

<p>Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MOTIE)</p>	<p>National Regional Integration Policy of The Gambia 2021 – 2030</p>	
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Harnessing regional integration opportunities to boost trade and investment for Gambian enterprises, in order to realise their full potential to increase exports and expand employment opportunities



May, 2021

Acknowledgment

Generating a national policy on such an intricate issue, dear to all and yet not adequately understood by many, and in which most people work on in their individual best interest without being coordinated by a defined national direction, is an impossible task without support from institutions and people who have responsibility for its accomplishment and successful implementation.

The Government of The Gambia registers appreciation for the support from the highest level of the Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration and Employment (MOTIE), other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs); and the private sector, in harvesting the broadest possible scope of necessary inputs across sectors and the country in developing this policy. For this achievement, a tonne of gratitude is owed to the Permanent Secretary, MOTIE and staff of the Directorate of Regional Integration and the Planning Unit. Special appreciation goes to Ms Ndeye Tabara Touray, task coordinator of this assignment at the MOTIE and the Directorate of Policy and Delivery at the Office of the President (OP), who provided invaluable leadership in structuring and giving necessary direction and synchrony of the policy with other government policies.

Finally, the Gambian Government's appreciation also goes to all the stakeholders across all sectors, who together helped form the direction that this policy is aimed at, both at the design and validation stages so that a unified platform is created for harnessing for national development the opportunities from regional engagements.

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Permanent Secretary, MOTIE

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ACHPR	-	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
ANR	-	Agricultural and Natural Resources
AU	-	African Union
AUCIL	-	Commission on International Law
AUABC	-	AU Advisory Board on Corruption and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
BIAT	-	Action Plan for Boosting Intra-African Trade
CET	-	Common External Tariff
CFA	-	French Currency
CFTA	-	Continental Free Trade Agreement
COMCEC	-	The Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation
CP	-	Cabinet Paper
ECA	-	Economic Community of Africa
ECOSOCC	-	The Pan-African Parliament and the Economic, Social & Cultural Council
RECs	-	Regional Economic Communities
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
ECWA	-	Economic Community of West Africa
ENO	-	ECOWAS National Office
ETLS	-	ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme
FDI	-	Foreign Direct Investment
FEA	-	Free Economic Area
GCCI	-	Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry
GCCPC	-	Gambia Competition & Consumer Protection Commission
GIEPA	-	Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency
GNAIP	-	Gambia National Agricultural Investment Programme
GWCCI	-	Gambia Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry
GOTG	-	Government of the Gambia

GRA	-	Gambia Revenue Authority
ISRT	-	Interstate Road Transit
MATTRICOM	-	Mainstreaming Trade and Trade Related Policies
MDAs	-	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MOFA	-	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOFEA	-	Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
MOTIE	-	Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration & Employment
MRU	-	Mano River Union
MTP	-	Medium term Plan
NA	-	Not Applicable
NAISECPA	-	National Inter-sectoral Committee for Employment and Poverty Reduction
NDP	-	National Development Plan
NTPDMC	-	National Trade Policy Decision Making Committee
OAU	-	Organisation of African Unity
OIC	-	Organisation of Islamic Countries
PMO	-	Personnel Management Office
PRC	-	Permanent Representatives Committee, \
PS	-	Permanent Secretary
RIIAC	-	Regional Integration Inter-sectoral Advisory Committee
RISP	-	Regional Integration Strategy and Policy
SADEC	-	South African Development Community
SDGs	-	Sustainable Development Goals
SMT	-	Senior Management Team
STCs	-	Specialised Technical Committees the Peace and Security Council and the African Union Commission.
UDEAO	-	Customs Union of West African States
UEMOA	-	West African Economic and Monetary Union

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Vision, Mission and Rationale

Our Vision

A unified coordinated national platform to inform and support sector engagements to optimise socioeconomic benefits to The Gambia from regional integration.

Our Mission

Harnessing regional integration opportunities to boost trade and investment for Gambian enterprises, in order to realise their full potential to increase exports and expand employment opportunities.

Rationale

The Gambia is a small economy with a limited market size that precludes the advantages of economies of scale in production and investment. In addition, the geographical location of The Gambia makes it difficult to explore its full potential without relying on regional arrangements to expand its trade and investment. Regional integration is an opportunity for The Gambia to improve its market efficiency; share the costs of public goods such as large infrastructure projects; participate in regional policy development and reforms; and serve as a building block for global integration. Being technically landlocked and bedevilled by a very small underdeveloped economy and markets, The Gambia needs its neighbours to forge an investment-worthy market to entice foreign direct investments (FDI) to spur needed economic development.

In pursuit of economic development and improvements in livelihoods, The Gambia has undertaken significant public investments in infrastructure and industrial production, but the proportion of private sector contribution to the economic outcomes of these endeavours is tiny and needs to be improved, since it is evidently the only sustainable way to ensure continuously expanded economic growth and social development. It is also the only sure way to regional, continental and global economic and social inclusion for The Gambia.

1. Policy Setting

1.1 Country context

The Gambia is the smallest country in mainland Africa, situated along the Gambia River, and has frontiers only with Senegal with an 80 kilometre border on the Atlantic Ocean. The mean annual temperature of The Gambia for the period 1951 to 2005 is about 28 degrees Celsius with the highest maximum temperature being about 39 degrees in April, and the lowest minimum being about 16 degrees in December and January (Jallow 2011). The country is characterised by a long dry season of about eight months and a short wet season of four months. Significant rainfall is recorded between June and October with mean annual rainfall being about 860mm. Average monthly humidity is low during the dry season and reaches about 80% in August and September. Solar radiation is highest in the months of March to June.

The population of The Gambia stood at 1,857,181 in 2013, out of which 1,442,974 were 7 years and above (2013 Census Report). However, based on the 2018 Labour Force Survey the total population is estimated at 2.3 million persons, of which 1.0 million are children aged 0-14 years, and 1.3 million are aged 15 years and over. Urban areas are reported in the same survey to have the highest proportion of the population with 54.6% compared to the rural areas (45.3%).

