

Terms Of Reference

AGOA Specialist Position

Position Location: Abuja/Remote

Background:

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) is the cornerstone of U.S. commercial relationship in trade and investment with Africa. It was first signed into law on May 18, 2000 and has now been extended through 2025.

The act accords duty-free treatment to virtually all products exported by beneficiary sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries to the United States. AGOA provides these beneficiary countries with the most liberal access to the United States market accorded to any country or region that has not negotiated a free-trade agreement with the United States.

Section 107 of the 2015 AGOA Extension and Enhancement Act requires that “beneficiary sub-Saharan African countries should develop utilization strategies in order to more effectively and strategically utilise benefits available under AGOA”. To date at least seven ECOWAS countries have developed their national AGOA strategies. Priorities sectors highlighted in these strategies include Textiles & Apparel and Agro-processing.

The ECOWAS Commission had developed an AGOA Action plan. The main objective of this tri-annual action plan was to expand West African exports to the U.S. market with increased use of AGOA benefits through the following four (4) pillars:

- i. Pillar one: Strengthening the institutional structures and coordination to support the development and implementation of policies and strategies
- ii. Pillar two: Working with member states to alleviate the main constraints faced by businesses in export
- iii. Pillar three: Supporting initiatives that aim to create market linkages for West African businesses
- iv. Pillar four: Working with member states to define and promote better trade and investment relationships with the U.S., with and beyond AGOA.

The ECOWAS Commission is seeking for a Consultant to provide support to the ECOWAS Commission and its Member States towards the implementation of the ECOWAS AGOA Action Plan.

Position Summary:

The AGOA Specialist assignment is to provide support to public and private stakeholders regarding AGOA outreach, and export promotion from West Africa to the U.S. He/she will provide support to the ECOWAS Commission and its Member States in the implementation of AGOA strategies, support to associations/export agencies on understanding AGOA and US market entry requirements, training for governments and customs related to the textile visa and direct support to firms needing to file required export/import documentation to claim AGOA preferences.

Reporting:

The AGOA Specialist will report to the Director of Trade at the ECOWAS Commission.

Primary Responsibilities:

- Provide information and raise awareness about AGOA's and the United States' import requirements, primarily via workshops and webinars in collaboration with Trade Support Organizations (Chambers of Commerce, Export Promotion Agencies) through West Africa.
- Identify the training needs and assist in organizing training workshops and webinars.
- Liaise with ECOWAS, Chambers of Commerce, and Export Promotion Agencies around the region to organize and lead training events.
- Support West African businesses in exporting to the U.S. market by receiving and answering questions from businesses about AGOA eligibility and how to export specific products to the U.S.
- Advise governments interested in obtaining or updating their textile visas.
- Provide any assistance regarding AGOA to stakeholders and partners if needed.
- Any other tasks as assigned.

Required Skills and Qualifications:

The successful candidate must have (or be):

- Master in Agribusiness, International Trade, Strategies and Marketing, Trade Facilitation, or related field.
- Must have 10+ years general work experience and 7+ years of progressive specific experience related to the position.
- At least five years of experience with Trade Facilitation projects (highly desired).

- A citizen of a West African country who is fluent in English or French, with a working knowledge of the other language.
- Previous experience in working with exporters and trade support institutions in West Africa.
- Previous experience in promoting AGOA and export to the U.S.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Excellent interpersonal, problem-solving, and mediation skills.