



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY



SEVENTH EAC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

2026/27 - 2030/31



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Seventh EAC Development Strategy

2026/27 -2030/31



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FOREWORD



H.E. Dr. William Samoei Ruto, CGH
Chairperson of the Summit of EAC Heads of State

The 7th EAC Development Strategy (2026/27 – 2030/31) marks a new chapter in the East African Community’s integration journey and development trajectory, one defined not only by transformation and resilience, but also inclusive growth. Embodying the ideals of EAC Treaty, Vision 2050, and continental and global frameworks, the Strategy manifests the aspirations of over 340 million East Africans, to live peacefully in a united region, with equitably shared opportunities for prosperity and posterity through our common shared value of “living no one behind”

During the 6th EAC Development Strategy (2021/22 - 2025/26), the Community expanded its membership to eight (8) Partner States with the accession of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Federal Republic of Somalia. This is a reflection that the Community’s aspirations mirror the desires and ambitions of many people. The expansion has opened a frontier for broadening market, resources, and influence. Within the period of the 6th Strategy, human development index improved from 0.505 in 2020 to 0.540 in 2023, indicating a broad prospect in social development across the Community. Education which we all recognise as an equalizer is taken seriously across the Partner States with primary and secondary enrolment rates now at 90 per cent and 80 per cent respectively. The Community intra-trade improved progressively from US\$ 12,708 million in 2022 to US\$ 15,187 million in 2024.

However, the dynamism in the global arena poses challenges ranging from pandemics, geopolitical alignments, rapid technological transformation, coupled with cybercrime and

disruptions in the supply chain. This calls for innovative approaches to handling the Community affairs, including governance, human capital development and policy coordination.

The 7th EAC Development Strategy thus far, responds to these realities with a bold, forward-looking agenda. It places strong emphasis on deepening regional trade integration, accelerating the transition to green and digital economies, strengthening productive and social sectors, building regional infrastructure, advancing the roadmap to a Monetary Union, and reinforcing governance, peace, and security. Above all, it champions a people-centred and market-driven integration process, ensuring that the benefits of our collective progress reach the entire Community. The proposal for 1 (one) per cent allocation to research and development is a testament that the Community is keen on accelerating development across the sectors.

It is noted that the formulation of the 7th EAC Development Strategy was an inclusive and participatory process, premised on Partner States voices, while considering contributions from the private sector, civil society, the academia, and development partners. We acknowledge and congratulate the Partner States and all stakeholders for their valuable contribution to the process.

As we embark on implementing this Strategy, we reaffirm our shared political will and collective responsibility. The success of this Strategy depends on the commitment of all stakeholders including Partner States, institutions, businesses, communities, and citizens. Let us move with unity of purpose and clarity of vision, confident that by working together, the East African Community will not only navigate the complexities of our time but also emerge as a global model of regional integration, resilience, and shared prosperity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT



***Hon. Veronica Mueni Nduva, CBS,
Secretary General, EAC***

The formulation of the 7th EAC Development Strategy (2026/27 – 2030/31) has been a truly collaborative endeavour, bringing together the dedication, expertise, and vision of a broad spectrum of stakeholders from across our eight Partner States and beyond. The process has drawn on the collective wisdom of policymakers, technical experts, private sector leaders, civil society representatives, academia, youth, and development partners, each contributing valuable perspectives that have enriched and strengthened this Strategy.

We extend our deepest appreciation to the leadership of the East African Community, the Summit of Heads of State, the Council of Ministers, the Ministries Responsible for EAC Affairs, as well as the Sectoral Ministries, Departments, and Agencies in all Partner States for their unwavering commitment, strategic guidance, and steadfast support throughout this process. Your shared vision for a more integrated, prosperous, and peaceful region has been the beacon that guided our work.

Special thanks go to the Heads of EAC Organs and Institutions and their respective technical teams for their tireless efforts in data gathering, analysis, and review. We are equally grateful to the development partners, regional apex bodies, private sector associations, and civil society organisations whose insights ensured that this Strategy reflects the aspirations and priorities of the people of East Africa.

We wish to particularly acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Ms. Annette Mutaawe Ssemuwemba, Deputy Secretary General (Customs, Trade and Monetary Affairs), and

Hon. Andrea Aguer Ariik Malueth, Deputy Secretary General (Infrastructure, Productive, Social and Political Sectors). Their highly valued insights shaped the strategic direction of this Strategy and guided the articulation of the new trajectory for the EAC's development agenda.

We further extend our gratitude to Mr. Aime Uwase, Director of Planning, the entire Planning team, and the Task force established to oversee the process, for their effective coordination and overall support, ensuring timely delivery and technical excellence.

Special recognition is also due to the Steering Committee, comprising experts from all Partner States, for their technical role and general oversight, which ensured that this Strategy is firmly grounded in the shared priorities and aspirations of the region.

We acknowledge with gratitude the professional expertise of Adapt Capitol Africa, the consulting firm that ably facilitated and coordinated the formulation process, ensuring that diverse inputs were synthesised into a coherent, forward-looking framework. Our special thanks go to the consulting team - Dr. Kenneth Kamona, Maurice Danje and Vitalis Akora.

Our sincere thanks also go to the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) for generously financing the formulation of this Strategy. Their support not only made this process possible but also underscored the importance of partnership in advancing regional integration and sustainable development.

Finally, we recognise the citizens of the East African Community, whose resilience, innovation, and aspirations are the foundation and driving force behind this Strategy. It is in your service, and with your participation, that we will translate this Strategy into action, ensuring that integration delivers tangible benefits for all.

On behalf of the EAC family, we look forward to working together to bring the 7th EAC Development Strategy to life and to build an East Africa that is more connected, competitive, inclusive, and resilient.

List of Abbreviations And Acronyms

AfCFTA	The African Continental Free Trade Area
AGOA	The African Growth and Opportunity Act
CASSOA	EAC Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency
CEBE	Regional Centre of Excellence for Biomedical Engineering and e-Health
CET	Common External Tariff
CM	Common Market
CMP	Common Market Protocol
CoE	EAC Regional Centres of Excellence
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
CPMR	Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution
CU	Customs Union
DS	Development Strategy
EAC	East African Community
EACA	East African Community Competition Authority
EACDF	EAC Development Fund
EACHRC	East African Health and Research Commission
EACoG	East African Community Games
EADB	East African Development Bank
EAHRC	East African Community Health Research Commission
EAHRJ	East African Health Research Journal
EAKC	East African Kiswahili Commission
ELA	East African Legislative Assembly
EAMU	East African Monetary Union
EAPI	East African Parliamentary Institute
EASTECCO	East African Science and Technology Commission
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreements
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IUCEA	Inter-university Council for East Africa
JAMAFEST	Jumuiya ya Afrika Mashariki Utamaduni Festival
LVBC	Lake Victoria Basin Commission
LVFO	Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation
MCBRTA	Multilateral Cross Border Road Transport Agreement
MEACAs	Ministries of East African Community Affairs
MIS	Management Information System
MTPs	Medium-Term Plans
MU	Monetary Union
NCPR	Nyerere Centre for Peace Research
NTBs	Non-Tariff Barriers
OSBPs	One-Stop Border Posts
PF	Political Federation
REC	Regional Economic Community
RSS	Republic of South Sudan
RMO	Resource Mobilisation Office
SDG	The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
SGR	Standard Gauge Railway
URT	The United Republic of Tanzania



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 7th EAC Development Strategy (2026/27–2030/31) sets the strategic direction for deepening regional integration and accelerating socioeconomic transformation across the East African Community. Building on the progress and lessons from the 6th Strategy, this new strategic planning cycle responds to a dynamic regional and global context marked by post-pandemic recovery, escalating climate shocks, evolving geopolitical tensions, and growing demand for inclusion, innovation, and resilience. The Strategy is anchored in the EAC Treaty, the EAC Vision 2050, and is aligned with continental and global frameworks such as the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The Strategy reflects the aspirations of Partner States, incorporating emerging priorities such as digital transformation, environmental sustainability, and regional value chains. It emphasizes a people-centered, market-driven integration process and seeks to institutionalise a results-based approach to policy and program delivery. Through broad consultation and review, the Strategy identifies strategic objectives and key priority areas that will guide regional actions over the next five years, ensuring alignment with Partner States’ national development plans and global commitments.

The EAC has seen notable institutional and political expansion with the accession of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2022) and the Federal Republic of Somalia (2024), enlarging the bloc to eight Partner States. While this growth signals rising influence, it also imposes integration and harmonisation challenges.

The EAC Customs Union has achieved notable milestones, including the full implementation of the Single Customs Territory for key goods, harmonisation of customs documentation, and progressive reduction of non-tariff barriers. Trade facilitation has been strengthened through digital systems and joint border operations. However, persistent challenges such as inconsistent application of common external tariff rates, recurrent non-tariff barriers in some Partner States continue to impede full integration. Addressing these requires strengthened enforcement mechanisms, capacity building for customs administrations, and enhanced dispute resolution frameworks to ensure uniform application of agreed instruments.

Implementation of the EAC Common Market Protocol has led to increased movement of goods, services, capital, and persons, with frameworks for mutual recognition of professional qualifications and harmonized immigration procedures in place. Partner States have made progress in opening sectors for cross-border investment and reducing work permit requirements. However, non-uniform application of commitments, delays in domestication of regulations, and infrastructure bottlenecks limit the full realization of benefits. Accelerating legislative alignment, enhancing monitoring and enforcement, and addressing physical and digital connectivity gaps will be critical for deepening the common market.

Social development outcomes have generally improved, including expanded access to education, reduced poverty rates, and progress in gender equality. However, persistent inequality, youth unemployment, and underfunded health systems continue to constrain inclusive development. The 7th Strategy emphasises human capital investment, youth empowerment, and regional social protection frameworks, expanding the scope of the 6th Strategy’s post-pandemic social recovery agenda.

Progress towards the EAC Monetary Union has included advancements in the operationalisation of the East African Monetary Institute (EAMI) and in the establishment of

the legal and institutional frameworks necessary for a common currency. Macroeconomic convergence has been partially achieved, with some Partner States meeting key criteria on inflation and fiscal deficits. While the region experienced moderate post-pandemic recovery, fiscal deficits, inflationary pressures, and rising debt burdens challenge stability. Gaps remain in full convergence, compounded by data harmonisation challenges, and readiness of financial systems. Disparities among Partner States persist, with some achieving resilience while others lag due to structural vulnerabilities. Compared to the 6th Strategy, which emphasized recovery from COVID-19 and safeguarding growth, the 7th Strategy pivots toward deeper convergence, policy harmonisation, and rebuilding buffers against global shocks. Moving forward, robust capacity-building for macroeconomic surveillance, stronger fiscal discipline, and accelerated operationalisation of EAMI are essential to meet the 2031 target for a single currency.

Progress was made toward establishing a Political Confederation, although the roadmap lags behind schedule. Democratic reforms and electoral governance have advanced unevenly, with varied institutional capacities among Partner States. The 7th Strategy builds on the EAC's growing political footprint and renewed efforts towards peace and security, such as the 2022 deployment to eastern DRC, thus contrasting with the 6th Strategy period, which was more focused on foundational governance reforms.

The implementation of the 6th EAC Development Strategy (2021/22–2025/26) registered notable progress in advancing regional integration under its seven strategic development objectives. Key achievements included the expansion of the EAC through the accession of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Federal Republic of Somalia, operationalisation of key regional infrastructure, and progress in implementing the Customs Union and Common Market Protocols. The region also enhanced its capacity to respond to health emergencies and climate-related risks. However, implementation faced constraints including delayed Partner States' contributions, fragmented coordination among organs and institutions, and persistent non-tariff barriers. Limited fiscal space, compounded by global shocks such as COVID-19 and geopolitical tensions, impacted program delivery. Lessons learned underscore the need for stronger political commitment, a sustainable financing mechanism, improved coordination, and adaptive programming to address emerging challenges. These insights have shaped the priorities and focus of the 7th EAC Development Strategy

The 7th EAC Development Strategy (2026/27–2030/31) marks a strategic evolution from recovery and stabilisation toward transformation and resilience. While the 6th Strategy was framed around economic recovery and repositioning in the aftermath of COVID-19, the 7th Strategy adopts a forward-looking, growth-oriented trajectory under the theme "Deepening integration for improved livelihoods of EAC Citizens." It emphasises structural transformation through digital and green economies, regional value chains, and innovation-driven development. The new strategy shifts from a reactive to a proactive posture, prioritising macroeconomic stability, climate adaptation, productive capacity enhancement, and institutional reform. Anchored in the goals of Agenda 2063, the SDGs, and AfCFTA, it introduces a more integrated, people-centered, and performance-driven framework to strengthen convergence, reinforce regional cohesion, and unlock the EAC's potential as a competitive, inclusive economic bloc. This pivot reflects lessons from the 6th Strategy's implementation and aims to build resilience against emerging global and regional shocks.

The 7th EAC Development Strategy is anchored on the belief that deepening regional integration through inclusive, market-driven, and people-centred approaches will lead to a stable, resilient, and prosperous East African Community. The Strategy assumes that if Partner States effectively implement harmonised policies, strengthen institutional frameworks, and invest in regional infrastructure and productive sectors, then the EAC will achieve stronger convergence, improved competitiveness, and more equitable socioeconomic outcomes across the region. By enhancing trade facilitation, accelerating digital transformation, mainstreaming climate action, and promoting social inclusion, including youth, women, and people with special needs, the EAC aims to catalyse sustainable development and shared prosperity. Aligning with Agenda 2063, the SDGs, and the AfCFTA, the strategy will contribute to continental and global integration goals. This transformative vision depends on robust political commitment, resource mobilisation, and multi-stakeholder partnerships that translate ambition into impact. The strategy's development hypothesis, therefore, rests on a virtuous cycle: strengthened institutions and integration mechanisms enable economic and social transformation, which in turn reinforces regional stability and cohesion. **The 7th EAC Development Strategy will pursue the following strategic development objectives.**

Deepening Regional Trade Integration:

In alignment with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Agenda 2063 Goal 2 (Accelerated African Economic Growth), and SDG 17.10 (Promote a universal, rules-based trading system), this priority focuses on accelerating the Customs Union implementation, eliminating Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs), harmonising trade instruments, promoting cross-border investments and regional value chains, and advancing digital trade integration through platforms such as the EAC Trade Portal. These actions are critical to fostering a seamless internal market and strengthening the EAC's contribution to continental trade ambitions.



Enhance production, productivity, and value addition in productive sectors:

This Strategic Development Objective aims to drive inclusive economic growth and regional competitiveness by enhancing production, productivity, and value addition across key sectors such as agriculture, industry, tourism, and services. The Strategy prioritises the modernisation of agricultural systems, strengthening agro-processing and manufacturing capabilities, improving access to regional and global markets, and fostering innovation and digital transformation in production systems. It also emphasizes the promotion of sustainable natural resource use, private sector participation, and development of regional value chains that support employment and resilience. This objective contributes to food and nutrition security, economic diversification, and integration of Partner States into the regional and continental economy. These interventions directly contribute to Agenda 2063 Aspiration 1 (A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development) and Goal 5 (Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production), while also advancing the 2030 SDGs—notably SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).



Strengthen the social dimensions of regional integration and improve access to quality socioeconomic services:

This objective seeks to deepen the social integration of the East African Community by enhancing access to quality, equitable, and inclusive socioeconomic services across the region. It emphasises the development of harmonised regional standards in health, education, and social protection, while promoting youth empowerment, gender equality, and the inclusion of people with special needs



This objective also prioritises improved regional coordination in addressing public health threats, expanding social protection systems, and strengthening skills development to meet the demands of a dynamic regional labour market. Through this, the EAC aims to foster a more cohesive, resilient, and inclusive regional community that supports shared prosperity and well-being. This aligns with Agenda 2063 Aspiration 6 (An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by African people, especially its women and youth) and Goal 18 (Engaged and empowered youth and children), as well as key 2030 SDGs—including SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

Full Implementation of the Roadmap for the Attainment of the EAC Monetary Union:



Guided by the EAC Monetary Union Protocol, EAMI Roadmap, and Agenda 2063 Goal 17 (African Financial and Monetary Institutions), this strategic development objective prioritizes the establishment of the East African Monetary Institute, macroeconomic convergence, harmonisation of monetary and fiscal frameworks, and preparation for a regional single currency. These actions support deeper macroeconomic integration and long-term economic stability, thereby contributing to SDG 8.10 (Access to Financial Services).

Development of Regional Infrastructure:



Aligned with SDG 9.1 (reliable, sustainable regional infrastructure), Agenda 2063 Goal 10 (world-class infrastructure), and PIDA (Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa), this Strategic Development Objective aims to expand cross-border transport corridors, modernise logistics and border infrastructure (e.g., Smart OSBPs), and enhance regional energy interconnectivity and digital infrastructure. These interventions support regional integration, trade facilitation, and energy access, particularly for land-linked Partner States.

Strengthening Regional Governance, Political Commitment, Accountability, and Inclusivity to Improve Peace and Security:



This area reinforces SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), Agenda 2063 Goal 11 (Democratic values and capable institutions), and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). It focuses on enhancing early warning systems, promoting democratic governance, electoral observation, human rights, anti-corruption frameworks, and inclusive political dialogue, premised on a strong belief that a secure and well-governed region is fundamental to sustaining integration and development gains.

Institutional Strengthening, Compliance, and Accountability:



Anchored in Agenda 2063 Goal 12 (Capable institutions) and aligned with SDG 16.6 (effective, accountable institutions), this Strategic Development Objective addresses the need for institutional reforms, improved coordination, performance management, and financial sustainability. It emphasizes a shift to results-based management, policy coherence, compliance with Council decisions, and enhanced partner coordination, ensuring that EAC Organs and Institutions operate efficiently and deliver value for citizens. In support of SDG 16.7 (inclusive, participatory decision-making), Agenda 2063 Goal 17 (Full African identity and engagement), and the principles of the EAC Treaty, this objective promotes a people-centred integration approach. It prioritises strategic communication, public awareness, stakeholder engagement, and participatory governance platforms to foster ownership, visibility, and feedback-driven policy implementation across the region.

The EAC continues to lead continental integration efforts, ranking high on the African Regional Integration Index, particularly in trade and free movement. Engagement with the AfCFTA and Tripartite frameworks is deepening, offering opportunities to scale up intra-African trade and regional value chains. Compared to the 6th Strategy, which prioritised AfCFTA alignment, the 7th Strategy adopts a more assertive leadership role, positioning the EAC as a model for convergence across RECs.

The 7th Strategy places greater emphasis on mainstreaming science and technology, as well as promoting gender and youth inclusion, alongside climate action. Regional innovation systems are being scaled up to support industrialisation and digital transformation. Despite progress in gender frameworks under the 6th Strategy, the 7th EAC Development Strategy underscores measurable integration of social inclusion in economic programming. Climate resilience has shifted from a reactive to a proactive agenda, aligning more closely with global commitments, such as the Paris Agreement and the AU Agenda 2063.

The rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies are essential for driving the EAC's future digital transformation. AI superintelligence can propel regional productivity and enhance service delivery, underscoring the need for robust digital skilling initiatives. Building on progress under the 6th DS, the 7th EAC Development Strategy positions digital transformation as a pivotal cross-cutting enabler of regional integration, competitiveness, and inclusive growth. Recognising the rapid pace of technological change and the lessons from the 6th EAC Development Strategy, the EAC will scale up investments in digital infrastructure, harmonise regulatory frameworks, and expand e-government and digital trade platforms to boost efficiency, transparency, and cross-border connectivity. Efforts will focus on bridging the digital divide by enhancing access, affordability, and skills, particularly for youth, women, and rural communities, while promoting innovation ecosystems and digital entrepreneurship. Embedding digitalisation across sectors is envisioned to accelerate service delivery, strengthen resilience, and position the Community as a digitally empowered and globally competitive region.



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



1.1 Background

The East African Community is a regional intergovernmental organisation of eight (8) Partner States namely: The Republic of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Rwanda, the Federal Republic of Somalia, the Republic of South Sudan, the Republic of Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania. With its headquarters in Arusha, the United Republic of Tanzania, EAC is mandated to lead the region's integration agenda across economic, social, and political spheres. The framework for cooperation among these eight Partner States is articulated in the EAC Treaty, which was signed in November 1999 and came into effect in July 2000. The Community's integration goals are wide-ranging. As outlined in Article 5(1) of the Treaty, the EAC aims to formulate and implement policies and programmes that promote deeper and broader collaboration among Partner States in political, economic, social, cultural, technological, defence, security, legal, and judicial matters, all for their collective benefit.

To achieve these objectives, the EAC is advancing through key integration milestones, namely the Customs Union, the Common Market, the Monetary Union, and ultimately, the Political Federation. Supporting these foundational pillars are a set of cross-cutting enabling and facilitating measures, including interventions in legal and judicial systems, infrastructure, energy, social development, and institutional strengthening. These enablers are designed to promote balanced and inclusive growth, while accelerating the expansion and harmonisation of economic activities throughout the region.

The EAC, building upon a trajectory of regional cooperation, integration, and development, seeks to align its strategic outlook with contemporary and emerging dynamics across Partner States and the broader African continent. This Strategy draws lessons from comparable regional efforts, such as EAC's Vision 2050 and its corresponding five-year plans, and contextualises them for the unique realities and aspirations of the EAC.



This Strategy is a bold commitment to deepen integration, accelerate shared prosperity, and ensure that no Partner State or citizen is left behind.

The EAC region, encompassing diverse ecological and demographic profiles, possesses both challenges and opportunities. With a population surpassing 341 million and growing at an average of 2.6% annually, the demographic dividend, particularly the youth, presents both a resource and a responsibility. Meanwhile, economic activity remains heavily reliant on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture, livestock, and fisheries, necessitating focused action on environmental sustainability, value addition, and regional resilience.

Despite steady economic growth in recent years, the Community continues to grapple with vulnerabilities including climate variability, environmental degradation, persistent food insecurity, and socio-political instability. Nonetheless, improved social indicators such as declines in malnutrition and poverty, better access to health and education, and enhanced gender representation, signal positive momentum.

A strategic shift is now underway, driven by transformative aspirations. These include the modernisation of agriculture, advancement of regional industrialisation, adoption of science and innovation-led development, and leveraging of digital and green economies. In response to evolving global dynamics, the 7th EAC Development Strategy prioritizes a forward-thinking agenda that positions digital transformation, powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), as a key driver of economic resilience and regional integration. The EAC's new strategic direction is equally anchored on achieving macroeconomic stability, regional peace, and inclusive growth, aligned with the aspirations of Agenda 2063, the SDGs, and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Through this Development Strategy, the EAC seeks to consolidate gains, confront persistent and emerging challenges, and catalyse transformative development. The guiding approach remains one of shared ownership, subsidiarity, and coherence across national and regional priorities. Ultimately, this strategy is a commitment to creating a resilient, peaceful, prosperous, and integrated East African region where all citizens can thrive.



With a population surpassing **341 million** and growing at an average of **2.6%** annually, the demographic dividend, particularly the youth, presents both a resource and a responsibility

1.2 The East African Community (EAC)

Vision, Mission, Core Values of the EAC



Vision:

A prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa.



Mission

To widen and deepen economic, political, social and cultural integration, in order to improve the quality of life of the people of East Africa through increased competitiveness, value added production, trade and investment.



Core Values

Underpinning the EAC is our commitment to our values: Professionalism; Accountability; Transparency; Teamwork; Unity in diversity; and Allegiance to the EAC ideals.

Objective of the EAC



The objective of the Community, as stipulated in Article 5 of the Treaty, is to develop policies and programmes aimed at widening and deepening co-operation among the Partner States in political, economic, social and cultural fields; research and technology; defence; as well as security, legal and judicial affairs for their mutual benefit.

EAC Legal, Institutional and Policy Frameworks

EAC's legal and institutional frameworks are mainly based on the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community, and its Protocols; as well as the Community laws. Its institutional framework consists of, inter alia, the Executive, Legislative and Judicial arms. The executive arm is composed of: The Summit of Heads of State; the Council of Ministers; the Co-ordination Committee; the Sectoral Committees; and the Secretariat, as well as EAC Institutions. The East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) and the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) are the legislative and judicial arms of the Community, respectively. The Summit gives overarching direction and provides impetus to the development and achievement of the objectives of the Community. The Council of Ministers is the policy Organ of the Community responsible for the general implementation of the Community's programs, projects, and activities. Details of the mandates and functions of the Organs and Institutions of the Community are duly spelt out in the EAC Treaty, Protocols, and Rules of Procedure. Several Institutions are operational for specific sectors, namely, East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO), Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation

(LVFO), Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC), Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA), Inter-university Council for East Africa (IUCEA), East African Kiswahili Commission (EAKC), East African Development Bank (EADB), East African Health and Research Commission (EAHRC) and East African Community Competition Authority (EACCA).

Development Frameworks of EAC Partner States

The National Visions are aligned to EAC Treaty and EAC Vision 2050, anchored on “A globally competitive upper middle-income region with a high quality of life for its population based on the principles of inclusiveness and accountability”. Thus, sustainable development and socio-economic transformation of the regional economies of the Partner States can be exploited within the regional frameworks that harness symbiotic synergies across the region. With adequate preparation, it should be possible to harmonise policies, strategies, plans, laws, regulations; Institutions at national and regional level; enabling infrastructure; Human Resource, staffing, capacity building and visibility.

The goal of transforming the East African Community into a Stable, Competitive and Sustainable Lower Middle-Income Region while “Accelerating a People-centred and Market-driven Integration” remains relevant for the 7th EAC Development Strategy. The key interventions of production, productivity & competitiveness; trade & investment facilitation and supportive policy and regulatory frameworks; welfare improvement; market connectivity; Liberalisation in free movement of factors of production; and sustainability of cross boundary resources, climate change effects in synergy with leveraging innovation, information access remain relevant in the medium term. These interventions, aligned to Vision 2050, are consistent with key priorities on the Partner States

Table 1: Summary overview of EAC Partner States' development frameworks

Country	Vision	Development vision	Priority Areas	National Development Plan
DRC	Vision 2050	Emerging country by 2040 and a developed country by 2050	DRC's extractive and agricultural sectors developed, with a view to building a diversified economy, inclusive growth and middle income.	National Development Plan 2024 to 2028.
Somalia	Vision 2060	Transform Somalia into a peaceful, inclusive, and middle-income nation by its independence centenary in 2060	Sustainable economic growth, human capital advancement, inclusive governance, and environmental sustainability.	Tenth National Transformation Plan (NTP) 2025-2029
Burundi	Vision 2060	Burundi Vision an Emerging Country by 2040 and a Developed Country by 2060	Decent living conditions; Eliminating preventable deaths; Economic growth; Agricultural value addition; Industrialisation; Mining; Natural resource management; Gender and equity in development.	National Development Plan 2018–2027
Kenya	Vision 2030	A globally competitive and prosperous nation with a high quality of life.	Transform Kenya into an industrialised middle-income country providing high quality life to all its citizens in a clean and secure environment.	Fourth Medium-Term Plan (MTP IV)
Rwanda	Vision 2050	Ensuring high standards of living for all Rwandans.	Human development, competitiveness and integration, Agriculture for wealth creation, urbanization and agglomeration, accountable and capable state institutions.	National Strategy for Transformation (NST 2) 2024 - 2029
South Sudan	Vision 2040	Towards freedom, equality, justice, peace, and prosperity for all.	Quality education, innovation, security, democracy, accountability, and prosperity, as well as equitable sharing of the national wealth.	Revitalized National Development Strategy II
Uganda	Vision 2040	Transform Uganda from a peasant society to a modern, prosperous country.	Strengthening of the economic fundamentals to harness abundant opportunities; prominence being given to a knowledge-based economy.	NDPIV (2025/26 – 2029/30)
United Republic of Tanzania	Vision 2050	To achieve upper middle-income status by harnessing land, natural resources, demographic dividend and technology	Manufacturing, digital economy, climate adaptation and youth empowerment	Fourth Five-Year Development Plan (FYDP IV)
EAC	Vision 2050	Attain a prosperous, competitive, secure, and politically united East Africa.	Widen and deepen economic, political, social and cultural integration at regional and global levels.	7 th EAC Development Strategy 2026-2031

1.3 Approach and Formulation Process of the Development Strategy

The 7th EAC Development Strategy has been formulated through a participatory process involving the assembly of diverse views and insights from internal and external sources. Primary data were gathered through administration of questionnaires and focus group discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, including policy makers, technical experts from Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in all the eight EAC Partner States, regional apex bodies representing specific stakeholder interests, development partners and EAC Organs and Institutions. The process has been multi-staged, encompassing close collaboration and validation to ensure that the final Strategy gained ownership and acceptance for effective implementation.

1.4 Structure of the 7th EAC Development Strategy

The 7th EAC Development Strategy is structured around seven chapters. Chapter one presents the salient features of the East African Community (EAC), the Community's Vision, Mission, Core Values, the objective as enshrined in the EAC Treaty, the legal, institutional and policy framework that governs the integration process, and the development frameworks of the EAC Partner States. Chapter two analyses the environment in which the Community has operated over the last five years from a socio-economic and political perspective, particularly the underlying internal and external factors influencing or likely to influence the integration pathway at continental and international levels.

Performance evaluation of the 6th EAC Development Strategy, including lessons learnt, is presented in Chapter three. Chapters four and five, respectively, set the Broad Development Context for the 7th EAC Development Strategy, and the strategic direction that will ensure that the regional integration is deepened for higher impact. The Implementation framework, financing mechanisms and monitoring and evaluation frameworks and presented in Chapters six, seven and eight respectively.



CHAPTER 2

SITUATION ANALYSIS

2.1 Governance and Political Developments in the EAC Region

The EAC has undergone significant political and governance transformations over the past five years, reflecting both progress and persisting institutional challenges in its journey toward deeper integration. One of the most consequential developments has been the expansion of the Community's membership. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) formally joined in 2022, significantly expanding the bloc's geographic and economic footprint. This was followed by the Federal Republic of Somalia's accession in early 2024, making it the EAC's eighth Partner State. While these accessions signal the EAC's growing influence and inclusivity, they have also presented integration challenges, including delays in domestication of Accession Treaties, legal harmonisation, and financial obligations from the new entrants.

Partner States continue to navigate diverse challenges in strengthening democratic principles, with some making notable progress, while others face complexities arising from political dynamics and institutional development. Nonetheless, the Partner States have continued to express commitment to democratic governance, as enshrined in the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community. National efforts have been directed toward strengthening electoral institutions, promoting citizen participation, and advancing rule of law. Across the region, Partner States have undertaken various reforms to enhance democratic resilience, including electoral reviews, judicial strengthening, and decentralization processes. While the pace and depth of these efforts have varied across Partner States, the shared aspiration to uphold democratic values remains evident. The EAC has also intensified its support to Partner States through election observation missions, capacity building for governance institutions, and dialogue platforms aimed at promoting peaceful political transitions, inclusivity, and adherence to constitutionalism.

In parallel, the EAC has made incremental yet strategically significant progress toward the establishment of a political confederation as the transitional model to a political federation. Key developments include the operationalisation of the Constitutional Experts Committee and the initiation of structured consultations across Partner States to gather views on the confederation model. Consultations with stakeholders, constitutional experts, and national governments continued through 2023 and

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The EAC's expansion to eight Partner States underscores its growing influence yet also amplifies the urgency of harmonising laws, strengthening institutions, and securing sustainable financing to uphold democratic governance and regional stability.

2024, backed by renewed political commitment from Heads of State. However, this process has been uneven and occasionally slowed by the residual effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and other development challenges which diverted attention and resources from regional governance efforts. The process is significantly behind schedule according to the initial roadmap.

From a peace and security standpoint, the deployment of the EAC Regional Force to eastern DRC in 2022, under the EAC – Lead Nairobi Process for the restoration of peace and stability in eastern DRC, marked a historic milestone in the bloc’s security cooperation. Although the mission formally came to an end in late 2023, the EAC’s commitment and capacity to respond to regional crises was reaffirmed. Nonetheless, tensions between some Partner States persisted, necessitating robust diplomatic engagement and conflict resolution mechanisms.

These political dynamics have occurred alongside pressing institutional and financial challenges. The fiscal pressure affected the functionality of key Organs and Institutions, and delayed policy implementation.

The EAC continues to face recurring cross-border tensions driven by porous borders, competition over resources, security issues, all of which exert influence on regional stability and economic integration. These are priority issues that align squarely with the EAC’s development and peace agenda, which prioritises regional security cooperation, social cohesion, and inclusive growth.

2.2 Macro-Economics Dynamics and Economic Development

Convergence

Macroeconomic convergence within the EAC has remained a critical yet unevenly achieved pillar of regional integration. The attainment of key convergence criteria, specifically on headline inflation, fiscal deficit, public debt, and foreign exchange reserves, has faced persistent challenges among Partner States, largely due to external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, global inflation, regional conflicts, and climate-induced disruptions. While Partner States like the Republic of Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania, and the Republic of Rwanda have demonstrated relative macroeconomic stability, fiscal

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East African Community remains Africa’s fastest-growing region, but achieving the East African Monetary Union demands closing persistent gaps in fiscal discipline, debt sustainability, and policy convergence.

deficits and debt sustainability thresholds have been exceeded in several Partner States, hindering progress toward the EAC macroeconomic convergence criteria. Inflationary pressures and currency volatility have further constrained alignment on monetary and exchange rate policies. The persistence of these divergences underscores the need for reinforced policy harmonisation, enhanced fiscal discipline, and capacity-building support to ensure sustained macroeconomic stability. Strengthening the Macroeconomic Convergence Surveillance Mechanism and aligning national macroeconomic frameworks with EAC-wide thresholds will be central to operationalising the EAMU roadmap in the near to medium term.