According to the Trade Policy review by the World Trade Organisation (WTO - 21st November 2017), The Gambian economy is little diversified relying mainly on agriculture, tourism, re-export trade, remittances and international aid. Its status as a regional entrepôt centre has been in decline. Agriculture is one of the main pillars of the economy, contributing about 21% to gross domestic product b(GDP) in 2016 and approximately 46% of the population works in agriculture. Given that The Gambia lies in the Sahel belt, agriculture is vulnerable to natural disasters (drought) and the country faces chronic food deficits. Subsistence agriculture predominates; groundnuts are the leading cash crop. The fisheries sector contributes about 2% to GDP.

Manufacturing contributes about 5-6% to annual GDP and caters largely for the small domestic market. Its GDP share has recently been in decline against the background of high input costs and taxes, and competition from imports, amongst others. Other main industries include fish processing, and water bottling.

The services sector has been the main driver of growth, contributing about 66% of GDP in 2016 (up from 56.3% in 2010). The tourism sector has contributed approximately 16-20% of GDP and has been the largest foreign exchange earner. Wholesale and retail trade was also a major sector of the economy (contributing about 25% of GDP), reflecting the importance of re-exports.

The Gambia has been running current account deficits, owing to large deficits in its merchandise trade. Traditionally, the port of Banjul has functioned as a regional centre for re-exports – with little, if any, further processing – into Senegal and beyond, benefiting from relatively low import taxes, a well-functioning port in Banjul, and limited administrative barriers. Over time, however, the importance of entrepôt trade has diminished for reasons such as the harmonization of the external tariffs in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and efficiency gains in competing ports, notably in Senegal. The ratio of merchandise trade-to GDP (imports and exports, including re-exports) averaged 46% in 2010-16 (down from 71% in 2003), which reflects in part the

decline in re-exports. Most re-exports have been destined for ECOWAS countries (Mali, Guinea, and Senegal). The entrepôt trade has been mainly in textiles.

The Gambia has a small export base. The main domestic export products in 2015 and 2016 were groundnuts and cashew nuts, and fish and crustaceans. The main export destinations were the European Union, Vietnam, India and China, whilst the main imported products were foodstuffs (particularly rice, sugar and vegetable oils), fuels, cement, vehicles, and capital goods. Imports in 2015 mainly originated from the European Union, West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal), Brazil (notably sugar) and China. However, The Gambia is a net exporter of services, which are dominated by tourism, which is also the most important foreign exchange earner (US\$120 million in 2015). Services imports are largely due to travel (mainly education) and transportation services.

The Gambia's fiscal situation as explained by the 2018 Article IV Consultation Report deteriorated as the deficit increased to 6.0% in 2018 from 5.3% in 2017, mainly due to lower grant revenues, spending overruns on goods and services, and unbudgeted transfers to State-owned enterprises. Tax revenues, marred by weak tax administration and high discretionary tax exemptions, remained relatively stable at 10.4% of GDP. The macroeconomic framework continues to be characterized by high debt levels. Public debt is estimated to decline by one percentage point, down to 87% of GDP in 2018. Although interest payments were less than the previous year, they still accounted for 25% of domestic revenues in 2018, leaving limited fiscal space for public investment and improved service delivery.

The Gambia ranks among the poorest countries in the world with a per capita income of US\$487 in 2016 and approximately half of the population of 2 million living below the poverty line (US\$1.25/daily). The Gambia was ranked 173rd (out of 188 countries) on the 2015 Human Development Index. The Gambia's long history of migration deteriorated in recent years as economic mismanagement and external shocks have moved the country close to economic crisis.

The country has been running large budget deficits leading to substantial levels of public debt, while the debt service has significantly limited the Government's fiscal space. The State continues to have an important role in the economy; virtually all state-owned enterprises are in financial distress and constitute a major fiscal burden. What used be high government borrowing resulting in the crowding out of the private sector with very high interest rates has over the past two years been characterised by significantly reduced public borrowing and switching to budget support for public financing, and the result has been domestic interest rates falling to as low as between 4% to 7%. Commercial finance costs fell from over 20% in 2016 to as low as 12% in 2021. However, this low cost of funds has not translated into significantly improved domestic or foreign investment due among others to the emergence of the COVID 19 pandemic in March 2020, and the poor structure of The Gambian economy, which has not been able to convert such financing cost gains into productive private investments.

Socially, The Gambia is a small but an ethnically and religiously plural nation that is viewed as a haven of stability in West Africa (Roberts 2005). Part of this tranquillity is attributable to historical and material conditions, such as a relatively peaceful colonial history and a lack of natural resources or mineral wealth of interest to external actors.

1.2 Regional context

The Gambia has since independence been active in the regional groups especially of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now African Union (AU). The Gambia participated in and is a founding member of the ECOWAS in 1975; joined the OAU soon after independence in 1965; and the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) in 1974. The Gambia has also acceded membership of the OIC's affiliated institutions, namely the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC).

ECOWAS or CEDEAO in French is a regional political and economic union of fifteen countries located in West Africa, the main goal of which is to promote economic cooperation among member states in order to raise living standards and promote economic development. ECOWAS has also worked to address some security issues by developing a peacekeeping force for conflicts in the region and it aims to promote cooperation and integration; and also to establish an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standards of its peoples, maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations among member states, and contribute to the progress and development of the African continent. Its main trade related preferential arrangements concern the removal of import duties on certain imports from other ECOWAS member States. The ECOWAS legislation implemented by The Gambia includes the Common External Tariff (CET), a five-band tariff(1 January 2015) based on the IHS 2012 nomenclature; a Community Levy to finance the activities of ECOWAS; the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) to improve intra-ECOWAS trade by removing import duties and taxes on qualifying products, including agricultural and industrial products; and the Inter-State Road Transit Scheme (ISRT - July 2013) to ease the movement of goods and persons, which since 2015 has been mandatory; Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment for which The Gambia now issues ECOWAS passports and Biometric ID Card, abolishing entry visas and permits for ECOWAS nationals.

To forestall the economic cooperation within ECOWAS, The Gambia is a participant in the West African Power Pool (WAPP), a specialized agency of ECOWAS, with the mandate of promoting and developing electricity generation and transmission infrastructures and to coordinate electricity trade among the ECOWAS member States; a member of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ); a monetary infrastructure for the creation of a monetary union in the ECOWAS region.

