The Elevate Africa Trade Desk Readiness Standard

Nov 7, 2026

What this Standard is

The Trade Desk connects people who hold capital with people who hold opportunity, and connects businesses that want to trade with one another across Africa. Before we introduce anyone, we make sure they are ready to be introduced.

This Standard tells you what "ready" means. It is the same for everyone: an individual investor, a small trading company, a large manufacturer or a government ministry. It is free, it is public, and you can check yourself against it before you apply.

The Desk checks that you are who you say you are and that your information is complete and clear. Whether your opportunity is a good investment is for the investor or buyer to decide. That is how the Desk can stand behind every introduction while every business decision stays with the people making the deal.

The four steps of readiness

Readiness has four steps. Each one builds on the step before it, and each one opens more of what the Desk offers.

Step	What it means	What it opens up
0. Preparing	You are getting ready, using this Standard and, as a Community member, our templates and our Desk Clinic	Guidance, templates, the Desk Clinic
1. Registered	You have told us who you are, where you are based and what you are looking for	Convenings, market updates, pipeline summaries
2. Verified	Your documents are complete, they agree with each other, and your background checks are clear	A place in the Desk pipeline, seen by verified partners
3. Desk-Ready	Your profile is complete, clear and up to date	Direct introductions to the right partners

Paying for membership gives you more support along the way. Everyone climbs the same four steps in the same way.

What you need

If you are an individual

You may be an investor, a founder, a professional or a trader.

- **To register:** your full name, where you live, what you are looking for and how to reach you.
- **To be verified:** a valid ID and proof of address. If you are investing, a short statement of where your money comes from, with one supporting document such as a bank letter. If you trade, your registered business name and twelve months of bank statements.
- **To be Desk-Ready:** investors complete a **Mandate Profile**, a one-page summary of what you invest in, where, how much and how you decide. Traders complete a **Trade Profile** under their business name.

If you are a founder raising money, your company does this on the company path below. Investment goes into businesses, so the business carries the file.

If you are a company

- **To register:** your company name, registration number, country, sector, what you are looking for, and a contact who can speak for the company.
- **To be verified:** your registration documents, who owns the company, two to three years of accounts, your tax and licence papers, and background checks on owners and directors. Smaller businesses without audited accounts can use accountant-certified accounts with bank statements instead.
- **To be Desk-Ready:** complete your **Trade Profile**. Every company fills in the core sections; a company raising capital adds the capital section.
    - **Core sections:** what you sell or buy, in what volumes, to what standards, and the markets you want to reach.
    - **Capital section, if you are raising capital:** a short, clear summary of your business, what you need, what it is for, your track record and your honest view of the risks.

If you are a country or public institution

This includes national and state governments, ministries, agencies and state-owned enterprises.

- **To register:** name a focal point with the authority to respond for your institution, and tell us which sectors and opportunities you plan to bring.
- **To be verified:** show investors how your environment works, including the investment rules, the approvals needed and how long they take, incentives on offer, and how money moves in and out. You then sign a Country Partnership Agreement, which opens your Country Lane.
- **To be Desk-Ready:** complete a **Country Trade Profile** and a **Pipeline Brief** holding at least three real, ready projects. A country is ready when its projects are.

How it works

1. **Check yourself first.** Go through the list for your group and see what you already have. People who do this usually get through in one round.
2. **Submit.** Send your information and documents through the Desk.
3. **We review.** We check that everything is complete, consistent and up to date, and we run background checks.
4. **We tell you where you stand.** You receive a letter confirming your step. If something is missing, the letter tells you exactly what, so you know what to bring next.
5. **We introduce you.** Once you are Desk-Ready, we match you with partners who fit what you are looking for, and make a written introduction to both sides. From there, the conversation is yours.

	Usual time, if your documents are ready
Individuals	20 to 30 days
Companies	30 to 45 days
Countries	4 to 6 months

The Standard is free. Community members learn it through templates, worked examples, the monthly Desk Clinic and the Readiness Cohorts. If you need professional help preparing your documents, we can point you to independent advisers.

Keeping your place

Your step stays current as long as your information does.

- Update your profile every six months. Countries update their Pipeline Brief every quarter.
- Renew your verification once a year.

- Tell us within 30 days if something important changes, such as new owners, new directors or a licence renewal.
- Reply to introductions and Desk enquiries within 15 working days. If two go unanswered, introductions pause until your contact confirms they are available.

If your documents go out of date, you move down a step until you refresh them. Anyone found to be under sanctions, hiding who owns them, facing fraud or corruption proceedings, submitting false documents, or using Elevate Africa's name without permission is removed permanently.

Good to know

- **Who owns your company.** Ownership must be traced to real people. Anyone who holds 10% or more must be named, with a copy of their ID.
- **How recent your documents must be.** Registration papers and good-standing letters must be under three months old. Accounts and profiles must be under six months old. IDs must be valid on the day we check them.
- **If you are a smaller business.** Where you do not have a formal document, we accept a sensible substitute: accountant-certified accounts with bank statements in place of audited accounts; your latest tax filing while a clearance certificate is on its way; purchase orders and invoices in place of formal contracts; and a signed resolution of the owners in place of board minutes.
- **What you declare when you submit.** Tell us if an adviser helped prepare your file, and if you hold an interest in any other Desk participant. The person who helped prepare a file never checks it; a different reviewer always does.
- **Community consent.** Mining, oil and gas, forestry, large-scale farming and other land-heavy projects must show documented consent from the communities affected. Projects without it are removed.
- **If you disagree with a decision.** You can ask for a second review by a different reviewer within 30 days of receiving our letter.
- **If you have a complaint.** Write to the Desk through the published complaints channel, and you will receive a response within 30 days.
- **For governments.** The Desk does not advise on credit ratings, borrowing, guarantees or risk cover. Where your pipeline needs them, we bring you together with the institutions whose role that is, such as the African Development Bank and Afreximbank.

What the Desk confirms

Every listing carries this statement, so everyone knows exactly what the Desk stands behind:

> Elevate Africa confirms that this information was provided and checked for completeness. Elevate Africa does not verify commercial viability, does not endorse this opportunity, and does not recommend any transaction.

The Desk makes the introduction. The decision, the negotiation and the deal belong to the parties.

Questions: tradedesk@weelevateafrica.org