Table 2: Macroeconomic convergence indicators

Economic indicator	Year	DRC	Somalia	Burundi	Kenya	Rwanda	RSS	Uganda	URT
Current account balance (% of GDP)	2020	-2.2	-6.5	-9.2	-3.7	-12.1	11.87	-6.68	-2.3
	2021	-1.1	-8.9	-13.1	-5.1	-10.9	6.23	-9.47	-3.5
	2022		-8.2	-15.9	-5.1	-9.4	-5.6	-7.91	-7.4
	2023	-1.5	-9.1	-13.5	-2.5	-11.6	2.01	-7.6	-3.8
	2024	-0.7		-8.1	-1.3	-12.7			-2.6
GDP per capita, (current US\$)	2020	458.8	594	284.1	2061.5	799		956.6	1,151
	2021	558.2	635	304.5	2206.2	851		1042.3	1,173.1
	2022	649	664	353.3	2260.7	999		1081.4	1,233.1
	2023	654.6	694	343.6	2096.7	1,047		1159.2	1,276.8
	2024		737	370.0		1,029		1262.7	1,227.4
Gross international reserves in months of imports	2020	0.6		1.1	5.6	5.9	2	5.09	5.6
	2021	2.6		3.2	5.2	5.1	2.2	4.28	6.6
	2022	2.6		2.2	3.9	4.3	1	4.84	4.7
	2023	8.2		3.3	4	4.4	2	3.7	4.5
	2024	10.0		3.9	4.1	5.4			4.5
Gross national savings (% of GDP)	2020				3.2	11			20.9
	2021				5.1	16			21.1
	2022				5.3	15			20.9
	2023	9.5			4.6	12			19.7
	2024	9.1				16			23.8
Real GDP growth (annual %)	2020	0.8	-2.8	0.3	-0.3	-3.4	-3.5	-1.4	4.5
	2021	6.4	3.5	3.2	7.6	10.9	-2.3	5.8	4.8
	2022	8.9	2.7	-9.2	4.9	8.2	8.1	5.8	4.7
	2023	8.5	4.2	13.1	5.6	8.2	4.9	5	5.1
	2024	6.5	4.1	-15.9	4.7	8.9			5.5
Central Government Debt (Percent of GDP)	2020	11.43	52.49	55.73	64.71	65.0	-	43.08	40.42
	2021	10.81	47.3	52.0	66.38	67.6	-	48.67	43.91
	2022	12.79	43.51	48.0	64.15	63.4	-	45.12	43.87
	2023	15.02	25.69	44.0	64.82	69.0	25.91	47.69	44.15
	2024	18.61	11.84	52.2	69.39	74.5	0	51.48	49.14

Economic indicator	Year	DRC	Somalia	Burundi	Kenya	Rwanda	RSS	Uganda	URT
Lending Rates (Long term)	2020	18.50		12.11	12.1	16.3	17.4		16.21
	2021	8.50		12.4	12.2	16.1	18		16
	2022	8.25		11.7	12.6	16.3	18.3		15.7
	2023	25		11.6	14.1	16.0	20		15.6
	2024	25				16.0			15.5
Tax revenue to GDP (%)	2020	6.7		17.4	14.7	15.7	2.3	11.25	12.17
	2021	6.8	1.72	17.0	13.67	15.8	2.56	11.83	11.15
	2022	10.11	1.78	18.0	15.26	15.6	1.47	11.87	12.3
	2023	10.13	2.06	16.1	15.06	15.0	1.76	12.39	12.34
	2024	10.46	2.09	15.2	13.09	14.6	4.05	12.06	13.15
Fiscal deficit incl. grants (% of GDP)	2020			-1.5	-7.37	-8.9	-7.9	-6.17	0.72
	2021	-0.2	-0.89	-2.3	-7.52	-8.7	-0.95	-8.06	-2.65
	2022	-1.96	0.02	-4.0	-6.17	-9.3	-1.91	-6.45	-3.07
	2023	-2.32	0.26	-4.2	-6.56	-7.3	7.07	-4.78	-2.5
	2024	-2.19	0.08	-2.9	-5.05	-6.9	-10.66	-4.24	-2.46
Inflation for EAC partner states, consumer prices	2020	-	-	7.5	5.4	3.7	29.7	2.8	3.3
	2021	-	-	8.4	6.1	1.9	10.5	2.2	3.7
	2022	-	-	18.9	7.6	21.6	-6.7	7.2	4.4
	2023	-	-	27.1	7.7	6.4	2.4	5.4	3.8
	2024	-	-	20.2	4.7	6.8	99.9	3.3	3.1
State Currency to US dollar exchange rates	2020	1851.5		1915.1	106.5	945	165.9	3717.5	2294.15
	2021	1989.4		1976.0	109.7	990	309.02	3584.7	2297.8
	2022	2006.9		2034.3	117.9	1,033	760.9	3709.4	2303
	2023	2686.7		2574.1	154.1	1,168	930.4	3725.9	2382.1
	2024	2855.9		2885.3	134.8	1,323	2163.1	3755.0	2597.3
Central Government's Budget (overall) deficit/ surplus excl.	2020			-5.7	-7.66	-13.6	-7.9	-6.99	0.08
	2021	-2.65	-2.44	-6.1	-7.78	-14.1	-0.95	-9.31	-3.1
	2022	-4.99	-4.48	-7.0	-6.41	-16.2	-1.91	-7.13	-3.48
	2023	-3.99	-3.46	-8.3	-6.73	-12.0	-3.49	-5.32	-2.94
	2024	-4.09	-4.17	-6.2	-5.18	--11.2	-31.37	-4.72	-2.78

Source: Partner States

Economic Growth

The East African Community has demonstrated strong resilience and sustained recovery in the post-COVID-19 period, emerging as one of Africa's fastest-growing regional blocs. The period from 2021 to 2025 was characterized by robust economic performance across most Partner States, underpinned by improved macroeconomic management, increased public and private investment, and recovery in key sectors such as agriculture, industry, and services. In 2021, the region recorded a broad-based economic rebound following the pandemic-induced contraction of 2020. Kenya and Rwanda, in particular, posted significant growth rates of 7.6%, and 5.7%, respectively, driven by strong domestic demand and expansion in services and manufacturing. Other Partner States, such as the DRC, URT, and Uganda, also experienced a return to positive growth trajectories, benefiting from the normalisation of trade, agriculture, and industrial activities.

From 2022 through 2023, growth remained resilient, with most EAC economies maintaining real GDP growth rates in the range of 4.5% to 8.5%. Rwanda continued to lead with consistent high growth, averaging over 8% annually. Uganda showed strong performance with 5.3% growth in 2023, and was projected to accelerate beyond 7% in 2025. Kenya maintained steady growth, although slightly subdued in 2024 due to fiscal consolidation and inflationary pressures (4.7% in 2024, against 5.7% in 2023). Burundi, while initially growing at a modest pace, demonstrated improving macroeconomic stability and increasing investment flows, with GDP growth expected to reach approximately 4.6% by 2025. The DRC sustained growth rates above 6% on average, supported by strong performance in the mining sector.

During the early 2020s, EAC economies experienced heightened inflation driven largely by global commodity shocks, supply chain bottlenecks and intermittent droughts affecting food prices. In 2022, inflation peaked for the region collectively reaching double digits-28% (AfDB) leading central banks to tighten monetary policy. By 2023/24 inflation began moderating as food supplies improved, energy costs receded, and monetary actions took effect. Regional aggregate inflation fell from 11.2% in 2023 to 9% in 2024.

The African Development Bank and World Bank both identify East Africa as the continent's fastest-growing region, owing to continued infrastructure investment, regional integration efforts, and a gradually diversifying economic base. The region's medium-term growth prospects are bolstered by several strategic factors, including: recovery in global and regional trade flows; increased public investment in energy, transport, and digital infrastructure; strengthening agricultural value chains; growing intra-regional trade through implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

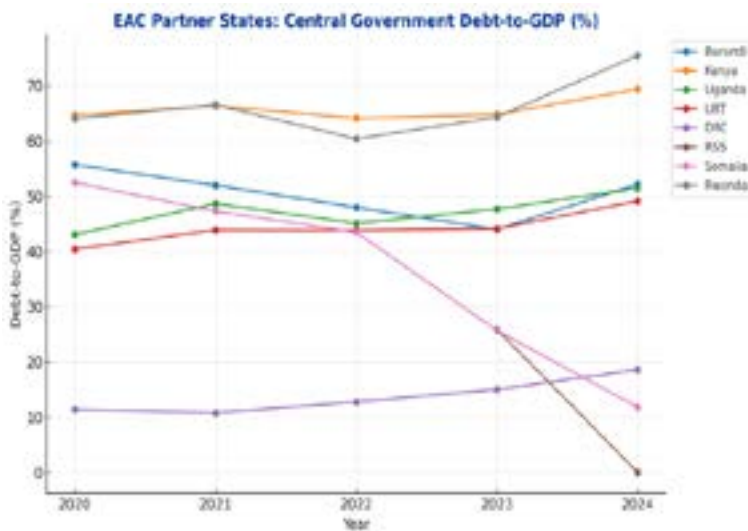
Despite the positive outlook, the EAC region remains exposed to several risks. These include global commodity price volatility, climate-related shocks affecting agriculture and water resources, regional insecurity and elevated public debt levels in some partner states. Addressing these risks through coordinated macroeconomic policies, strengthened institutions, and climate resilience strategies remains critical for sustaining inclusive and durable growth.

Table 3: GDP growth rate

Year	DRC	Somalia	Burundi	Kenya	Rwanda	RSS	Uganda	URT
2020	0.8	-2.8	0.3	-0.3	-3.4	-3.5	-1.4	4.5
2021	6.4	3.5	3.2	7.6	10.9	-2.3	5.8	4.8
2022	8.9	2.7	2.2	4.9	8.2	8.1	5.8	4.7
2023	8.5	4.2	3.3	5.7		4.9	5	5.1
2024	-	4.1	-	4.7	8.9	-	6.0	5.5

Source: National sources

-: data not available



Sectoral drivers of GDP

Across the EAC region, economic growth during the 2021 to 2025 period was primarily driven by a services-led expansion, with sectors like ICT, financial services, trade, tourism, and transport contributing over 50% of GDP in most partner states particularly Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and URT. Agriculture remains a vital but vulnerable pillar, heavily influenced by weather patterns, input subsidies, and subsistence farming. During the 2021-2025 period, industrial growth showed mixed trends. Rwanda and DR Congo recorded strong gains from construction, mining, and light manufacturing, while Kenya and URT experienced more moderate advances. Rwanda and DRC are experiencing surges in high-growth, resource-driven and infrastructure-led industries, propelled by either policy reform (Rwanda) or commodity demand (DRC). Kenya and Tanzania have strong services and agriculture bases, and while their industrial sectors are important, they do not dominate growth in the same way. Oil-related developments in South Sudan played a significant role in shaping industrial output, though often with volatility. Overall, the EAC region reflects a gradual transition toward more service-oriented economies, underpinned by agriculture and selective industrial momentum.

Table 4: Key drivers of GDP

Country	Agriculture	Industry / Manufacturing	Services (incl. ICT, Finance, Tourism, Construction)
DR Congo	Strong commodity export growth (minerals, agriculture)	Mining-led surges (cobalt, copper) drove 2022 peak; mining remained key in 2023	Services modest: retail, public, logistics in urban hubs
Somalia	Pastoralism/fisheries high weight	Rebuilding lightly: remittance-driven construction & telecoms	Finance remittances-financed, telecoms, trade in hubs (Mogadishu)
Burundi	Modest contribution from agriculture recovery & subsistence farming	Industry led by agro-processing, small mining operations	Services grew slowly: retail, public administration, informal trade
Kenya	Rebounded postdrought (~6.1% in Q1 2024), key crops tea, maize, horticulture; Subsidies (fertiliser/seed) helped agriculture grow 6.5% in 2023	Manufacturing stable (~2-3%), challenged by high input costs and currency headwinds; Construction weakened: -2% in Q3 2024	Major driver (~50%+ of growth): financial services, ICT, transport, real estate; Tourism/resilience in accommodation & food services (+33.6% in 2023)
Rwanda	Strong rebound: +5.3% in 2024 post2 weak years on improved weather/cultivation	Industry surged via construction, light manufacturing, mining	Services remain the primary engine (50% growth): ICT, trade, hospitality, transport
South Sudan	Agriculture/food from subsistence basis; oil revenues distort GDP data	Oil & related sector dominate; insecurity limits other industrial growth	Services (government, trade) supported by oil revenues
Uganda	Agricultural recovery postpandemic; emphasis on cash crops & smallholder yields	Industry traction from oil infrastructure and construction activity	Services + trade and finance grew, bolstered by oil sector optimism (≥7% in 2025)
URT	Sustained growth via food crops & smallholder output, but drought risks persist	Industry growth led by construction boom pre2020 and manufacturing expansion	Services dominant (~60% of GDP): banking, trade, tourism key growth contributors

Table 5: GDP shares

	Year	DRC	Somalia	Burundi	Kenya	Rwanda	RSS	Uganda	URT
Agriculture, value added (% of GDP)	2020	14.9	-	31.4	22.7	27%	-	24.8	26.7
	2021	14.4	-	30.9	21.5	24%	-	24.1	26.8
	2022	13.6	-	31.5	21	25%	-	24.1	26.2
	2023	12.9	4.1	33.7	21.8	27%	4.1	23.6	26.8
	2024	12.4	-	34.4	-	25%	-	-	26.3
Industry, value added (% of GDP)	2020	20.8	-	12.8	17.4	19%	-	26.6	29.2
	2021	20.4	-	12.2	17.2	20%	-	26.8	29
	2022	106.5	-	10.8	17.5	21%	-	26.5	30.5
	2023	18.1	-	9.7	16.9	21%	-	26.3	30.2
	2024	17.5	-	9.1	-	21%	-	-	30.9
Services, value added (% of GDP)	2020	37.8	-	36.0	51.9	47%	-	41.8	37.2
	2021	37.6	-	36.7	53.1	48%	-	41.8	36.9
	2022	35.6	-	36.3	53.5	46%	-	42.2	35.9
	2023	33.8	-	34.9	53.3	46%	-	42.5	36.1
	2024	32.8	-	34.5	-	48%	-	-	36

Source: Partner States

Table 6: Sector contribution to GDP (%)

S. Sector		Year	DRC	Somalia	Burundi	Kenya	Rwanda	RSS	Uganda	URT
Agriculture, forestry and Fishing	Crops & livestock	2020	14.9	-	33.7	20.5	20	9.6	18.0	22.4
		2021	14.4	-	33.1	19.2	17	-	17.9	22.3
		2022	13.6	-	33.4	18.6	19	-	18.3	21.7
		2023	12.9	65	35.5	19.4	20	-	18.1	22.6
		2024	12.4	65	36.1	-	19	-	24.7	22.3
	Forestry	2020	0.5	-	1.2	0.0	6	-	4.3	2.6
		2021	0.5	-	1.2	0.0	6	-	4.0	2.7
		2022	0.4	-	1.1	0.0	6	-	3.8	2.7
		2023	0.3	-	1.0	0.0	5	-		2.6
		2024	0.2	-	1.0		5	-		2.4
	Fishing	2020	0.02	-	1.0	0.0	0	-	2.5	1.7
		2021	0.02	-	1.0	0.0	0	-	2.2	1.8
		2022	0.02	-	1.0	0.0	0	-	2.0	1.8
		2023	0.02	-	1.0	0.0	0	-	1.9	1.7
		2024	0.02	-	1.0		0	-		1.6
Manufacturing and extractive industry	Mining and quarrying	2020	29.9	-	0.5	0.0	1	-	1.7	6.8
		2021	31.0	-	1.4	0.0	3	-	1.6	7.3
		2022	34.8	-	0.9	0.0	3	-	1.5	9.0
		2023	37.8	-	0.9	0.0	2	-	2.4	9.1
		2024	39.9	-	0.8	0.0	3	-		10.1
	Manufacturing	2020	20.8	-	2.4	0.1	9	-	16.0	7.7
		2021	20.4	-	2.3	0.1	9	-	16.3	7.2
		2022	106.5	-	1.8	0.1	10	-	16.1	7.1
		2023	18.1	-	1.6	0.1	9	-	15.1	7.1
		2024	17.5	-	1.6		9	-		7.3
	Electricity, water and gas	2020	0.6	-	0.7	0.0	2	-	3.6	0.7
		2021	0.6	-	0.7	0.0	2	-	3.5	0.7
		2022	0.5		0.6	0.0	0		3.4	0.6
		2023	0.5		0.6	0.0	0		3.4	0.6
		2024	0.5		0.6		0			0.7
Construction	2020	4.5		5.8	0.1	7		41.8	14.0	
	2021	4.2		5.7	0.1	7		41.8	13.8	
	2022	4.0		7.5	0.1	8		42.2	13.7	
	2023	4.2		7.9	0.1	8		42.5	13.4	
	2024	4.2		8.3		9			12.8	

S. Sector		Year	DRC	Somalia	Burundi	Kenya	Rwanda	RSS	Uganda	URT
Services	Trade and repair, Accommodation and food, and tourism	2020	13.9		12.3	0.1	10		10.7	10.1
		2021	13.6		12.6	0.1	11		10.6	10.1
		2022	12.8		13.8	0.1	12		11.1	9.7
		2023	12.0		14.2	0.1	11		12.0	10
		2024	11.6		12.9		14			10.1
	Financial and insurance	2020	1.4		6.6	0.1	2		2.7	3.4
		2021	1.4		6.9	0.1	3		2.8	3.4
		2022	1.3		6.4	0.1	3		2.8	3.7
		2023	1.3		6.2	0.1	2		2.8	3.4
		2024	1.3		6.7		2			3.3
	Transportation, storage	2020	12.5		4.4	0.1	6		3.3	7.4
		2021	12.9		3.8	0.1	5		3.2	7.0
		2022	12.4		3.7	0.1	6		3.4	6.7
		2023	11.9		3.7	0.1	5		3.5	7.2
		2024	11.9		4.0		6			7.5
	Government services	2020	3.2		14.1	0.1			2.9	3.8
		2021	3.1		14.2	0.1			3.0	3.8
		2022	2.9		13.3	0.1			2.9	3.7
		2023	2.7		12.0	0.0			2.7	3.5
		2024	2.5		12.0					3.3
Other services	2020	3.1		2.7	0.0	29		2.4	0.8	
	2021	7.1		2.7	0.0	28		2.4	0.9	
	2022	6.7		2.5	0.0	26		2.1	0.9	
	2023	6.4		2.2	0.0	27		1.9	0.9	
	2024	6.0		2.4		26			0.8	

Source: Partner States

Per Capita Incomes

The EAC continues to exhibit wide disparities in per capita income across its eight partner states, reflecting both structural economic differences and varying levels of development

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Rwanda has shown notable progress, with its income per capita growing from around **US\$910** in 2021 to over **US\$1,040** in 2025, reflecting strong growth momentum and improved macroeconomic management



As of 2025, Kenya leads the bloc with a projected nominal per capita income of approximately US\$2,468, driven by a relatively diversified economy anchored in services, technology, and agriculture. Rwanda has shown notable progress, with its income per capita growing from around US\$910 in 2021 to over US\$1,040 in 2025, reflecting strong growth momentum and improved macroeconomic management. URT also maintains steady growth, with nominal per capita income reaching about US\$1,224 in 2023. In contrast, Uganda's per capita income remains modest, ranging between US\$800 and US\$1,000, while Burundi and South Sudan have income levels below US\$500. DRC, Somalia, and South Sudan face significant data challenges, limiting precise year-by-year analysis. However, available estimates suggest these Partner States remain in the lower-income tier, with per capita incomes mostly under US\$1,000. These disparities underscore the need to support convergence by addressing underlying structural constraints in the lower-income economies, improving data systems, and enhancing regional integration efforts. Bridging these income gaps will be critical for achieving inclusive growth, social cohesion, and the bloc's broader goals of economic transformation.

Unemployment

Between 2021 and 2025, the East African Community (EAC) Partner States experienced a gradual recovery of their labour markets from the COVID-19 pandemic, although unemployment, particularly among youth and women, remains a persistent regional challenge. While some Partner States have made notable progress in reducing joblessness through investments in digital economies and entrepreneurship, high levels of informality and skill mismatches continue to limit access to decent and sustainable employment across the region. Youth unemployment rates remain significantly higher than national averages, reflecting structural barriers and limited formal job creation in fast-growing populations. Informal employment still dominates labour markets in all Partner States, with over 70% of workers engaged in low-productivity, insecure jobs without social protection. Country-level disparities remain pronounced. Some Partner States maintain relatively low official unemployment rates, but with high underemployment in informal sectors. Fragile states face deeper structural constraints that hinder employment growth. These dynamics underscore the need for coordinated regional strategies focused on skilling, youth empowerment, job creation, and cross-border labour mobility to meet the goals of inclusive economic development under the 7th EAC Development Strategy.



70% of workers and above engaged in low-productivity, insecure jobs without social protections

Table 7: Unemployment rates

Country	2021 (%)	2022 (%)	2023 (%)	2024 (%)	2025 (%) - est	Data sources
DR Congo	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	ILO, INS RDC, World Bank
Somalia	21.4	16.3	16.3	16.3	16.3	LFS, IHBS (SNBS)
Burundi	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.9	ILOSTAT, World Bank
Kenya	6.5	6.6	6.3	5.9	5.6	KNBS, ILO, World Bank
Rwanda	21.1	20.5	17.2	14.9	14.5	NISR Rwanda, ILO
RSS	12.0	12.3	12.5	12.7	13.0	ILO, UNDP, World Bank
Uganda	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.5	UBOS, ILO, World Bank
URT	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.3	NBS URT, World Bank

2.3 Fiscal Sector Development

The fiscal sector across the EAC Partner States has played a pivotal role in shaping the region's development trajectory between 2021 and 2025. The region has witnessed varied fiscal dynamics influenced by post-pandemic recovery efforts, global economic shocks, and national reform agendas. Following expansive fiscal responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, Partner States implemented consolidation measures aimed at narrowing fiscal deficits and stabilising debt burdens. These measures included medium-term fiscal frameworks focused on domestic resource mobilisation, prudent spending, and improvements in tax administration systems. Despite these gains, most Partner States remained below the 20% tax-to-GDP threshold recommended for sustainable fiscal development. Public debt levels surged, propelled by infrastructure spending and COVID-19-related financing needs. Some Partner States approached high debt distress thresholds, triggering engagements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under Extended Credit Facility arrangements, while others maintained relatively sound debt positions. External shocks and inflation pressures continued to impede progress. Rising global commodity prices and exchange rate volatility exacerbated fiscal pressures.

Expenditure management and efficiency were given prominence by the respective Partner States. Governments across the region placed emphasis on improving expenditure quality. Key measures included program-based budgeting, prioritisation of social and infrastructure sectors, and public investment management reforms. Concerning the regional fiscal harmonisation, progress towards the EAC Monetary Union Protocol's fiscal convergence criteria remained uneven. However, challenges in meeting deficit and debt thresholds persisted across most countries.



Despite revenue reforms and budget efficiency gains, fiscal vulnerabilities, especially high debt burdens, underline the strategic imperative of stronger domestic resource mobilization and deeper fiscal harmonisation.

The fiscal trajectories of EAC Partner States over the 2021–2025 period reflect efforts to transition from crisis response to sustainable development financing. Despite progress in revenue reforms and budget efficiency, fiscal vulnerabilities persist. Strengthening domestic resource mobilisation, enhancing expenditure management, and accelerating fiscal harmonisation remain strategic imperatives for the successful implementation of the EAC’s Seventh Development Strategy.

Table 8: External debt stock and debt indicators

Indicator	Year	DRC	Somalia	Burundi	Kenya	Rwanda	RSS	Uganda	URT
Total debt stock (US\$ Millions)	2020	6,182.52	4,528.74	1,936.72	65,127.63	7,150.00		16,398.08	25,497.07
	2021	7,385.03	4,485.92	2,154.79	72,818.49	7,945.00		20,761.92	29,735.01
	2022	9,499.86	4,439.75	2,478.80	73,416.88	8,648.00	3,722.90	21,738.84	32,374.67
	2023	10,558.53	2,817.67	2,180.09	70,027.38	9,512.00		24,330.17	34,794.29
	2024	13,168.26	1,515.35	2,443.48	83,895.37	10,688.00		29,058.20	39,121.90
Debt-to-GDP ratio (%)	2020	11.43	52.49	55.73	64.71	72.4	-	43.08	40.42
	2021	10.81	47.3	55.47	66.38	73.3	-	48.67	43.91
	2022	12.79	43.51	54.73	64.15	67.5	-	45.12	43.87
	2023	15.02	25.69	48.56	64.82	73.5	25.91	47.69	44.15
	2024				66.5	78.7	56.9	46.4	49.7

Source: Partner States

2.4 The External Sector

External Trade



2021 and 2023, EAC intraregional trade rose from roughly US \$9.8 billion to US \$12.1 billion, an annual growth of about 11–13%, yet it remained persistently low, at 15% of total EAC trade

Between 2021 and 2023, EAC intraregional trade rose from roughly US \$9.8 billion to US \$12.1 billion, an annual growth of about 11–13%, yet it remained persistently low, at 15% of total EAC trade. Despite sustained post-COVID-19, easing of nontariff barriers and political coordination, intra-EAC trade continues to lag regional targets of 40%, highlighting that tariff harmonisation and infrastructure deficits still inhibit deeper regional linkages. Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania dominate intra-EAC corridors: in Q3 2023, URT outperformed Kenya as the intra-EAC’s leading exporter (US\$798m), while Uganda remained the largest regional importer (US \$649m). Smaller economies such as Burundi and Republic of South Sudan continue to register intra EAC trade under US\$200m annually,

while newcomers, notably Somalia, record early intraregional trade in the US\$100–150m range, pointing to latent corridor potential. A growing share of the DRC’s cross-border trade is routed through Mombasa and Dar es Salaam, underscoring the strategic importance of port and rail connectivity.

External trade has grown steadily alongside intra-EAC flows: total EAC trade rose from US\$65.3 bn in 2021 to US\$80 bn+ in 2023, with key external partners including China (US\$11bn imports in 2023), the EU, UAE, India and South Africa. The operationalisation of the Tripartite Free Trade Area (COMESA, EAC, SADC) and full implementation of the AfCFTA are expected to catalyse both interregional and international flows. However, realising this potential will require improving corridor infrastructure, completing customs union reforms, and supporting institutional alignment for the new Partner States- the Federal Republic of Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo to capture value within the regional bloc.

Table 9: Global and Intra-Regional Trade: Exports and Imports (US\$ Million)

Year	DRC	Somalia	Burundi	Kenya	Rwanda	RSS	Uganda	URT
2020	21,080	4,427	1,072	21,464	4,626	1,831	12,399	14,530
2021	28,627	5,507	1,194	26,448	4,710	3,691	13,051	17,241
2022	27,162	7,084	1,467	28,494	6,105	5,952	13,325	22,479
2023	28,782	7,965	1,359	25,842	7,116	4,388	18,085	22,391
2024	36,347	10,736	1,141	28,351	8,306	2,690	21,872	24,387

Source: EAC Facts and Figures

Table 10: Top exports and imports

Exports/ Imports	Commodity/ service	Analysis area	Value
Exports	0901-Coffee	Exports (US\$ M)	22.8
		% of Total Exports	18%
	2615-Niobium, tantalum, vanadium, etc.	Exports (US\$ M)	13.1
		% of Total Exports	10%
	0902-Tea	Exports (US\$ M)	11
		% of Total Exports	9%
2402-Cigars	Exports (US\$ M)	0%	
	% of Total Exports	0%	
Imports	1001-Wheat and mesline	Exports (US\$ M)	8.3
		% of Total Exports	6%
	2710-Petroleum oil and oils obtained from bituminous minerala	Imports (US\$ M)	135.5
		% of Total Imports	14%
	3103-Mineral or chemicals fertilisers	Imports (US\$ M)	48.9
		% of Total Imports	5%
8703-Motor cars and other motor vehicles	Imports (US\$ M)	33.9	
	% of Total Imports	3%	
1701-Cane or beet sugar	Imports (US\$ M)	28.4	
	% of Total Imports	3%	
2523-Portland cement	Imports (US\$ M)	25.8	
	% of Total Imports	3%	

Top exports/ imports (Kenya)			
Exports/ Imports	Commodity/ service	Analysis area	Value
Exports	0902-Tea	Exports (US\$ M)	1348.7
		% of Total Exports	16%
	2710-Petroleum oil and oils obtained from bituminous minerala	Exports (US\$ M)	106.4
		% of Total Exports	1%
	0603-Cut flowers	Exports (US\$ M)	715.4
		% of Total Exports	9%
0901-Coffee	Exports (US\$ M)	300.1	
	% of Total Exports	4%	
0804-Dates, figs, pineapples, avocados, etc	Exports (US\$ M)	207.9	
	% of Total Exports	3%	
Imports	2710-Petroleum oil and oils obtained from bituminous minerala	Imports (US\$ M)	4101.7
		% of Total Imports	20%
	1511-Palm oil and its fractions	Imports (US\$ M)	901.8
		% of Total Imports	4%
	1001-Wheat and mesline	Imports (US\$ M)	639.3
		% of Total Imports	3%
3004-Medicaments	Imports (US\$ M)	528.7	
	% of Total Imports	3%	
1006-Rice	Imports (US\$ M)	505.9	
	% of Total Imports	3%	
Top exports/ imports (Uganda)			
Exports/ Imports	Commodity/ service	Analysis area	Value (US\$ M) / %
Exports	7108-Gold (unwrought or semi-manufacture forms)	Exports (US\$ M)	3377.4
		% of Total Exports	42%
	0901-Coffee	Exports (US\$ M)	1548.1
		% of Total Exports	19%
	0801-Cocoa beans	Exports (US\$ M)	306.1
		% of Total Exports	4%
1701-Cane and beet sugar	Exports (US\$ M)	162.7	
	% of Total Exports	2%	
2710-Petroleum oil and oils obtained from bituminous minerala	Exports (US\$ M)	140.1	
	% of Total Exports	2%	
Imports	7108-Gold (unwrought or semi-manufacture forms)	Imports (US\$ M)	3272.7
		% of Total Imports	24%
	2710-Petroleum oil and oils obtained from bituminous minerala	Imports (US\$ M)	2090.1
		% of Total Imports	15%
	1511-Palm oil and its fractions	Imports (US\$ M)	358.2
		% of Total Imports	3%
8703-Motor cars and other motor vehicles	Imports (US\$ M)	298.4	
	% of Total Imports	2%	
3004-Medicaments	Imports (US\$ M)	263.4	
	% of Total Imports	2%	

Top exports/ imports (URT)			
Exports/ Imports	Commodity/ service	Analysis area	Value
Exports	7108-Gold (unwrought or semi-manufacture forms)	Exports (US\$ M)	3419.6
		% of Total Exports	39%
	0801-Cocoa beans	Exports (US\$ M)	564.9
		% of Total Exports	6%
	2401-unmanufactured tobacco	Exports (US\$ M)	509.5
		% of Total Exports	39%
	0713-Dried leguminous vegetables	Exports (US\$ M)	376.9
		% of Total Exports	4%
	0901-Coffee	Exports (US\$ M)	303.9
		% of Total Exports	3%
Imports	2710-Petroleum oil and oils obtained from bituminous minerala	Imports (US\$ M)	2806
		% of Total Imports	18%
	8701-Tractors	Imports (US\$ M)	450.8
		% of Total Imports	3%
	8703-Motor cars and other motor vehicles	Imports (US\$ M)	411.6
		% of Total Imports	3%
1701-Cane or beet sugar	Imports (US\$ M)	403.3	
	% of Total Imports	3%	
1001-Wheat and mesline	Imports (US\$ M)	392.7	
	% of Total Imports	3%	
Top exports/ imports (DRC)			
Exports/ Imports	Commodity/ service	Analysis area	Value
Exports	7403-Refined Copper and alloys	Exports (US\$ M)	22179.4
		% of Total Exports	85%
	0207- meat and edible offals	Exports (US\$ M)	1539.6
		% of Total Exports	6%
	1801-Cocoa beans	Exports (US\$ M)	454.2
		% of Total Exports	2%
	2822-Cobalt oxides	Exports (US\$ M)	423.5
		% of Total Exports	2%
2609-Tin ores and concentrates	Exports (US\$ M)	393	
	% of Total Exports	2%	
Imports	2710-Petroleum oil and oils obtained from bituminous minerala	Imports (US\$ M)	2554.2
		% of Total Imports	25%
	8407-Spark-ignition or piston engines	Imports (US\$ M)	406
		% of Total Imports	4%
	8429-Self-propelled bulldozers, etc	Imports (US\$ M)	239.1
		% of Total Imports	2%
2519-Natural Magnesium carbonate	Imports (US\$ M)	212.6	
	% of Total Imports	2%	
8474-Machinery	Imports (US\$ M)	204.5	
	% of Total Imports	2%	

Top exports/ imports (RSS)			
Exports/ Imports	Commodity/ service	Analysis area	Value
Exports	2709- Crude oil	Exports (US\$ M)	1690.4
		% of Total Exports	99%
	7204-Ferrous Waste and Scrap metals	Exports (US\$ M)	10.8
		% of Total Exports	1%
	0305-Fish	Exports (US\$ M)	1.6
		% of Total Exports	0%
	4402-Wood Charcoal	Exports (US\$ M)	0.7
% of Total Exports		0%	
3525-Builders'ware of plastic, nei	Exports (US\$ M)	0.4	
	% of Total Exports	0%	
Imports	2710-Petroleum oil and oils obtained from bituminous minerala	Imports (US\$ M)	141.6
		% of Total Imports	14%
	2523-Portland cement	Imports (US\$ M)	65.5
		% of Total Imports	7%
	8703-Motor cars and other motor vehicles	Imports (US\$ M)	49.2
		% of Total Imports	5%
1701-Cane or beet sugar	Imports (US\$ M)	39	
	% of Total Imports	4%	
1001-Wheat and mesline	Imports (US\$ M)	29.3	
	% of Total Imports	3%	
Top exports/ imports (Somalia)			
Exports/ Imports	Commodity/ service	Analysis area	Value
Exports (Data not available)		Exports (US\$ M)	
		% of Total Exports	
		Exports (US\$ M)	
		% of Total Exports	
		Exports (US\$ M)	
		% of Total Exports	
	Exports (US\$ M)		
	% of Total Exports		
Imports (Data not available)		Imports (US\$ M)	
		% of Total Imports	
		Imports (US\$ M)	
		% of Total Imports	
		Imports (US\$ M)	
		% of Total Imports	
	Imports (US\$ M)		
	% of Total Imports		

Top exports/ imports (Rwanda)			
Exports/ Imports	Commodity/ service	Analysis area	Value
Exports	7108-Gold (unwrought or semi-manufacture forms)	Exports (US\$ M)	1,509.05
		% of Total Exports	50%
	2710-Petroleum oil and oils obtained from bituminous minerala	Exports (US\$ M)	182.74
		% of Total Exports	6%
	0902-Tea	Exports (US\$ M)	114.05
		% of Total Exports	4%
2615-Niobium, tantalum, vanadium, etc.	Exports (US\$ M)	99.17	
	% of Total Exports	3%	
Imports	7108-Gold (unwrought or semi-manufacture forms)	Imports (US\$ M)	1,167.30
		% of Total Imports	22%
	2710-Petroleum oil and oils obtained from bituminous minerala	Imports (US\$ M)	680.93
		% of Total Imports	13%
	1006-Rice	Imports (US\$ M)	155.95
		% of Total Imports	3%
1701-Cane or beet sugar	Imports (US\$ M)	170.53	
	% of Total Imports	3%	
1511-Palm oil and its fractions	Imports (US\$ M)	130.21	
	% of Total Imports	2%	

Source: Partner States

Foreign Direct Investment Performance

From 2021 to 2023, the East African Community saw modest growth in foreign direct investment (FDI), with inflows rising from around 1.4% of GDP in 2022 to an estimated 2.3–2.6% by 2023, albeit unevenly distributed across Partner States. Kenya, URT, Rwanda and Uganda continued to attract the lion's share of FDI, driven by manufacturing, mining & quarrying, finance, and services projects. Kenya's FDI stock stood at over US \$10 billion by the end of 2022 (9.5 % of GDP), while URT registered inflows of about US \$1.44 billion in 2022, 20.8 % above 2021 levels, signalling investor confidence in policy-driven improvements in the investment climate.