The African Union, or AU, is a pan-African organisation whose goal is to propel a united continent towards peace and prosperity. The AU supports political and economic integration among its 54 member nations. It aims to boost development, eradicate poverty and bring Africa into the global economy. The advent of the African Union (AU) is said to be describable as an event of great magnitude in the institutional evolution of the continent in which its leaders on the 9th of September 1999, declared in Libya (the Sirte Declaration) the establishment of an African Union, with a view, *inter alia*, to accelerating the process of integration in the continent, and to enable it play its rightful role in the global economy while addressing multifaceted social, economic and political problems compounded as they are by certain negative aspects of globalization. Its main objectives include to rid the continent of the remaining vestiges of colonization and apartheid; to promote unity and solidarity among African States; to coordinate and intensify cooperation for development;

to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States, and to promote international cooperation within the framework of the United Nations.

The vision of the African Union (“An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena”), encapsulates a vision of a new, forward looking, dynamic and integrated Africa to be fully realized through relentless struggle on several fronts. In tandem with evolved global realities the African Union has shifted focus from supporting liberation movements in the erstwhile African territories under colonialism and apartheid, as envisaged by the OAU since 1963 and the Constitutive Act, to an organization spear-heading Africa’s development and integration embodied in its objectives¹ zeroing in on enabling African economic integration and taking advantage of the potential benefits of significantly increased intra African investment and trade.

The work of the AU is implemented through several principal decision making organs, namely the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the Executive Council, the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), Specialised Technical Committees (STCs), the Peace and Security Council and The African Union Commission. The AU structure promotes participation of African citizens and civil society through the Pan-African Parliament and the Economic, Social & Cultural Council (ECOSOCC).

Organs that handle judicial and legal matters as well as human rights issues include the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR), and the African Court on Human and Peoples’ rights.

Whilst both started from initially differing perspectives: the AU (seeking the political freedom of all African territories from colonialism) and the ECOWAS (seeking to minimize the market disadvantages of geographical subdivision and contagion national instabilities amongst its members), the two organizations realized later that to sustain peace and stability in both West Africa and on the African continent, acceptable economic growth and development needed to be achieved and sustained.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest inter-governmental organisation after the United Nations, with membership of 57 states, covering four continents (An Introduction to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Shaher Awawdeh, May/June 2020. The

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1. ¹ To achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and the peoples of Africa;
 2. To defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States;
 3. To accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent;
 4. To promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples;
 5. To encourage international cooperation, taking due account of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
 6. To promote peace, security, and stability on the continent;
 7. To promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;
 8. To promote and protect human and peoples' rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant human rights instruments;
 9. To establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations;
 10. To promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies;
 11. To promote co-operation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples;
 12. To coordinate and harmonize the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;
 13. To advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology; To work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health on the continent.

OIC considers itself as the “collective voice of the Muslim world”, and endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of its member states. One of the bonds that have fostered a feeling of togetherness amongst Muslims throughout history is the profound belief of belonging to the Muslim *Ummah*, which is an Arabic term referring to the collective Muslim community worldwide. The feeling of belonging to the *Ummah* had helped Muslims to live under different Islamic caliphates for more than thirteen centuries, the last of which was the Ottoman Caliphate, which ruled the Muslim world for four centuries until its collapse in 1924.

Originally formed around the idea of Muslim solidarity, it should be noted that national interests of member-states, rather than Islam, became a central factor in the organization’s work; and although the OIC was originally established as a political response to political developments, its scope of interest was expanded to include a wide spectrum of areas reflecting interests of its member states in economic, social, cultural and humanitarian domains. As an intergovernmental organization with aims to foster joint Islamic action and cooperation amongst its member states in all spheres, the organizational structure of the OIC reflects to a great deal the areas of interest, priorities and concerns of its member countries as enshrined in its charter.

Whilst the smallest country on mainland continental Africa, and bedevilled by the already explained geographical constraints that present serious geopolitical investment and trade difficulties, The Gambia is attractive to the sensitivities espoused in the OIC. The OIC is the second most important sponsor of public investment in education in the Gambia with projects in health, energy and education, to name a few. Properly organised and strategically harnessed The Gambia stands to benefit from the OIC in more ways than one – including in trade, public and private sector investment.

The Gambia being a small economy and needing significant domestic and foreign direct investment (FDI), and market access for its domestic outputs through trade to sustain acceptable economic growth and development; and technically surrounded by a single neighbor(Senegal) through which most of its trade to reach the immediate sub-region must be routed needs effective AU and ECOWAS arrangements. This will give it the much needed value-laden and investment-attractive market size that would normally attract and retain significant inward investments in the productive and industrial sectors. ECOWAS has not been able to bring this to bear on The Gambia because of its inability to enforce its protocols and the AU has just recently recognised and put in place through the Africa Continental Free Agreement mechanisms to open up the African market to its member states.

1.3 Trade patterns and partners

Whilst The Gambia is a member of and trades with the ECOWAS, AU and OIC, its import data shows that her main imports (approximately 50%) come from outside of these three organisations. Within the three groups, the main import suppliers to The Gambia are the ECOWAS, AU and the OIC in that order of significance. The neighbouring countries – Senegal, Mali, Guinea Bissau & Guinea Conakry – even though low, it is still significant as an import source of The Gambia, accounting for 16% of the total import bill. Out of these, Senegal is the single most important supplier to The Gambia, accounting for more than 90% of the total import bill from these countries. This makes The Gambia an important export market for Senegal.

Regarding exports, which measures The Gambia's production and international trade supply response capacity, ECOWAS is the most important among the three groups. ECOWAS constitutes more than 75% of The Gambia's total exports, over 90% of which is re-exports to Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry and Mali. The neighbouring countries together become the second most significant export market for The Gambia. Exports to AU countries not included in ECOWAS and the OIC are all domestic exports and have significant implications for The Gambia's domestic industrial and production policies in various sectors. However, generally The Gambia's merchandise imports far outstrip exports. The export base is very small (US\$19.1 million in 2015), consisting mainly of groundnuts and fish. The main trading partners for exports are the European Union, Viet Nam, India and China; imports come mainly from the European Union, West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal), Brazil and China (The Gambia Trade Policy Review, 21 November 2017; p6).

