they will have a full fledged open source development platform that resides in Africa. Once they develop and feel their application is mature, they can submit their application for testing in the largest application laboratory in Africa that will be operated by the AeTrade Group. The AeTrade Group will insist on protecting their intellectual property and will test the application and offer to promote it for them in the continent. This is an inclusive way to distribute wealth in the new digital economy.

13. How accessible will the Platform be to anyone who wishes to register?

The platform will be accessible to any person who has a smartphone that is connected to the internet. In order to be inclusive the AeTrade Group will manufacture and distribute affordable solar powered laptops which are connected via satellite. The platform will be a business to business marketplace for all citizens across the continent. We will use the four African Union Languages and more in due course.

14. Can Government collect taxes through the Platform?

Yes, every transaction is recorded, and the necessary information for the concerned country will be reported to the authorities relevant to that country. The Platform will comply with all legislative and regulatory requirements.