Table 11: Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) (US\$ Million)

Year	DRC	FRS	Burundi	Kenya	Rwanda	RSS	Uganda	URT
2020	27,279.00		552.7	9,530.90	2,707.10		13,357.90	18,461.9
2021	29,149.00		558.3	9,563.60	2,937.80		15,031.60	18,924.3
2022	33,677.00		567.7	10,915.30	3,237.30		16,631.20	22,182.4
2023	34,694.00		444.6	9,237.00	3,696.10		19,624.70	23,042.5
2024				11,653.90	4,269.60		22,929.60	

Source: Partner States

Some Partner States such as the Republic of Burundi and Republic of South Sudan remained marginal FDI recipients, with the Republic of South Sudan attracting US \$0.12 billion in 2022 (up 71% YoY) but sliding into negative net inflows in 2023. Since its accession in 2024, the Federal Republic of Somalia's formal FDI integration commenced with official

figures still emerging; its continued reliance on aid remains a significant factor alongside private sector inflows. The DRC is expected to strengthen its role in regional FDI, supported by its mineral resources and ongoing infrastructure projects and the expanding presence of regional banking institutions such as Equity Bank, despite formal data being currently limited. Continued acquisitions are expected to play a more central FDI role. The Republic of Uganda continues to attract investment across manufacturing, services and agribusiness sectors, though at a relatively moderate pace compared to some other Partner States.



88% Approximate FDI inflows in 2022 were in mining and quarrying, finance and manufacturing in the United Republic of Tanzania

Across most Partner States, FDI is primarily concentrated in mining and quarrying, manufacturing, finance and insurance, and energy sectors. For instance, in the United Republic of Tanzania, approximately 88% of FDI inflows in 2022 were in mining and quarrying, finance and manufacturing. In the Republic of Kenya, sectors such as technology, hospitality, agriculture and manufacturing have attracted renewed investor interest in early 2025. Continued growth in FDI will depend on the adoption of clearer investment codes aligned with AfCFTA), enhanced investment facilitation measures, harmonisation of regional regulations, and the development of targeted infrastructure corridors that bolster connectivity- particularly benefiting Partner States seeking to improve FDI performance.

With the Tripartite FTA becoming fully operational in 2024 and a growing global focus on Africa's sustainable investment opportunities, the region is well-positioned to further strengthen its FDI-to-GDP ratio. To harness this momentum effectively and translate it into equitable economic gains, the 7th EAC Development Strategy should prioritise deepening reforms in investment facilitation. This includes streamlining approval processes, enhancing investor protections, and creating a more conducive environment for private sector participation. Furthermore, optimising the potential of regional transport and energy corridors will be critical to improving connectivity and reducing investment costs. Equally important is fostering inclusive participation of Partner States that currently lag in attracting investment, ensuring balanced growth across the Community. These strategic efforts will not only amplify job creation and diversify sources of capital but will also embed sustainability principles within the EAC's competitive investment framework, strengthening the region's appeal to investors mindful of environmental, social and governance considerations.

2.5 Intra-EAC Trade

Intra-EAC trade has experienced robust growth across all Partner States between 2021 and 2024, signalling progress in regional integration. Total intra-regional exports and imports grew significantly, with Partner States such as Uganda, URT, and Kenya showing the highest absolute increases. Uganda’s intra-EAC trade rose from US\$1.53 billion in 2021 to approximately US\$2.65 billion in 2024, marking a 73% growth. URT and Kenya also recorded strong export growth of 47% and 42% respectively, underscoring their rising roles as regional production and transit hubs. Newer Partner States also registered meaningful improvements in intra-EAC trade volumes. Somalia, following its accession in 2024, already reached intra-EAC trade levels comparable to Burundi, with exports and imports growing from US\$110 million in 2021 to an estimated US\$155 million in 2024, a 41% increase. Similarly, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has demonstrated growing regional engagement, aided by infrastructure development and improved cross-border facilitation. These gains suggest that policy harmonisation and improved logistics corridors are beginning to yield inclusive trade dividends across the bloc.

Despite this progress, intra-EAC trade still comprises only about 15% of total trade, revealing untapped integration potential. While the upward trends are encouraging, persistent non-tariff barriers, inconsistent application of the Common External Tariff (CET), and infrastructure bottlenecks continue to limit the scale and efficiency of trade among Partner States. Going forward, the 7th Strategy must prioritize full customs union operationalization, logistical interoperability, and institutional support for Somalia and the DRC to fully unlock the region’s trade potential. By building on current momentum, the EAC can move closer to its ambition of a more connected, self-sustaining regional economy.



Intra-EAC trade remains far below its potential; removing non-tariff barriers and aligning trade policies is critical to building a unified regional market.

Unlocking the full potential of intra-EAC trade requires modernised corridors, customs reforms, and swift integration of new Partner States.

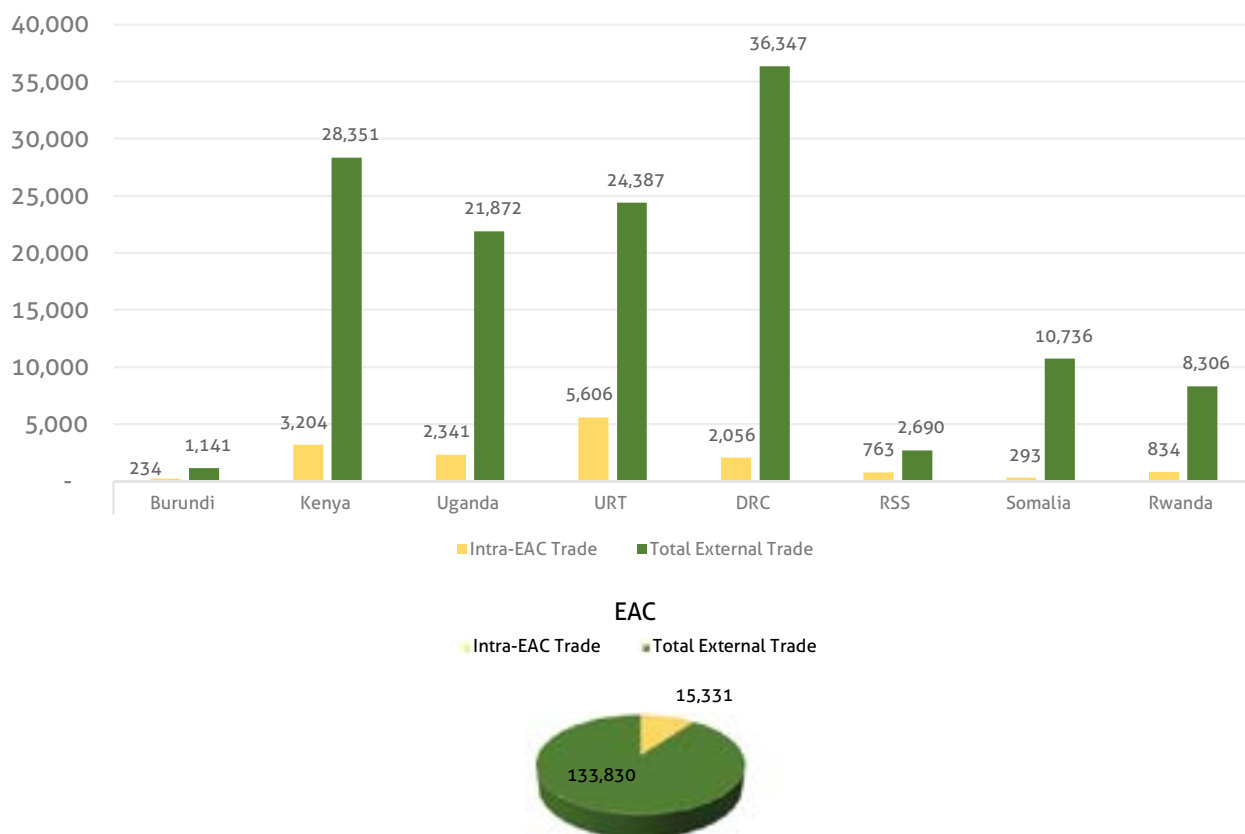
Table 12: Intra-EAC Trade Values (Exports & Imports, US\$million)

Partner	Trade Flow	Units	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
EAC	Total Trade	US \$	9,969	21,111	12,842	13,972	15,331
	Total Exports	US \$	6,083	12,147	7,646	7,891	8,338
	Total Imports	US \$	3,886	8,964	5,196	6,081	6,993
Burundi	Total Trade	US \$	336	395	384	365	234
	Total Exports	US \$	299	313	376	342	227
	Total Imports	US \$	38	82	8	24	7

Congo DR	Total Trade	US \$	1,017	3,184	1,754	1,786	2,056
	Total Exports	US \$	961	1,442	1,658	1,713	1,931
	Total Imports	US \$	57	1,742	96	74	125
Kenya	Total Trade	US\$	2,212	4,337	3,111	2,835	3,204
	Total Exports	US\$	713	2,621	1,003	920	967
	Total Imports	US\$	1,500	1,716	2,108	1,914	2,237
Rwanda	Total Trade	US \$	482	661	768	864	834
	Total Exports	US \$	446	611	687	785	765
	Total Imports	US \$	36	51	80	79	69
Somalia*	Total Trade	US \$	219	264	271	32	293
	Total Exports	US \$	110	137	136	161	149
	Total Imports	US \$	109	127	135	1 60	144
South Sudan	Total Trade	US \$	678	2,680	856	831	763
	Total Exports	US \$	591	667	839	807	728
	Total Imports	US \$	87	2,013	17	24	35
URT	Total Trade	US \$	3,684	7,129	3,777	4,840	5,606
	Total Exports	US \$	2,057	4,511	1,820	1,898	2,301
	Total Imports	US \$	1,627	2,618	1,957	2,942	3,305
Uganda	Total Trade	US \$	1,339	2,460	1,922	2,130	2,341
	Total Exports	US \$	906	1,845	1,127	1,265	1,270
	Total Imports	US \$	432	615	795	864	1,071

Source: EAC Statistics

Global and Intra Regional Trade: Exports and Imports (USD Million)- 2024



2.6 Industrialisation

During the 6th EAC DS, the EAC Partner States aimed for structural transformation through industrialisation, guided by both the EAC Industrialisation Strategy (2012–2032) and national development plans. Although manufacturing's contribution to GDP remains limited, progress has been made in agro- processing, textiles and light assembly. Regional coordination efforts, including the Global Manufacturing and Industrialisation Summit and industrial competitiveness, have focused on improving standards, strengthening SME linkages, and harmonising policies. Nonetheless, industrial capacity is uneven across the region, with Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda leading in value addition, while new Partner States like Somalia have yet to advance beyond early-stage MSME clusters.

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Scaling up value addition, regional value chains, and technology adoption is central to driving EAC industrial transformation.



Infrastructure, integration platforms & institutional readiness

Progress has been seen in strategic infrastructure corridors, such as the emerging Kakira-Kisumu expressway linkage, and EAC-wide capacity building efforts, like technology transfer initiatives at the EAC level. Additionally, enabling infrastructure, institutional readiness for new Partner States, mobilisation of SME finance, technology transfer and PPP-driven industrial parks are essential. These efforts should build directly on policy achievements, commitments by the Partner States, infrastructure development timelines and the accession experiences of Somalia and the DRC.

Competitive Industrial Performance (CIP) Index

UNIDO's latest CIP reporting highlights persistently low industrial competitiveness in sub-Saharan Africa, with EAC countries still in the lower percentiles globally. Between 2021 and 2024, modest improvements were made across the region, yet none of the eight Partner States have broken into mid-tier CIP standings. All EAC Partners for which data are available show slight upward shifts (+0.01 to +0.03 pts), reflecting very gradual industrial deepening and export complexity gains driven by constrained capital tech investments and export sophistication. Structural bottlenecks, such as low technological depth and limited export complexity, have been addressed through EASTECO, laying the foundation for greener, more decentralised industrial hubs. The operationalisation of cross-border payments in 2025 is expected to facilitate working capital flows for regional manufacturers. Full institutional integration of DRC and Somalia remains a priority as both Partner States require regulatory and security sector alignment to attract private sector investment into local value chains. Public-private partnerships and dedicated MSME funds are being expanded across all Partner States to close financing gaps and promote technology diffusion.

Outlook & strategic imperatives (2024–2025)

As the Region advances into the 7th EAC Development Strategy, the focus on industrialisation is on establishing policy frameworks for the implementation of industrial parks, skills-linked trade corridors, and regional value chain consolidation. Progress so far highlights the need for harmonised incentives, enforcement of regional standards, and localised technology adoption, particularly in high-potential sectors such as agro-processing, light manufacturing and mineral beneficiation. Partner States stand to benefit from the AfCFTA and COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite FTA platforms to deepen market linkages for finished products. However, this will require strong coordination across national investment frameworks, energy access reforms and EAC-level regulatory convergence. It also requires enabling infrastructure, institutional readiness for newer Partner States, mobilisation of SME finance, technology transfer, and PPP-driven industrial parks, drawing directly on policy progress, infrastructure timelines, and the accession experience of the Federal Republic of Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Competitive Industrial Performance (CIP) Index

UNIDO's latest CIP reporting highlights persistently low industrial competitiveness in sub-Saharan Africa, with EAC countries still in the lower percentiles globally. Between 2021 and 2024, modest improvements were made in infrastructure deficits and narrow industrial bases remain binding. Somalia's industrial baseline is very low, with preliminary indications pointing to minimal manufacturing value added and negligible domestic exports. Other Partner States such as Burundi, South Sudan, and Rwanda continue showing incremental gains from very low starting points, while Kenya, URT and Uganda lead the regional performance, anchored by relatively larger manufacturing sectors and export footprints.

Table 13: CIP Index Scores (2021 vs 2024)

Country	2021 CIP score	2024 CIP score	(2021–2024)
DRC	0.15	0.18	+0.03
Somalia	N/A	N/A	—
Burundi	0.12	0.14	+0.02
Kenya	0.30	0.33	+0.03
Rwanda	0.18	0.21	+0.03
South Sudan	0.10	0.11	+0.01
Uganda	0.25	0.28	+0.03
URT	0.27	0.29	+0.02

Source: EAC Statistics

Industrial policy, infrastructure, enhanced access to electricity and broadband, technology transfer and SME support remain critical to accelerate CIP relevant indicators. Somalia's data gap underscores the urgency of building institutional systems and industrial sector baselines post accession.

Manufactured exports

Over 2021–2024, manufactured exports comprising chemicals, machinery & transport equipment, base metal products, textiles, and other manufactures have steadily gained share in EAC exports, though with variation across Partner States. The EAC Industrialisation Policy & Strategy targets manufactured exports to reach 60% of total merchandise exports by 2032. By 2023, manufactured goods already accounted for roughly 70% of exports from the EAC into the EU alone, signalling the sector's rising outward orientation.

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70% Approximate exports from the EAC into the EU alone, signaling the sector's rising outward orientation.

By 2023-24, textiles, chemicals, iron and steel, edible-oil processing, cement and pharmaceuticals had emerged as leading sub-sectors across the region. For example, Uganda and Kenya both recorded increased shipments of textiles, leather and chemicals during regional trade fairs in 2024. Meanwhile, machinery and transport equipment along with "manufactured goods classified chiefly by material" (such as metal products, furniture) grew from 35% to 40% of the EAC's total manufactured-exports share to Europe between 2021 and 2024.

These trends reflect both intraregional trade in manufactures estimated at 25% of total manufactured imports into region in 2023 and rapidly expanding extra regional flows. Nevertheless, most Partner States still depend heavily on primary commodities, with manufactured export shares varying from 20% to 60%.

Table 14: Aggregate manufactured-export shares by sector¹

Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) Section	2021 share of EAC manufactured exports (%)	2024 share (%)
Machinery & transport equipment (SITC 7)	32.8 %	32.8 %
Chemicals & related products (SITC 5)	22.2 %	22.2 %
Manufactured goods by material (SITC 6)	7.5 %	7.6 %
Misc. manufactured articles (SITC 8)	9.3 %	9.3 %
All manufactures (total)	70 %	70 %

Table 15: Estimated PartnerState manufactured export shares²

Partner State	2021 (%)	2024 (%)	Notes
DRC	~15 %	~25 %	Basemetal manufacturing, limited light goods.
Somalia	~10 %	~20 %	Early manufacturing in textiles, processed food.
Burundi	~20 %	~25 %	Emerging textiles, agrofood processing.
Kenya	~45 %	~55 %	Machinery, apparel, chemicals, metals processing up.
Rwanda	~25 %	~35 %	Light manufacturing: cement, chemicals, metals.
South Sudan	~10 %	~15 %	Very nascent manufactured goods exports.
Uganda	~35 %	~45 %	Textiles/leather, pharmaceuticals, chemicals expanding.
URT	~30 %	~40 %	Textiles, agroprocessing, cement, iron.

Machinery and transport equipment and chemicals consistently dominate EAC manufactured exports (55 % combined), reflecting rising capital goods and mid technology exports. Light manufactured goods (textiles, miscellaneous manufactures) account for a further 15–20%, capturing the region's comparative advantage industries. Burundi, South Sudan, Somalia have lower manufacturing shares, but all show uplift by 2024 (5–10 percentage points), aligned with regional industrialisation efforts. The share of manufacturing in exports across all EAC Partner States rose by 10 points on average between 2021 and 2024, demonstrating early successes of the EAC Industrialisation Policy and trade-facilitation measures, yet leaving scope to accelerate further toward the 2032 targets.

¹ (percentage share of manufactured goods exports, by SITC sector group) Data: EAC–EU trade via Eurostat Comext; aggregated at EAC-level.

² (approximate percentage of each partner's total exports attributable to manufactured goods)

Manufactured exports within the EAC show a clear upward trajectory, both in absolute value and sectoral composition—with machinery, chemicals, and basic manufactures consolidating as core outward-oriented sectors by 2024. The overall share of manufactured goods in partner state exports increased markedly (10point average gain), yet disparities persist across economies. Enhancing sectoral capacity (e.g., textiles, light engineering, agro-processing), advancing regional value chains, and reinforcing compliance with AfCFTA and Tripartite trade frameworks will be essential to reach long-term targets, especially boosting manufacturing shares above 60 % of total merchandise exports across all Partner States by 2032.

2.7 Productive Sectors

Agriculture & Livestock

Between 2020 and 2024, agriculture remained the backbone of the EAC economies accounting for approximately 24–44 % of GDP in most Partner States, and provided livelihoods for up to 80% of the population. Despite modest declines in agriculture’s share of GDP (especially as services expand), the sector’s absolute size continued to grow through 2024, driven by favourable commodity prices, expansions in production of staples (e.g., maize, cassava in URT) and rising volumes in livestock outputs (notably dairy in Uganda).

As of 2024, Somalia maintains its heavy reliance on agriculture (65% of GDP), with livestock alone generating 40% of GDP and 50%+ of export earnings, underscoring its pastoralist strength. URT, with 26.3% of GDP derived from agriculture and 85% of exports, remains a regional agricultural powerhouse; its cattle herd (39.2 million heads as of 2024) continues playing a pivotal role in rural incomes. Uganda’s dairy sector expanded significantly, with milk output increasing from 3.2 billion L (2022) to 5.3 billion L (mid2024), translating into milk export earnings rising to US\$264m (from US\$131.5m in 2020) Dairy industry in Uganda.

Despite the growth in agriculture sector across the region, significant challenges remain. Recurrent droughts and severe food insecurity— especially in Somalia and the Republic of South Sudan – continue to threaten millions of people. Additionally, infrastructure shortcomings reduce agricultural productivity and restrict trade of agro-products within the region, hindering full regional market



Strengthening agriculture, fisheries, and natural resource management will secure food systems and fuel economic growth.

integration. While efforts aligned with Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) initiatives and harmonized livestock regulations are underway, achieving complete regional market integration is essential and must be a key focus of future strategies to support the region's agricultural and economic development.

Table 16: Select livestock and crop production (figures in 000s)

	Year	Burundi	Kenya	Uganda	URT	DRC	RSS	Somalia	Rwanda
Cattle (Head)	2020	405 649	26,757	14,987	33,928	1,344	13,143	5,531	1,372
	2021	617 243	22,853	15,076	35,256	1,490	13,355	5,300	1,450
	2022	781 721	21,125	15,131	36,584	1,392	13,583	5,300	1,576
	2023	602 627	21,945	14,478	37,913	1409	13,811	5,300	1,645
	2024	678 606	22,436	14,478	39,241		14,635	5,300	1,645
Maize (Tonnes)	2020	26.2	3,795,170	4,560	6,711	1476	181,003	75	448,632
	2021	26.3	3,314,430	3,500	7,039	1581	175,454	75	482,682
	2022	27.5	3,082,220	4,738	6,417	1519	190,050	75	458,522
	2023	26.9	4,285,206	4,945	8,011	1525	219,300	75	508,492
	2024	26.7		4,269	10,084		352,689	75	627,086
Fish (Tonne)	2020	405 649	153.3	624	474	539		52	
	2021	617 243	164	686	477	555		51	
	2022	781 721	173.7	718	472	541		53	
	2023	602 627	161.3		480		140	58	
	2024	678 606	168.4		523		200	59	

Source: Partner States



Tourism and Wildlife Management

The EAC is endowed with some of the most iconic and ecologically diverse wildlife and tourism assets in Africa. Spanning landscapes from the snow-capped peaks of Mount Kilimanjaro to the savannah plains of the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem and the dense rainforests of the Albertine Rift, the region boasts over 100 national parks, game reserves, and conservancies. Flagship destinations such as the Serengeti National Park (URT), Maasai Mara (Kenya), Bwindi Impenetrable Forest (Uganda), and Volcanoes National Park (Rwanda) are globally recognized for biodiversity conservation and wildlife tourism, particularly the Big Five and mountain gorillas.

Tourism remains a major economic driver within the EAC, contributing an average of 8–10% to the region's GDP and accounting for approximately 17% of total export earnings. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, international tourist arrivals in the region peaked at over 6.9 million (2019), generating an estimated US\$ 6.2 billion in revenue and sustaining more than 4.5 million jobs. Post-pandemic recovery trends are promising, with countries such as Kenya and URT recording a 70–80% rebound in arrivals and revenue by the end of 2023. Intra-regional tourism is also growing, facilitated by the EAC Single Tourist Visa (adopted by Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda), and joint marketing initiatives under the umbrella of the EAC Tourism Marketing Strategy (2021–2025).

Tourism and Wildlife Management sector focuses on enhancing the region's tourism potential, promoting sustainable use of wildlife resources, and strengthening regional integration in tourism and wildlife conservation. Improving infrastructure, adopting sustainable tourism practices, conserving and utilizing wildlife resources, investing in hospitality, transport, and tourism-related services, establishing a single tourist visa in the EAC, and promoting the EAC as a single tourist destination are essential steps for the development of the sector. Integration of community-based tourism models that promote local economic empowerment, integrating conservation with value chains (e.g., eco-safaris, sustainable hunting) is also a key component of the overall tourism and wildlife development strategy.

The EAC has implemented strategic initiatives to strengthen wildlife management. Institutions such as the East African Wildlife Conservancies Association (EAWCA) and cross-border conservation areas like the Mara-Serengeti and Virunga-Bwindi complexes are pivotal to these efforts.

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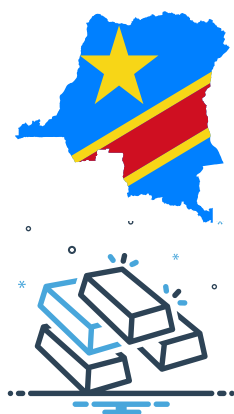
70-80%
Approximate percentage recorded by Kenya and URT recording on Post-pandemic recovery trends are promising rebound in arrivals and revenue by the end of 2023.

Notable progress has been recorded in community-based conservation models, enhanced surveillance technologies (e.g., drone and satellite tracking), and improved ranger capacity, leading to a decline in elephant and rhino poaching incidents in key sites, in particular elephants and rhinos.

However, the tourism continues to grapple with challenges such as: Poor infrastructure; High cost of travel especially flights; Limited marketing and promotion; Environment degradation and wildlife poaching; Skills gap and service quality; and Inadequate funding.

Environment and Natural Resources

The EAC region is richly endowed with diverse natural resources. It holds significant mineral reserves including fluorspar, titanium, zirconium, gold, cobalt, nickel, copper, diamonds, coal, iron ore, oil, and gas. DRC's mining alone contributes 2.3% of GDP, with gold and copper among top exports.



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URT natural gas potential is estimated at tens of TCF, alongside coal, nickel (290ktonnes) and gemstones. Kenya leads Africa in geothermal capacity (828MW), hydro (826MW) and wind (331MW), generating 2,819MW total, while deploying major renewable projects like the Lake Turkana Wind Farm and national solar plants ([Renewable Energy in Kenya](#)). On the other hand, agriculture remains vital to the region, with URT alone producing millions of tonnes of staple crops. Organic farming spans 1.3mha in East Africa, with Uganda boasting 231kha under organic cultivation.

The EAC is home to a diverse range of transboundary terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, including Lake Victoria (Africa's largest freshwater lake), the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem, and the Congo-Nile Divide forest ecosystems, which are shared across Kenya, URT, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These ecosystems support livelihoods of over 200 million people and contribute significantly to regional economies through agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and hydropower generation. For instance, Lake Victoria alone supports a fishing industry worth over US\$ 500 million annually and provides employment to more than 3 million people. The tourism sector, driven by iconic transboundary parks like Serengeti-Mara and Virunga Volcanoes, contributes about 8–10% to GDPs of partner states. To sustainably manage and exploit these resources, the EAC has implemented policies like the EAC Protocol on Environment

and Natural Resources Management and transboundary initiatives under the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC), as well as joint anti-poaching operations and integrated water resource management programs. These efforts aim to harmonise environmental governance, ensure ecosystem resilience, and promote equitable economic development across the region. However, shared ecosystems face pressure from over-exploitation, wetland loss, pollution, fencing, and urban expansion- prompting the EAC to harmonise cross-border environmental policies and launch initiatives like the €8 M EAC4Nature project (2025–28) to promote nature-based solutions and climate resilience.

Table 17: EAC Forest cover (HA)

Indicator	Year	DRC	Burundi	Kenya	RSS	Uganda	URT
Plantation forest cover	2020	577	1,295.00	1,496.00	2,300.00	3,143.50	553,040
	2021	577	1,295.00	1,519.00	2,300.00	3,418.20	553,040
	2022	577	1,295.00		2,300.00	3,418.20	553,040
	2023	577	1,295.00		2,300.00	3,418.20	553,040
	2024						553,040
Natural forest cover	2020		1,136.00	40,330.00	192,000.00	24,148.10	45,191,970
	2021		1,136.00	52,262.00	192,000.00	24,148.10	45,191,970
	2022		1,579.30	52,262.00	192,000.00	21,382.30	45,191,970
	2023		1,579.30	52,262.00	192,000.00	21,382.30	45,191,970
	2024				192,000.00	21,382.30	45,191,970
Other forest vegetation cover	2020		1,798.00	1,240.00	20,079.00		2,852,440
	2021		1,798.00	1,240.00	20,079.00		2,852,440
	2022		1,798.00		20,079.00		2,852,440
	2023		1,798.00		20,079.00		2,852,440
	2024				20,079.00		2,852,440

Source: Partner States

Climate change in the context of environment and natural resources in the EAC region

Climate change poses a significant threat to the environment and natural resources across the EAC, impacting critical sectors such as agriculture, water, forestry, fisheries, and biodiversity. The region has witnessed a marked increase in the frequency and severity of climate-related disasters, including prolonged droughts, floods, and erratic rainfall patterns. For example, East Africa experienced one of its worst droughts between 2020 and 2023, with over 40 million people affected and livestock losses exceeding 9.5 million animals, particularly in Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia. In URT, climate variability has been linked to a 20–30% reduction in maize yields, while Uganda’s coffee production zones are projected to shift due to rising temperatures. Lake Victoria, the region’s most vital transboundary water body, has seen declining fish stocks and increased algal blooms, affecting a fishing industry that supports over 3 million livelihoods.

The EAC has adopted several legal and policy frameworks to combat and adapt to climate change. Key among them is the EAC Climate Change Policy (2011), which provides a coordinated regional approach to adaptation and mitigation, supported by the EAC Climate Change Strategy (2011–2031) and its Climate Change Master Plan (2021–2031). These frameworks promote climate-resilient agriculture, sustainable forest management,

and ecosystem-based adaptation. Additionally, the Protocol on Environment and Natural Resources Management (2006) mandates Partner States to harmonise environmental laws and integrate climate concerns into national planning.

The EAC Climate Change Fund, currently under development, is intended to support regional projects and enhance capacity building. However, challenges remain, including inadequate financing, weak enforcement, and limited data integration. These issues highlight the urgent need for stronger cross-border collaboration, investment in early warning systems, and better alignment with global frameworks such as the Paris Agreement and the African Union's Agenda 2063.



2.8 Social Sectors

Population growth and size

The East African Community (EAC) is home to approximately 341 million people—a figure projected to nearly double by 2050, making it one of the fastest-growing regional blocs worldwide. The population is predominantly young, with about 77% under 35 years of age, presenting both demographic dynamism and dependency burdens. Annual population growth in Eastern Africa averages 2.6%, notably higher than the global average (1.1%), driven by high fertility rates of between 3.5 and 6.7 births per woman, and varying by country. Urbanisation is rising rapidly; around 32% of the population currently lives in urban areas, a trend expected to surpass 50% by 2050, placing pressure on infrastructure

and services and creating new economic opportunities. This demographic trajectory underscores a potent demographic dividend if the region invests decisively in education, healthcare, employment, and urban planning. However, managing this growth poses urgent needs for job creation, youth skills development, and resilient social systems to support sustainable integration across the EAC.



Human capital investment through health, education, and social protection is essential for inclusive regional development.

Table 18: EAC Population (2024)

Category	DRC	Somalia	Burundi	Kenya	Rwanda	RSS	Uganda	URT	EAC
0-9	40,721,120	6,887,239	3,857,351	12,505,333	3,450,565	5,521,221	13,321,659	20,580,675	106,845,163
10 to 19	26,954,605	4,584,226	2,984,549	11,617,891	3,136,578	3,465,118	11,404,639	15,214,806	79,362,412
20 to 24	9,601,855	1,703,382	1,003,805	5,250,260	1,307,452	1,317,553	4,422,615	5,700,371	30,307,293
25 to 29	8,213,635	1,514,100	778,950	4,787,262	1,046,071	1,027,782	3,647,553	4,984,572	25,999,925
30 to 34	6,825,415	1,265,034	759,217	4,218,247	963,346	875,944	2,897,280	4,184,157	21,988,640
Total under 35	92,316,630	15,953,981	9,383,872	38,378,993	9,904,012	12,207,618	35,693,746	50,664,581	264,503,433
Total Population	115,685,000	19,654,460	12,220,934	52,428,290	13,798,554	15,254,268	45,905,417	66,278,276	341,225,199
% under 35	79.8	81.2	76.8	73.2	71.8	80.0	77.8	76.4	77.5

Source: Partner States

Human Development Index Performance

Over the past decade, EAC partner states have demonstrated modest but uneven improvements in HDI, primarily driven by gains in education and health, though economic and structural disparities persist. From 2020 to 2023, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi recorded HDI improvements of +0.02 to +0.04, reflecting targeted investments in healthcare (e.g., increased life expectancy), education access and quality, and modest income growth. South Sudan remains excluded from the latest HDR while DR Congo and Burundi continue in the low HDI category.