The trade significance of The Gambia's neighbouring countries, both in terms of imports and exports, also provides ample opportunity for a larger and ready market, which under proper and committed arrangements could be the catalyst for significant foreign investments in sectors of The Gambia that can span agriculture, fisheries, tourism and industry, to name a few. Most trade with ECOWAS, including re-exports is generally routed through Senegal. It is therefore clear that The Gambia needs first and foremost the Senegalese market, and then the larger sub-regional markets that include Mali, Guinea Bissau and Guinea Conakry, all of which are most accessible cost effectively only through Senegal. In this case, and given its almost landlocked status, even if it were the most productive economy, access to third countries for all forms of trade and other engagements in the immediate sub-region and continent, could still be a problem unless agreements are reached on unhindered access through Senegal's road networks. This makes the Gambia/Senegal relationship a critical strategic concern.

Apart from ECOWAS with which The Gambia shares similar commodity outputs, the AU and OIC markets have significant opportunities for The Gambia's domestic agricultural and industrial policies. The AU and OIC member countries not included in ECOWAS constitute a potential market that can both trigger domestic industrial value chain growth and output, and significantly increase domestic response to international market demand for Gambian products. This has

significant implications for domestic economic growth, employment (especially youth employment), national production diversification into industrial activities, and improved incomes and livelihoods. To harness the investment and trading opportunities presented by the AU and ECOWAS, both of which are economic integration organisations seeking to bring about increased regional investment and trade value between member countries could be achieved effectively only using the immediate sub-regional links strategically. Most if not all of the immediate sub-regional countries are members of both ECOWAS, the AU, and the OIC. Since the OIC is generally an interest group, it can also be a platform for enhanced investment and trade for The Gambia if the what binds them together (The Islamic Ummah) is strategically utilised to ensure access by Gambian businesses to unhindered markets worthy of attracting significant investment inflows. The OIC has at its disposal the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), capable of providing significant financing to both public and private investments to Gambians and foreigners wishing to invest in The Gambia, whilst the Islamic Insurance arrangements as being used to secure energy financing to NAWEC, is also potentially useful in generating volumes of inward investment inflows from the OIC.

The Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) is the main multilateral economic and commercial cooperation platform of the Islamic world. COMCEC serves as a central forum to address the common development problems of the Islamic Ummah and provide solutions to them, which make it handy for the current and future needs of The Gambia. As one of the four Standing Committees of the OIC, COMCEC was established by the Third Islamic Summit Conference held in Mecca/Taif, in 1981, becoming operational at the Fourth Islamic Summit Conference held in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco, in 1984.

1.4 Policy framework

Recently MOTIE embarked on a series of policy reforms to promote trade, investment, and industrial development to enhance private sector development and employment with consequential impact on poverty. Some of the key policies include the National Trade Policy; National Trade Strategy and Industrial Policy; National Investment Policy; National Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Policy; National Quality Policy; National Entrepreneurship policy; and The National Employment Policy. These policies were designed to align the Ministry's programs to the NDP and the wider development efforts of the Government of The Gambia in achieving the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

The reform process also aims at integrating the Gambian economy into the regional, multilateral and global economies as a means to promote economic growth and development. Thus, regional integration initiatives remain an important policy thrust of the Government of The Gambia due to its size and geography.

The National Development Plan (NDP) is the current medium term plan of The Gambia in which regional integration is an important driver in realising its objectives especially in the promotion of

trade and investment as well as private sector development. The vision of the NDP 2018 – 2021 include “...a country whose citizens enjoy a standard of living and access to basic services to enable them to decent and dignified lives; youth, women, children realize their full potential, and a nurturing and caring environment exists for the vulnerable; an enabling environment for our private sector to thrive; and our natural heritage is nurtured and preserved for future generations”.

Government commits itself to complete the ratification as a process of domestication of regional protocols of ECOWAS, AU, and OIC as well as conduct sensitization programmes on regional integration. This is clearly demonstrated by the inclusion of regional integration programs in the National Development Plan (NDP).

The National Trade Policy and the MOTIE medium term plan (MTP) 2016 – 2021, amongst other policies were revised to support the achievement of the NDP and for that purpose, whilst regional integration shall outlive the current NDP, the benefits of regional integration must be brought to bear sufficiently on the achievement of the NDP where possible. The NDP therefore recognised and considered regional integration as a key implementation strategy for its successful implementation.

The National Trade Policy in particular was revised to reflect the Government’s resolve to make trade an instrument tool for sustainable socio-economic development, and promotion of the private sector as the engine of growth, transformation and job creation. The trade policy was designed to reflect the range of opportunities and challenges facing The Gambia in the country’s efforts to address persistent poverty and growing inequalities, emphasizing the critical issue of implementation, not only of the policy itself, but also interrelated sectoral policies, existing trade agreements and relevant regional and continental initiatives needed to harness trade for development.

In addition, MOTIE formulated the medium term plan (MTP) to ensure effective coordination and implementation of its various policies to address the supply side constraints, for improved competitiveness and to promote value addition. This aims to facilitate the integration of The Gambia into the global trading system. The MTP emphasises the government’s commitment to continue to advocate for the full implementation of regional integration programs both under the AU and ECOWAS, towards achieving the national regional integration goal of a single economic space to help increase trade, stimulate economic growth, attract foreign direct investment, and enable domestic producers to enjoy economies of scale. Whilst the foundation for regional integration includes designing and implementing an infrastructure for the successful implementation of trade protocols/agreements, regional macroeconomic policy, peace and security and transport protocols, its strategic thrust from a national perspective must include and be anchored on optimising the benefits of regional integration for national development.

To this end, the following government commitments were reiterated as the pillars for regional integration:

1. At the ECOWAS level, the government will pursue programs to improve the competitiveness of The Gambia to facilitate the integration of The Gambia into the regional markets for enhanced economic growth through exports, and that MOTIE would continue to pursue regional programs, which include among others ETLS, ISRT, CET, etc., to the best possible advantage of this strategic plan.

2. At the wider African Continental level, the Government will energetically participate in the current effort by the African Union to establish a Pan- Africa Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA²) by the indicative date of 2017; and
3. To be able to benefit from continental market integration initiatives, The Gambia will adopt and implement the right policy mix to help integrate the economy in the wider African continent. This will require developing the trade facilitation system, trade-related infrastructures, and national productive capacities to take advantage of regional and continental market access opportunities.

