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# CODESA – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FOR SUBMISSION TO COMESA COUNCIL OF MINISTERS



CREATED BY

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# CODESA - Executive Summary

*for Submission to the COMESA Council of Ministers*

**Subject:** Establishment of the COMESA Digitalisation, Education and Social Agency (“CODESA”) as a Specialized Institution with a Ten-Year Mandate (2026–2036)

## 1. Purpose and Legal Authority

This submission seeks approval to establish the COMESA Digitalisation, Education and Social Agency (CODESA) as a specialized institution of COMESA with a ten-year mandate (2026–2036), operating under a constitutive Charter and a Host Country Agreement. CODESA shall be mandated to accelerate regional digitalisation, strengthen inclusive education and skills systems, and institutionalize social development instruments across Member States, in a manner complementary to existing specialized entities, particularly ACTESA. The proposed legal basis is consistent with the COMESA Treaty, including the Authority and Council’s powers to create specialized institutions and adopt regional programmes (see COMESA Treaty (English) (Articles 3, 4, 182)).

References: **COMESA Treaty (English)** [Download COMESA Treaty \(PDF\)](#)

## 2. Institutional Design and Governance

CODESA shall be constituted by a Charter approved by the Council of Ministers and endorsed by the Authority. Its legal personality, privileges and immunities shall be defined by a Host Country Agreement. Governance shall comprise: (i) a Governing Council with representation from the COMESA Secretariat, Member States, and designated partners, (ii) an Executive Board for operational decisions, and (iii) technical committees covering digital infrastructure, e-government interoperability, cybersecurity and data governance, vocational education, and social development. Reporting and oversight shall align with existing Secretariat divisions, notably Infrastructure & Logistics and Information & Networking (ICT), to ensure policy coherence with the Digital Free Trade Area (DFTA), e-Government and customs digitalisation strategies.

References: COMESA – Information & Networking (ICT), COMESA – Infrastructure & Logistics Division, Customs Digitalisation Policy Brief [Infrastructure & Logistics Division](#)

## 3. Strategic Scope and Complementarity

CODESA’s mandate is region-wide and explicitly complementary to ACTESA’s specialized remit for staple foods trade and market systems. A cooperation memorandum between CODESA and ACTESA shall govern joint steering, non-duplication, data-sharing and a shared results framework, particularly for digital agriculture, standards harmonisation, warehouse receipts, logistics and cold-chain pilots integrated with digital public infrastructure. The scope also implements COMESA’s regional coordination role under multi-country digitalisation programmes and harmonisation initiatives. References: ACTESA – About, ACTESA Intergovernmental & Council Report (Nov. 2023), COMESA–World Bank Announcement on Accelerating Digital Access

## 4. Programme Architecture

The programme is organised in three mission pillars with cross-cutting compliance and transparency disciplines:

1. **Strategic Alliance for SFPSEI (with ACTESA):** Regulatory harmonisation for inputs and markets; commodity exchanges and warehouse receipts; digital farmer services; logistics and cold-chain pilots; corridor-based delivery.



2. **Digitalisation and Connectivity:** Regional broadband corridors and last-mile access; sovereign cloud and data centres; digital identity and interoperable e-government services; regional cybersecurity posture and data protection aligned to COMESA instruments.
3. **Pan-African Power Play (regional public goods):** Multi-sector corridor packages, interoperable digital public infrastructure, and standards-based trade facilitation that support AfCFTA-consistent integration.

References: COMESA – ICT Status Report (2023), AU Digital Transformation Strategy 2020–2030, Agenda 2063 [Report on the Implementation of COMESA ICT Programmes \(2023\)](#)

### **5. Funding Architecture, Fiduciary Safeguards, and Procurement Transparency**

CODESA shall operate on a fully externalised funding model imposing no fiscal obligation on COMESA's assessed budget. Financing windows include bilateral donors, development finance institutions, blended finance with private co-investment, and, where eligible, participation in sustainable bond markets. Financial reporting shall be IPSAS-compliant with annual external audits; all procurement cycles shall be disclosed using the Open Contracting Data Standard to ensure full-cycle transparency from planning through completion.