Table 19: Human development index (HDI)

Country	HDI (2020)	HDI (Latest, ~2023)	Change 2020–2023
DR Congo	0.51 ¹	0.522 ³	+0.01
Burundi	0.42 ¹	0.439 ⁵	+0.02
Kenya	0.56 ¹	0.580 ²	+0.02
Rwanda	0.55 ¹	0.578 ³	+0.03
South Sudan ⁶	0.42 ⁶	– (fragile)	– (data gap)
Uganda	0.54 ¹	0.582 ⁴	+0.04
URT	0.53 ¹	0.532 ³	+0.002
EAC Average	0.505	0.540	+0.035

¹ Approximate 2020 values (UNDP HDR 2020 statistical annex)

² Kenya's 2023 HDI from UNDP HDR 2025

³ 2023 HDI values: URT 0.532, Rwanda 0.578, DR Congo 0.522 [HDR UNDP](#)

⁴ Uganda 0.582 in 2023

⁵ Burundi 0.439 in 2023

⁶ South Sudan latest ≈0.433 (HDR 2019) [HDR UNDP](#)

Elevated HDI scores correlate directly with enhanced workforce productivity, earnings capacity, and social resilience- cornerstones for economic competitiveness and poverty reduction. The EAC currently enjoys a youth demographic bulge, with 65% of its 343 million people under 30, and projections estimate that by 2030, 75% will be below 25 years of age. This age structure presents a golden opportunity: if adequately educated, skilled, and integrated into the formal labour market, this large working-age population could- via increased savings, innovation, and consumer demand-fuel a sustained economic take-off.



The EAC stands at a pivotal crossroads, with opportunities to harness its youthful population, abundant natural resources, and strategic location to achieve unprecedented growth.

Enhanced HDI through improved education, health, and living standards enables a more capable workforce. A healthier, better-educated youth demographic is essential to tapping into productivity gains. As labour-intensive sectors evolve, countries with higher HDI and skilled human capital stand stronger in attracting foreign and domestic investment, leveraging their demographic dividend for structural transformation. Raising HDI thus ensures benefits of the demographic dividend are widespread, not confined to elite segments, fostering inclusive growth and reducing inequality. To achieve this, the 7th EAC DS should prioritize:



- **Massive investment in secondary and tertiary education, aligning curricula to market needs and emphasizing STEM and technical skills.**
- **Universal primary healthcare, with strengthened reproductive, maternal, and child health services to further increase life expectancy and labor force participation.**
- **Labour market reforms that reduce barriers and increase competitiveness to absorb youth into formal employment.**
- **Social protection systems to shield vulnerable youth during transitional periods.**
- **Regional coordination within EAC to enable skill mobility, harmonize accreditation, and jointly develop regional job markets.**

Health

The health sector in the EAC continues to play a central role in advancing human development, productivity, and regional integration. The region has made commendable progress in key health outcomes over the past two decades, including reductions in maternal and child mortality, expanded immunization coverage, and strengthened disease surveillance. However, significant disparities persist across Partner States, and the region continues to grapple with a high burden of communicable diseases, emerging non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and public health emergencies.

Major regional health challenges include high maternal mortality ratios, with the lowest MMR of 203 per 100,000 live births in Rwanda, to an estimated 1,150 in South Sudan,

as well as high rates of under-five mortality, particularly in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria remain prevalent; for instance, in Uganda and Kenya, HIV prevalence is estimated at 5.3% and 4.2% respectively, with malaria accounting for 15–30% of outpatient visits in most Partner States. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed weaknesses in health system resilience, supply chains, and emergency response mechanisms. Meanwhile, NCDs such as hypertension, diabetes, and cancers are rising rapidly due to urbanisation and lifestyle changes, now accounting for up to 30% of all deaths in some Partner States.



**In Uganda and Kenya,
HIV prevalence
is estimated at
5.3% and 4.2%
respectively**

At the national level, Partner States have made targeted investments to strengthen their health systems. Kenya has rolled out a universal health coverage (UHC) initiative under its national health insurance programme, while Rwanda has achieved over 90% health insurance coverage through its community-based health insurance model. URT and Uganda have expanded access to primary health care and introduced digital health platforms for improved service delivery. South Sudan and DRC, while still rebuilding from conflict and fragility, have made efforts to decentralize services and strengthen health governance.

At the regional level, the EAC has taken strategic steps to enhance coordination and harmonisation in health service delivery. The establishment of the EAC Regional Centre of Excellence for Vaccines, Immunization and Health Supply Chain Management in Rwanda and the East African Health Research Commission (EAHRC) in Burundi underscore the region's commitment to collaborative health governance. The EAC has also developed and implemented the EAC Regional Health Sector Strategic Plan (2020–2025), the EAC Digital Health Strategy, and cross-border health frameworks to manage mobile populations and health threats. These efforts have improved disease surveillance, laboratory networking, joint epidemic response, and regional procurement of essential medical supplies.

Despite these achievements, gaps remain in health workforce capacity, financing, infrastructure, and data systems. Health worker density across the region is well below the WHO-recommended threshold of 4.45 health workers per 1,000 population, with rural and border areas most underserved. Out-of-pocket health expenditure remains high, especially in countries without comprehensive insurance systems, limiting access and deepening inequality.



Health worker density across the region is well below the WHO-recommended threshold of **4.45 health workers per **1,000** population**

The 7th EAC Development Strategy will therefore prioritise strengthening primary health care, accelerating UHC across Partner States, enhancing regional health security and pandemic preparedness, and promoting integrated digital health solutions. Other focus areas include scaling up health research, innovation, and technology transfer through EAHRC, as well as harmonising regulatory frameworks for medicines, vaccines, and health professionals, and investment in production of vital medicines, medical equipment, and personal protective equipment to reduce the financial burdens of importing the equipment. Special emphasis should also be placed on maternal and child health, NCD prevention, mental health, and cross-border health services to serve mobile and vulnerable populations.

Table 20: Health sector indicators

Indicator	Year	DRC	Somalia	Burundi	Kenya	Rwanda	RSS	Uganda	URT
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	2020	64	73	47	36	33	63	43	43
	2021	62	71	47	36	33	62	43	43
	2022	60	78	47	32	28.9	60	43	33
	2023	59	76	47	32	30.2	58	36	33
	2024	56	66	47	32	29.2	57	34	33
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	2020	60	57	60	64	68	58	64	62
	2021	59	56	60	64	68	58	68	62
	2022	59	54	60	64	69.6	58	68	65
	2023	60	59	61	64	69.7	59	68	65
	2024	60	59	61	64	69.9	59	68.2	68
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)	2020	81	113	78	52	45	98	64	67
	2021	78	109	78	52	45	96	64	67
	2022	76	144	78	41	41	93	64	43
	2023	75	102	78	41	36.8	91	52	43
	2024	93	102	78	41	35.5	88	46	43
Death rate, crude (per 1,000 people)	2020	9.5	11	9.0	10.5	6.0	9.1	7	9.3
	2021	9.7	11	9.0	10.5	6.0	10	6.8	9.3
	2022	9.4	13	8.6	11	6.0	10	6.6	7.5
	2023	9.4	10	9.0	11	5.8	10	6.5	6.8
	2024	9.4	10	8.4	11	5.7	9.1	5	6.6

Source: Partner States

Education, science, technology, and innovation

The education sector across the EAC has made commendable progress, particularly in achieving near-universal primary school enrolment and improving adult literacy rates. Most partner states now record gross enrolment rates above 90% at the primary level, with countries like Kenya, Rwanda, and URT demonstrating strong commitment to universal basic education through free education policies/initiatives. Adult literacy rates across the region range from approximately 67% to 83%, with notable improvements among women. However, these achievements are offset by persisting inequities in access, especially in early childhood education and among rural and communities with special needs. The quality of primary education remains a concern, with large class sizes, inadequate learning materials, and a shortage of qualified teachers limiting learning outcomes.

At the secondary and tertiary levels, the region continues to face major structural and access-related challenges. Secondary school gross enrolment rates remain low- under 50% in most countries, while tertiary enrolment averages just 9–10%, far below the global average of 40%. Transition rates between primary, secondary, and higher education remain weak, contributing to high dropout rates and a shortage of skilled graduates entering the labour market. Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) systems are underdeveloped, with limited industry linkage and insufficient capacity to absorb the growing youth population. Moreover, the region faces a severe teacher shortage, particularly at the secondary level, with over 60% of secondary teachers in some countries unqualified.

In response to these challenges, the EAC must prioritize systemic reforms that promote equity, quality, and relevance in education. Key priorities include expanding access to early childhood education, strengthening foundational learning in primary schools, and significantly increasing secondary and post-secondary opportunities, particularly through TVET and digital learning pathways. Investment in teacher training, digital literacy, and pedagogical reform is essential to improve educational outcomes and align skills development with the demands of the 21st-century economy. The harmonisation of regional qualifications frameworks, promotion of cross-border student mobility, and integration of ICT in teaching and learning will be vital for building a competitive regional education system. Anchoring these efforts within a rights-based and inclusive policy framework will enable the region to harness its demographic dividend, close the education-to-employment gap, and drive inclusive and sustainable development across the EAC.

Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) are increasingly recognized as critical drivers of socioeconomic transformation across the EAC. Over the past decade, EAC Partner States have made deliberate efforts to enhance regional cooperation and national capacity in STI. The adoption of the EAC Regional STI Policy (2019), and the subsequent validation of the 2023–2033 STI and Intellectual Property Policies, have laid a strong foundation for harmonising policies and promoting collaborative innovation. The establishment of the East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO) and the development of instruments such as the Regional STI Dashboard and EAC Journal of Science, Technology and Innovation (EAJSTI) are further advancing knowledge exchange and institutional capacity.

Despite these gains, the region's performance across core STI indicators remains uneven and below continental and global benchmarks. Gross Expenditure on Research and

Development (GERD) in all Partner States remains significantly below the African Union target of 1% of GDP. Researcher density, measured as the number of researchers per million inhabitants averages under 100 across the region. Scientific publication output also remains modest, averaging fewer than 40 peer-reviewed articles per million people, compared to over 100 per million in emerging economies.



Gross Expenditure on Research and Development (GERD) in all Partner States remains significantly below the African Union target of 1% of GDP

Policy development has been more encouraging, with most Partner States now possessing dedicated national STI policies, including Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. Rwanda has further integrated STI into its broader digital economy strategy, and URT is currently exploring approaches to Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) integration. However, implementation remains constrained by limited domestic funding, weak linkage between academia and industry, and underdeveloped innovation ecosystems.

At the regional level, collaborative initiatives such as the Regional Bioeconomy Strategy, Open Science integration, the EAC Research and Technological Development Fund, and periodic regional STI conferences have begun to build momentum for a more networked and innovation-driven economy. Yet challenges persist, including fragmented data systems, low private sector participation in R&D, and insufficient incentives for technology transfer and intellectual property protection.

Moving forward, the 7th EAC Development Strategy must prioritize increasing investment in R&D to at least 1% of GDP, expanding human capital by targeting over 200 researchers per million population, scaling up digital research infrastructure, and fostering stronger public-private partnerships to commercialize research outputs. Embedding STI more firmly into the region's development planning can enable the EAC to harness science and innovation as key enablers of industrialisation, competitiveness, and sustainable development. Strengthening STI systems will also position the region to better leverage its youthful demographic and transition towards a knowledge-based, innovation-led economy.

Table 21: Education sector indicators

Indicator	Year	DRC	Somalia	Burundi	Kenya	Rwanda	RSS	Uganda	URT	EAC
Primary enrolment rates, percent Gross	2020	107.3	19	124.9	133.7	138.8	52.3	118	110.6	99.6
	2021	111.9	24	127.1	136.3	149.8	75	118	109.7	105.7
	2022	117.9	31	118.2	138.8	144.8	62.9	118	108.5	103.2
	2023	118.7	33.8	121	107.7	141.2	74	118	98.2	99.1
	2024		35.3	124.4	112	148.2	74	120	84.2	
Secondary enrolment rates, percent Gross	2020	50	19.2	25.6	76.5	42.5	7.9	36.8	34.1	38.1
	2021	52	26	27.8	82.6	43.6	11	36.8	34.8	40.8
	2022	65	24	20.4	82.3	42.9	13.4	36.8	36.1	40.1
	2023	66	26	26.3	90.1	44.3	7	36.8	38.5	41.9
	2024		25.1	28.8	93.9	48.6	9	34	39.1	
Literacy rates, percent	2020	70.9		62	85	72	34.5	76.1	78	
	2021	80		64	85	72	35	76.1	78	
	2022	80	53.7	68.3	85	72	34.5	76.1	78	
	2023	79	53.7	69.4	85	72	32	76	82.8	
	2024		53.7	72	85	76	34.5	74	78.8	

Source: Partner States

Sports, Culture, Art, Youth and Gender

Sports, culture, art, youth, and gender are key pillars in advancing social cohesion, identity, youth empowerment, and inclusive development. These sectors serve as powerful vehicles for regional integration, peace-building, and economic growth, particularly given the region’s demographic structure, where over 65% of the population is below 30 years. While these areas have traditionally received less focus in mainstream development discourse, recent efforts at both the national and regional levels reflect growing recognition of their strategic importance.

In the realm of sports, the EAC region is home to globally recognized athletic talent, particularly in long-distance running, football, and rugby. Kenya and Uganda consistently rank among the top performers in international athletics. Football is the most popular sport across the region, with national leagues and clubs gaining increasing visibility, though infrastructure and investment disparities persist. To promote regional unity and talent development, the EAC has institutionalised the EAC Inter-Parliamentary Games and the EAC Regional Games, with participation from youth, students, and civil servants. At the national level, Rwanda and Uganda have invested in modern sports facilities and high-performance centres, while Kenya and URT have expanded youth academies and school-level competitions.

Culturally, the region is endowed with rich and diverse heritage, including diverse ethnic groups, multiple UNESCO-listed heritage sites, and vibrant creative industries. Cultural expressions such as music, dance, oral traditions, and crafts play a vital role in preserving identity and fostering cross-cultural understanding. Efforts such as the EAC Arts and Culture Festival (JAMAFEST) hosted on a rotational basis have provided a critical platform for cultural exchange, regional branding, and tourism development. Countries like Rwanda and Kenya have developed national cultural policies and creative industry strategies, while Burundi and South Sudan are advancing traditional arts through community-level programs.



On gender equality, the region has made progress in legal and institutional reforms, though gender disparities remain prominent in access to education, political representation, economic opportunities, and protection from gender-based violence. Women constitute over 30% of parliamentary seats in Rwanda, Uganda, and URT- Rwanda leading globally with over 60%. However, in some Partner States, gender-based violence remains widespread, and women's political and economic participation is limited. Regionally, the EAC Gender Equality and Development Bill (2017) and the EAC Gender Policy (2018) provide a framework for promoting gender mainstreaming in all sectors. National gender action plans, such as Kenya's Gender Strategy (2020–2024) and Uganda's Gender Equality Policy, further support implementation. Despite these efforts, systemic gaps persist in enforcement, financing, and societal attitudes.



30% Women in parliamentary seats in Rwanda, Uganda, and URT- Rwanda leading globally with over 60%

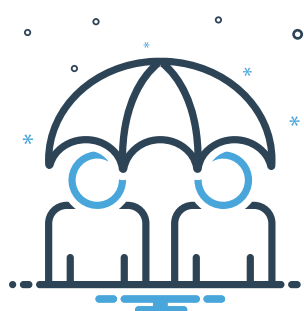
Future efforts of EAC must thus focus on sports development by enhancing regional coordination through the EAC Sports Council, standardize talent identification programs, invest in sports infrastructure, and commercialize sports to create jobs and spur youth engagement. Cultural integration and creative economy is a priority through promotion of

protection and commercialization of indigenous knowledge, expansion of creative industry financing, digitisation of cultural assets, and institutionalization of JAMAFEST and similar platforms as regional economic drivers. Efforts must aim at strengthening enforcement of gender-related laws and policies, increasing women's access to finance and leadership, harmonising gender-based violence response systems, and institutionalizing gender budgeting across EAC programs. Prioritization of sports, culture, and gender as central components of development positions the EAC to foster greater regional cohesion, inclusive growth, and sociolect-cultural resilience. These sectors not only reflect the identity of East Africans but also represent untapped potential for innovation, employment, and global positioning.

Social Protection

Social protection is increasingly recognised as a foundational pillar for inclusive development and resilience-building. With high levels of poverty, vulnerability, and informality in employment, social protection mechanisms are essential in safeguarding the wellbeing of individuals and communities, especially in times of crisis. As of 2023, approximately 60% of the EAC population remains vulnerable to shocks such as illness, unemployment, old age, disability, and climate-related disasters. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed gaps in social protection coverage, with over 70% of the working population in the informal sector lacking access to social security systems.

All eight EAC Partner States have made commendable progress in developing national social protection frameworks, though levels of maturity and coverage vary significantly. Kenya and Rwanda have the most comprehensive systems, with Kenya implementing the National Safety Net Programme (NSNP), which supports over 1.3 million vulnerable households through cash transfers, and Rwanda rolling out its Vision Umurenge Programme (VUP), covering over one million beneficiaries through public works and direct support, and financial services. Uganda, URT, and Burundi have expanded contributory social security schemes, while also piloting non-contributory interventions. The DRC and South Sudan, although relatively new to the EAC, face considerable challenges in establishing functional social protection systems due to fragility and fiscal constraints.



Social protection coverage remains low across the region with less than 20% of the population covered by any form of social protection

At the regional level, the EAC has taken critical steps to foster integration and coordination of social protection systems. The **EAC Social Protection Policy Framework** was adopted to provide a regional roadmap for harmonising standards, enhancing portability of benefits, and supporting vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities, orphans, informal workers, and cross-border populations. Additionally, the **EAC Protocol on Social Security**

Benefits, currently under negotiation, aims to facilitate the transfer of social benefits across Partner States in support of regional labour mobility. These initiatives have begun to yield results. For example, cross-learning platforms and regional capacity-building efforts have supported the alignment of Partner States' policies with international social protection standards. Integration of social protection into national development plans has improved fiscal prioritisation in Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda. However, coverage remains low across the region, with fewer than 20% of the population covered by any form of social protection, and contributory systems reaching mainly formal sector workers, who account for less than 25% of the workforce.

In the prevailing situational context, social protection must be positioned as a core element of regional socio-economic transformation. Priority areas should include: Scaling up national social protection floors, with a focus on universal health coverage, child grants, and social pensions; enhancing regional policy coherence, including finalisation and ratification of the Protocol on Social Security Benefits; strengthening the portability of benefits across Partner States to support the regional labour market and free movement of persons; investing in digital social registries and delivery systems to improve targeting, efficiency, and accountability; and expanding fiscal space through innovative financing and enhanced budget allocation to social protection sectors. Reinforcing social protection systems will enable the EAC to significantly reduce poverty and inequality, promote human capital development, and enhance the resilience of its populations, laying a firm foundation for sustainable, inclusive, and equitable regional development.

Migration and Refugee Management

The EAC region continues face complex migration and refugee dynamics, shaped by both voluntary cross-border movement and forced displacement due to conflict, political instability, and climate-related shocks. The region hosts one of the largest refugee populations in Africa, with over 5 million refugees and asylum seekers recorded as of 2024, predominantly in Uganda (over 1.5 million), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1 million), Kenya (approximately 600,000), and URT (over 250,000).

The EAC has adopted a regional and rights-based approach to migration and refugee management, anchored in key frameworks such as the EAC Common Market Protocol, which guarantees the freedom of movement, right of residence, and establishment for citizens of Partner States. In addition, Partner States are bound by international and continental instruments, including the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1969 OAU Convention governing the specific aspects of Refugee Management in Africa, and the Global Compact on Refugees. At regional level, the Community has established coordination mechanisms through the Sectoral Council on Interstate Security and the EAC Integrated Border Management Programme, which seeks to harmonise immigration procedures, enhance border security, and improve the management of mixed migration flows.

Notable progress has been made under these frameworks. EAC Partner States have largely operationalised the use of electronic passports (e-passports), enhancing mobility and identity verification across the region. One Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) at locations such as Malaba, Namanga, and Rusumo, have facilitated smoother cross-border movement by reducing processing times and enhancing surveillance. Additionally, the EAC has launched capacity-building programmes for immigration officers, partnered with UNHCR on regional refugee response strategies, and promoted refugee inclusion in national development

plans, especially in Uganda and Rwanda. Nonetheless, disparities persist in refugee integration policies, as some Partner States continue to maintain closed camps or limit refugees' movement and employment rights.

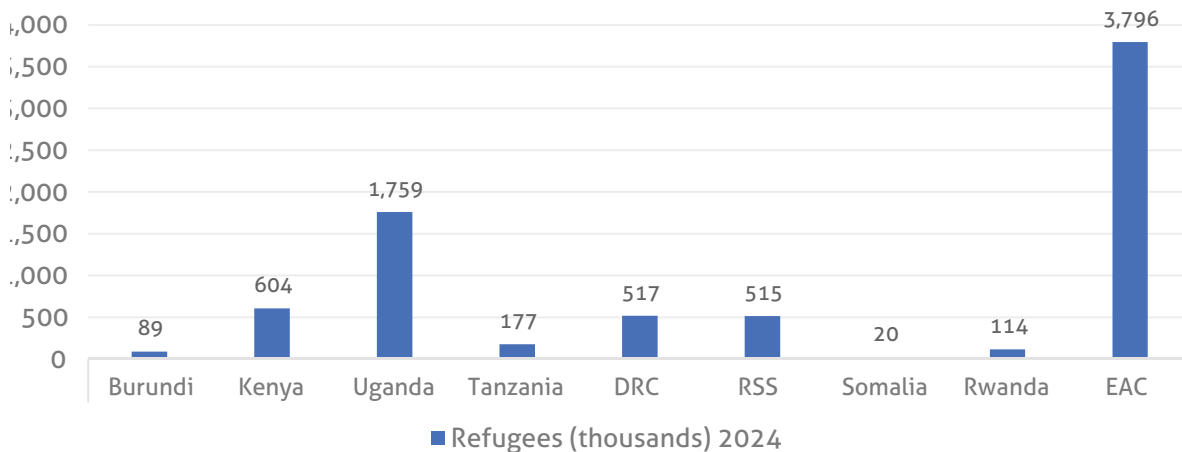
Despite significant progress, critical challenges remain in capturing undocumented migrants in data systems, insufficient legal harmonisation on refugee status determination, pressure on host communities and services, and rising transnational crimes such as human trafficking and smuggling. Additionally, climate change and insecurity in regions like eastern DRC and the Republic of South Sudan continue to cause large-scale displacement, highlighting the need for more adaptive and resilient management systems.

Looking forward, key priorities include harmonising immigration and refugee policies to ensure equitable rights and responsibilities across Partner States; strengthening regional data systems and early warning mechanisms for migration-related shocks; enhancing infrastructure at border posts to facilitate dignified movement; and deepening cooperation with humanitarian and development actors to transition from emergency response to long-term integration and resilience. Additionally, the region must invest in climate-resilient migration frameworks and scale up cross-border community development initiatives to promote social cohesion and shared prosperity in areas hosting high numbers of refugees. A coordinated, humane, and development-oriented approach to migration and refugee management will be essential for regional stability, human security, and the realisation of the EAC's broader goals under the Common Market Protocol and Vision 2050.



Over 5 million refugees and asylum seekers recorded as of 2024, predominantly in Uganda (1.5 million), the Democratic Republic of Congo (1 million), Kenya (approximately 600,000), and URT (over 250,000).

Refugees (thousands) 2024



2.9 Regional Infrastructure Development

Efficient, integrated, and modern transport infrastructure is central to the EAC's ambition of becoming a competitive, seamless, and prosperous regional bloc. As a key enabler of regional integration, trade, and economic growth, the transport sector has received strategic focus in successive EAC development plans. The region has made considerable progress in the development of road, rail, air, and inland waterway networks; however, challenges related to financing, maintenance, and intermodal connectivity persist.

The EAC Partner States have collectively invested in major infrastructure projects aimed at improving connectivity and reducing the cost of doing business. The Northern Corridor (linking Mombasa to Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan, and eastern DR Congo) and the Central Corridor (connecting Dar es Salaam to Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, and eastern DR Congo) remain the region's principal arteries for trade. As of 2024 completion of Phase 1 and 2 (Dar es Salaam to Dodoma) of the Standard Gauge Railway and the ongoing implementation of additional phases—stretching over 1,200 km, have attracted significant investment exceeding US\$ 7 billion, with financing coming from both public sources and development partners. The average cross-border road transport time between key cities has been reduced by up to 30% over the past decade due to improved road conditions and border post efficiencies.

Railway development has also been revitalised, particularly through the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) projects in Kenya and URT. Kenya's SGR from Mombasa to Naivasha, spanning over 580 km, and URT's ongoing SGR connecting Dar es Salaam to Mwanza and Kigoma, are transformative in linking inland production zones to ports. Inland waterways on Lake Victoria have seen investment in port rehabilitation and vessel safety, enhancing cross-lake connectivity among Uganda, URT, and Kenya. Air transport liberalisation has progressed under the coordination of the EAC Secretariat although full implementation of the EAC Liberalisation of Air Transport Services is still incomplete. Efforts to liberalize air transport market and modernise regional infrastructure for air navigation and airports services are ongoing.



Seamless connectivity through modern transport, energy, and digital networks will be the backbone of deeper integration

EAC-led initiatives such as the **EAC Transport and Transit Facilitation Strategy**, the **Vehicle Load Control Act**, and the **One Stop Border Post (OSBP) programme** have significantly improved trade logistics and border efficiency. As of 2023, 15 OSBPs had been completed across the region, cutting average border crossing times by up to 70%, from several days to under 6 hours in some locations. The **EAC Infrastructure Development Strategy (2016–2025)** has also provided a coordinated framework for regional investments and

has catalysed joint financing efforts involving the African Development Bank, World Bank, and EU.

Despite these gains, the region continues to face critical challenges. Infrastructure financing gaps remain substantial, estimated at US\$ 2.5 billion annually. Many secondary and feeder roads remain underdeveloped, hampering rural–urban linkages. Rail and water transport systems still lag in terms of efficiency, integration, and freight volumes. Institutional fragmentation and delays in harmonising transport regulations also constrain seamless cross-border mobility.

Looking ahead, priorities remain in completion and standardisation of regional SGR networks and their integration with port and dry port infrastructure; full implementation of the EAC Upper Airspace Management Strategy and liberalisation of air transport services to enhance regional aviation; expansion of OSBPs and digitalisation of border and customs procedures to accelerate trade facilitation; development of multimodal transport corridors (road–rail–water–air) to enhance regional connectivity and reduce logistics costs; and mobilisation of innovative financing, including PPPs and climate-resilient infrastructure funding mechanisms.

Intensifying efforts to modernise and harmonise transport infrastructure will enable the EAC to significantly reduce the cost of trade, enhance regional competitiveness, and fast-track the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Transport infrastructure remains a cornerstone of regional economic integration and a critical driver of industrialisation, agricultural transformation, and inclusive growth across East Africa

Road Network

The road network remains the backbone of regional connectivity and trade facilitation, supporting over 80% of intra-regional freight and passenger transport- making it a key enabler of economic integration, cross-border trade, and access to social services. As of 2023, the combined road network across the eight EAC Partner States spans over 520,000 kilometres, with approximately 18–22% classified as paved roads. However, the quality, connectivity, and maintenance of these roads vary significantly across the region, contributing to high transport costs- estimated at 30–40% higher than the global average for landlocked Partner States such as Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and South Sudan.



The eight EAC Partner States spans over **520,000 kilometers**, with approximately **18–22%** classified as paved roads

Recognizing the strategic importance of road infrastructure, the EAC has undertaken major initiatives to upgrade, expand, and harmonize the regional road network. The **EAC Regional Roads Development Programme (RRDP)** and the **EAC Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy (2020–2030)** have provided frameworks for coordinated development and investment. Flagship corridor projects such as the **Northern Corridor** (linking Mombasa to Kampala, Kigali, and Juba) and the **Central Corridor** (connecting Dar es Salaam to Dodoma, Kigoma, Bujumbura, and Kigali) have benefited from extensive investment, with support from partners including the African Development Bank, World Bank, and EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund.

Significant progress has been made. Over 4,000 kilometres of regional trunk roads have been rehabilitated or constructed since 2015. Examples include the Arusha–Holili/Taveta–Voi Road linking URT and Kenya, and the Kagitumba–Kayonza–Rusumo road in Rwanda, which is now a fully upgraded segment of the Central Corridor. These improvements have led to reduced transit times by up to 50% on some corridors, and enhanced safety, trade volumes, and regional mobility. The One Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) program, implemented at key crossing points such as Malaba, Busia, Rusumo, and Nimule, has drastically reduced border clearance times, reinforcing the role of road transport in facilitating regional integration.

Despite the progress, challenges persist. Road maintenance is underfunded and inconsistently managed, with many rural and feeder roads remaining in poor condition. In addition, regional disparities in road quality, fragmented regulatory regimes, overloading, and non-tariff barriers continue to hinder the full benefits of corridor efficiency. Climate resilience of road infrastructure is also emerging as a pressing concern in the face of increasing extreme weather events.



Table 22: Length of paved roads (Km) in the EAC- 2024

Country	National Road Network (km)	Paved Roads	% Paved Roads
DRC	58,000	3,500	6.03
Somalia	21,830	2,860	13.10
Burundi	5,200	1,560	30.00
Kenya	23,693	12,467	52.62
Rwanda	8,025	4,141	51.60
South Sudan	20,000	400	2.00
Uganda	21,288	6,503	30.55
United Republic of Tanzania	37,435.04	12,202.68	32.6
Total	195,261	43,389	22.22

Source: Partner States

Road network development remains a top priority to the Community, with emphasis expected on upgrading and expanding strategic regional trunk roads to meet the EAC Class A and B road standards; enhancing road maintenance frameworks, including the establishment of dedicated road funds and asset management systems; mainstreaming climate resilience and green infrastructure in road design and construction; scaling up digital solutions for intelligent transport systems (ITS), weigh-in-motion technology, and regional vehicle tracking; and deepening PPP frameworks to attract private investment in road infrastructure, especially for toll roads and expressways. Consolidating gains and addressing persistent infrastructure gaps will enable the EAC to unlock the full potential of its road network to drive industrial growth, regional integration, and inclusive socioeconomic development. A robust, integrated, and resilient regional road system will be vital to realising the vision of a connected and competitive East Africa.

Railway Network

The railway network in the EAC region plays a critical role in promoting regional connectivity, reducing transport costs, and supporting trade integration and economic growth. Historically, the EAC’s railway infrastructure has been underdeveloped, largely characterized by ageing colonial-era metre-gauge systems with limited interoperability across partner states. However, recent efforts have witnessed renewed commitment to modernizing and expanding railway systems as part of a broader strategy to enhance infrastructure-led regional development.

As of 2024, the total rail network across the EAC Partner States spans approximately 5,400 km, with Kenya, URT, and Uganda accounting for the majority of operational



The total rail network across the EAC Partner States spans approximately 5,400 km, with Kenya, URT, and Uganda accounting for the majority of operational lines

lines. Kenya and URT have made the most notable progress with the construction and partial operation of Standard Gauge Railways (SGR). Kenya's Mombasa–Nairobi SGR, completed in 2017 has significantly reduced freight transit times from over 24 hours to just 8 hours. By 2023, the line was transporting an average of 6 million tonnes of cargo annually, contributing to a substantial shift from road to rail freight. URT's Central Corridor SGR project, under phased construction, spans from Dar es Salaam to Mwanza and further towards Rwanda and Burundi. The 2024 completion of Phases 1 & 2 (Dar es Salaam - Morogoro - Dodoma) and the ongoing implementation of additional phases-stretching over 1,200 km, have attracted significant investment exceeding US\$ 7 billion, with financing from both public sources and development partners.

At the regional level, the EAC has taken several initiatives to support railway development. These include the **EAC Railways Master Plan**, which provides a coordinated framework for developing an interoperable, integrated, and efficient regional railway network. This master plan emphasizes upgrading to standard gauge across Partner States, harmonising regulatory frameworks, and promoting public-private partnerships (PPPs). Additionally, the **Tripartite Transport and Transit Facilitation Programme (TTTFP)**, implemented jointly with COMESA and SADC, aims to improve cross-border infrastructure efficiency and standardization.

Progress under these initiatives is evident in the increased alignment of national railway projects to regional corridors. Notably, the revival of Uganda's metre-gauge lines to link with Kenya's SGR, and feasibility studies to extend SGR lines to Rwanda, DRC, and South Sudan, underscore growing cross-border railway ambitions. The establishment of OSBPs and adoption of the EAC Vehicle Load Control Act have enhanced multimodal transport integration and reduced logistical bottlenecks along key corridors.



Despite this progress, critical challenges remain. Fragmented implementation, financing gaps, weak institutional coordination, and inconsistent technical standards continue to impede the seamless development of a regionally harmonized railway system. The reliance on bilateral financing arrangements and lack of private sector participation further constrain the pace of development.

In the prevailing situational context, EAC must maintain its focus on fast-tracking the full implementation of the EAC Railways Master Plan, with a focus on linking all Partner States through standard gauge networks; mobilizing innovative financing, including structured PPPs and blended finance mechanisms, to close infrastructure investment gaps; harmonising technical and safety standards, and establishing a regional railway regulatory authority to oversee cross-border operations; upgrading existing metre-gauge lines for short- to medium-term interoperability while concurrently investing in SGR expansion; and integrating railway development with port and industrial zones to stimulate trade and improve the region's global competitiveness.

Maritime Transport

Maritime transport plays a vital role in facilitating the movement of goods, people, and services across inland and international waters. The region's maritime infrastructure is primarily anchored on the Northern and Central Corridors, connecting landlocked Partner States to global markets through key seaports such as the Port of Mombasa in Kenya and the Port of Dar es Salaam in URT. Together, these two ports handle over 90% of the EAC's international maritime cargo, with Mombasa alone processing approximately 35 million tonnes annually as of 2023, and serving as the principal gateway for Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan, and eastern DRC.

Complementing these are critical inland waterways, notably Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika, which provide cross-border linkages between Kenya, URT, Uganda, Burundi, and DRC. Lake Victoria supports the movement of over 4 million tonnes of cargo annually and sustains regional ferry services, fisheries trade, and logistics hubs such as the Port Bell–Kisumu–Mwanza triangle. However, much of this potential remains underutilised due to outdated vessels, limited port infrastructure, poor navigational aids, and fragmented regulatory frameworks.