1.5 Institutional framework

The progress made so far in managing regional integration is the establishment in the MOTIE of the Directorate of Regional Integration. The current structure and reach of the directorate in sustaining and managing an institutional platform to support regional integration efforts include:

- I. The establishment by the ECOWAS Commission in the MOTIE of an ECOWAS National Office (ENO), with the director of regional integration serving as head of this office. This office is funded by the ECOWAS Commission to deal with ECOWAS related matters in the ministry and nationally. This means that the ECOWAS Commission has a platform in The Gambia as a focal point of reference on all matters to which anyone from both within and outside of government can go and make enquiries. The ECOWAS arrangements are very well detailed in the ENO Operational Manual for ECOWAS National Units. It already has structures The Gambia of the Gambia has already signed into for managing the relationship. The GoTG needs to work towards expanding the directorate of regional integration in accordance with the agreed structure to accommodate the necessary human capacity to manage the ECOWAS relationship.
- II. However, there are no similar arrangements for both the African Union (AU) and the OIC relationships. Instead, for the AU, only matters that are either trade and/or investment related are handled by the directorate of regional integration, whilst others are handled by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), with very little coordination between the two ministries. The OIC matters are handled in a similar fashion with the AU since the MOTIE is responsible only for COMCEC matters, whilst the rest are dealt with by the MOFA.

It might be important at this point for The Gambia to review the implementation imperatives of both the AU and OIC relationships, establish similarities with ECOWAS, and seek to accommodate them into the ECOWAS ENO structure to take care of the management of all regional relationships. This certainly will go down well with the AU since at the central level, the AU seeks to

²The CFTA aims to deepen Africa's market integration and using trade to serve more effectively as an instrument for the attainment of rapid and sustainable socio-economic development, and strategically position the continent to exploit its numerous trade and investment opportunities and contribute positively towards the structural transformation of African economies. The CFTA is thus designed to provide an opportunity to integrate the fragmented national markets into a functional continental market bringing together the fifty-four African countries with a combined population of more than one billion people and a combined gross domestic product of more than US \$3.4 trillion.

utilise sub-regional structures such as ECOWAS to implement its programme such as the Africa Free Trade Agreement. Since also that most AU members are also members of the OIC, it should be easy for the structure to accommodate the management requirements of the OIC, and the ECOWAS ENO could be feasibly be suitable for all of the existing three regional organisations. The Gambia is member of.

For MOTIE to establish an effective system for supporting and harnessing optimal outcomes from The Gambia's membership of the three regional organisations, and achieve the regional integration goal as specified, there is need for the internal augmentation and capacitation of the systemic infrastructure in MOTIE; and achieve recognition and adherence from all MDA stakeholders to yield to a centralised coordination and support mechanism in their dealings with these organisations.

2 Guiding Principles

The policy revolves around how The Gambia shall optimise the successful fulfilment of its obligations in the organisations they are members of, structure, manage and harness its regional integration portfolio, which currently encompasses the ECOWAS, AU and the OIC. However, as and when The Gambia becomes a member of similar organisations in the future, they shall be brought into this portfolio and managed as such.

Regional integration shall henceforth be perceived as relationships that The Gambia can utilise across all sectors of the economy, both private and public; and to seek to use to the advantage of its other policies and strategies such as in agriculture, infrastructure, education, health, fisheries, tourism and others; and to generate inward investments, increased domestic production and output, and export participation. Against this background, The Gambia's new Regional Integration Policy 2021 – 2030 shall help operationalize her sectoral policies by enabling The Gambia take advantage of opportunities from regional groupings, making the Gambia's private sector even more active and become the engine of economic growth and development. It will create a common platform to coordinate and inform regional integration efforts across sectors, and support regional integration negotiations in all these sectors, to ensure the most favourable sectoral and national outcomes. The Gambia shall ensure that all the regional organisations are adequately informed of how the institutionalised coordinated national mechanism for managing regional integration shall be operated, and how all sectors in the economy must relate within this framework.

Furthermore, The Gambia shall prioritise its membership of regional organisations, which is evident in zeroing in on the ECOWAS, AU and the OIC. This prioritisation shall be reflected in the need to meet the financial obligations of these organisations in order to have a voice that will give access to all the opportunities offered by the organisations. Where two organisations compete, such as the case with all of the three organisations in question, The Gambia shall concentrate its efforts on expected overall benefits of membership in determining prioritisation of meeting membership obligations.

The National Consultative Committee on Regional Integration (NCCRI), of the ECOWAS ENO shall be expanded in scope to function also as an inter-sectoral advisory committee for regional

integration. However, where this fails a separate inter-sectoral advisory committee to support the policy supervision of the regional integration shall be established and function like a board of directors.

3 Key Factors to Enhance Benefits from Regional Integration

The key success factors which must be in place and effectively functional at the national level in order that The Gambia benefits from regional integration include:

- a. **Strengthening consultation and social dialogue mechanisms at the national level in order to develop clear and coherent national policies.** For effective implementation of ECOWAS, AU and OIC protocols and conventions there is the need for greater institutionalisation. This requires participation of the sectoral ministries – trade, agriculture, finance, transport, fisheries, etc., and organisations such as the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCC) and the Gambia Women’s Chamber of Commerce (GWCC) in the implementation process through the proper functioning of inter-ministerial coordination committees to be established under the Directorate of Regional Integration. This suggests the need for more regular meetings and at more levels to analyse measures already adopted at the national level, to assess the level of implementation of protocols, to identify needs, to make all levels of the state hierarchy aware of the need for national implementation and to plan future actions.
- b. There is also the need to **facilitate greater participation of the private sector and civil society groups in the integration process.**
- c. **Data and other kinds of information on issues of regional integration** should be made available to the public, unless classified, as a way of increasing public awareness.
- d. To improve the MOTIE’s role in the implementation of regional integration, there is the need for **capacity building to cover not only the top ranking officers but also the lower ranks across sectors and stakeholders, who are actually on the field and the creation of the right work attitudes** that are in keeping with the highest standards of service expected from regional integration.
- e. **Parliament must take its oversight role in regional integration very seriously.** It is not enough for Parliament to ratify ECOWAS, AU and OIC protocols, but more so to ensure that the executive implements its regional integration obligations adequately and effectively. The National Parliamentary representatives at the ECOWAS parliament must be utilised to ensure that the national interest is adequately represented and to hold the government to account for meeting its obligations to the regional groups, implementation of regional programs and achievement of optimal net impacts from the relationships.

4 Objectives and Strategies

Objective 1: Effectively coordinated cross-sectoral approach to managing regional integration under the supervision of MOTIE.

