

The COMESA Secretariat launched a multilingual (English, French and Arabic) [online platform](#) for exchanging and sharing information on the availability and production of essential goods (e.g. basic food products, fuel, sanitisers, cleaning and hygiene products, thermometers, veterinary food supplies, etc.) within the COMESA region. The initiative is part of the response measures to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision to develop such a platform was taken at the 8th Extra-ordinary meeting of the COMESA Council of Ministers held on 14th May 2020 together, on which occasion the [COMESA guidelines for the movement of goods and services across the COMESA Region](#) were also adopted ([read more](#)). The 2 tools are complementary with each other.

This portal, apart from being an information sharing system on essential goods produced in the region, is also an e-marketplace solution able to stimulate the sale of essential products manufactured in the COMESA area by connecting potential buyers to suppliers. Products are sold at competitive prices as the intermediation costs are eliminated, being buyers capable to purchase them directly from producers, who can register to the website freely. The categories of products that can be sold through the platform are listed in the Section E.2 (Transport of goods and cross border freight transport operations) of the COMESA guidelines for the movement of goods and services across the COMESA Region.

The Covid-19 essential goods platform, which is currently still under development, will contain in future also details about essential goods shortages and surplus in each COMESA country, with a detailed list of such goods. To this end, a network of [focal points](#) in each COMESA country will continually feed the portal with updated information and data gathered in the system.