**Operational Plan for Walking the Sahel (WTS)**

**Objective** To ensure efficient execution of WTS’s B2B marketplace and logistics operations through streamlined processes, technology integration, and robust infrastructure.

**Core Operations**

**1. Marketplace Operations**:

* **Platform Management**:
  + Maintain a user-friendly digital platform for listing and transacting raw materials, agricultural goods, and fuel.
  + Provide multilingual support (English, French, Swahili) for regional accessibility.
* **Supplier and Buyer Onboarding**:
  + Implement a seamless registration process for users.
  + Conduct periodic webinars and guides to educate users on platform features.

**2. Logistics Operations**:

* **Fleet Management**:
  + Partner with logistics providers and independent fleet operators.
  + Use AI-driven tools for route optimization and driver matching.
* **Delivery Tracking**:
  + Enable real-time tracking for all deliveries via GPS integration.
  + Establish a centralized system for monitoring delivery performance.

**3. Shared Services**:

* **Customer Support**:
  + Set up a 24/7 helpline and chatbot support for platform users.
  + Develop a ticketing system to resolve user issues efficiently.
* **Marketing and Branding**:
  + Centralize the creation of marketing materials for digital campaigns.
  + Collaborate with regional teams to ensure culturally relevant branding.

**4. Financial Services**:

* **Payment Systems**:
  + Integrate Afreximbank’s PAPSS for seamless cross-border payments.
  + Offer escrow services for secure transactions.
* **Financing Options**:
  + Partner with Paystar to provide insurance for goods-in-transit and credit facilities for suppliers.

**5. Data Management**:

* **Market Insights**:
  + Use platform analytics to provide insights into trade trends and demand forecasts.
* **User Data Security**:
  + Implement advanced encryption to protect user information.
  + Comply with regional data protection regulations.

**Infrastructure Requirements**

1. **Warehousing**:
   * Collaborate with NCX to establish strategically located warehouses.
   * Equip warehouses with inventory management systems for real-time tracking.
2. **Technology**:
   * Develop AI algorithms for logistics optimization and demand forecasting.
   * Build a scalable cloud-based platform to handle increasing transaction volumes.
3. **Regional Offices**:
   * Set up offices in key trade hubs (e.g., Lagos, Nairobi, Accra) for localized operations.

**Operational Timeline**

**Phase 1 (Year 1-2)**:

* Launch pilot operations in Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya.
* Establish initial warehousing and fleet partnerships.
* Onboard 200,000 active users.

**Phase 2 (Year 3-5)**:

* Expand operations to North and Southern Africa.
* Scale logistics capacity and warehouse infrastructure.
* Introduce advanced AI tools for predictive analytics.

**Phase 3 (Year 6+)**:

* Achieve full continental integration with operations in all 54 African countries.
* Implement dynamic pricing for logistics and warehousing.
* Expand offerings to include renewable energy solutions.

**Performance Metrics**

1. **User Engagement**:
   * Monthly active users.
   * Customer satisfaction scores.
2. **Logistics Efficiency**:
   * Delivery time metrics.
   * Fleet utilization rates.
3. **Financial Performance**:
   * Revenue from transactions and logistics.
   * Cost-to-income ratios.

**Risk Mitigation**

1. **Operational Risks**:
   * Develop contingency plans for supply chain disruptions.
   * Partner with Paystar for goods-in-transit insurance.
2. **Regulatory Risks**:
   * Maintain compliance with AfCFTA and regional trade policies.
   * Regularly review and update platform terms to reflect legal changes.

**Conclusion** This operational plan ensures WTS can efficiently scale its marketplace and logistics services while maintaining high levels of user satisfaction and operational efficiency. Through strategic partnerships and robust infrastructure, WTS is positioned to transform Africa’s trade landscape.