Strategic Activity 1.1: Establish a Multi Sectoral Regional Integration Coordination and Support platform that is trustworthy and dependable, under the leadership of MOTIE. This mechanism will ensure a systemic infrastructure to support all relationships across sectors with the ECOWAS, AU and OIC in all activities and establish the framework by which these supports shall be accessed and utilised.

Strategic Activity 1.2: Assignment of overall responsibility for, and leadership for regional integration relationship management to the MOTIE.

Strategic Activity 1.3: MOTIE to make available all the specialisations in its directorates and satellite institutions as a technical pool that shall provide technical knowhow and support to all regional integration negotiations and activities at the sectoral level under the supervision of the Directorate of Regional Integration.

Strategic Activity 1.4: Within the coordinated institutionalised mechanism, to develop and put in place structures to support adequate and useful databases and negotiation support systems to all engagements in regional organisations across all sectors of the economy.

Strategic Activity 1.5: Elaborate around the ECOWAS ENO structure a comprehensive mechanism that accommodate the management requirements for all other regional relationships, and develop an institutional capacity that will enable the effective functioning of the platform in optimising the effectiveness of regional integration management.

Objective 2: Regional group membership rendered as tools for achieving socioeconomic development through the attraction of investments and trade, and the enhancement of development to meet national goals.

Strategic Activity 2.1: Re-define the strategic purpose or goal of membership of all regional organisations and ensure internalisation across all sectors of the economy of these objectives, and the required role of all institutions and citizens in realising this strategic goal or purpose.

Strategic Activity 2.1: Rationalise memberships of regional organisations and collaborate to ensure prioritisation and investment in them to generate optimal value for money and global integration.

Strategic Activity 2.1: Establish a support structure that is capable of providing technical backup to all sectors in all aspects of engagement with the organisations and helping to optimise regional engagement outcomes to socioeconomic development of The Gambia.

Strategic Activity 2.1: Institutionalise periodic reviews and studies to measure and determine the socioeconomic outcomes/impacts from membership of the ECOWAS, AU and the OIC.

Objective 3: To build an adequate and comprehensive information database in the MOTIE that will accommodate all policy engagements including regional integration, and dependable on the basis of its quality, currency and depth of information to inform all investment, trade, industry and other investment and/or trade related aspects of the relationships between countries and organisations; to optimise benefits to stakeholders who either are interested in investing or trading with The Gambia or other countries in the regional groups.

Strategic Activity 3.1: Create a strong and comprehensive database on all the organisations and sectors in The Gambia, which is useful in meeting all data requirements of sector participants.

Strategic Activity 3.1: Develop and institutionalise a monitoring framework that is supported by a comprehensive and adequate database to support all engagements with these groups, which shall be available virtually to stakeholders under secured arrangements.

Objective 4: Given The Gambia's peculiar geographical trade and investment challenges and the ECOWAS inability to enforce requisite adherence of immediate neighbours to its various protocols, to seek maximum benefits from regional integration through alternative means in which common sub-regional interest-driven ambitions are enlisted to secure unhindered investment-worthy markets for The Gambia, through the creation and operation of a free trade area (FTA) for the immediate neighbouring countries with whom The Gambia has very strong trade and investment links; and which are vital means

to The Gambia being able to optimally benefit from its larger regional integration membership.

Strategic Activity 4.1: Develop and create an incentivizing solution to ensure Senegal's respect of its protocols and avoid creating stumbling blocks to The Gambia in reaching both the Senegalese and other regional markets.

Strategic Activity 4.1: The Gambia shall lead the move to establish and operationalize a special free trade area made up of The Gambia, Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry and Mali. This area shall seek to rationalise and harmonise economic and financial policies within the scope of ECOWAS and create a common sub-ECOWAS market to enhance trade and investment in this market for the benefit of all members to reflect the socioeconomic peculiarities common to the countries that make up this sub-group. When agreed, the signed agreement can be registered with the AU, ECOWAS and West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), since what it seeks to do is contribute to or further regional economic integration, which is a principal objective of all the named regional organisations.

6. Implementation

The policy shall be implemented through a phased implementation plan 2021-2025 under the advice of an inter-sectoral advisory committee to be established. This policy shall be subject to a mid-term review in 2025, which will inform a new implementation plan 2025-2030. MOTIE shall deploy its full range of financing, policy dialogue capacity, technical assistance and donor reach, in compliance with its other policies and those from the sectors, to ensure that this policy guideline, processes and procedures are followed and adjusted as being implemented.

The inter-sectoral advisory committee shall serve as a high level inter-sectoral coordinating body on regional integration and ensure that MOFEA, MOFA and OP are directly involved in continuous policy evolution and implementation as primary stakeholders.

Annexes

Table 1: The Weaknesses and Strengths of MOTIE to Sustainably Operate a Coordinated National Framework of Engagement for Regional Integration