To address these challenges, the EAC has undertaken a



Together, Northern and Central Corridors handle over 90% of the EAC's international maritime cargo, with Mombasa alone processing approximately 35 million tonnes

range of strategic initiatives to strengthen maritime transport. Key among these is the **EAC Protocol on Transport and Communications**, which provides a framework for harmonized maritime regulations, safety standards, and infrastructure development. The **EAC Ports and Maritime Transport Strategy (2020–2030)** and the **Lake Victoria Transport Programme (LVTP)**, implemented through the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC), have supported the rehabilitation of key landing sites, the upgrade of ferry services, and the establishment of a regional Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Mwanza. Additionally, there has been progress in the development of the **Single Maritime Window** and digitisation of cargo handling and customs procedures to enhance efficiency at ports.

These efforts have led to notable improvements in turnaround times at Mombasa and Dar es Salaam, increased private sector investment in port infrastructure, and enhanced safety and surveillance on major lakes. The revival of ferry services such as the MV Mwanza and modernisation of inland container depots (ICDs) are helping to reduce transport costs and transit times for landlocked Partner States. However, challenges persist, including limited last-mile connectivity, capacity constraints in maritime training institutions, and weak coordination between national maritime authorities.

As the EAC moves into the next 5 years, priorities for maritime transport remain in upgrading and expanding port infrastructure across both seaports and inland ports to accommodate rising cargo volumes and larger vessels; accelerating implementation of the EAC Maritime Transport Strategy to enhance policy coherence and regional coordination; enhancing safety and environmental sustainability by investing in navigation systems, search and rescue capacity, and green port initiatives; promoting intermodal transport systems that seamlessly link maritime, rail, and road transport for greater logistical efficiency; and building human capital through maritime training and certification programs aligned with international standards (IMO/STCW).



Civil Aviation and Airports

Civil aviation in the East African Community is experiencing coordinated development through regional cooperation and institutional frameworks. The EAC Treaty outlines cooperation in all civil aviation ecosystem which encompasses all the interconnected elements involved in the operations including air navigation services, airports services and infrastructure, airlines, air traffic management, and related subsectors. The region is also experiencing steady growth of aircraft, passengers and cargo movement, contributing to economic growth and social development. The key regional cooperation initiatives in civil aviation and air transport, includes adopting common policies, domestication and harmonisation of air transport regulations, establishing centres of excellence in aviation; implementing the liberalisation of air transport in the region; establishing a single block of upper airspace over the EAC countries; operationalization of the East African Multilateral Agreement on Aircraft Accident Investigation, Search and Rescue.

Air passenger traffic in the region is recovering from the COVID-19 downturn. By 2023, regional passenger volumes were estimated to have rebounded to over 85% of pre-pandemic levels. Cargo volumes have also seen growth, particularly in Kenya and Rwanda, with Entebbe and Kigali increasingly becoming transit points for high-value and time-sensitive goods. However, despite this recovery, the cost of air travel in the region remains among the highest in Africa, largely due to restrictive bilateral air service agreements, high taxes and fees, and limited competition.

The ongoing efforts toward a liberalized EAC airspace have yielded modest gains, including increased flight frequencies, more efficient route management, and reduced duplication in safety oversight functions. Progress has also been registered in the digitalisation of air traffic management systems, cross-border cooperation in search and rescue operations, and efforts to integrate environmental sustainability into aviation planning-aligning with ICAO's Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA). CASSOA play an important role in ensuring regulatory compliance of aviation standards and recommended practices. Capacity building across Partner States continues to be instrumental in maintaining international aviation safety

Despite these advances, several constraints remain. The region continues to grapple with high operating costs, inconsistent regulatory enforcement, limited open skies

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85% of the EAC's Percentage of the regional passenger volumes estimated by 2023 to have rebounded of pre-pandemic levels

implementation, and infrastructural disparities between major and secondary airports. These factors hinder full realization of air transport’s potential to drive regional economic transformation.

To address these challenges and enhance the aviation sector, the EAC has initiated several regional interventions. Key among these are the establishment of the EAC Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA), the harmonisation of civil aviation regulations and technical guidance Materials (TGMs), and progressive steps toward the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision and the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). The EAC has also promoted joint provision of air navigation services, launched regional training programmes for aviation professionals, and supported the development of aviation infrastructure master plans.

Continued focus should be on full operationalisation of the liberalised regional air transport market and support Partner States’ compliance with SAATM commitments; strengthening CASSOA’s mandate and resourcing to ensure harmonised regulatory oversight and capacity development; reducing air travel costs through rationalisation of taxes, fees, and charges across Partner States; modernisation of airport infrastructure, particularly in secondary cities, to support inclusive access and regional equity; promotion of environmentally sustainable aviation, including investment in green airport technologies and alignment with global climate standards; and digital transformation in aviation services, including smart ticketing, cargo tracking, and air traffic management systems.



Communications

Across the eight EAC countries, mobile connectivity has grown rapidly, but stark disparities remain. Kenya and Tanzania are regional leaders, with SIM penetration exceeding 140% in Kenya and over 80 million mobile subscriptions in Tanzania, supported by highly entrenched mobile money ecosystems. Rwanda and Uganda are mid-tier performers, with roughly 30–38% of their populations online by early 2025, reflecting steady progress but limited by device affordability and income constraints. By contrast, Burundi and South Sudan remain at the lowest end, with only 12–13% and 12% internet penetration respectively, underscoring fragile infrastructure and affordability challenges.

When compared regionally, a common trend emerges. SIM penetration outpaces internet usage across all EAC states. Kenya exemplifies this gap, with 146% SIM penetration but only 48% internet use. This pattern reflects multi-SIM ownership alongside persistent barriers to digital adoption, particularly handset costs, literacy, and data affordability. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia both show strong absolute numbers (60.3 million mobile connections in DRC, and 55% internet penetration in Somalia), yet coverage remains uneven, especially in rural areas.

The trend across East Africa points to mobile-led connectivity, where communications growth is tied tightly to mobile broadband expansion and mobile money ecosystems. Satellite internet (notably Starlink in Somalia and Uganda) is emerging as a complementary solution for underserved areas. Yet the comparative analysis highlights a clear divide: Kenya, Tanzania, and increasingly Rwanda stand as relatively mature digital markets, while Burundi, South Sudan, and parts of the DRC lag behind. For the region collectively, the strategic challenge is less about mobile coverage- which is fairly widespread, and more about driving affordable, meaningful internet use that can close the digital inclusion gap .

The East African Community One Network Area (ONA) strategy aims to create a unified telecommunications market within the region by eliminating roaming charges and enabling calls within the EAC at local rates. This initiative fosters greater connectivity and economic integration by making communication more affordable and seamless across borders. The ONA aims to facilitate seamless communication and promote regional integration by enabling users to make calls and use data services at local rates across participating EAC countries.

The ONA was first piloted by Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda, and has since expanded to include URT, Burundi and South Sudan. The EAC is working to include the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Federal Republic of Somalia in the ONA framework. The initiative was driven by the need to address high roaming charges, which were a barrier to economic integration. The EAC emphasizes stakeholder engagement and consultation in the development and implementation of the roaming framework.



Meteorology

The EAC meteorology framework strategy focuses on strengthening regional cooperation and capacity building in meteorology to support sustainable development and address climate change impacts. Key areas include enhancing data processing and forecasting systems, expanding climate observing stations, and improving monitoring and prediction of extreme weather events.

The EAC Climate Change Policy and related strategies, such as the Climate Change Masterplan and the regional Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). Implementation roadmap, form the foundation for this framework. The strategy aims to harmonize climate change initiatives, identify priority adaptation and mitigation actions, and promote public awareness and capacity building.

Energy Generation and Supply

Reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy is a cornerstone of socioeconomic transformation within Community. Over the past two decades, Partner States have made significant progress in expanding power generation capacity, increasing electricity access, and transitioning toward cleaner energy sources. As of 2023, the EAC's total installed electricity generation capacity exceeded 10,500 MW, with hydropower (45%), thermal (30%), and a growing share of renewables (solar, geothermal, wind, 25%). Kenya leads the region in renewable energy deployment, generating over 90% of its electricity from clean sources, including being the continent's top producer of geothermal power (≈ 950 MW). Rwanda and Uganda have also invested heavily in mini-hydropower and solar hybrid systems, while URT has increased its national grid capacity through hydro and gas investments.

Electricity access across the region, however, remains uneven. As of 2023, **urban access averages 65–85%**, while **rural access lags at 25–40%**, with **Burundi and South Sudan** reporting the lowest national access rates, both under **15%**. Transmission and distribution losses also remain high in some countries, ranging from **18% to 25%**, undermining system efficiency. Furthermore, reliance on biomass, especially in rural and peri-urban areas continues to dominate household energy use, accounting for **over 70%** of total energy consumption in the region, contributing to deforestation, health risks, and gendered labour burdens.

To address these challenges, the EAC has implemented several strategic and institutional interventions. The **EAC Energy Access and Roadmap** and the **EAC Bioenergy Strategy (2018–2028)** aim to increase electricity connectivity and promote sustainable fuel alternatives. The **East African Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (EACREEE)**, established in 2016, supports innovation and coordination in renewable energy development. The **Eastern Africa Power Pool (EAPP)** and ongoing efforts toward cross-border interconnections such as the **Kenya–Uganda–Rwanda** and **Kenya–URT** transmission lines are enhancing regional power trade and system resilience.

Progress under these initiatives is visible in expanded energy generation, improved cross-border electricity flows, and rising regional electrification rates. For instance, regional electricity access has improved from **27% in 2010 to above 50% by 2023**, with more than **20 million**

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Regional electricity access has improved from 27% in 2010 to above 50% by 2023, with more than 20 million people gaining first-time access over the last decade

people gaining first-time access over the last decade. Additionally, the uptake of off-grid and mini-grid solutions has accelerated, particularly in rural Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda, supported by public–private partnerships and donor-backed financing mechanisms. URT, through her rural electrification programme, has seen over 12,300 villages connected to electricity in the last five years, with the government now embarking on connecting over 64,200 hamlets.

Looking ahead, the EAC must prioritize deeper integration of energy markets, enhanced grid reliability, and universal access by 2040. The focus should be on **scaling investment in renewable energy infrastructure**, especially in solar, wind, and geothermal across underutilised zones; **expanding regional interconnectivity and harmonising power regulation frameworks** to boost cross-border electricity trade; **strengthening rural electrification**, particularly through decentralized mini-grids and solar home systems; **improving energy efficiency and reducing technical losses** across transmission networks; **accelerating transition from biomass to clean cooking technologies**, which will yield environmental and public health co-benefits; and **mobilising private sector investment** through regional power purchase frameworks and de-risking instruments.



Table 23: EAC Partner States energy production (GWh)

Indicator	Year	DRC	Somalia	Burundi	Kenya	Rwanda	RSS	Uganda	URT
Production of electricity from fossil fuels (GWh)	2020	15	28	87	755	90		57	4,519
	2021	15	28	122	1,262	150		51	5,253
	2022	15	28	108	1,585	184		75	6,071
	2023		28		1,306	74		65	7,401
	2024								5,579
Production of hydroelectricity (GWh)	2020	12,382		178	4,233	453		4,062	3,139
	2021	13,134		131	3,675	479		4,598	3,086
	2022	13,073		123	3,040	602		4,965	2,821
	2023			133	2,668	493		5,418	2,699
	2024								6,034
Geothermal	2020				5,060				-
	2021				5,037				-
	2022				5,518				-
	2023				6,032				-
	2024								-
Production of electricity from solar, wind, tide, wave, and other sources (GWh)	2020					224		87	19
	2021					237		101	17
	2022			13		227		99	16
	2023			8		317		99	10
	2024								16

Power Interconnectivity

Power interconnectivity has steadily emerged as a strategic pillar within the EAC’s energy integration agenda, enabling efficient cross-border trade, improved reliability, and greater access to sustainable electricity. Anchored by the **East African Power Master Plan**, the region has prioritized a harmonized interconnection code and grid compliance through the Eastern Africa Power Pool (EAPP). By 2022, approximately **54%** of the plan’s envisaged 12,567 MW generation capacity had been achieved, while **transmission infrastructure exceeded targets at 211%**, facilitating a surplus load value of nearly **US\$357 million** in potential trade.

Key cross-border transmission projects have advanced regional consolidation. The **Sodo–Moyale–Suswa HVDC line** (500kV, 1,045km, 2,000MW capacity) connecting Ethiopia and Kenya was commissioned in November 2022, enabling Kenya to access cheaper Ethiopian power. The **Kenya–URT HVAC line** (510km, 1,600MW transfer capacity) became operational in 2025 delivering electricity to ~198,000 previously off-grid residents across 21 villages and generating local jobs and inclusive supply chains. Additional interconnectors include **Masaka–Mutukula–Mwanza** (Uganda–URT), **Isinya–Singida** (Kenya–URT), and planning for future lines such as **Karuma–Juba** (Uganda–South Sudan), demonstrating an expansive blueprint for infrastructure linkages.

EAPP’s institutional evolution has underscored the region’s dedication to regulatory harmonisation. In 2023, the **Eastern Africa Power Pool’s Independent Regulatory Board** was officially hosted in Kampala and funded by the Africa Development Bank to develop a full-fledged cross-border electricity trading platform. Complementary measures such as the **EAC interconnection code**, national electrification masterplans, and alignment of

grid codes have improved market integration and investor confidence.

Strategic impact and emerging benefits have been observed. Electrification rates remain uneven, under 11% in Rwanda and 23% in Kenya as of 2020, but improved interconnectivity is unlocking border-town access under EAC's cross-border electrification program. Access to surplus power enables more affordable tariffs; e.g., Kenya sources power at a -KSh7 (US\$ 0.05)/kWh discount via the Ethiopia interconnector. Large-scale interconnectivity supports industrial development, modern service delivery, and climate mitigation through reduced reliance on thermal generation.

Despite these strides, challenges remain. Operational electricity trading lags paper potential, with uneven domestic grid quality, tariff distortions, and capacity constraints slowing the pace. Rural electrification disparities persist, especially in Burundi and South Sudan. While transmission networks have been expanded, **commercial integration**, through trading systems, standardized PPAs, and regulatory alignment, requires accelerated development.

2.10 Regional integration

Africa's regional integration has shown steady but uneven progress, with the EAC ranked as the continent's most integrated regional economic community (REC) in the latest ARII. As of the 2023 report, the EAC scored an average index of 0.625, outperforming other RECs in areas such as free movement of people (0.88), trade integration (0.77), and productive integration (0.66). These scores reflect advances in harmonized trade regimes, shared infrastructure protocols, and joint industrial strategies. However, the continent overall still lags in financial integration (0.27) and infrastructure connectivity (0.32), with disparities across subregions and countries hindering the full realization of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Despite these constraints, progress is being made toward implementing AfCFTA, which now includes 47 of 55 AU member states having ratified the agreement, creating a market of over 1.3 billion people with a combined GDP exceeding \$3.4 trillion. The EAC stands in a strong position to leverage its relatively high integration performance to champion deeper continental cohesion, particularly



The EAC's leadership in continental integration must now be matched with accelerated implementation of customs, market, and monetary union commitments.

through trade facilitation, regional value chains, and cross-border infrastructure projects. Nevertheless, bottlenecks such as non-tariff barriers, inconsistent policy harmonisation, and limited institutional coordination continue to hinder the pace and depth of Africa-wide integration.

Going forward, the EAC's leadership in continental integration offers both an opportunity and a responsibility to accelerate convergence and support the AfCFTA as a transformative economic framework. With its strong performance in trade integration, free movement of people, and productive integration, the EAC can act as a catalyst for deeper continental convergence by exporting its policy best practices, institutional frameworks, and infrastructure models to support broader harmonisation across RECs. Going into the 7th Development Strategy, the EAC should prioritize aligning its regional frameworks with AfCFTA protocols, spearheading cross-border value chains, and championing collective approaches to address non-tariff barriers and regulatory fragmentation. This leadership role not only reinforces the EAC's relevance in shaping Africa's economic future but also amplifies its potential to unlock economies of scale, attract investment, and position the region as a central hub for intra-African trade and industrial transformation.

2.11 Cross Cutting Issues

The EAC confronts pivotal cross-cutting challenges, including **digital transformation, innovation, social inclusion, and climate resilience**, that shape regional progress. Despite strategic frameworks, gaps in implementation and funding hinder equitable growth. Addressing these interconnected priorities will unlock the region's potential for inclusive, sustainable development.

Digital Transformation

The East African Community has made progress in advancing digital transformation in customs, trade facilitation, and regional payment systems, yet significant gaps remain that constrain regional integration and competitiveness. Uptake of digital tools is uneven across Partner States due to persistent infrastructure deficits, limited financing, and weak private sector engagement in research and innovation. The region continues to lag in the commercialization of innovations and lacks robust digital ecosystems to drive industrial growth, e-governance, and competitiveness. Furthermore, disparities in connectivity and skills, especially for rural communities, women, and youth, reinforce the digital divide. These challenges highlight the need for stronger infrastructure, greater investment, and inclusive innovation systems to enable the EAC to fully leverage digitalization as a driver of growth and integration.

The EAC Digital Transformation Strategy 2025-2030 positions digitalization as a foundational cross-cutting enabler for regional integration and inclusive growth. Recognizing its transformative potential across all sectors, the strategy focuses on harmonising digital policies, expanding infrastructure, and fostering innovation ecosystems to bridge existing disparities. While digital tools are increasingly deployed in customs, trade facilitation, and payment systems, uneven adoption persists due to infrastructure gaps, financing constraints, and limited private sector engagement. The 7th EAC Development Strategy builds on past progress by prioritizing investments in broadband connectivity,

interoperable digital platforms, and skills development, particularly for youth, women, and rural communities, to create a more competitive and digitally empowered region.

Central to the strategy are four key pillars: establishing a harmonized legal framework for digital trade and data protection; achieving 90% internet coverage in urban and rural areas; developing a robust digital economy through e-commerce and financial inclusion; and enhancing digital literacy to reach 80% competency by 2030. Integration of AI and DPI into regional strategies will be pivotal in enhancing the efficiency of cross-border trade, e-commerce, and service delivery. Regional efforts will focus on AI-driven innovation ecosystems, ensuring that all EAC Partner States are equipped with the necessary digital skills for the future workforce. A collaborative network approach across all partner states in academia and AI research is critical to foster innovation and ensure the region develops homegrown AI solutions that meet East Africa's needs. These efforts aim to address critical challenges including fragmented policy implementation, inadequate funding for digital public goods, and skills mismatches that hinder innovation commercialization. Emerging technologies like AI, blockchain, and IoT are strategically incorporated, with emphasis on ethical governance and inclusive access to ensure all Partner States benefit equitably from the digital revolution.

The EAC envisions a future where seamless cross-border digital trade, efficient e-government services, and vibrant tech entrepreneurship drive sustainable development. This will be achieved embedding digital transformation across all sectors. The strategy's success hinges on coordinated multi-stakeholder action, combining regulatory harmonisation, infrastructure investment, and human capital development to overcome current limitations. Ultimately, this comprehensive approach seeks to position East Africa as a globally competitive digital hub while ensuring no community is left behind in the region's socio-economic transformation.

Science, Technology and Innovations

Over recent years, science, technology, and innovation (STI) have emerged as key pillars in the EAC's development agenda. In 2024, the region formally launched the East African Regional Science, Technology and Innovation Policy 2023–2033 and a companion Regional Intellectual Property Policy, signaling a renewed commitment to science-led growth and innovation ecosystems. Yet, financing remains a critical bottleneck: none of the EAC Partner States have reached the 1percent of GDP benchmark for R&D investment envisaged by the Africa-wide STI Strategy (STISA2024), with Kenya recording a peak of just 0.8percent back in 2010. Regional efforts such as EASTECO and IUCEA, in partnership with GIZ, have supported initiatives like the dSkills@EA digital skills and AI research alliance to enhance human capital and promote demand-driven tech entrepreneurship. Still, across the region, the adoption and commercialization of innovations is uneven hindered by weak infrastructure, financing constraints, and limited private-sector engagement in research and development.

Despite these limitations, several innovation ecosystems are taking shape: Kenya's Konza Technopolis (Silicon Savannah) is now more than 75percent subscribed and advancing as a smart-city innovation hub with biotech, ICT, and smart agriculture components, aimed at creating thousands of tech-focused jobs in coming years. Rwanda's Kigali Innovation City similarly aspires to catalyze a technologybased industrial cluster, integrating universities, start-ups, and business incubators within a Special Economic Zone. Meanwhile, agricultural

innovation receives regional support through networks like ASARECA, enhancing the deployment of improved technologies for resilience and productivity across Partner States. Together, these developments reflect initial traction in building STI infrastructure and ecosystems, though their scalability and regional diffusion remain uneven.

The EAC has made notable progress in advancing science, technology, and innovation (STI) through institutional support from bodies like the East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO) and the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA). Efforts include promoting STEM education, harmonising TVET systems, and enhancing research collaborations.

Gender, Youth, People With Disabilities and Social Inclusion

East Africa's demographic profile is defined by a powerful youth bulge, with over 60 percent of the EAC population under the age of 30, and projections suggesting this will grow to 75 percent of those under 25 by 2030. Yet the region faces a staggering employment crisis. Over 50 percent of youth aged 15–35 are unemployed, climbing to 66 percent among young rural women. While education access is expanding, the mismatch between skills and labour market needs, pervasive informality, and limited opportunities especially for young women deepen socioeconomic exclusion. In sub-Saharan Africa, youth unemployment averages around 13 percent, with young women facing an employment rate of 38.2 percent versus 42.6 percent for young men. Gender inequalities further compound these challenges, as women's labour force participation remains considerably lower, roughly 46 percent for women versus over 72 percent for men in SSA, hindering inclusion and amplifying inequality. Despite comprising more than 60 percent of the EAC populace, women remain underrepresented in decision-making and leadership positions, with limited access to education, finance, ICT, and formal employment opportunities.

Sex and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) remains a pervasive challenge in the region, undermining gender equality, human rights, and socioeconomic development. Despite progress in policy reforms, such as the EAC Gender Policy (2018), as well as national action plans, SGBV prevalence is still high, exacerbated by weak enforcement, cultural norms, and limited survivor support systems. The Strategy commits to harmonising SGBV prevention and response

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60%, Percentage of the EAC population under the age of 30, and projections suggesting this will grow to 75 percent of those under 25 by 2030

frameworks, strengthening community-based protection mechanisms, scaling up survivor-centred services, and institutionalising gender budgeting to resource these interventions effectively. Through integration of SGBV prevention and response into regional development programming, alongside promoting women's economic empowerment and leadership, the EAC aims to address both the structural and immediate drivers of violence, fostering a safer and more equitable environment for all citizens.

The EAC recognizes disability mainstreaming as a critical component of inclusive development, ensuring that persons with disabilities (PWDs) are meaningfully engaged in and benefit from regional integration. Current policy frameworks, including the EAC Social Protection Policy Framework and the ongoing negotiations on the Protocol on Social Security Benefits, explicitly target improved access to social protection, employment, education, and assistive technologies for PWDs. However, gaps remain in enforcement, funding, and the harmonisation of national disability policies, which limits the full participation of PWDs in economic and social life. Going forward, the Strategy seeks to integrate disability considerations into all sectors, expand regional capacity building, strengthen data systems for disability- dis aggregated indicators, and promote the portability of benefits to support PWDs' mobility and economic participation across Partner States.

Gender and youth are increasingly recognized as central to regional integration. The EAC has implemented programs to promote gender equality, empower women and girls, and expand youth employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. Sports, culture, and TVET initiatives are supporting youth inclusion, while gender mainstreaming has been advanced through anti-GBV campaigns and leadership development. The EAC has institutionalised policy frameworks, including the Gender and Community Development Strategic Plan and Youth Policy (2013), aimed at mainstreaming gender, youth, and social inclusion across programmes. At the time of formulating the 7th EAC Development Strategy, a successor of this policy, the EAC Youth Policy (2025) was under review, to be adopted within the first year of the 7th Strategy.

Despite these efforts, progress is hampered by cultural norms, weak enforcement of inclusion policies, and persistent socioeconomic inequalities. High youth unemployment and the mismatch between education and labour market needs remain significant regional challenges. Structural barriers still limit full participation



Embedding gender equality, youth empowerment, technology, and climate resilience in all sectors will future-proof the EAC's growth.

of persons with specialized needs, including persons with disabilities and rural populations, in economic development. These dynamics not only curtail human capital potential but also constrain inclusive regional economic growth and integration unless explicitly addressed in the next strategic phase.

Climate Change

Climate change poses a profound and escalating threat to the East African Community, with the region warming nearly twice as fast as the global average. Temperatures have risen by over 2°C in key cities, and future projections indicate further warming alongside declining and erratic rainfall. The region faces increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events such as droughts and floods, which have displaced millions and caused billions in economic losses. Agriculture, a key economic driver employing over 60% of the population is highly vulnerable, with studies projecting yield declines of up to 13% in staple crops. Water scarcity is intensifying, with per capita water availability in countries like Kenya expected to fall below 300 m³ by 2050. These shifts are also triggering public health risks, biodiversity loss, and mounting climate-induced displacement.

The EAC has acknowledged climate change as a core development challenge and has integrated climate resilience across several sectors particularly agriculture, energy, and disaster risk management. Progress includes improved regional meteorological collaboration, enhanced weather forecasting, and emphasis on renewable energy investments. Efforts by the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) have also targeted climate adaptation and ecosystem preservation.

Although EAC Partner States have initiated climate adaptation policies and regional mechanisms, mainstreaming climate resilience across all sectors remains limited. Institutional fragmentation, low climate financing, and weak coordination hinder the implementation of comprehensive, data-driven responses. Without urgent and scaled-up action, climate change will continue to undermine food security, human development, and economic integration efforts in the region. Embedding a climate-smart approach into all pillars of the 7th EAC Development Strategy is essential to building long-term resilience, reducing vulnerabilities, and securing inclusive, sustainable development across the bloc.;



2.12 SWOT and PESTEL Analysis

The EAC stands at a strategic crossroads, with unprecedented opportunities to advance regional integration while navigating significant internal and external threats. A comprehensive SWOT and PESTEL analysis reveals critical dynamics across Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal dimensions. The Community enters the 7th Development Strategy period with significant institutional strengths under the political dimension. The region benefits from a well-established governance and integration framework, backed by strong political will from Partner States. These foundations provide a vital platform to advance regional priorities, including the EAC Political Federation. Strategically, the EAC must now leverage its active diplomatic channels to deepen engagement in continental (AU Agenda 2063) and global (UN SDGs) arenas, thereby positioning the region as a unified voice on key geopolitical issues. However, risks such as intermittent political instability, interstate tensions, and competing national priorities must be mitigated through enhanced implementation of the EAC Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Mechanism and the institutionalization of joint planning and dispute resolution mechanisms to ensure continuity of regional programmes.

Economically, the EAC is anchored in a resilient and diversified base spanning agriculture, services, tourism, and emerging industrial sectors. The region's strategic location and expanding membership create a vast internal market with enhanced bargaining power. Opportunities from continental trade frameworks such as AfCFTA and international investor interest offer a unique opening to deepen regional value chains, develop trade infrastructure, and transform the region into a continental logistics and manufacturing hub. However, the region must address threats posed by global economic shocks, fiscal constraints, and high debt levels by reinforcing domestic revenue mobilization, harmonising investment protocols, and leveraging innovative financing instruments like diaspora bonds and blended finance to sustain infrastructure and development initiatives.

Socially, the EAC's demographic profile, characterized by a youthful population with over 65% under 30 presents a potential demographic dividend that, if well harnessed, could drive innovation and productivity across the region. Coupled with a rising middle class and increased

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Leveraging strengths like a young workforce and strategic location, while mitigating political, economic, and climate risks, will shape the EAC's competitive edge.

urbanization, the region is poised for rapid socioeconomic transformation. The strategic direction should prioritize massive investments in technical and vocational training, digital education, and labour market alignment to absorb this dynamic workforce. However, challenges such as mismatched education outcomes, high unemployment, and uneven access to social services require coordinated interventions across Partner States, including harmonized social protection systems and regionally aligned employment policies.

Technological advancement continues to shape the EAC's integration agenda, with expanding digital infrastructure, growing internet penetration, and adoption of e-commerce offering opportunities to leapfrog traditional development barriers. Regional uptake of 4IR technologies such as AI, blockchain, and fintech presents avenues to enhance productivity, governance, and service delivery. To capitalize on these, the EAC must operationalize a comprehensive Digital Transformation Strategy focusing on regional ICT interoperability, digital trade, and cybersecurity governance. The absence of harmonized laws on data protection and digital commerce, alongside a digital skills gap, threatens to widen regional disparities. This calls for a coordinated push toward regional legal frameworks on digital economy governance and robust capacity-building programs in STEM and digital innovation.

From an environmental standpoint, the EAC is increasingly embracing sustainability as a core development imperative. The region's renewable energy potential—spanning solar, wind, geothermal, and hydro—aligns well with global climate action goals and provides a strong case for green industrialisation and resilient infrastructure. The strategic focus must prioritize mainstreaming climate resilience across all sectors and leveraging global climate financing mechanisms to fund adaptation and mitigation efforts. Disjointed national environmental governance frameworks and rising vulnerability to climate-induced disasters, however, threaten collective progress. The Community must fast-track the operationalization of the EAC Climate Change Master Plan and invest in early warning systems, transboundary conservation efforts, and ecosystem-based adaptation models to strengthen resilience.

Legally, the EAC possesses a solid foundation of regional treaties, protocols, and legal instruments. However, the slow pace of ratification, fragmented legal regimes, and inconsistent enforcement across Partner States continue to undermine the integrity of the integration process. Strategic focus must now shift to accelerated legal harmonisation, particularly in critical areas such as investment law, labour mobility, digital trade, and environmental regulation. Establishing a Legal Harmonisation Roadmap and enhancing the mandate of the East African Court of Justice to cover broader jurisdictions including cross-border commerce and digital services will be essential to secure investor confidence and promote legal certainty in the regional market.

Overall, the EAC's strategic outlook is defined by a compelling convergence of institutional readiness, economic potential, demographic dynamism, technological momentum, environmental responsibility, and legal maturity. However, realizing this potential will require bold and coordinated action to mitigate existing threats, close systemic gaps, and optimize available opportunities. The 7th EAC Development Strategy must therefore be anchored in proactive regionalism, legal coherence, youth-centred innovation, and sustainable, inclusive growth to transform the Community into a globally competitive, integrated, and resilient economic bloc.

Table 24: SWOT and PESTEL analysis

	Political	Economic	Social	Technological	Environmental	Legal
STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established institutional framework and governance architecture supporting regional integration. Strong political will and commitment from Partner States towards deepening integration. Ongoing efforts to operationalise the EAC Political Federation and strengthen regional governance. Active regional diplomacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic geographical positioning and expanded membership creating a large and diversified market. Steady GDP growth averaging with a resilient service and agricultural sector. Expansion in EAC partnership (PS) offers a larger internal market, increased bargaining power on the global stage, and more robust regional collaboration Existing regional infrastructure development initiatives Economic Diversification Among Partner States-diverse economic base, with sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, mining, tourism, and emerging technology industries Strong collaboration with development partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographic dividend- over 65% under age 30, presenting both opportunity and risk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing adoption of ICT and digital platforms for regional operations and coordination. Expanding digital infrastructure and e-government services. Growing access to the internet and smartphones which is transforming communication and services across diverse sectors High adoption of e-commerce for enhanced efficiency in business transactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased focus on green growth, climate resilience, and sustainable resource management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operationalisation of key protocols (e.g. Customs Union, Common Market) and regional policies. Relatively stable macroeconomic environment with ongoing harmonisation of policies Established regional policy harmonisation efforts:

	Political	Economic	Social	Technological	Environmental	Legal
WEAKNESSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited institutional capacity and technical expertise, especially in implementing regional frameworks. High reliance on donor funding, risking the sustainability of strategic initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low investment in research, innovation, and industrial infrastructure. Resilient service and agriculture sectors but low industrialisation and manufacturing capacity. Weak ethics and integrity standards in the public and private sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited stakeholder awareness and citizen participation in the integration process. Health and education disparities persist across Partner States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak monitoring and evaluation frameworks and limited use of data for decision-making. Limited R&D investment and digital skills gap constraining adoption of 4IR technologies. Limited digital literacy and weak capacity in STEM disciplines across much of the region threaten the ability to scale up Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies. lack of coordinated regional support for start-ups, incubators, and innovation hubs reduces the scalability of tech-based solutions across borders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dis-harmonized regional environmental governance and resilience strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate and inconsistent domestication of regional policies and legal instruments at national levels. Fragmented regulatory frameworks Slow pace of legal harmonisation and ratification of regional instruments. Inconsistent enforcement of EAC laws and limited capacity in legal affairs
OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing international interest in regional blocs creates momentum for building unified political voices in global negotiations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic alignment with continental (Agenda 2063, AfCFTA) and global (SDG 2030) development frameworks. Private sector interest in regional value chains and investment in manufacturing and agribusiness. Potential for increased intra-regional trade and joint infrastructure development. Enhanced cooperation with development partners and regional blocs (COMESA, SADC). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing youthful population providing a potential demographic dividend. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding ICT and digital transformation space enabling innovation and regional connectivity. Emerging innovation ecosystems, especially in fintech, agriculture, and health sectors. Digitisation and adoption of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing Global Focus on Climate Change and Green Economy: The growing global emphasis on climate change mitigation and the transition to a green economy presents opportunities for the EAC to leverage international climate financing and investment in sustainable development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing demand for legal reforms on labour mobility, digital trade, and refugee protection.

	Political	Economic	Social	Technological	Environmental	Legal
OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage strong political will and existing diplomatic frameworks to advance joint regional interests at continental (AU) and global (UN, WTO) levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Untapped potential in renewable energy (solar, hydro, wind) and sustainable land use. Emerging Middle Class and Consumer Markets in Africa: The rapid growth of the middle class across Africa, particularly in urban areas, represents an expanding consumer base for goods and services. EAC's geographic position offers a unique advantage as a trade and logistics hub. With access to the Indian Ocean, key port cities like Mombasa and Dar es Salaam serve as critical gateways for both regional and international trade. This location creates opportunities to strengthen the region's role in global supply chains, enhance maritime trade, and develop infrastructure to support logistics and transport industries. Growing Global Interest in African Markets: There is increasing international attention on Africa as a growing economic hub, with foreign investors and multinational companies showing heightened interest in trade, infrastructure, and industrial investments. This global interest can help the EAC attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), technology transfers, and partnerships that align with the development strategy's goals of industrialisation and economic growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing influence of diaspora in shaping new pathways for economic growth and regional integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technological Innovations and Digital Transformation: Advances in technology, particularly in information and communication technologies (ICT), fintech, e-commerce, and digital services, present opportunities for the EAC to enhance productivity, improve governance, and drive economic growth. The adoption of these technologies can also help streamline trade, facilitate regional integration, and improve service delivery, in line with the 6th Development Strategy. 		

