



## Trade Catalyst Africa appoints Antoinette Tesha as Investment Director

***Antoinette Tesha joins TCA with substantial experience in investments for export growth in both financial and development services sector. In her new role Antoinette will help lead TCA's strategic partnerships with governments and the private sector.***

**Nairobi, 3 July 2024:** [Trade Catalyst Africa](#) (TCA), has appointed Ms Antoinette Tesha as its Investment Director. With a robust background in investment, finance, banking, and development, Antoinette brings over a decade of expertise to TCA, positioning the organization for unprecedented growth and success.

Antoinette recently led Gatsby Africa's Regional Textiles and Apparel programme in Kenya, focusing on the export growth across East Africa. Her distinguished career spans various regions and roles, from her early days at Stanbic Bank in Tanzania to senior positions at Thomson Reuters and ABSA Capital in South Africa. She has excelled in financial markets, development financing, and debt capital markets, and has a proven track record in program management and enterprise development.

In her new role, Antoinette will help lead TCA's strategic partnerships in impact investing, venture capital, and private equity. She brings best in class experience in managing investments and exits in emerging markets to deliver commercial returns. Antoinette is a certified corporate director and a member of Women in Africa Investments, with academic credentials from the University of Sussex and the University of Surrey.

Commenting on the appointment, TCA CEO Mr Duncan Onyango, said: *"We are confident that Antoinette's diverse background and passion will drive our success. Her ability to build trust quickly and manage stakeholder relationships will be invaluable as we pursue our mission to strengthen Africa's export capabilities through strategic investments in trade infrastructure and SMEs."*

TCA is the commercial subsidiary of [TradeMark Africa](#) (TMA) one of the leading aid for trade organizations across the globe. TCA was started in response to the gap in infrastructure financing across Africa and the persistent challenge of SME's accessing finance from traditional lenders. As an investment vehicle, TCA is developing and implementing innovative and sustainable financing models to fund trade infrastructure and enhance access to trade finance for SMEs. USAID provided the initial capital of US\$25 million for TCA's operationalisation. TCA is currently raising additional resources from development finance institutions (DFIs), commercial banks, private equity funds and other financial institutions.

TCA will build on many of the early wins and indepth experience of TMA trade facilitation work in physical infrastructure spanning areas such as ports and one stop border posts (OSBPs). Such interventions contributed to for example a drop in dwell times at Mombasa Port by over half while select OSBPs supported by TMA led to reduction of time to cross borders by an average of 70%. As physical infrastructure funding becomes constrained, TCA offers partner governments a comprehensive range of enhanced and sustainable funding instruments, delivering projects that will improve the operating environment through time and cost reductions along trade routes and across borders.

Remarking on her new role, Ms Tesha said: *"I am delighted to be joining TCA. Africa's trade is on a clear upward trajectory. Despite challenges in enterprise growth, the private sector consistently proves the continent's potential. However, much of this potential is hindered by inadequate systems and infrastructure. I am deeply committed to bridging this gap and believe that investing in Africa's trade*



*infrastructure is not only commercially viable but also offers significant financial returns. Contributing to the acceleration of this growth is a privilege, and I am excited about this next chapter of my career with TCA.”*

## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

### **About Trade Catalyst Africa**

Trade Catalyst Africa (TCA), a wholly owned subsidiary of TradeMark Africa (TMA), is designed to tackle the challenge of accessing finance for trade infrastructure and trade finance. TCA will utilize blended finance strategies to de-risk commercial investments in trade projects. Its focus will be on enhancing investments in both hard and soft trade infrastructure and improving access to trade finance for SMEs.

USAID has provided the initial capital of US\$ 25 Million to operationalise TCA. TCA will leverage this funding to raise additional capital from development finance institutions (DFIs), commercial banks, private equity funds, microfinance institutions, FinTechs and other financial institutions for investment. Ultimately, TCA will be an evergreen fund and will revolve its funding across multiple projects by recouping its investments using a transparent revenue model.

TCA will have two financing windows:

- Developer Window to deploy concessional and catalytic capital de-risking and supporting the development of trade & digital infrastructure such as industrial parks, one stop border posts, digital trade corridors, etc;
- Trade Finance window curating short and medium-term financing interventions supporting SMEs in agribusiness, cotton, textiles, and garments sectors.

TradeMark Africa is a Not-for-Profit aid-for-trade organisation established in 2010, with the aim of growing prosperity through trade. TCA will implement projects on the back of TMA in-depth experience in project design, implementation, and stakeholder engagements. TCA will support TMA to expand and sustain the scale of its impact, in line with its development objectives. We believe this will amplify the gains made by TMA in trade facilitation and in spurring Africa’s economic and trade growth.

For more information about Trade Catalyst Africa, please visit: [www.tradecatalystafrica.com](http://www.tradecatalystafrica.com) .