Ref.	Necessary Strengths for Regional Integration	Ref.	Actual Strengths of MOTIE	Ref.	Weaknesses of MOTIE
1	The primary policies of responsibility of MOTIE, namely the National Trade Policy; Industrial Policy; Investment Policy; National Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Policy; National Quality Policy; and the National Employment Policy, must each be able to accommodate the concerns of other MDAs in their abilities to ease sectoral difficulties to the extent of creating dependency on MOTIE by the other sectors.	1	MOTIE already carries very good policies in all of these areas except the National Investment Policy, which is grossly inadequate and needs resolution since it is critical for the attraction of investments from the regional groups.	1	Except to the extent that aspects in these policies are in response to the NDP and implemented as such, most policy strategies lack funding.
				2	Some of the policies have accompanying strategic plans for their implementation. As with other government MDAs, there is no system for the implementation of strategic plans, since there is hardly any link between the plans and annual budget allocations to MDAs, and they continue to serve mostly as literature review material for continuing future planning with hardly any bearing on the outcome of the implementation of related policies.
2	The structure in terms of the systems and processes of enabling that level of dependency by other sectors must be such that it is perceived by the sectors and the regional groupings to be necessary linchpins for the effective implementation of regional obligations and harvesting of membership benefits.	2	The organisational structure of MOTIE supported by its satellite institutions highly reflects the institutional framework needed to implement the primary areas of responsibilities.	1	What is at stake in terms of structure is the lack of systemic capacity (technologically digitised platforms), to realise the desired level of MDAs and regional groups' dependency for respective regional matters.
3	MOTIE must by default have and sustain a staff complement that displays adequate appropriate education, professionalism, motivation and commitment. This means the other sectors and regional groupings must perceive them as dependable and by default the reference for all issues/concerns relating to all matters with respect to these groupings.	3	At the moment MOTIE has a small, highly trained and relatively motivated staff in the regional integration directorate but lacks the internal network and external recognition for coordinating regional integration matters.	1	There is inadequate staff numbers and capacity with sufficient motivation to realise the desired level of MDAs and regional groups' dependency for respective regional matters.
				2	The absence of a Monitoring and Information/Database unit is a serious weakness since it would have by default attracts all sectors seeking to know more about organisations that they either wish to or already engaged with.
4	The systems that MOTIE operate within this coordination role must display the capacity to be adequately informative and a must-refer-to platform for all sorts of support to other MDAs and the regional groupings. In this case they must be based on digital platforms.	4	MOTIE has invested in a planning and statistics unit, which are necessary inputs into the overall role of MOTIE as facilitator for both domestic and external trade. The statistics function of the Planning Unit can be enhanced and re-scaled to include providing the database for regional integration.	1	This planning and statistics unit is being capacitated progressively but there is need as in other MDAs to strategically define how it can be effective in supporting MOTIE to carry out its primary functions.
				2	Specifically, there is a need for adjustment of the structure (such as the creation of a monitoring and information unit) within the Directorate of Regional Integration to enhance overall capacity to effectively coordinate and support

					other sectors in meeting their sectoral responsibilities, and take advantage of The Gambia's membership of the regional groups.
				3	The operational modalities for the coordination of regional integration policy strategy and other MOTIE policies to ensure acceptance and recognition by other MDAs, must be sanctioned by Cabinet since unless MOTIE is able to bring about effective attraction of FDI inflows, domestic investment in production and financing of production, the ideals of socio-economic development of economic growth, full employment, supply side growth and The Gambia's participation in the global economy and the reduction of poverty will continue to be mere ideals.
5	Two very important policies of MOTIE that have very significant involvement of stakeholders, the Trade Policy and the Employment Policy have had inter-sectoral implementation mechanisms in the form of committees, but these have for one reason or another not been functional and calls have been made in the review of these policies to reactivate these committees. This is a weakness that MOTIE must resolve since for any of its important committees to be functional and effective is critical.	5	MOTIE has a history of interaction with stakeholder institutions in both the public and private sector.	1	<p>A:</p> <p>The National Trade Policy Decision Making Committee (NTPDMC) for Mainstreaming Trade and Trade-Related Issues (MATTRICOM), with its three sub-committees, namely: the Trade Negotiations Committee (headed by MOTIE), the National Trade Facilitation Committee (headed by GRA) and the Committee on Market Access (headed by GCCI) has not been functional and there are calls for its reactivation.</p> <p>B:</p> <p>The National Inter-Sectoral Committee for Employment and Poverty Alleviation (NAISECPA) set up in 2005 and responsible for inter-sectoral coordination and provision of overall guidance and direction to the action programme is said in the current employment policy to have to be reactivated.</p> <p>These two referred failures in creating operational momentum for the two very important policy organs show a serious internal weakness in MOTIE, which if not resolved will also be a threat to the successful implementation of the RISP.</p>

Table 2: The Opportunities and Threats of MOTIE to Sustainably Operate a Coordinated National Framework and Optimise Benefits from Engagements in Regional Integration

Ref.	Environmental Factor Category	Ref.	Actual Policy Strategy Opportunities on Regional Integration	Ref.	Actual Policy Strategy Threats on Regional Integration
1	Financing	1	MOTIE can access annual public budget financing and some funding from the donor community.	1	Even though annual public financing is certain, most if not all of the funding from this source is to finance the staff budget only. Public financing has never been adequate to cover necessary monitoring, evaluation and all other coordination associated costs of the policies for which MOTIE is responsible.
		2	Donor funding including from some of the regional groups is a source of funding, e.g. from the ECOWAS.	2	Whilst relatively significant, financing would normally be available, most if not all of it is directed at studies and policy development, leaving a lot other systemic infrastructure costs unfunded. Given that policy development is so critical to the country and forms in itself part of its trade secrets, funding of these activities should preferably have been from the public budget. ECOWAS departs from this nature in a sense since some of its funding is towards maintaining the ECOWAS National Office (ENO) in the Directorate of Regional Integration.
2	Staff numbers and capacity	1	The MOTIE has the mandate and can restructure and determine the needed staff strength of any of its directorates. In this sense the Directorate of Regional Integration can be restructured and beefed up in numbers and expert capacity.	1	In spite of MOTIE being able to restructure and recommend needed staff capacity for its directorates, the approval for any new positions and recruitments thereof are resident in the MOFEA and PMO, away from the control of MOTIE.
		2	Once recruited or posted to MOTIE continuing to maintain staff capacity through training and other motivations remains primarily the responsibility of MOTIE.	1	The inability of the training budget to adequately meet the skill development needs for the task on an on-going basis.
3	Recognition from others as the reference for regional integration matters.	1	MDAs all know that MOTIE is responsible for regional integration matters and setting the infrastructure for creating a mechanism that enhances The Gambia's engagement with these regional groups.	1	Given that in almost all of the engagements with the specified regional groupings, the MOFA will be a principal player, there is need to clarify its specific role and of the MOTIE in enabling and sustaining the systemic infrastructure to coordinate and support regional integration engagements.
		2		2	Given further that regional conventions/protocols on integration are cross sectoral, the engagements of the regional groupings with member countries usually affect almost all of the sectors in a country. For this reason, several MDAs would each be responsible for aspects of the engagement and be working with the regional groups without reference to MOTIE who has primary responsibility for coordinating and optimising the net outcomes from membership to these groups. <u>Cabinet clarifications of the rules of regional integration engagements by MDAs should enable adherence to a domestic protocol on the matter.</u>
		2	By default MOTIE has been recognised by the regional groups for being the primary government policy engagement agency for issues dealing	1	The lack of requirements by the regional groups for requiring sector routing of engagements through MOTIE and dealing with sectors directly has contributed to usurping the local recognition of

			with regional integration.		MOTIE for regional integration matters.
4	The almost landlocked status of The Gambia and the Senegalese stranglehold.	1	Slow economic growth and endemic poverty, factors that breed insecurity are not in the social, economic and security interest of Senegal, and Senegal should be interested in what mutual growth, development and security can bring and factor it into how the two countries relate.	1	There is evidently a deliberate stranglehold on The Gambia by its only neighbour, which needs to be accepted on both sides, discussed and resolved in an atmosphere of honesty and commitment to mutual beneficial collaborative co-existence.
				2	The main purpose of Gambia's membership of these groups include creating a market potential that will attract and sustain major foreign investments. This in itself is a boost of market potential for the other countries in the FTA and unless The Gambia is creative in enabling them realise the potentials in this, their cooperation will be hard to achieve.