	Political	Economic	Social	Technological	Environmental	Legal
OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to align political structures with socio-economic goals, especially through integration of regional security, migration, and foreign policy frameworks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing Demand for Natural Resources and Energy: The global demand for natural resources, particularly minerals, oil, gas, and agricultural products, continues to rise. The EAC, with its abundant resources, stands to benefit from this trend through increased exports and partnerships in extractive industries. Additionally, renewable energy investments—such as solar, wind, and hydropower—align with both the global push for green energy and the EAC’s goals for sustainable • Regional and Continental Trade Initiatives: Africa-wide trade agreements, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), provide opportunities for the EAC to expand its trade networks beyond the region. • Leveraging AfCFTA allows the EAC to access larger markets, promote exports, and attract new trade partners, supporting the strategy’s objectives of boosting trade and economic integration. 				

	Political	Economic	Social	Technological	Environmental	Legal
THREATS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political instability and insecurity in some Partner States hindering implementation. Competition between Partner States on resource allocation or joint project ownership Mixed levels of commitment to regional obligations and divergent national priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persistent non-tariff barriers and trade disputes affecting cross-border trade. Global economic shocks (e.g., inflation, pandemics, conflicts) that disrupt regional economies. Rising debt levels across Partner States impacting fiscal space and development spending. Low levels of domestic revenue mobilisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High population growth rate. Increasing internal and cross-border migration and refugee flows. Mismatch between youth bulge and employment creation. Rapid urbanization that continues to transform social dynamics, creating challenges for housing, public services and employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of harmonised regional laws on data protection, cybersecurity, e-commerce, and digital trade poses risks to cross-border technology platforms and limits investor confidence. Increasing digitisation without robust regional cybersecurity protocols exposes the EAC to threats including data breaches, financial fraud, and infrastructure sabotage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change and environmental degradation impacting key sectors such as agriculture and water. Rising climate-related vulnerabilities such as droughts, floods, and resource degradation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple memberships and their resulting overlapping legal instruments with political, economic and social implications to Partner States and the Community.

2.13 Stakeholder Analysis

The stakeholder landscape of the EAC has evolved significantly since the 6th Development Strategy, necessitating a more inclusive, responsive, and future-focused engagement framework under the 7th Development Strategy (2026/27–2030/31). The shift reflects the growing complexity of the regional integration agenda, the urgency to adapt to emerging development priorities, particularly in digital transformation, climate resilience, green growth, and social inclusion, and the imperative to strengthen institutional delivery mechanisms.

One of the most notable shifts is the elevation of **non-traditional and emerging stakeholder categories**, such as digital and energy regulatory institutions, farmer organisations, youth and women networks, and private sector-led innovation platforms. These actors, previously peripheral or moderately engaged, are now recognized as central to delivering on the Strategy's thematic priorities. Their inclusion reflects an intentional move toward a more networked, adaptive ecosystem of implementation, anchored in participatory governance, innovation, and sustainability.

Equally critical is the increased engagement with **EAC staff and institutions**, not only as executors of the Strategy but as strategic enablers of institutional transformation. Unlike the 6th Strategy, which was predominantly Secretariat-driven, the 7th Strategy emphasizes internal capacity strengthening, cross-departmental collaboration, and performance-based accountability across EAC organs and institutions. This internal reorientation is essential for ensuring that EAC is not only policy-rich but implementation-strong.

Moreover, **media actors, service providers, and suppliers** have gained recognition as key facilitators of transparency, knowledge dissemination, and operational efficiency. Their inclusion signals a broader move toward openness, stakeholder ownership, and systems-based delivery. Meanwhile, the **private sector and development partners** remain pivotal, but their engagement is now increasingly structured around co-creation platforms, blended finance mechanisms, and sustainability partnerships, rather than just technical and financial support.

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Sustained integration success depends on mobilizing and aligning all stakeholders- governments, private sector, civil society, and citizens, towards common goals.

This strategic realignment of stakeholders under the 7th EAC Development Strategy is not only timely but necessary. It enables the EAC to tap into a wider base of capacity, creativity, and capital; to ensure that the Strategy is implementable, inclusive, and resilient; and to reaffirm that regional integration is a shared responsibility and a collective opportunity.

Table 25: Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder	Role/Mandate	Interest & Influence	Expected Engagement under 7 th Strategy
Partner State Governments	Ministries of EAC Affairs + Sectoral Ministries (e.g., Agriculture, Trade, ICT, Environment)	Oversight and domestic implementation of EAC policies/ protocols.	High: Directly implement and domesticate agreements; set national priorities.	National planning, alignment of budgets, participation in regional committees and inter-State dialogues.
EAC Organs & Institutions	Secretariat, EALA, EACJ, EAC Institutions	Regional coordination, law-making, oversight, research, capacity-building, sector regulation.	High: Drive regional agenda, harmonisation, sector-specific guidance (digital, energy, STI).	Lead technical coordination, legal reviews, knowledge management, digital platforms, innovation systems.
Regional Economic Communities	COMESA, IGAD, SADC, ECCAS, ECOWAS	Trade protocols, infrastructure planning, integration, security.	Medium-High: Provide inter-bloc harmonisation and linkages to continental frameworks.	Co-formulate transboundary corridors, cross-REC benchmarking, alignment with AU Agenda 2063.
Private Sector & Industry	EABC, TIAB, ATU, Digital startups, Agri-business clusters	Trade promotion, policy feedback, SDG mobilization, infrastructure investment.	High: Investors in sectors and corridors; strong voice in PPPs and regulatory environment.	Engage via Consultative Dialogue Framework; invest in corridor projects, digital hubs, green enterprises.
Farmer Organisations & Cooperatives	National apex farmer unions, commodity-based FOs	Represent agrarian interests; service delivery; climate adaptation.	Medium: Crucial for agricultural livelihoods, climate resilience, food systems.	Participatory in case studies, value-chain planning, climate-smart paradigm, agri-stakeholder forums.
Civil Society & Professional Associations	CAs, think tanks, chambers, media, legal societies	Advocacy, oversight, inclusion, policy analysis, public awareness.	Medium: Bridge between citizens and regional institutions.	Include women, youth and professional CSOs in monitoring M&E, justice, participation forums.
Development Partners	BMZ (GIZ/ KfW), AfDB, EU, UN Agencies, World Bank, UNECA, UNFPA, WHO, UNSD, ONS-UK, Bill and Melinda Gates, IOM, SIDA.	Technical & financial support for strategies, capacity building.	High: Co-funding, technical backstopping, global standards.	Joint financed projects (digital, green, institutional), structured coordination via Sectoral Councils.
Digital & ICT Regulators	Communications Authorities of various PS, EACO, ATU, AFIF	Regulate ICT, digital trade, cybersecurity, data governance.	Medium: Key to digital transformation and e-commerce.	Harmonize cyber and data laws, coordinate via 7 th strategy digital cluster, support EARDIP / e-commerce.
Energy Regulatory Bodies	EREA, ERCE	Cross-border energy market regulation, sector capacity-building.	Medium: Strategic for green growth and energy union vision.	Support development of regional clean energy regulation, capacity building via ERCE, cross-border markets.
Youth & Women Networks	The Youth Café, women federations, rural youth platforms	Social inclusion, innovation, labour markets, gender equity.	Medium-High: Represent core demographic; leverage digital & green economy opportunities.	Involve in programme design, digital hubs, entrepreneurship, social protection and governance forums.
Academic & Research Institutions	Universities, EASTECO, policy institutes (e.g., HESPI)	Evidence generation, policy input, capacity-building, STI systems.	Medium: Technical basis for strategy, innovation, M&E.	Partner in monitoring & evaluation systems, evidence frameworks, Open Science and knowledge-sharing.

Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder	Role/Mandate	Interest & Influence	Expected Engagement under 7 th Strategy
Service Providers & Suppliers	Consultants, technical firms, ICT vendors, logistics firms	Deliver technical support, infrastructure, training, and logistical services for EAC programs.	Medium: Essential to operational delivery; influence quality and timeliness of implementation.	Engaged through transparent procurements; included in digital and infrastructure clusters; capacity-building contracts.
Media	Regional press, broadcasters, digital influencers	Inform and shape public discourse; ensure transparency and accountability.	Medium-High: Influence public perception, pressure for delivery, and regional visibility of EAC initiatives.	Media briefings, strategy communications, public education campaigns, enhanced digital outreach and advocacy partnerships.
EAC Staff	Secretariat directors, technical officers, program staff	Plan, coordinate, execute, monitor, and report on strategy implementation across priority areas.	High: Core executors; critical to driving institutional reforms, policy harmonisation, and inter-State coordination.	Central role in strategy clusters; capacity development; result-driven performance frameworks; action planning forums.
The General Public	Citizens of the Community from all walks of life	Taxpayers, vested power and interest	Low – medium: represent the consumers or victims or beneficiary of regional policies, programmes, plans, interventions and strategies.	Awareness building, involvement from conception to execution of policies and interventions, freedoms and rights articulated in protocols.

2.14 Performance Evaluation of the 6th EAC Development Strategy

2.14.1 Introduction

The 6th EAC Development Strategy (2021/22–2025/26) was implemented under the theme "Economic Recovery through Regional Integration, Resilience and Repositioning," aiming to strengthen the EAC's socioeconomic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic while deepening regional integration. The strategy outlined eight key priority areas, including strengthening the Single Market, promoting productive sectors, and institutional transformation. As the region transitions into the 7th Development Strategy period, it is essential to reflect on the achievements, challenges, and lessons learned from the 6th Strategy. The performance evaluation provides an evidence-based assessment of progress made, highlighting both successful interventions and areas requiring strategic reorientation. This analysis offers critical insight to inform the design, prioritisation, and implementation framework of the forthcoming development agenda.

2.14.2 Theory of Change and Objectives of the 6th EAC Development Strategy

The 6th EAC Development Strategy (2021/22–2025/26) was anchored on a transformative Theory of Change that recognized regional integration as a catalyst for inclusive and sustainable development across the EAC Partner States. The strategy assumed that by strengthening the policy, institutional, and infrastructural foundations of integration, the EAC could accelerate socio-economic transformation, enhance resilience, and improve the quality of life for East Africans.

The Strategy's logic model outlined a clear results chain, starting from strategic interventions in trade, customs, infrastructure, health, and governance, leading to expanded intra-EAC trade, improved regional connectivity, responsive institutions, and empowered citizens. Its implementation was underpinned by key enablers: enhanced resource mobilization, evidence-based policymaking, robust monitoring and evaluation, and deepened stakeholder engagement. Specifically, the Strategy pursued seven broad strategic development objectives:



Attainment of a fully-fledged Customs Union through full implementation of the Single Customs Territory (SCT) and enhanced ICT systems for customs administrations and other key players.



Enhancing domestication and implementation of regional commitments in line with the EAC Common Market Protocol, and other related regional, continental, and international frameworks.



Attainment of the EAC single currency through the realization of macro-economic convergence criteria and the harmonisation of fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policies.



Strengthening regional governance, political commitment, accountability, and inclusivity to improve peace and security, in the build-up to an EAC Political Confederation.



Development of quality multi-dimensional strategic infrastructure and related services including clean energy, to support and accelerate sustainable regional integration and global competitiveness.



Developing and strengthening the capacity of all EAC Organs and Institutions to effectively execute their mandates.



Increasing visibility of EAC, stakeholder knowledge and awareness, and participation of EAC citizens in the integration process.

This strategic framework laid the groundwork for advancing a prosperous, competitive, secure, and politically united East African region. The lessons and outcomes from the 6th Strategy directly inform the priorities and structural orientation of the 7th Development Strategy.

2.14.3 Overview of progress under the 6th EAC Development Strategy

This section presents an assessment of achievements and shortfalls realized under the 6th EAC Development Strategy (2021/22-2025/26), based on the Mid-Term Review and annual performance reports. It further outlines priority areas for strategic realignment and acceleration under the 7th Development Strategy to ensure the full realization of the EAC Vision 2050 and alignment with Agenda 2063 and the UN SDGs.

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While significant progress has been made in infrastructure and trade facilitation, uneven implementation across Partner States has limited the full potential of regional integration.

The 6th EAC Development Strategy aimed to accelerate regional integration by advancing key pillars including trade, macroeconomic convergence, infrastructure development, governance, institutional capacity, and citizen participation. A review of its implementation reveals commendable achievements alongside persisting challenges that provide critical learning for the formulation of the 7th Strategy. Overall, the implementation of the Development Strategy registered notable progress across all strategic priority areas, despite global and regional challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate shocks, and geopolitical instability.



OBJECTIVE 1:

Attainment of a fully-fledged Customs Union through full implementation of the Single Customs Territory (SCT) and enhanced ICT systems for customs administrations and other key players.

The Community has made notable progress towards the establishment of a fully-fledged Customs Union through the continued implementation of the Single Customs Territory (SCT) and enhancement of ICT systems for customs administration. Since the SCT's roll-out in 2014, significant strides have been made in streamlining trade procedures, reducing clearance times, and enhancing revenue collection. The A review of the 6th EAC Development Strategy highlights that Partner States such as Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda have achieved near-complete operationalization of the SCT for most imports and exports. These efforts have been supported by key digital platforms, including the Regional Electronic Cargo Tracking System (RECTS), Customs Management Systems, and the Electronic Single Window Systems, which together have simplified documentation, minimized physical inspections, and accelerated cargo clearance. As a result, average clearance times have reduced from over 20 days to less than 5 days for compliant cargo, contributing to increased intra-regional trade and improved logistics performance.

Despite these advances, several structural and operational challenges persist. Implementation of the SCT remains uneven, particularly in South Sudan, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where customs modernisation and ICT infrastructure lag behind. Interoperability among national customs ICT systems remains a challenge, limiting seamless data exchange and integration. Revenue sharing among Partner States also remains a sensitive issue, with recurring delays in remittance and differences in valuation practices undermining trust in the SCT framework. In addition, persistent non-tariff barriers, stays of application of the CET, informality at border posts, and limited awareness among small-scale traders and logistics providers continue to constrain the full realization of customs union objectives. Infrastructure bottlenecks, including poor road connectivity and inefficiencies at ports and border points, further complicate the movement of goods across the region.

There is evident need to focus on consolidating the gains of the SCT by accelerating its implementation across all Partner States and harmonising customs procedures to promote uniformity. Investing in a regionally integrated and interoperable ICT architecture that connects all customs administrations and border agencies in real time remains pertinent. Further, strengthening logistics infrastructure particularly for landlocked countries and expanding the use of multimodal transport corridors will be critical to unlocking trade potential. EAC must prioritize the establishment of a robust, transparent, and automated revenue-sharing mechanism, underpinned by joint audits and reconciliation frameworks. Building capacity of customs officials, border agents, and private sector actors will be essential to ensure efficient application of SCT procedures, while enhanced public-private dialogue will help address operational bottlenecks. Institutionalizing mechanisms for the removal and monitoring of non-tariff barriers will be critical in fostering trust and ensuring that the Customs Union supports a truly integrated and competitive regional economy.



OBJECTIVE 2:

Enhancing domestication and implementation of regional commitments in line with the EAC Common Market Protocol, and other related regional, continental, and international frameworks.

The review of the 6th EAC DS observed that there was notable progress in on enhancing the domestication and implementation of regional commitments in line with the Common Market Protocol and related frameworks. Several Partner States have initiated legal and regulatory reforms to align their national policies with the Protocol's provisions, particularly in areas such as the free movement of goods, persons, capital, and services. For instance, customs procedures have become more harmonized through the operationalization of the Single Customs Territory (SCT), which has improved cargo clearance and transparency. Moreover, instruments such as the EAC Tariff Management System and the Non-Tariff Barriers (NTB) Reporting Portal have been developed and deployed to improve trade facilitation. In the domain of professional services, frameworks for the mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications in fields such as engineering, accountancy, and health have been partially operationalized, representing an important step toward labour mobility and skills integration.

Despite these advances, several implementation challenges persist. A major concern is the uneven and partial domestication of regional instruments across Partner States. While regional frameworks have been formally adopted, translating them into national legal systems has been inconsistent and often slow due to limited legislative capacity, bureaucratic delays, and divergent national priorities. The legal and institutional fragmentation across countries undermines the seamless application of Protocol provisions. This is especially evident in the movement of persons and services, where work permit restrictions, varied residency conditions, and the slow rollout of Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) continue to constrain integration. Moreover, financial regulations, tax systems, and investment laws remain largely unharmonized, limiting cross-border capital flows and business expansion.

Implementation is further hampered by weak enforcement and monitoring mechanisms. The EAC Secretariat lacks the legal authority to compel compliance, and there are no binding sanctions for non-adherence to agreed commitments. This has resulted in limited accountability and a lack of urgency among some Partner States. Additionally, public awareness of regional commitments remains low, particularly among citizens, private sector actors, and decentralized government entities. Without adequate stakeholder engagement and civic understanding, domestic pressure to enforce or demand compliance with regional frameworks remains weak. National implementation committees, which are supposed to coordinate domestication efforts, often suffer from inadequate resources, low visibility, and institutional fragmentation, which hinders their capacity to drive reform.

Looking ahead, EAC must prioritize the establishment of a legally binding compliance mechanism that includes clear timelines, peer review processes, and incentives or consequences for performance. Technical support should be provided to Partner States to fast-track the domestication of key legal instruments, especially those concerning the free movement of labour, capital, and services. There is a pressing need to operationalize Mutual Recognition Agreements in professional sectors to unlock regional employment opportunities and address skill mismatches. Furthermore, the capacity of national

implementation committees must be reinforced through sustained financial and technical investment to enable them to serve as effective vehicles for integration. Public sensitization and civic education should also be scaled up to enhance ownership of the integration agenda and mobilize popular support. The use of digital platforms to track compliance in real-time should be institutionalised to improve transparency and monitoring. Finally, alignment with continental frameworks such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the AU Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, and global targets under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must be actively pursued to promote synergy, attract financing, and enhance the global relevance of the EAC integration agenda.



OBJECTIVE 3:

Attainment of the EAC single currency through the realization of macro-economic convergence criteria and the harmonisation of fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policies.

The EAC continues to pursue the establishment of a single currency as outlined in the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Monetary Union (EAMU), signed in 2013. This ambitious goal is premised on achieving macroeconomic convergence, harmonising fiscal, monetary, and exchange rate policies, and establishing key institutions, most notably the East African Monetary Institute (EAMI). Although the initial target for introducing a single currency was 2024, the implementation trajectory has experienced considerable delays, necessitating a recalibration of priorities and timelines.



Progress on fiscal deficit (target $\leq 3\%$ of GDP) and public debt ($\leq 50\%$ of GDP) remains inconsistent across the region

Significant progress has been made in some areas. Partner States have demonstrated commitment to macroeconomic convergence, with positive performance in maintaining inflation levels within the prescribed threshold of 8% in most years, and in aligning statistical methodologies for fiscal and monetary reporting. The Monetary Affairs Committee (MAC) has facilitated increased policy coordination and technical harmonisation among central banks. However, performance on other convergence indicators, particularly fiscal deficit (target $\leq 3\%$ of GDP) and public debt ($\leq 50\%$ of GDP) remains inconsistent across the region. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent global shocks have further exacerbated fiscal imbalances, pushing most Partner States outside the convergence thresholds.

Despite the formal establishment of the East African Monetary Institute (EAMI), its operationalization remains pending. Delays in staffing, infrastructure development, and resource allocation have hindered the region's capacity to enforce convergence monitoring

and policy harmonisation. The diversity of exchange rate regimes among Partner States, along with weak enforcement of convergence criteria, continue to constrain progress toward a unified monetary framework.

Going forward, EAC must prioritize the institutionalization and full operationalization of the EAMI as a central technical body to drive macroeconomic surveillance, policy alignment, and capacity development. A strengthened convergence framework should be established, incorporating realistic interim benchmarks, time-bound commitments, and peer review mechanisms to ensure accountability. There is also a need for deeper harmonisation of fiscal policies through adoption of common fiscal rules, debt anchors, and transparency standards. Enhanced technical assistance and investment in capacity building will be crucial to support macroeconomic forecasting and policy implementation across Partner States. Furthermore, sustained political dialogue is needed to reaffirm regional commitment to the monetary union agenda. Broad-based stakeholder engagement, spanning the private sector, civil society, and academia should be institutionalised to build awareness, ownership, and readiness for the transition to a single currency. The 7th Strategy presents an opportunity to re-energize this agenda and chart a practical, inclusive path toward deeper macroeconomic integration and monetary stability in the region.



OBJECTIVE 4:

Strengthening regional governance, political commitment, accountability, and inclusivity to improve peace and security, in the build-up to an EAC Political Confederation.

During the implementation of the 6th DS, the EAC made significant strides toward laying the institutional and legal foundations for a Political Confederation. Central to this progress was the decision to develop the constitution for the EAC Political Confederation, which will articulate the sovereignty powers between Partner States and the proposed confederated structure. A number of consultative forums were held across Partner States, engaging political actors, civil society, and the general public to generate consensus to define the constitutional framework. The formation of a Team of Constitutional Experts to move this process forward further echoes the Community commitment to the achievement of a Political Federation, anchoring the confederation process within a participatory and iterative legal framework.

In parallel, the EAC's peace and security architecture was strengthened. The operationalization of the EAC Early Warning Mechanism and the EAC Peace Fund and the decision to create the EAC Peace and Security Council enhanced the region's capacity to predict and respond to emerging conflicts. Notably, the EAC played a facilitative role in dialogue processes in Republic of South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, reaffirming its political commitment to regional stability. Collaborative mechanisms for intelligence sharing and cross-border security coordination have also been advanced, supporting the broader objective of regional governance harmonisation.

Efforts to promote political commitment, accountability, and inclusivity were reflected in the adoption and implementation of key governance instruments, including the EAC

Protocol on Peace and Security and principles enshrined in the Treaty. The East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) and the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) continued to serve as important accountability and rule of law institutions. Initiatives to involve youth, women, and civil society in the integration process have been scaled up, although gaps in meaningful participation and national-level implementation persist.

Despite these gains, critical challenges remain. Political divergence among Partner States, asymmetrical governance systems, and weak enforcement mechanism of regional protocols continue to hinder progress toward a Political Confederation. Moreover, resource constraints and limited institutional capacities at both the regional and national levels have slowed the operationalization of peace and governance frameworks.

To address these gaps and accelerate progress under the 7th DS, a number of strategic priorities will be emphasized. First, the finalization and ratification of the Political Confederation framework will be prioritized, with Partner States urged to commit to timelines and sustained dialogue. Second, regional governance and rule of law mechanisms will be strengthened through the establishment of a governance peer review platform and harmonisation of key political frameworks. Third, inclusive political dialogue will be institutionalised, ensuring structured and equitable participation by civil society, women, youth, and communities with special needs. Fourth, the EAC will deepen operational support for peace and security interventions, including mediation and early warning systems. Lastly, accountability mechanisms will be reinforced by enhancing the mandates and resourcing of EALA and EACJ, and by introducing Partner State compliance scorecards linked to governance benchmarks. These interventions are envisioned to strengthen the EAC's political integration trajectory, laying a resilient foundation for an inclusive, stable, and accountable Political Confederation.



OBJECTIVE 5:

Development of quality multi-dimensional strategic infrastructure and related services including clean energy, to support and accelerate sustainable regional integration and global competitiveness.

The development of quality, multi-dimensional strategic infrastructure and related services, including clean energy, is a critical enabler of regional integration and global competitiveness. Over the period of the 6th Development Strategy, the East African Community (EAC) registered commendable progress in transport connectivity, trade facilitation, digital infrastructure, and energy systems. These efforts have contributed significantly to reducing trade costs, expanding market access, and laying the foundation for an interconnected and resilient regional economy. However, challenges remain in closing infrastructure gaps, harmonising systems, and ensuring equitable access to clean energy.

On transport infrastructure, the EAC advanced the implementation of regional trade corridors, including the Northern and Central Corridors, as well as critical links to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. The operationalization of One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs, among others) at key crossings (e.g., Busia, Malaba, Rusumo, and

Mutukula) improved border efficiency and clearance times, reinforcing trade facilitation. Efforts to expand the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and rehabilitate inland water transport on Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika continued to receive regional and national prioritization.

Digital infrastructure also recorded marked improvements, including expanded fiber optic coverage and the roll-out of the EAC Regional E-Trade and Transport Facilitation Platform. These initiatives contributed to the modernisation of customs systems, improved tracking of goods, and reduction in non-tariff barriers. Additionally, some Partner States made strides in enhancing digital access and broadband coverage to support e-commerce and innovation.

On energy infrastructure, the region strengthened cross-border electricity interconnectors and integrated power transmission systems through the East African Power Pool (EAPP) and Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Program (NELSAP). Renewable energy development, particularly solar, wind, and hydropower, advanced in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and URT, expanding energy access and supporting green industrial growth.

Despite these achievements, critical challenges persist. Financing constraints and institutional capacity limitations have delayed the completion of flagship infrastructure projects. There are also disparities in infrastructure readiness across Partner States, affecting corridor efficiency and trade competitiveness. In energy, rural electrification remains low in several states, while energy market integration remains underdeveloped. The uptake of clean and climate-smart technologies is hindered by weak policy alignment, low investment, and limited access to financing instruments for small and medium enterprises. Moreover, digital infrastructure roll-out is uneven, with challenges related to interoperability of systems, regulatory fragmentation, and digital literacy, especially in remote and under-served regions.

To accelerate regional integration and enhance the global competitiveness of the EAC region, the 7th DS will prioritize the completion of key regional flagship infrastructure projects. These include the extension and upgrading of strategic corridors such as the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR), the rehabilitation of inland waterways on Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika, and the improvement of regional road networks. These projects are critical to unlocking connectivity between Partner States, easing the movement of goods and people, and fostering regional trade and investment.

The strategy will also emphasize strengthening regional coordination and deepening infrastructure financing. The establishment of a dedicated EAC Infrastructure Development and Maintenance Fund will be pursued, with a strong focus on leveraging blended financing and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). Improved coordination between Partner States and enhanced capacity of regional project implementation units will be essential to fast-tracking infrastructure delivery and ensuring value for investment.

Expanding access to clean and affordable energy will be another strategic priority. The strategy will promote investment in cross-border electricity interconnections, renewable energy technologies, off-grid solutions, and energy storage infrastructure. At the same time, harmonisation of regulatory frameworks and the development of regional electricity markets will be advanced to improve affordability, reliability, and inclusivity of energy services across the region.

Recognizing the impacts of climate change and the need for sustainability, the 7th Strategy will champion the development of smart and climate-resilient infrastructure.

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The 7th Strategy will champion the development of smart and climate-resilient infrastructure.

This includes integrating climate risk assessment tools in infrastructure planning and enforcing regional design and construction standards that promote sustainability and durability. These measures aim to ensure long-term infrastructure utility and safeguard communities against climate-related disruptions.

The Strategy will also seek to expand digital connectivity and foster inclusive digital transformation across the region. This will involve scaling up broadband infrastructure, enhancing interoperability of digital platforms, and finalizing regional e-commerce and data governance frameworks. A deliberate focus will be placed on digital inclusion, particularly for women, youth, and rural communities, to ensure equitable access to the opportunities presented by the digital economy.



OBJECTIVE 6:

Developing and strengthening the capacity of all EAC Organs and Institutions to effectively execute their mandates.

During the implementation of the 6th EAC Development Strategy, deliberate efforts were made to strengthen the institutional capacity of EAC Organs and Institutions to effectively deliver on their mandates. Key progress was recorded through the introduction of results-based management systems, improved alignment between workplans and strategic priorities, and enhanced performance monitoring frameworks. Institutional audits and capacity assessments were undertaken across EAC Organs such as the Secretariat, the East African Legislative Assembly, the East African Court of Justice, and various specialized institutions. These assessments informed internal reforms and operational improvements, including better coordination, automation of key administrative functions, and targeted staff capacity-building initiatives. The rollout of digital tools such as HRMIS platforms, online document management systems, and enterprise resource planning significantly enhanced internal efficiency and accountability mechanisms.

Despite this progress, persistent structural and systemic challenges continue to limit the full institutional potential of the Community. Delayed and inconsistent financial contributions from Partner States, coupled with over-dependence on donor funding, have undermined both programmatic sustainability and strategic autonomy. Many institutions within the EAC structure continue to operate with understaffed teams, especially in technical and managerial roles. In some cases, limited legal and operational autonomy hinders the ability of institutions to act independently and efficiently. Governance challenges persist, particularly in the consistent application of institutional reforms across all EAC Organs.

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The 7th EAC Development Strategy must prioritize bold and transformative actions to unlock the full institutional potential of the Community

The 7th EAC Development Strategy must therefore prioritize bold and transformative actions to unlock the full institutional potential of the Community. This includes finalizing and operationalizing institutional reforms emerging from the capacity audits, strengthening legal frameworks to clarify mandates, and enhancing institutional autonomy. Human resource development must be a core focus, anchored in a community-wide talent strategy that addresses recruitment, retention, and capacity building at all levels. Financial sustainability should be reinforced through predictable and timely Partner State contributions and the full implementation of the EAC Resource Mobilization Strategy, with an emphasis on diversifying funding sources. It will also be imperative to institutionalise results-based performance management systems across all Organs and to enhance coordination mechanisms between institutions and with Partner States. Digital transformation must be deepened to ensure that EAC institutions operate with the efficiency, transparency, and agility required to deliver on the region's ambitious integration agenda.



OBJECTIVE 7:

Increasing visibility of EAC, stakeholder knowledge and awareness, and participation of EAC citizens in the integration process.

Under the 6th EAC Development Strategy, notable strides were made toward enhancing the visibility of the East African Community (EAC), raising stakeholder awareness, and encouraging citizen participation in the regional integration process. The EAC Secretariat leveraged a variety of tools and platforms to communicate its vision, activities, and benefits. These included expanded use of digital communication channels such as social media, the official website, and newsletters, all of which improved the accessibility of integration-related information. The deployment of citizen-facing services like the EAC e-citizen platform and the upgraded mobile app further underscored the Community's efforts to promote transparency, service delivery, and digital engagement. Moreover, public events such as EAC Day, regional exhibitions, and trade fairs served as vital opportunities for face-to-face interaction with the citizenry and private sector, thereby contributing to the visibility of EAC-led initiatives.

In addition, the Community made efforts to engage youth, civil society, and academia. The EAC Youth Ambassadors Platform and annual Essay Writing Competitions provided effective entry points for mobilizing young people, while the Consultative Dialogue

Framework (CDF) offered a structured mechanism for the participation of civil society and private sector actors in shaping integration policy. Similarly, the expansion of regional infrastructure projects such as One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) and cross-border trade corridors did not only support economic integration but also made the EAC's impact more visible and tangible to ordinary citizens.

Despite these commendable efforts, persistent challenges have constrained the full realization of this strategic objective. Public awareness of EAC programs and their benefits remains relatively low, especially among citizens in rural and remote areas. This is attributed to the limited localization of EAC messaging and the absence of harmonized communication strategies across Partner States. Most outreach activities are still centralized and reactive, with minimal alignment to local contexts, languages, and communication norms. Furthermore, existing citizen engagement platforms tend to operate on a one-way basis, offering limited opportunities for interactive participation or feedback from the broader public. The fragmentation of national coordination mechanisms and the underutilization of national EAC focal points have also weakened the domestication of visibility and awareness initiatives.

Moving into the 7th Development Strategy, it is imperative for the Community to institutionalise a more robust and inclusive communication and engagement approach. A comprehensive EAC Communication and Public Diplomacy Strategy should be developed and operationalized to ensure strategic, consistent, and context-sensitive messaging across all Partner States. This must be supported by strong partnerships with local media, civil society, youth networks, and educational institutions to deepen grassroots engagement. In addition, targeted civic education campaigns should be rolled out, particularly in schools, rural communities, and cross-border areas, alongside mainstreamed platforms for marginalized voices, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities. The establishment and resourcing of national EAC chapters or focal institutions will be critical for domesticating the regional agenda and facilitating real-time citizen feedback mechanisms. In an increasingly digital age, the use of modern technologies should be expanded to facilitate two-way dialogue, measure citizen satisfaction, and track the public's awareness of integration outcomes. Prioritizing these measures, will not only enhance EAC's visibility but also foster a more participatory and people-centred integration process.

2.15.4 Key Lessons Learnt

Institutional coordination is critical for regional policy implementation:

The effectiveness of regional policies is highly dependent on coordinated action across EAC Organs, Institutions, and Partner States. Limited clarity in mandates and overlaps among institutions contributed to fragmented implementation and diluted accountability.

Political commitment alone is insufficient without binding enforcement mechanisms:

While Partner States have demonstrated political goodwill, the absence of binding enforcement mechanisms has hindered full domestication and compliance with EAC Protocols, particularly the Customs Union and Common Market Protocols.

Strategic projects require sustainable and diversified financing:

The heavy reliance on Partner State contributions has constrained the pace of infrastructure and institutional development. Delays in remittances affected program delivery, highlighting the urgent need for alternative financing strategies including public-private

partnerships and revitalised donor coordination.

ICT and digital systems are enablers of integration:

Investments in regional ICT platforms (e.g., RECTS, e-NTBs) significantly improved customs efficiency and transparency. However, uneven adoption and digital infrastructure gaps exposed the need for inclusive digital transformation strategies across the region.

Macroeconomic convergence needs more than technical alignment:

Progress toward the EAC Monetary Union revealed that convergence is not only a technical task but also a governance and institutional issue. Divergent fiscal positions, and delays in establishing the East African Monetary Institute (EAMI) weakened momentum toward a common currency.