References: [IPSASB \(IFAC\) – Public Sector](#), [Open Contracting Data Standard \(OCDS\)](#)

### **6. Safeguards, Data Protection and Cybersecurity**

Environmental and social due diligence shall apply the updated African Development Bank Integrated Safeguards System and, where relevant, the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework, including screening, ESIA/ESMP instruments, stakeholder engagement (ESS10) and grievance redress. Digital platforms and cross-border data exchange shall conform to the COMESA Data Privacy Policy and internationally recognised security frameworks, including ISO/IEC 27001 and the NIST Cybersecurity Framework 2.0.

References: [AfDB – Updated ISS \(effective 31 May 2024\)](#), [World Bank – Environmental and Social Framework](#),

COMESA – Data Privacy Policy (Secretariat), [ISO/IEC 27001:2022](#), [NIST Cybersecurity Framework 2.0](#)

### **7. Implementation Modality and Decision Gates**

Implementation shall follow a phased model: Inception (legal setup and baselines), Pilot (selected Member States), Scale-up (corridor-based expansion), and Consolidation (institutionalisation and steady-state operations). Continuation across decision gates is conditioned on verified performance, fiduciary integrity and safeguards compliance, including IPSAS-audited statements, complete OCDS disclosure, and attainment of minimum service-level thresholds for digital identity, e-services availability/latency, cross-border transactions, and corridor/OSBP performance.

References: COMESA – Infrastructure & Logistics Division, COMESA – ICT Programmes (Status/Reports), [OCDS Documentation](#)

### **8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Key Performance Indicators**

A unified MEL framework shall establish baselines, annual and mid-term evaluations, and public dashboards. Illustrative KPI families include: adoption of harmonised seed/fertilizer/warehouse-receipt standards; intra-COMESA staple trade growth; broadband and corridor coverage; sovereign cloud and core registries in operation; identity enrolment and cross-border e-service transactions; cybersecurity

incident detection/response times; inclusion metrics (women and youth shares); IPSAS audit opinions and OCDS publication coverage.

References: ACTESA Intergovernmental & Council Report (Nov. 2023), COMESA – ICT Status Report (2023)

### 9. Risk and Mitigation Posture

A consolidated risk register shall be maintained and reviewed quarterly, spanning strategic (policy alignment), operational (delivery, capacity), fiduciary and procurement (IPSAS/OCDS conformance), environmental and social (ISS/ESF), cyber/data (ISO/IEC 27001, NIST CSF), and market/financing (blended finance, sustainability). Escalation thresholds and corrective measures shall be codified in the Governance Manual.

References: [AfDB – Updated ISS](#), [World Bank – ESF](#), [NIST CSF 2.0](#)

### 10. Decision Requested

The Council of Ministers is invited to:

1. Approve the establishment of CODESA as a specialized institution pursuant to the COMESA Treaty, authorising the Secretariat to finalise and table the CODESA Charter for adoption and to negotiate a Host Country Agreement.
2. Endorse the cooperation memorandum between CODESA and ACTESA, including a non-duplication clause and a shared results framework for SFPSEI-related activities.
3. Authorise the Secretariat to constitute the CODESA Development Fund and adopt IPSAS-compliant financial regulations and OCDS-based procurement transparency for all CODESA-managed operations.
4. Instruct the Secretariat to prepare the 2026–2036 decennial results compact, with decision gates at Pilots, Mid-Term and End-Term, and to report annually to Council on fiduciary, safeguards and KPI performance.

#### Key References (live links):

COMESA Treaty (English) · COMESA – Information & Networking (ICT) · COMESA – Infrastructure & Logistics Division · COMESA – ICT Status Report (2023) · Customs Digitalisation Policy Brief · ACTESA – About · ACTESA Intergovernmental & Council Report (Nov. 2023) · COMESA–World Bank: Accelerating Digital Access · AU Digital Transformation Strategy 2020–2030 · Agenda 2063 · [AfDB – Updated ISS \(effective 31 May 2024\)](#) · [World Bank – Environmental and Social Framework](#) · COMESA – Data Privacy Policy · [IPSASB \(IFAC\) – Public Sector](#) · [Open Contracting Data Standard](#) · [ISO/IEC 27001:2022](#) · [NIST Cybersecurity Framework 2.0](#)