Annex 2 - Strategies/actions from Public Sector Respondents that The Gambia Government can adopt to maximally Profit or Benefit from its Relationships in the Regional Groups

ECOWAS	AU	OIC
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government should work with its neighbors to identify life changing cross-border projects of women and youths that will not only improve livelihoods but strengthen peaceful co-existence. This might include improving women and youth participation in the development and implementation of regional programmes. 2. More proactive engagement and active participation in ECOWAS matters. It should ensure that it ratify all ECOWAS Protocols and fully participate in all ECOWAS meetings. Proactively engage government institutions responsible for implementing ECOWAS protocols. 3. Alliance with Senegal on matters of common interest; 4. Ensure visibility of regional integration in national policies and advocacy. 5. Ensure compliance with ECOWAS instruments. 6. The Gambia must be proactive. 7. MOTIE must look for information on regional programmes and introduce such programmes to the relevant agencies in good time. 8. MOTIE must improve private sector participation in regional programmes. 9. Government must increase budgetary allocation to the ECOWAS programmes. The Gambia is usually underrepresented in some of the negotiation processes compared to its counterparts. The Gambian 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working closely with ECOWAS and other sub-regional institutions to present a united front at the AU. 2. Ensure compliance with AU instruments. 3. Advocate for special status as small and fragile state. 4. Secure information about programmes and filter such programmes to the relevant agencies in good time. 5. Must be proactive in finding out what projects/activities are available out there. 6. Ensure the central coordination of all AU programmes at the National Level. Strengthen the capacities of the stakeholders in monitoring and reporting of AU programmes. A robust institutional mechanism for negotiation and implementation of AU programmes. 7. Formulation of National Policy on Gambia's engagements with AU and its programmes. Government should enhance national coordination and also consultation with the Mission in Addis as well as other AU agents. 8. More proactive engagement and active participation in AU matters. It should ensure that it ratifies AU Protocols. 9. Promote peace and security as well as trade as the basis of integration. 10. Ensure that promotion of regional integration is a key strategy in her foreign policy. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working closely with ECOWAS and the AU to present a united front to the OIC. 2. Aspire to lead the African group similar to the Arab league. 3. Stay on course for the 2022 summit hosting. 4. Secure information about programmes and filter such programmes to the relevant agencies in good time. 5. Establish National Strategy for the effective participation of Gambia in OIC. 6. Designate MOTIE as the Central administration for coordination of OIC programmes and activities. 7. Put in place a monitoring framework for participation and implementation of OIC programmes. 8. Provide budgetary allocations for Gambia's participation in OIC. 9. Government should enhance national coordination and consultation on OIC matters. 10. More proactive engagement and active participation in OIC matters. It should ensure that it ratifies OIC Protocols. 11. Promote peace and security as well as trade as the basis of integration. 12. Ensure that promotion of regional integration is a key strategy in her foreign policy. 13. Ensure that sectoral policy adequately reflect the regional programmes in order to optimise benefits from them. 14. Draft project proposals and seek funding through the coordination of MOTIE.

<p>delegation to most of these processes comprises of only government officials and in worst case only one Ministry or an officer, whereas other country delegations comprise of experts from both the public and private sectors.</p> <p>10. MOTIE must conduct exhaustive consultations with stakeholders during the design and implementation stages of the regional programmes. Consultation must not be viewed as a fulfillment of a requirement but a means to build sense of ownership in stakeholders and maximize the country's gain. Government officials must not pretend to have all the answers. We need to consult all stakeholders to improve the country's position. The awareness programmes must target the local populace. Watching Senegalese TV programmes on how the introduction of the ECO currency and the AfCFTA will affect the lives and livelihood of locals and MSMEs gives a clear indication that the Gambia has a long way to go.</p> <p>11. Designate MOTIE as the Central administration for coordination of Regional programmes, and put in place a monitoring framework for participation and implementation of programmes. Establish a more specific and well-coordinated approach to regional integration.</p> <p>12. Promote peace and security as well as trade as the basis of integration.</p> <p>13. Ensure that promotion of regional integration is a key strategy in her foreign policy.</p> <p>14. Ensure that sectoral policy adequately reflect the programmes in order to optimise benefits from regional programmes.</p> <p>15. Try to fulfill ECOWAS protocols as much as possible.</p>	<p>strategy in the foreign policy.</p> <p>11. Ensure that sectoral policies adequately reflect regional programmes in order to optimise benefits from them.</p> <p>12. Prioritize regional activities into those that will have greater economic benefits for the country and emphasize them.</p>	
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Annex 2: Stakeholders Consulted

1. Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
2. The Gambia Competition and Consumer Protection Commission
3. Weights and Measures Bureau
4. Gambia Investment Promotion Authority (GIEPA)
5. Ministry of Health
6. Ministry of Transport, Works & Infrastructure
7. Bureau De Prospective Economique, Senegal
8. Senegalo-Gambian Permanent Secretariat
9. Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry
10. Gambia Horticultural Enterprise (GHE)
11. The Office of the President
12. National Food and Nutrition Agency
13. Gambia radio and Television Services
14. Ministry of Petroleum and Energy
15. GIEPA - Gambia Investment
16. The Gambia Standards Bureau
17. Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
18. Gambia Teachers Union
19. Gambia Revenue Authority
20. Ministry of Fisheries and Water Resources
21. Ministry of Justice
22. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
23. The Gambia's Women's Federation
24. QTV
25. Ministry of Defence
26. Ministry of Interior
27. Department of Weights and Measures – MOTIE
28. Ministry of Agriculture – Plant Protection Services
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