Citizen engagement remains limited yet crucial for integration ownership:

Awareness of EAC programs and benefits is low among citizens, especially youth, women, and rural communities. Integration cannot be people-centred without structured engagement platforms, civic education, and inclusivity mechanisms.

Peace and security are prerequisites for economic integration:

Regional instability, particularly in some Partner States, disrupted trade corridors, displaced populations, and diverted resources away from development. The EAC's progress underscored the necessity of integrating peacebuilding, early warning, and conflict resolution into the broader development agenda.

Performance monitoring must be strengthened for strategic delivery:

The MTR showed progress in performance-based budgeting, but weaknesses in M&E frameworks, data quality, and feedback loops undermined evidence-based decision-making. Robust monitoring systems are essential to track progress, inform policy adjustments, and ensure accountability.

Legal and regulatory harmonisation must be paired with institutional capacity:

While legal reforms were initiated in several areas (e.g., SPS, professional qualifications), gaps in national institutional capacity impeded enforcement and service delivery. Legal harmonisation efforts must be matched with technical support and institutional strengthening.

Cross-sectoral and regional synergies enhance impact:

The 6th Strategy demonstrated that collaboration across sectors (e.g., trade, agriculture, health, and education) and with other regional bodies (e.g., AU, AfCFTA, COMESA) creates greater coherence and development impact. However, these synergies must be systematically coordinated and institutionalised.

Key Strategic Shifts Moving into the 7th EAC Development Strategy

A mid-term review of the 6th EAC Development Strategy (2021/22–2025/26) provided critical insights into implementation progress, policy bottlenecks, and the evolving needs of the Community. While the Strategy registered progress in policy formulation, institutional reform, and infrastructure coordination, its overall implementation was constrained by systemic challenges including low domestication and enforcement of regional instruments, limited resource mobilization (underfunded strategic programmes, relying heavily on development partners- over 60% of programme budgets), weak institutional capacity, limited participation of the private sector, youth, and civil society

in integration processes, fragmented monitoring systems- with no real-time tracking of performance, and slow progress in digital integration, innovation ecosystems, and value chain development.

To address these challenges and realize the Community's aspirations under Vision 2050, the 7th EAC Development Strategy (2026/27–2030/31) adopts a strategic reorientation that reflects both the lessons learned and the policy imperatives recommended by the review of the 6th Development Strategy. This Strategy marks a decisive transition from a focus on planning and frameworks to delivery, financing, and institutional effectiveness. The changes or reforms will be realised through:

From policy formulation to implementation and delivery:

The 7th Strategy prioritizes the full operationalization of regional instruments and commitments. A dedicated compliance and delivery mechanism within the Secretariat will be institutionalised to track policy implementation, resolve delays, and ensure accountability. Emphasis will be placed on aligning national development plans with regional priorities through structured peer review and performance incentives.

From financial dependence on development partners to Self sufficiency:

Recognizing the need for financial self-reliance, the Strategy proposes:

- *Re-establishment of a regional Partnership Fund: The EAC Partnership Fund was established by the Council in 2006. However, the fund has been inactive since 2018, ostensibly due to management deficiencies. Going forward, this strategy will draw lessons from the previous model and address the prevailing constraints by enhancing accountability, transparency, and DP confidence. This will include strengthening EAC internal management systems in Finance, Audit, Projects and Programmes, HR and Procurement.*
- *Fast tracking the establishment of the East African Development Fund (EADF) to catalyse investments in infrastructure projects in collaboration with the East African Development Bank (EADB) and Partner States. The process for the establishment of the EADF begun in November 2003 and the 10th EAC Council of Ministers Meeting held in August 2005 directed the EAC Secretariat to conduct a study on the establishment of the Fund. The study involved a consultative process of desk reviews; consultations with regional institutions that operate similar Funds; consultations with the Secretariat; and consultations with Partner States' Government officials and non-state actors that included the private sector and civil society. Among other issues, the study proposed funding modalities for the Fund; sources of resources for the Fund; criteria for eligibility to the Fund; conditionality for drawings from the Fund; projects and investments to be supported by the Fund; and governance and management of the Fund. By 2013, the instruments for the establishment of the Fund had been finalized. The Fund will be hosted at the East Africa Development Bank (EADB). Under this Strategy, the EAC Secretariat and EADB will jointly develop a Management Contract and a Resource Mobilisation Framework for the Fund.*
- *In collaboration with the East African Development Bank (EADB), fast track the establishment of the EAC Private Sector Fund (EACPSF) to support MSME's for innovation, and socio-economic development. The idea of the Fund was formally approved by the EAC Council of Ministers as a mechanism to mobilize resources from the private sector in support of regional integration priorities. However, despite this policy approval, the Fund has not yet been fully operationalized.*

The progress made so far includes the conceptualization and design of the Fund, as well as discussions on governance structures and modalities for private sector participation. Further steps are required to establish the Fund legally, secure seed capital, and put in place operational guidelines. Importantly, there is recognition that the private sector remains an underutilized source of financing for EAC integration, and the EACPSF is a critical instrument to harness this potential once operationalized.

From centralized institutions to decentralized execution:

The Strategy embraces a more decentralized implementation model, empowering EAC Organs, Institutions and Partner States with increased operational responsibility. Greater operational autonomy and capacity will be devolved to EAC Organs, Institutions and Partner States for program delivery. Notably, approximately 80% of the implementation of the strategy lies with the PS and only 20% with the EAC Organs and Institutions. This will be supported by capacity development, performance-based budgeting, and a restructured Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework.

From sectoral silos to integrated economic corridors:

To unlock the full economic potential of the region, the Strategy introduces a corridor-based development approach, where transport, energy, digital infrastructure, trade, and value chains are synchronised along regional growth nodes. This will enhance interconnectivity, reduce transaction costs, and create more inclusive development outcomes.

From fragmented innovation to a regional STI ecosystem:

The Strategy places innovation at the centre of regional development by promoting the establishment of a regional innovation ecosystem. This includes harmonized STI policies, investment in shared research infrastructure, and operational support for EASTECO and regional centres of excellence.

From limited inclusivity to systemic stakeholder engagement:

To ensure people-centred integration, the Strategy institutionalises participation of youth, women, civil society, and the private sector across planning and implementation processes. Dedicated mechanisms for engagement, capacity building, and resource access will be created to strengthen local ownership of the regional agenda.

From Weak data systems to predictive, data-driven governance:

The Strategy mainstreams the use of harmonized data, digital tools, and analytics to enable evidence-based planning and adaptive decision-making. A regional digital integration and data analytics framework will support real-time performance tracking and cross-border data harmonisation for key sectors.



CHAPTER 3

BROAD DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT FOR THE 7TH EAC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



3.1 Introduction

Formulation of the 7th EAC Development Strategy considers the current global context characterized by an inclination away from multilateral cooperation towards nationalist and sovereignty-driven agendas, which poses challenges to regional blocs like the EAC. Considering these dynamics, the Strategy has adopted a fresh, context-sensitive approach to regional integration in line with the objectives envisioned in the EAC Treaty. The Strategy also responds to the current internal and external realities affecting the EAC, not only the aggressive digital revolution and shifting geopolitical dynamics, but also the rising socioeconomic and political complexities across Partner States.



The Strategy focuses on five transformative priorities that will unlock inclusive growth, strengthen unity, and elevate the EAC's voice on the global stage.

The 7th EAC Development Strategy presents a major contextual shift that prioritizes deepening of EAC integration by fully implementing the EAC Customs Union and Common Market Protocols, and faster progress towards the EAC Monetary Union and Political Federation for regional cohesion. It adopts a transformative stance that responds to the current challenges and opportunities to consolidate the region's, at the same time emphasizing social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and citizen engagement to truly reflect a holistic development agenda.

The Strategy therefore emphasizes the consolidation of the existing areas of cooperation by strengthening the already established mechanisms in trade, infrastructure, education, and movement of people to ensure that they function effectively to deliver tangible results to citizens across the region.

3.2 Global, continental regional frameworks and International Development Obligations

Sustainable Development Goals

The 7th EAC Development Strategy has aligned its goals with common goals among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs) that constitute the United Nations blueprint for achieving sustainable development in the world by 2030. The SDGs aim to promote an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable future for the world, for both present and future generations. The 7th EAC Development Strategy has aligned its development objectives with the SDGs to attract human and financial resources that the international community is investing in achieving inclusive and sustainable development.

The African Union Agenda 2063 and the AfCFTA

The 7th EAC Development Strategy takes into consideration the EAC as one of the eight Regional Economic Communities that constitute a key pillar in implementing the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063.

Agenda 2063 is the blueprint for transforming Africa into a global powerhouse of the future. It is the continent's strategic framework that aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development and is a concrete manifestation of the pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance

The genesis of Agenda 2063 was the realization that there was a need to refocus and reprioritize Africa's agenda from the struggle against apartheid and the attainment of political independence for the continent which had been the focus and instead to prioritize inclusive social and economic development, continental and regional integration, democratic governance and peace and security amongst other issues aimed at repositioning Africa to becoming a dominant player in the global arena.

The 7th EAC Strategy aligns with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which is a single continent-wide market for goods and services. AfCFTA **aims to boost growth, reduce poverty and broaden economic inclusion. It is estimated that** Eastern Africa would see a decline of 4.8 million out of poverty. The AfCFTA envisions the establishment of stronger trade facilitation through the reduction of red tape, simplification of customs procedures, and making it easier for African businesses to integrate into global supply chains. The EAC, through this strategy, will help expand intra-African trade by better harmonising and coordinating trade liberalisation and facilitation regimes and instruments with other RECs and across Africa in general.

Tripartite Free Trade Area

The 7th EAC Development Strategy is aligned with the Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement (TFTA). The TFTA Tripartite is an umbrella organisation consisting of three of Africa's Regional Economic Communities, namely: the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa; the East Africa Community and the Southern African Development Community (COMESA-EAC-SADC). It comprises 26 member countries and aims to accelerate economic integration for the people of the Eastern and Southern African Region. The main objective of the TFTA is to contribute to the broader objectives of the African Union, that is, accelerating economic integration of the continent and achieving sustainable economic development leading to poverty alleviation and improvement in quality of life for the people of the Eastern and Southern African Region.

The EAC Vision 2050

The 7th EAC Development Strategy aligns with the long-term development aspiration and is defined in the EAC Vision 2050. The Vision lays out a broad perspective in which the region optimises the utilisation of its resources to accelerate productivity and the social well-being of its people. It portrays a future East Africa with rising personal prosperity in cohesive societies, competitive economies, and strong inter-regional interaction.



CHAPTER 4

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2026/2027- 2030/2031

4.1 Overview

The Community's strategic direction takes a major shift towards delivering inclusive growth and development. The overall goal, guiding principles, strategic development objectives, key priorities, strategic interventions and targets are detailed under the following sub-sections.

4.2 Development Theme & Goal



Overall Goal:

Attain an integrated, stable, and resilient East African Community that enables shared prosperity for East Africans.



Development Theme:

Deepening integration for improved livelihoods of East Africa citizens.



Quality Policy Statement:

Commitment to delivering high-quality services that align with international standards and best practices

4.3 Guiding Principles of the Development Strategy

Results-oriented management:

The implementation of the Strategy will prioritize measurable outcomes and impacts, ensuring that all interventions are guided by clear targets, performance indicators, and a robust Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) framework.

Subsidiarity and complementarity:

The Strategy will uphold the principle of subsidiarity, where responsibilities are undertaken at the most effective level- regional or national, to optimize efficiency. EAC Organs, Institutions, and Partner States will work in complementarity to avoid duplication and promote synergy.

Inclusivity and stakeholder engagement:

Implementation will be anchored in participatory approaches that involve Partner States, regional institutions, civil society, private sector, youth, women, and development partners. This ensures ownership, accountability, and relevance of interventions.

Sustainability and resource efficiency:

The Strategy will emphasize sustainable development, economically, socially, and environmentally, while promoting the efficient use of limited financial and natural resources, including a greater focus on domestic resource mobilization and private sector engagement.

Transparency and accountability:

Open and transparent implementation processes will be pursued, with clear accountability mechanisms at all levels. Regular performance reporting, public access to information, and independent evaluations will be integral to fostering trust and integrity.

Innovation and digital transformation:

To enhance delivery, the Strategy will promote the adoption of innovative technologies and digital solutions across sectors particularly in trade facilitation, education, health, and governance. As the EAC deepens integration, emerging technologies like AI, DPI, and fintech will be prioritized. These technologies will aim to improve efficiency in infrastructure, trade facilitation, and public sector services. Key interventions will focus on harmonising digital trade policies, enhancing cybersecurity, and advancing AI-powered skills development to close the digital divide.

Resilience and risk responsiveness:

Implementation will be adaptive to emerging risks and uncertainties, including climate change, pandemics, economic shocks, and geopolitical dynamics. Resilience-building and contingency planning will be mainstreamed into all programs.

Harmonisation and integration:

The Strategy will support the harmonisation of policies, legal frameworks, standards, and regulatory systems across Partner States to advance deeper integration and coherence in regional development.

Evidence-based decision making:

Policies and interventions will be informed by data, research, and lessons learned from past strategies. Investment in data systems and knowledge management will support this principle.

4.4 Strategic Development Objectives

The implementation of the 7th EAC Development Strategy is guided by a results-oriented Theory of Change that articulates how the Community's strategic investments will translate into tangible outcomes and long-term impact. The overarching goal is to realize a prosperous, competitive, secure, and integrated East African Community that delivers inclusive development and socioeconomic transformation for its citizens. This will be achieved through seven Strategic Development Objectives (SDOs), each logically sequenced to create a pathway from outputs to outcomes and eventual impact.

Together, these strategic pathways form a coherent and results-based Theory of Change that will guide the EAC's journey from vision to reality, ensuring that the benefits of integration are broadly shared across all Partner States and among all segments of the population. In summary, the Community's Strategic Development Objectives are:

Strategic Development Objective 1 of the strategy prioritizes the deepening of regional trade integration by advancing the full operationalization of the Single Customs Territory (SCT). Through legal and procedural reforms, enhanced ICT infrastructure, and institutional capacity-building, the EAC aims to harmonize customs procedures, reduce clearance times, and expand SCT coverage. The expected outcome is a seamless internal market that supports the growth of intra-EAC trade and regional value chains, ultimately contributing to improved competitiveness.

Strategic Development Objective 2 aims at promoting agricultural production and productivity, regional industrial development focusing on value addition, support to the MSMEs sector, transition to production and and climate resilience.

Strategic Development Objective 3 on the social front focuses on improving health service outcomes, strengthening the education training sectors, promoting social cohesion and inclusivity, and championing the interest of diverse groups in the region's socioeconomic development.

Strategic Development Objective 4 focuses on the achievement of macroeconomic convergence and the transition towards a single regional currency. The objective emphasizes the operationalization of the East African Monetary Institute (EAMI), fiscal and monetary harmonisation, and technical support for policy alignment. The outcomes of this objective include greater macroeconomic stability, enhanced investor confidence, and regional preparedness for monetary union.

Strategic Development Objective 5 aims to unlock regional competitiveness through the expansion of strategic infrastructure and clean energy connectivity. With investments in cross-border transport corridors, energy interconnectors, and digital infrastructure, the EAC will reduce trade logistics costs, improve regional mobility, and support climate-resilient development. These outputs will lead to increased economic integration and inclusive growth.

In the realm of peace, governance, and political integration, **Strategic Development Objective 6** aims to strengthen regional governance systems and advance the EAC's transition towards a Political Confederation. By reinforcing peace and security frameworks, early warning systems, and political dialogue mechanisms, the Strategy seeks to cultivate a stable and cohesive regional environment. The anticipated outcome is improved trust, security, and readiness for deeper political integration.

Finally, **Strategic Development Objective 7** focuses on enhancing the institutional effectiveness and operational efficiency of EAC Organs and Institutions. It targets institutional reforms, human resource development, resource mobilization, and improved monitoring and evaluation systems. The outcomes of this objective are stronger service delivery, timely implementation of regional programs, enhanced visibility and stakeholder participation, and increased accountability across the Community.

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- **Deepening Regional Trade Integration**
- **Enhance Production, Productivity, and Value Addition in Productive Sectors**
- **Strengthening of the Social Dimensions of Regional Integration**
- **Full implementation of the Roadmap for the attainment of the EAC Monetary Union**
- **Development of Regional Infrastructure**
- **Strengthening Regional Governance, Political Commitment, Accountability, and Inclusivity to Improve Peace and Security**
- **Institutional Strengthening, Compliance and Accountability**

This theory of change is depicted in the following results framework.

4.5 Results framework

Goal: Attain an integrated, stable, and resilient East African Community that enables shared prosperity for East Africans.

SDO 1: Deepening trade integration	SDO 2: Enhance production, productivity, and value addition, in productive sectors	SDO 3: Strengthen the social dimensions of regional integration and improve access to quality socio-economic services	SDO 4: Full implementation of the Road map for the attainment of the EAC Monetary Union	SDO5: Enhance Development of Regional Infrastructure	SDO6: Strengthen Regional Governance, Political Commitment, Accountability, and Inclusivity to Improve Peace and Security	SDO7: Institutional Strengthening, Compliance and Accountability
<p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased intra-EAC trade in goods and services • Improved environment for investment and private sector development • A supportive trade environment that guarantees fair competition in EAC markets 	<p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved production and productivity in agriculture and tourism. • Expansion in industrial development and SMEs across value chains in the productive sectors • Environmental conservation enhanced, and sustainable use of natural resources strengthened • Ecologically sustainable and economically efficient fisheries and aquaculture production in the EAC region 	<p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in regional health service delivery • Partner States' education systems and training curricula fully harmonized • Favourable laws and policies on labour mobility and immigration, with concomitant increase in access to employment. • Enhanced participation of women and youth in social, economic and political activities of the region • Increased generation, availability, access and use of health research products and technologies. • Increased recognition and adoption of Kiswahili as a regional language. • Increased investment in creative arts as a tool for social cohesion and economic development 	<p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonised regional fiscal & Monetary Exchange rate policies. • The four EAMU Institutions operationalized • Attainment of the macro-economic convergence criteria 	<p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved infrastructure, and efficiency in road transport and related services • Improved infrastructure and efficiency in railway transport and related services • Expanded air transport system that is safe, secure and efficient • Expanded maritime transport system that is safe, secure and efficient • Improved communications Infrastructure • Increase in production and consumption of energy 	<p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved governance, political commitment and accountability in the region • Improvement in EAC's international relations • Improved peace and security in the region 	<p>Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved capacity and performance of the EAC Organs and Institutions. • Evidence-based decision-making and policy development • A well-guided EAC integration process • Increased and sustained resources for the implementation of EAC Programs and Projects • Increased contribution of the EAC legislative functions to the regional integration agenda • Visibility and stakeholder participation enhanced through an institutionalised robust and inclusive communication and engagement approach
<p>Cross cutting outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased availability and adoption of scientific and technological innovations • Enhanced integration of gender, youth and social inclusion in regional economic growth • 8.3 Climate change mainstreamed across EAC programs and operations 						

4.6 Key Priority Areas of the EAC over the Plan Period 2026/27 - 2030/31

To support the realization of the Strategic development objectives above, the following are the key priority areas that guide short-term planning, resource allocation and implementation of the Community's projects and programmes.

- *Enhancement of trade facilitation services through harmonisation of customs procedures, digitisation, upgrading of OSBPs, expansion of SCT coverage, removal of non-tariff barriers (NTBs), support to the MSMEs sector to enhance intra-EAC trade in goods, alignment of Partner States' laws with the AfCFTA and TFTA, export promotion and capacity building.*
- *Strengthening of the regional productive sectors, focusing on increased production, productivity, and value-addition in the agricultural and industrial sectors, promotion of tourism, sustainable utilisation of natural resources, and effective management of the effects of climate change.*
- *Strengthening of the social sectors, focusing on improvement of regional health outcomes, expanded education programmes especially to address youth unemployment, social cohesion through culture and sports, labour mobility, and gender inclusivity in the region's socio-economic development.*
- *Finalization of the legal and technical processes for the establishment of the EAC Monetary Union institutions, development of medium-term macroeconomic convergence programmes (MTCs) by Partner States, and financial market integration.*
- *Improvement of the region's network and capacity of physical infrastructure (roads, railways, ports and maritime facilities), liberalisation of air transport services, civil aviation safety and security, increased access to clean energy, modernisation of meteorological infrastructure for disaster risk management, and development of quality communications infrastructure to facilitate cross-border interconnections and sharing of communications facilities and timely response to cyber-insecurity.*
- *Good Governance, Democratic Accountability, Rule of Law, and Human Rights and peace building through conflict resolution and prevention to spur trade and investment for sustainable socio-economic development of the region.*
- *Strengthening of institutional and decision-making structures for enhanced ownership, implementation and accountability by transforming the EAC Secretariat into a Commission, and application of the sanction mechanisms as provided for in the EAC Treaty.³*

³ In February 2016, the 33rd Meeting of the Council decided that the Report on the EAC institutional review be implemented through an initial phase and the consolidation that would require transforming the EAC Secretariat to a Commission (EA C/CM 33/ Decision 22), subject to amendment of the relevant Articles of the Treaty to provide for the establishment of the Commission. The Report of the joint EAC/GIZ bench-marking Mission to ECOWAS in February 2024 recommended that the EAC develops a comprehensive road map for implementation of the Council directive on transforming the Secretariat into a Commission.

Financing of EAC Integration:

Further, the 7th EAC Development Strategy prioritizes the establishment of alternative and sustainable resource mobilization strategies that align financing with community needs and ensure that projects truly reflect the aspirations of the region's people. A renewed resolve among Partner States to disburse their financial contributions in a timely manner is required to ensure the sustainability and autonomy of EAC operations.

Improvement in Decision-making:

The EAC's decision-making process is rooted in the principle of consensus among Partner States. While this doctrine ensures inclusivity and ownership, it also contributes to significant delays, especially when bureaucratic processes at national levels are slow or politically inclined. More efficient and streamlined coordination mechanisms have been proposed in the Strategy to enable timely implementation of policy decisions and directives.

Need for Value and Impact:

Recognizing the need for depth, value and greater impact of EAC projects and programmes, the Strategy has focused on a limited set of priorities with clearly defined, measurable targets that are achievable within the five-year period. It has adopted a more practical, results-oriented outlook that supports collective progress while acknowledging Partner States interests.

4.7 Strategic Development Objectives (SDOs), Strategic Interventions, Sector Priority Areas and Key Targets



SDO 1: Deepening Trade Integration

4.7.1.1. Customs

The Customs Union is crucial for enhancing trade facilitation and improving customs operations across the EAC Partner States. The objectives of the Customs Union, as outlined under Article 3 of the Protocol on the Establishment the East African Customs Union are to: i) further liberalize intra-regional trade in goods on the basis of mutually beneficial trade arrangements among the Partner States, ii) promote efficiency in production within the Community, iii) enhance domestic, cross border and foreign investment in the Community, and iv) promote economic development and diversification in industrialisation in the Community.

The Strategy aims to align customs procedures, laws, and practices across Partner States, adopt technologies like blockchain and Artificial Intelligence for trade facilitation, build capacity for customs officers and trade officials. The Strategy also seeks to enhance the monitoring and evaluation of implementation of commitments guaranteeing the rights and freedoms under the Common Market Protocol.

Other priorities include strengthening of partnerships with the private sector for regular

dialogue on customs reforms, trade facilitation challenges, and opportunities for co-investment in trade infrastructure; operationalization and implementation of key trade agreements, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area and the Tripartite Free Trade Area; development of infrastructure for trade facilitation; value-added production; and incorporation of gender-sensitive trade policies to promote inclusion of groups with special needs, such as women, youth, and small-scale traders in regional trade activities.

Sector Priority Area: Provision of Customs Services that facilitate Trade and Investment in the EAC

Strategic Interventions:

1. *Deepen Integration through Enhanced Customs Cooperation*
2. *Develop and implement legal instruments to support regional customs and trade operations*
3. *Strengthen Capacity Building and Knowledge Management for Trade and Customs services*
4. *Develop Infrastructure and Smart Border Systems for Trade Facilitation*
5. *Promote Digital Transformation and Innovation in Customs Processes*
6. *Accelerate Authorized Economic Operators (AEOs) program*
7. *Expand Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation through MRAs and Customs Mutual Assistance Agreements (CMAAs)*
8. *Enhance Regional Risk Management & intelligence sharing mechanisms*
9. *Joint enforcement task force with real-time internet-based communication channels*
10. *Facilitation of Green Trade*

Key Targets

1. *Eliminate Stays of application of EAC CET and 100% implementation of all tariff lines at EAC CET rates by all Partner States by 2030/31*
2. *100% implementation of SCT Enhancement Plan and Blueprint for attainment of the fully-fledged Customs Union by 2030/31*
3. *All Partner States implement the EAC Customs Guarantee to ease movement of goods and services by 2030/31*
4. *Adopt and implement at least 3 regional legal instruments including for SCT, Anti-Counterfeit, SEZ and CMA amendments by 2030/31*
5. *All Partner States apply AI, blockchain and risk-based tools to improve accuracy and reduce fraud by 2030/31*
6. *100% of EAC Customs Instruments aligned with AfCFTA Protocol by 2030/31*
7. *Upgrade 50% of border posts to Smart OSBPs by 2030/31*
8. *At least 5 AEO Association chapters are established in Partner States by 2028/29*
9. *Establish an AEO programme in all 8 EAC Partner States by 2028/29*

10. *Implement 3 MRAs/CMAAs with jurisdictions such as India, Japan, China, SADC, ECOWAS, COMESA by 2030/31*
11. *Establish and operationalise a risk Observatory for joint analysis, early warning and performance benchmarking by 2030/31*
12. *Establish a regional compliance and enforcement mechanism by 2026/27*
13. *Mainstream Green Trade Facilitation in Customs administrations by 2028/29*

4.7.1.2 Trade

EAC integration is expected to boost economic growth through increased trade in goods, services, and investment, as evidenced by enhanced diversification, higher trade volumes, and increased foreign direct investment. Streamlining customs, harmonising trade laws and tariffs, and removing procedural barriers are vital for deeper integration. A strong digital trade strategy, encompassing e-commerce, digital payments, and ICT infrastructure, will further enhance trade and help maximise benefits from regional agreements like the TFTA and AfCFTA.

Key drivers for expanding regional trade and investment include adopting trade-friendly tariffs, reducing non-tariff barriers, supporting MSMEs, and integrating sustainability into trade policy through green investments and climate-resilient infrastructure. Further priorities include developing infrastructure for trade facilitation, strengthening public-private partnerships, aligning national policies with regional frameworks, promoting exports to achieve broader market access, and advancing energy cooperation through initiatives such as the East African Power Pool (EAPP).

Sector Priority Area: Streamlining, simplifying, and harmonising Trade Administrative procedures and regulations

- **Internal Trade**

Strategic Interventions

1. *Strengthen Monitoring and Elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers in the EAC*
2. *Promote Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to enhance intra-EAC trade in goods*
3. *Compilation of annual Trade and Investment Reports*

Key Targets

1. *Resolve 100% of NTBs by 2030/31*
2. *Hold 1 East African Community MSMEs Trade Fair annually*
3. *Publish 1 Trade and Investment Report annually*
4. *Establish the Trade Remedies Committee by 2026/27*
5. *Remove at least 80% of Trade in Services Restrictions by 2030/31*

- **International Trade**

Strategic Interventions

1. *Strengthen the coordination of Implementation of the AfCFTA and TFTA Agreements in the EAC Partner States*
2. *Promote EAC Partner States exports to external markets including negotiations of FTA Agreements with Pakistan, Singapore, UAE and UK*
3. *Support the EAC Partner States in the Implementation of key priority measures in the EAC Regional Trade Policy and Enhance Cross-Border ECommerce.*
4. *Enhance free movement of services in the EAC Partner States.*

Key Targets

1. *Publish at least 2 biannual and regional reports on the implementation of the AfCFTA and TFTA*
2. *Align at least 2 restrictive provisions in the Partner States' laws with the AfCFTA and TFTA annually*
3. *Develop 3 EAC negotiation positions annually*
4. *Conduct the end term review of the Export Promotion Strategy by 2030/31*
5. *Produce 2 Reports of the Exports Promotion Subcommittee annually*
6. *All (8) Partner States implement the harmonised e-commerce frameworks by 2030/31*
7. *Remove 80% of identified non-conforming measures in laws and regulations by 2030/31*
8. *Support 60 MSMEs annually to access new markets*
9. *Finalise Negotiations for 5 remaining services sectors by 2028/29*

- **Standards, Quality, Metrology and Testing**

Strategic Interventions

1. *Develop Quality Infrastructure to facilitate innovation, industrial development, consumer protection, and increased trade regionally and internationally*
2. *Capacity building to facilitate mutual recognition of conformity assessment systems and procedures*
3. *Harmonisation of Standards*

Key Targets

1. *At least 3 quality infrastructures institutes upgraded to international recognition annually*
2. *Annual monitoring visits to assess adoption and implementation of harmonized EAC Standards*
3. *Harmonise 150 Standards annually*

4.7.1.3 Investment

The investment promotion sector is committed to establishing a favourable environment for investment, positioning the EAC as a unified investment destination, and strengthening the capacity of investment promotion agencies to support private sector growth within the region. Key priorities include harmonising policies and regulations, implementing business environment reforms, supporting investments in agro-based value chains, enhancing public-private partnerships, and advancing digitisation efforts to foster sectoral development over the medium term.

The EAC Private Sector Promotion Strategy focuses on improving business policies and institutions by harmonising laws, developing hubs, clusters, and special economic zones, and building capacity in public agencies. It also supports market development, encourages public-private dialogue, promotes environmentally responsible private sector growth, and connects DFIs with local businesses to boost cross-border trade and investment.

To engage effectively with the region's private sector, key challenges must be addressed, such as discriminatory taxes on EAC goods versus local products, inconsistent domestic tax regimes (VAT, Excise, Income Tax), unequal levies and fees on goods moved between Partner States, inconsistent application of the EAC CET 2022 due to country-specific exceptions, persistent non-tariff barriers, trade restrictions on services, and failure of some Partner States to implement agreed commitments.

The 7th EAC Development Strategy depends on strong collaboration between the EAC, the EABC, and the EACSO. Enhanced stakeholder engagement will allow targeted discussions on trade, investment, industrialisation, and economic growth with policymakers. The Strategy has identified the following priority areas, strategic interventions and key targets for the respective sub sectors under Trade.

Sector Priority Area: Investment Promotion and Private Sector Development

Strategic Interventions

1. *Harmonise Investment Laws by EAC Partner States*
2. *Digitisation and provision of investment-related services.*
3. *Enhance private sector participation in regional integration and development of regional projects*

Key Targets

1. *Harmonise investment codes across all EAC Partner States by 2030/31*
2. *Digitise investment-related services and create a centralised digital portal in at least 7 Partner States by 2030/31*
3. *Develop one (1) regional policy paper with private sector input annually*

4.7.1.4 Trade and Consumer Welfare

The East African Community Competition Authority (EACCA) was established under Article 9(2) of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community and Section 37 of the EAC Competition Act. Its operations are further governed by Article 21 of the Protocol on the Establishment of the EAC Customs Union and Article 33 of the Protocol on the Establishment of the EAC Common Market. The Authority is mandated to enforce the EAC Competition Act by promoting and protecting fair trade and safeguarding consumer welfare within the Community.

In accordance with Section 3 of the Act, its key objectives are to enhance the welfare of the people by protecting all market participants' freedom to compete and prohibiting anti-competitive practices; improve the competitiveness of Community enterprises in global markets through internal competition; create a conducive environment for investment; and align the Community's competition policy and practices with international standards.

The first EACCA Strategic Plan, which concluded in 2024, focused on establishing the Authority's institutional framework and laying the groundwork for its operationalisation, with limited implementation of projects and programmes. The second Strategic Plan marks the Authority's transition into full-scale implementation of its projects and programmes.

Significant progress has been achieved, including the amendment of the EAC Competition Act to strengthen regulatory oversight and the development of the EAC Competition (Merger and Acquisition) Regulations. However, several challenges have hindered the Authority's effectiveness over the past five years. These include prolonged delays in reviewing the Act to address emerging issues, such as e-commerce; slow enactment of national competition laws in some Partner States; a limited understanding of the importance of competition policy; persistent resource constraints; and the absence of a comprehensive competition assessment framework.

To address these challenges, EACCA will prioritise strategic interventions aimed at strengthening its regulatory capacity, promoting harmonised competition frameworks, and enhancing appreciation and enforcement of competition policy across the region over the next five years.

Sector Priority Area: Promotion of economic integration and development in the EAC through regulation of competition in markets

Strategic Interventions

1. *Implementation of the EAC merger control regime.*
2. *Investigate cross-border anti-competitive business practices and abuse of dominance cases.*
3. *Investigate consumer welfare violations and enhance coordination on regional consumer protection matters.*
4. *Enhanced transparency, accountability and predictability of processes and procedures of EACCA.*
5. *Institutional strengthening of EACCA and resource mobilisation to enforce its mandate through implementation of critical activities.*

Key Targets

1. Investigate and analyse 80 mergers notified to the Authority by 2030/31.
2. Investigate and conclude 6 anti-competitive business practices and one abuse of market dominance cases by 2030/31.
3. Establish and operationalise a regional consumer protection coordination network by 2026/27
4. Sign at least 4 MOUs annually with either Partner States, RECs, consumer organisations or regulators.
5. Develop a Case Management System by 2030/31.
6. Collect at least 4.0 million US\$ annually from merger filing fees.

Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the EAC Common Market Protocol

The overall objective of the EAC Common Market is to widen and deepen cooperation among the Partner States in the economic and social fields for the benefit of the Partner States and their citizens. The Protocol for the Establishment of the EAC Common Market covers several commitments to facilitate the free movement of people, goods, services, capital, workers, as well as the rights of establishment and residence. If fully implemented, these commitments under the respective freedoms and rights will have a profound and positive impact on the economies of the Partner States.

