

On 19-20 July 2022 in Accra, Ghana, the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the European Union (EU) held a continental [inaugural conference](#) for the launch of the “Programme on the implementation and application of Rules of Origin (RoO) for enhanced Intra-African trade” (the agenda of the event is available [here](#)

). Also known the EU-WCO Rules of Origin Africa Programme, this initiative aims at building the capacity of African customs administrations and other stakeholders for enhanced understanding, implementation, and application of the AfCFTA RoO (contained in the Annex 2 to the Protocol on Trade in Goods of the AfCFTA Agreement), in compliance with other international commitments and best practices, including the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) of the EU, which also include, in dedicated Protocols, specific RoO applicable to goods traded under these Agreements.

Rules of origin (ROOs) are a set of provisions that are used to determine if products are eligible for duty-free or reduced duties under reciprocal (e.g. Free Trade Areas or Customs Unions) or non-reciprocal trade preferences (i.e. the Generalized Systems of Preferences adopted by many developed countries or customs territories in the world). Commonly known as the "legal criteria allowing the determination the economic nationality of the goods", these rules are particularly simple when a product is wholly grown or manufactured in one country, while can be very complex when a finished product includes components that originate in many countries. Rules of origin vary from agreement to agreement and from product to product.

The conference concluded by consensus on the need for capacity building and harmonized instruments to enable all stakeholders to manage and administer RoO effectively and that the EU-WCO RoO Programme is of utmost relevance and importance in that process. It must be noted that this event has been recently followed by the [official launch](#) by the AfCFTA Secretariat of the AfCFTA e-Tariff book and a renewed version of the AfCFTA website.