Since the establishment of the Common Market in 2010, the Community has registered achievements in the enjoyment of the freedoms and rights in the Protocol, which have laid a good foundation on which to consolidate and realise a functional Common Market. Despite these achievements, implementation challenges still exist. Legal and regulatory measures inconsistent with regional commitments continue to hamper progress in establishing a common market. Progress to eliminate restrictions has been slow, and in some cases, new measures have been introduced contrary to commitments undertaken in the EAC Common Market Protocol.

To attain the objectives of the Common Market, the Partner States have undertaken to remove legislative and regulatory restrictions through the review and amendment of identified CMP non-compliant laws, and adoption of regional laws to facilitate Common Market Protocol implementation.

Sector Priority Area: Accelerated and measurable progress towards full realization of CMP

Strategic Interventions

1. Harmonize identified Partner State non-compliant laws and regulations with CMP commitments
2. Develop regional laws to enhance implementation of CMP commitments
3. Strengthen Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms for the implementation of the CMP

Key Targets

1. Harmonise/align 80% of identified CMP non-compliant laws with CMP commitments by 2030/31

2. *Develop Regional laws for at least 50% of identified areas by 2030/31*
3. *Produce Bi-annual status reports on the implementation of the Common Market Protocol*
4. *Publish at least 2 EAC Common Market Protocol Scorecards by 2030/31*



SDO 2: Enhance Production, Productivity, and Value Addition in Productive Sectors

The productive sectors include Agriculture and Food Security, Tourism and Wildlife, Industrial Development and SMEs, as well as the Energy, Environment, and Natural Resources sub-sectors. At the EAC Secretariat, the performance of these sub-sectors has been constrained by limited financial resources, insufficient staffing, and slow implementation of Council and Summit directives. Notably, the Industrial Development and SMEs sub-sector has lacked permanent staff since 2019. Key Summit decisions, such as the phase-out of used garments and the harmonisation of age limits for imported used motor vehicles, remain pending, with only one Partner State having implemented the decision regarding used garments.

The Environment and Natural Resources sub-sector, crucial given the ongoing impacts of climate change, currently operates with only one staff member. Similar staffing challenges are evident in the Tourism and Wildlife and Energy sub-sectors, issues that are exacerbated by employee departures and delays in recruitment. To address these challenges, among others, a series of priorities, strategic interventions, and targets have been identified.

4.7.2.1 Agriculture & Food Security

Improving agricultural production, productivity, value addition, and food security continues to be a key priority for the region. Efforts will focus on research and development, climate-smart crop production, value addition, integrating agroforestry into farming, improving post-harvest management, and identifying market linkages.

Sector Priority Area: Enhanced Agricultural Production and Productivity, Value Addition and Market Access

Strategic Interventions

1. *Strengthen coordination and implementation of harmonized regional policies, strategies, guidelines and legislation to increase sustainable and inclusive agricultural production, productivity, and intra-regional trade*
2. *Strengthen regional and national mechanisms for managing transboundary crop and animal pests and diseases*
3. *Strengthen coordination and implementation of EAC Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) Regional Agri-food system Investment Plan (RASIP) – CAADP Framework*

4. *Strengthen coordination and EAC Partner States Capacities for the implementation of the EAC Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Protocol*
5. *Expand Access to Agricultural Financing and Insurance*
6. *Enhance Innovation and Technology Adoption in Agriculture*

Key Targets

1. *Establish joint surveillance systems for management of transboundary crop and animal pests and diseases by 2027/28*
2. *All Partner States are on track in Implement the CAADP Kampala Declaration by 2030/31*
3. *All Partner States fully implement the SPS Protocol by 2030/31*
4. *Develop a regional microcredit and insurance scheme to support smallholder farmers and livestock keepers by 2029/30*
5. *Adopt new technologies in agricultural extension services (precision farming, digital agriculture, and biotechnology) by 2030/31*

4.7.2.2 Tourism & Wildlife

The Tourism and Wildlife Management sector focuses on enhancing the region's tourism potential, promoting sustainable use of wildlife resources, and strengthening regional integration in tourism and wildlife conservation. Improving infrastructure, adopting sustainable tourism practices, conserving and utilising wildlife resources, investing in hospitality, transport, and tourism-related services, establishing a single tourist visa in the EAC, and promoting the EAC as a single tourist destination are essential steps for the development of the sector. Integration of community-based tourism models that promote local economic empowerment, integrating conservation with value chains (e.g., eco-safaris, sustainable hunting), is also a key component of the overall tourism and wildlife development strategy.

Sector Priority Area: Diversification of Tourism and Promotion of Sustainable Use of Wildlife Resources.

Strategic Interventions

1. *Promote the EAC Tourism Destination Brand "Visit East Africa: Feel the Vibe"*
2. *Enhance Quality of Service in the tourism sector*
3. *Promote Innovation and Digital Transformation in Tourism*
4. *Strengthen Wildlife Conservation and Anti-Poaching Efforts+*

Key Targets

1. *Conduct at least five (5) Joint tourism promotion in international and regional trade fairs by 2030/31*
2. *Develop and implement eight (8) Classification Criteria, standards and guidelines for tourism service providers by 2028/29*

3. *Establish an EAC Digital Tourism Platform by 2028/29*
4. *Develop and implement at least three (3) transboundary ecosystem management plans by 2030/31*
5. *Establish and operationalise at least four (4) transboundary wildlife conservation networks by 2028/29*

4.7.2.3 Industrial Development & SMEs

The East African Community Industrialisation Strategy 2021-2032 focuses on developing strategic regional value chains, improving industrial infrastructure, strengthening information systems, and building industrial skills. Key measures also include increasing access to financial and technical resources, enhancing industry support services, expanding trade and market access, fostering regional collaboration in R&D and innovation, and supporting SMEs.

Sector Priority Area: *Enhanced Industrial Production and Productivity for Improved Incomes and Wealth Creation.*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Upgrade priority value chains for intra-EAC trade.*
2. *Modernise and cluster MSMEs with skills and technology access.*
3. *Optimise Industrial Infrastructure, Logistics Networks and enabling environment for Spatial Industrial growth and Agglomeration*
4. *Strengthen collaboration in innovation R&D, Technology Transfer and adoption of Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) technologies*
5. *Expand Investment in Digital and Technological Infrastructure*

Key Targets

1. *Develop one (1) matching grant scheme for the private sector per year.*
2. *Develop and operationalise one (1) MSME clustering programme annually*
3. *Conduct a study on industrial corridors and infrastructure (SEZs & industrial Parks) by 2030/31*
4. *Develop one (1) programme annually to review tariffs and agreements to support industrial development*
5. *Establish at least 2 innovation hubs and 2 industrial clusters by 2030/31 to drive research and development (R&D) Establish at least 2 innovation hubs and 2 industrial clusters to drive research and development (R&D) by 2030/31*

4.7.2.4 Environment & Natural Resources

The Environment and Natural Resources sector development involves conservation efforts, sustainable use of resources, and climate change management. It includes climate-smart agriculture, developing value chains for agriculture and livestock, improving value addition and market access, creating financial tools for smallholder farmers and livestock keepers, collaborating on transboundary pest and disease management, and adopting new agricultural technologies. Additional measures consist of strengthening institutional capacities for addressing climate change, transitioning to a green economy, and reducing disaster risks.

Sector Priority Area: Sustainable natural resource use, management and conservation, environmental sustainability, and climate change management

Strategic Interventions

1. *Implement the Regional Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.*
2. *Cross-border cooperation in Blue Economy development*
3. *Valuation of natural capital*
4. *Strengthen Community-Led Nature-Based Solutions for Transboundary Biodiversity Landscapes*
5. *Strengthen Disaster Risk Reduction and Management System*

Key Targets

1. *Review the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan by 2028/29*
2. *Implement at least three (3) transboundary blue economy projects by 2030/31*
3. *Undertake valuation of natural capital in at least 4 additional transboundary landscapes by 2028/29*
4. *Implement at least four (4) transboundary biodiversity nature-based solution projects by 2030/31*
5. *Develop and operationalise an EAC Early Warning System for Disaster Risk Management by 2030/31*

4.7.2.5 Sustainable Development of Natural Resources within Lake Victoria Basin

The Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) is a specialised institution of the East African Community (EAC), established under Article 114(2)(b)(vi) of the EAC Treaty. Its legal foundation is further reinforced by Article 33 of the Protocol for Sustainable Development of the Lake Victoria Basin (2003), and Section 3 of the Lake Victoria Basin Commission Act (2022), which provides for its operational and governance framework.

The Commission's core mandate is to promote, facilitate, and coordinate sustainable development and management of natural resources within the Lake Victoria Basin (LVB). It

serves as a regional platform for harmonised policy and strategic interventions across the EAC Partner States.

To fulfil this mandate, LVBC implements and coordinates multi-sectoral programmes and projects aimed at improving environmental sustainability, water quality, ecosystem health, climate resilience, and socioeconomic development in the Basin. However, the effective execution of these initiatives has faced persistent challenges.

Key constraints include inadequate and inconsistent financial contributions from Partner States, limited technical and human resource capacity, and bureaucratic delays in project implementation. These have particularly impacted progress in areas such as maritime safety enhancement, port infrastructure modernisation, and the deployment of essential services like wastewater and solid waste management systems.

Furthermore, the Commission contends with a range of external challenges, including the accelerating impacts of climate change, the rapid proliferation of invasive aquatic weeds (notably *Eichhornia crassipes*, or water hyacinth), increased sedimentation, and the accumulation of plastic and organic debris in the lake ecosystem. These environmental pressures compound operational difficulties and require enhanced regional collaboration, investment, and innovation to address sustainably.

Sector Priority Area: Promotion of sustainable utilisation and management of the Lake Victoria Basin resources

Strategic Interventions

1. *Infrastructure Development for Environmental and Public Health Sustainability,*
2. *Strengthen Cross-Border Collaboration for Maritime Safety and Economic Development,*
3. *Expand Public Health and Livelihood Programs,*
4. *Promote Sustainable Environmental Practices and Climate Resilience,*
5. *Build Institutional Capacity for Effective Implementation of projects and programmes,*

Key Targets

1. *Update and implement the Strategy for management of invasive aquatic weeds by 2030/31*
2. *Develop and implement a capacity-building program for LVBC staff and Partner States' stakeholders by 2030/31*
3. *Establish and implement a mechanism for joint efforts between Partner States to invest in infrastructure, technology, and training for safer and more efficient maritime trade on Lake Victoria by 2030/31*

4.7.2.6 Development of Fisheries and Aquaculture

The Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO), a specialised EAC institution, coordinates the management and development of fisheries and aquaculture in the region. Established by Convention in 1994, LVFO is registered as a regional fisheries management organisation

under the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's Charter (CAP 102).

The Organisation's operations have been hampered by insufficient staff and financial resources. A job evaluation led to the downgrading of professional staff positions, which has adversely affected both productivity and staff morale. External challenges include climate change, rising water levels impacting fishing communities and power-generation sites, illegal fishing, water pollution, aquatic diseases, outdated Lake navigation routes, and over-reliance on development partners for programme implementation. The Organisation's main priority and strategic focus for the next five years are outlined below.

Sector Priority Area: Promote sustainable management and development of fisheries and aquaculture in the East African Community for food security and wealth creation

Strategic Interventions

1. *Strengthen sustainable Fisheries Management and development*
2. *Strengthen fisheries and aquaculture resource monitoring and research.*
3. *Enhance knowledge management, information sharing, awareness creation and participation of the East African people on fisheries and aquaculture, particularly for women and youth.*
4. *Strengthen quality assurance, trade and marketing of fish and fishery products*
5. *Promote value addition, market access*
6. *Promote and support aquaculture management and development by encouraging investment in commercial aquaculture and effective bio-security measures*
7. *Strengthen Institutional Capacity and Resource Mobilisation*

Key Targets

1. *Reduce Illegal, Unprotected and Unregistered (IUU) fishing cases by 50% by mid-term and by 20% by 2030/31*
2. *At least 10 harmonised fisheries policies, plans, legislations, standards, and guidelines established/domesticated by 2030/2031*
3. *Fisheries Management plan V developed and implemented 60% by mid-term and 90% of FMP V actions by 2030/31*
4. *Undertake at least 5 timely, demand-driven, and innovative research and extension services by 2030/31.*
5. *At least 2 Regional knowledge management and information-sharing digital platforms developed and operational, reaching a minimum of 500,000 users across East Africa by 2030/31*
6. *At least 70% of fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders report improved access to timely, relevant information and increased participation in sectoral activities by 2030/31*
7. *Enhance power reliability for LVFO's ICT systems through sustainable energy solutions, meeting at least 60% of datacentre energy needs and achieving 99.9% system uptime for knowledge management and information sharing by 2027/2028*

8. *Increase the volume of key commercial fish species undergoing value addition by at least 20% by 2030/31*
9. *Develop at least 5 novel fishery products by 2030/31*
10. *Develop at least 5 harmonised Aquaculture policies, plans, legislations, standards, and guidelines by 2030/31*
11. *At least 6 TVETS facilities Acquired/Upgraded by 2030/31*
12. *Develop and implement a comprehensive Resource Mobilisation Strategy by 2030/31*

4.7.2.7 Science, Technology & Innovation

The East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO) is mandated to promote and coordinate the development, management, and application of science, technology, and innovation (STI) in the region. Over the past five years, the Commission has faced several challenges in implementing its initiatives. These include overlapping mandates and duplication of activities with the EAC Secretariat, slow adoption of regional policies, inadequate funding, and resource constraints. Additional challenges are limited awareness of STI programs, capacity gaps—both technical and financial—in developing bankable regional proposals, weak STI implementation capacity, and insufficient collaboration among research institutions, academia, and industry across the region.

Sector Priority Area: *Promote and coordinate the development, management and application of Science and Technology in EAC Partner States*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Digital Transformation and implementation of the Artificial Intelligence Programme*
2. *Implement the Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Programme*
3. *Implement the Innovation and Technology Transfer Programme*

Key Targets

1. *Pilot-test at least 10 AI projects in sectors (health, agriculture, education) by 2030/31*
2. *Establish 10 innovation hubs (at least one per Partner State) by 2030/31*
3. *Support 32 youth-led startups by 2030/31*
4. *Convene 7 youth engagement forums, targeting 5,000 participants by 2030/31*
5. *Support 25 regional youth innovation project initiatives by 2030/31*
6. *Support commercialisation of at least 50 innovation protocols by 2030/31*
7. *Support the registration of 100 patents by 2030/31*
8. *Sign 70 MOUs or collaborative research projects under university-industry partnerships by 2030/31*
9. *Attain 100,000 Unified knowledge transfer platform users by 2030/31*
10. *Complete the EASTECO Permanent headquarters by 2030/31*



SDO 3: Strengthen the Social Dimensions of Regional Integration

4.7.3.1 Development of Regional Health Systems

A well-functioning health care system is a top priority for the EAC region. Despite significant progress, challenges remain in implementing Universal Health Coverage (UHC) across Partner States due to financial constraints and inadequate infrastructure. Budgetary constraints have severely affected the capacity for effective coordination of health programmes and response to disease outbreaks. Further, the declining support from development partners has impacted key health sector programmes, notably those targeting HIV and TB. High turnover rates among health workers have led to staffing shortages in some areas, negatively impacting the quality of healthcare services and limiting the effectiveness of health system strengthening efforts.

Addressing these challenges is crucial for the health sector to improve outcomes in the region. Some of the focus areas in the Strategy include improvement of health infrastructure, use of state-of-the-art equipment and human resources to strengthen healthcare systems, health promotion and disease prevention, innovation and digitalisation of healthcare services, increased health financing, and improvement of health data and information management systems.

The East African Health Research Commission (EAHRC) was established as the principal advisory institution to the EAC on health research and development. The Mission of the Commission is to improve the health and well-being of citizens of the Community by generating, accessing, capturing, assessing, synthesising, sharing, disseminating, and utilising health research and findings, as well as technological development that is suitable and relevant to the Community and its people". Over the last five years, the Commission has experienced serious understaffing due to delayed recruitments to replace exited staff, lack of its own office space, funding constraints and delays in operationalisation of a number of initiatives such as the East African Health Cloud (EAHC), thereby limiting its capacity to deliver on its mandate.

Sector Priority Area: *Improvement in regional health service outcome indicators*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Strengthen regional health systems resilience and emergency preparedness*
2. *Accelerate digital health transformation and telemedicine services*
3. *Enhance maternal and child health outcomes through targeted interventions*
4. *Promote pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity*
5. *Promote health financing schemes and Universal Health Coverage in the region*

Key Targets

1. *Support development of harmonised early warning guidelines and facilitate functional systems in 4 Partner States by 2028/29*

2. *Pilot regional standards and telemedicine in demonstration hospitals in each Partner State (~30% of referral facilities) by 2028/29*
3. *Support two regional referral hospitals to become centres of excellence for health services by 2028/29*
4. *Coordinate regulatory harmonisation and investment forums to attract at least 4 new manufacturing investments in the health sector by 2028/29*
5. *Provide technical assistance to 4 Partner States to develop or expand national health insurance schemes by 2028/29*
6. *All 8 Partner States adopt or adapt the regional guidelines and at least 6 operationalise early warning systems by 2029*
7. *At least 50 % of referral facilities use EAC-aligned digital systems by 2030/31*
8. *Support four regional centres of excellence on health and promote regional guidelines by 2030/31*
9. *Facilitate the establishment/expansion of 6 plants producing essential medicines by 2030/31*
10. *All 8 Partner States adopt regional principles for UHC by 2030/31*

Sector Priority Area: Strengthen health research through capacity building partnerships and networking, and through the establishment of Centres of Excellence

Strategic Interventions

1. *Promote Awareness and use of health information in the EAC Partner States*
2. *Strengthen collaboration and coordination of research programs and networks to create a conducive regional research ecosystem*
3. *Strengthen EAHRC institutional and Human Resources management and institutional framework for effective and efficient governance and operation*
4. *Implement the Digital Regional East African Community Health (REACH) Initiative*

Key Targets

1. *Establish and operationalise a Regional Ethics Board by 2027/28*
2. *Develop a Legal and regulatory framework for multi-country clinical trials in the EAC Partner States by 2027/28*
3. *Sign at least two collaboration Agreements with Development Partners by 2028/29*
4. *Develop and implement joint research projects focusing on regional health priorities, such as pandemic preparedness and response by 2030/31*
5. *Conduct bi-annual East African Health and Scientific Conference (EAHSC)*
6. *Issue and share at least fourteen (14) Conference Briefs with Partner States for implementation by 2030/31*
7. *Publish at least three (3) issues of EAHRJ & two (2) Issues of EASci by 2030/31*
8. *Prepare at least five (5) Grant Applications for funding through PPPs by 2030/31*

9. *Establish a Health Research Fund by 2028/29*
10. *Develop and operationalise a robust blueprint of the East African Health Cloud (EAHC) & Regional East African Diseases Surveillance Control and Response (READSCoR) by 2030/31*
11. *Develop and implement the roadmap for the establishment of telemedicine in EAC RCoEs by 2030/31*
12. *Construct the EAHRC Permanent headquarters by 2030/31*

4.7.3.2 Education & Training

Financial constraints have delayed the operationalisation of the EAC Centres of Excellence, hindering progress in establishing and utilising specialised education and training institutions. Other challenges include uneven adoption of the E-learning Strategy by Partner States due to inadequate digital infrastructure, regulatory barriers, resistance from professional bodies, and delays in harmonisation of accreditation standards. These challenges have slowed down the operationalisation of Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs), thus affecting the mobility of professionals across the region. Expansion of TVET programmes has been affected by limited private sector involvement, outdated infrastructure, and gaps in aligning curriculum with labour market needs.

Areas of focus in the Strategy include expansion of TVET and development of employment-linked and market-relevant skills to address youth unemployment, digitisation of education, expansion of resilient, equitable online learning systems, harmonisation of regional education systems and implementation of MRAs.

Sector Priority Area: Strengthening of the regional education and training system

Strategic Interventions

1. *Improve foundational learning outcomes and literacy rates*
2. *Develop regional digital learning platforms and e-learning infrastructure*
3. *Strengthen technical and vocational education training (TVET) systems*
4. *Skills certification and recognition*

Key Targets

1. *Increase the number of students accessing regional digital learning platforms to at least 1 million students across Partner States by 2028/29*
2. *Support the establishment of 8 STEM Centres of Excellence by 2030/31*
3. *All (8) Partner States implement the Regional Education Quality Assurance System by 2030/31*
4. *Two (2) million students accessing the regional digital learning platform with interoperable learning resources by 2030/31*
5. *Attain 60 TVET Qualifications with regional recognition by 2030/31*
6. *One hundred (100) skills certifications recognised regionally by 2030/31*

7. *Develop and effectively implement Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) by 2030/31*

4.7.3.3 Development of the Regional Higher Education System

In 2009 the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) enacted the IUCEA Act 2009, thus effectively integrating IUCEA into the EAC operational framework. The Act spells out the IUCEA's main objectives, which are to: i) facilitate networking among universities in East Africa, and with universities outside the region; ii) provide a forum for discussion on a wide range of academic and other matters relating to higher education in East Africa; and iii) facilitate maintenance of internationally comparable education standards in East Africa so as to promote the region's competitiveness in higher education.

The IUCEA, under the Act, is also mandated to advise the EAC Partner States on higher education matters, and to contribute towards: i) meeting national and regional developmental needs; ii) developing quality assurance processes in order to ensure that teaching, learning, and research in the region achieve and maintain international standards; iii) assisting member universities and other higher education institutions to identify and implement good practices in institutional management and use of resources; developing human resource capacity in all disciplines of higher education in the Community; and promoting equal opportunities for all higher education students in East Africa, including those with special needs.

Among the challenges that have hindered the Institution from fully discharging its mandate include: i) inadequate financial and human resources; ii) delay in the implementation of regional policies by Partner States; and slow implementation of the harmonisation of the EAC common higher education area

Sector Priority Area: *Development of Human Resource capacity in all disciplines of higher education in East Africa*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Coordinate the implementation of the EAC Common Higher Education Area*
2. *Promote the establishment of digitisation platforms to improve the digital skills in teaching, learning and research*
3. *Coordinate Research and Innovation in the region integration-related issues*
4. *Promote Gender and Social Inclusion in University Education*

Key Targets

1. *Establish and operationalise mechanisms for promoting cross-border student and faculty exchanges by 2030/31*
2. *Develop a Regional TVET qualification framework and occupational standards by 2030/31*
3. *Establish a regional TVET quality assurance mechanism by 2030/31*
4. *Develop and implement guiding policies and regulations for AI adoption in teaching,*

learning and research by 2027/28

5. *Establish a PPP-driven Regional Innovation and Research Fund by 2030/31*
6. *50% Increase of females and persons with special needs participating in higher education, especially in STEM by 2030/31*

4.7.3.4 Culture & Sports

Delays in implementing the Culture and Sports Mobility Framework stem from coordination challenges among Partner States and the complex process of aligning regulations. Additional obstacles include limited private sector investment, slow progress on the EAC Culture Trust Fund, and sectoral underdevelopment. Proposed solutions focus on building cultural industries for employment, boosting cultural tourism through exhibitions, and enhancing sports infrastructure to engage youth in EAC integration.

Sector Priority Area: *Promotion of social cohesion through culture and sports*

Strategic Intervention

1. *Promote cultural and creative industries as drivers of economic growth*

Key Targets

1. *Facilitate development of regional sports programmes and sharing of facilities through partnerships by 2028/29*
2. *Support 600 creative enterprises through small grants, training and regional fairs by 2030/31*
3. *Digitise and preserve at least 5,000 cultural assets by 2030/31*
4. *Implement Cultural exchange programmes targeting 3,000 participants by 2030/31*

4.7.3.5 Labour, Employment, Immigration & Refugee Management

Delays in finalizing key policies like the EAC Refugee Management Policy and employment-sharing guidelines have limited labour mobility. Only five of eight Partner States have issued the EAC e-Passport, hampering seamless travel and full regional integration. Additional challenges include slow adoption of the Labour Migration Policy, limited social security portability, and insufficient protection for migrant workers' rights.

Further, long process on finalization and implementation of regional issues to facilitate movement of labour (e.g. the long outstanding finalization of Draft Directive for the coordination of Social Security Benefits in EAC), inconsistency of the EAC to organize tripartite meetings and meetings for Ministers in charge of labour and employment; inconsistent implementation and enforcement of labour provisions in the EAC Common Market Protocol across Partner States, leading to unequal treatment of migrant workers and limited involvement of trade unions in regional policy formulation and monitoring, despite their critical role in labour market regulation and social dialogue have exacerbated the challenges that the sector has faced.

Barriers to cross-border movement for workers, including bureaucratic work permit processes, non-recognition of certain professions, and inadequate protections for informal sector workers.

Many initiatives such as the implementation of the EAC Decent Work Programme and harmonisation of social security benefits have faced resource constraints and capacity gaps within Partner States, thus limiting their ability to fully implement and sustain these programmes. Effective response to the challenges requires more efforts in the harmonisation of labour policies and laws, youth employment and skills development, social protection and decent work, and implementation of the regional Labour Migration Policy. An **EAC Decent Work Agenda** will be developed as a cross-cutting policy driver for the next strategy, aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and AU Agenda 2063.

To enhance collaboration between the EAC and the regional bodies championing workers interest, for example, the East African Trade Union Confederation (EATUC), it is important to establish a formal regional consultative tripartite structure (Trade union, Employers, Governments) within the EAC governance structure (e.g. through the **Labour and Employment Sub-Committee** or a dedicated **Labour Advisory Council**). Further, the periodic consultations between the EAC Secretariat and the regional trade union bodies will be crucial during policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation missions, particularly those dealing with employment, social policy, regional security and human rights. Creation of a **Labour Observatory or Social Dialogue Platform** will be key in facilitating monitoring of trends in employment, wages, rights violations, and labour migration.

The United Nation's Human Rights Commission (UNHCR) estimates that the EAC region hosts 4.2 million refugees and asylum seekers. The figure rises to 5.3 million when internally displaced persons (IDPs) are factored in. About 5% of the East African population is living in displacement, located in marginalized areas where they hardly benefit from government programmes. The refugee management sector has experienced significant challenges including long simmering conflicts in the region; negative multiplier effect of climate change leading to conflict escalation; forced migration and statelessness, especially affecting the youth, women and children; long delay in finalizing the EAC Refugee Management Policy; and resource constraints experienced by hosting countries. The key strategic interventions for effective refugee management for the sector include i) finalization and implementation of the EAC Refugee Management Policy; ii) concerted efforts in conflict resolution and peace building; iii) harmonisation of refugee management policies; and iv) engagement with the private sector for resource mobilization and support to refugee mobility to support refugee management.

Sector Priority Area: *Strengthening Immigration capacities to enhance free movement of persons, workers and services and management of refugees*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Enhance regional labour mobility and skills recognition frameworks*
2. *Develop comprehensive refugee and migration management systems*
3. *Strengthen employment creation programs targeting youth and women*
4. *Strengthen National Labour Market Information Systems (LMIS) and establish a Regional LMIS*

Key Targets

1. *All (8) Partner States domesticate harmonised labour laws by 2030/31*
2. *Sign and harmonise 8 Bilateral/multilateral labour migration agreements by 2028/29*
3. *Support Five (5) Partner States to standardise integrated Labour Market Information System (LMIS) by 2028/29*
4. *Sign 12 Bilateral/multilateral labour migration agreements by 2030/31*
5. *Develop three (3) regional programmes providing technical guidance on legal assistance, social protection and access to education/employment for vulnerable migrants by 2030/31*
6. *Thirty thousand (30,000) Youth/women employed through regional programs by 2030/31*
7. *All (8) Partner States integrate Labour Market Information System (LMIS) and Regional Labour Market Information system established by 2030/31*

4.7.3.6 Gender, Community Development & Civil Society Mobilization

The Gender, Community Development and Civil Society Mobilization has experienced slow progress in the implementation of the EAC Gender Policy Action Plan which has limited the effectiveness of regional gender equality initiatives, particularly in addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV) and promoting gender equity across the EAC. Delays in finalizing the regional Social Protection Policy, and limited funding for youth, children, and persons with disabilities programs, inconsistent engagement of the civil society and private Sector have aggravated the sector's challenges.

While some consultative forums have been held, engagement with civil society and the private sector has been inconsistent, with fewer forums held than originally planned. Inconsistent engagement reduces opportunities for meaningful dialogue and collaboration on gender and community development issues, limiting the potential for innovative solutions and partnerships.

Women in cross-border trade have faced barriers such as limited access to finance, market information, and regulatory challenges at border points. These barriers hinder the economic empowerment of women, reducing their ability to fully participate in regional trade and contribute to the region's economic growth and development.

Therefore, enhancement of gender equality, women's empowerment, strengthening of community-based development Initiatives and enhancement of civil society engagement in regional integration have become indispensable imperatives in mainstreaming gender in the region's socio-economic development.

Sector Priority Area: Promotion of Gender, Women Empowerment, and Socio-economic Development

Strategic Interventions

1. *Enhance gender equality and women's participation in leadership and decision-making*

2. *Strengthen community development frameworks and civil society engagement*
3. *Implement comprehensive social protection systems*

Key Targets

1. *Five thousand (5,000) Women-led enterprises supported through grants and mentorships by 2028/29*
2. *Forty (40) Regional Gender Equality indicators monitored by 2030/31*
3. *Eight hundred (800) CSOs participating in Regional Civil Society Engagement programs by 2030/31*
4. *Eight (8) Community Development Projects, Cross Border Programmes and Innovation Hubs established by 2030/31*
5. *All (8) Partner States implement the EAC Social Protection Policy by 2030/31*

4.7.3.7 Development of Kiswahili as a Key Tool for Regional Integration

The East African Kiswahili Commission (EAKC) is mandated to coordinate, harmonize, and promote the development and use of Kiswahili for regional integration and sustainable development. Its core activities include coordinating and promoting research, teaching and learning, curriculum development, policy formulation, knowledge generation, and the standardization of terminologies. The Commission's mandate is derived from Article 137 of the EAC Treaty, which designates Kiswahili as the lingua franca of the Community. Furthermore, the 21st Summit of EAC Heads of State adopted Kiswahili as an official language of the EAC in addition to French and English. This was further enhanced by the 24th Ordinary Summit of Heads of State's approval of amendment to Article 137 of the Treaty for Establishment of the EAC to provide for the official status of the languages.

Notable progress has been made in popularizing Kiswahili, as seen in the increasing regional and international interest in its use as a communication medium. Kiswahili's growing global recognition highlights its role as a symbol of Africa's linguistic pride. The designation of 7th July every year as World Kiswahili Language Day by UNESCO and its adoption by the UN and AU, and widespread use in education, media, diplomacy, and trade reflect its international importance. As one African language that is widely spoken globally, Kiswahili supports the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the African Continental Free Trade Area. The language also continues to play a vital role in advancing EAC's economic and cultural integration, access to social services as well as its application in emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, and Biotechnology across various sectors, including the creative industry.

Despite these achievements, the Commission faces major challenges, including limited human and financial resources, the slow establishment of National Kiswahili Councils (with only one Partner State having done so), and the absence of a governing Act.

Sector Priority Area: *Coordination and promotion of the development and use of Kiswahili for regional and international interaction for political, economic, social, educational, scientific, and technological development*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Develop Kiswahili language policy and legal frameworks*
2. *Coordinate research, knowledge management, and technology integration*
3. *Capacity building for Kiswahili Professionals and Institutions*
4. *Public awareness campaigns, advocacy and promotion of Kiswahili language use*
5. *Strengthen EAKC's Institutional Framework for Effective and Efficient Governance and Operations*
6. *Establish Partnerships and Strengthen Collaborations*

Key Targets

1. *Develop at least five Kiswahili language policies and legal frameworks by 2030/31*
2. *Develop the EAC Regional Kiswahili Policy by 2026/27*
3. *At least 8 Partner States supported to develop and review their National Kiswahili Policies by 2030/31*
4. *Provide technical support to all Partner States in establishing National Kiswahili councils by 2030/31*
5. *Undertake Kiswahili research to document new knowledge on five thematic areas by 2030/31*
6. *Develop/acquire at least five Language technology tools by 2030/31*
7. *Support at least 5 Scholarships under exchange programs by 2030/31*
8. *Translate at least ten (10) key research and policy documents by 2030/31*
9. *Support at least three (3) Partner States to integrate Kiswahili into national curricula by 2027/28*
10. *Establish at least three (3) centres of excellence in Kiswahili by 2030/31*
11. *Support at least three (3) stakeholders in the production of content in Kiswahili for communication and documentation by 2030/31*
12. *Enhance EAKC's corporate governance systems by 2030/31*
13. *Establish and implement at least five (5) Strategic partnerships and collaborations established and implemented by 2030/31*
14. *Complete the construction of EAKC Permanent headquarters by 2030/31*



SDO 4: Full Implementation of the Roadmap for the Attainment of the EAC Monetary Union

The objective of the East African Community Monetary Union (MU) is to promote and maintain monetary and financial stability aimed at facilitating economic integration to attain sustainable growth and development of the Community. The successful realisation of the MU will depend on the harmonisation of fiscal and monetary policies across the region. The focus is on the establishment of the necessary institutions to support the Monetary Union; attainment of EAC macroeconomic convergence criteria; harmonisation of fiscal and monetary policies, legal and regulatory frameworks and statistics to facilitate implementation of the Monetary Union Protocol; and accelerated integration of the regional payment and settlement systems.

The other Priorities include creating a framework for regional macroeconomic policy coordination, implementing the EAC Payment Systems Masterplan and the Regulatory Framework for Cross-border Mobile Money transactions, raising awareness about the EAC Monetary Union, and developing Medium-Term Convergence Programs (MTCPs) by all Partner States.

As Partner States strive to attain the macro-economic criteria, the Strategy proposes an interim currency and convertibility arrangement whereby Partner States' currencies are allowed for cross-border transactions through the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on currency acceptability and convertibility of Partner States domestic currencies by the Central Banks. The MoU aims to enhance the security and integrity of the currency convertibility and repatriation framework to facilitate acceptability, convertibility and repatriation of currencies of EAC Partner States. This would alleviate the high cost of cross-border transactions resulting from a multiple exchange rate regime which is very expensive, particularly for cross-border traders.

Sector Priority Area: *Attainment of the EAC Single Currency*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Institutional Strengthening and Governance*
2. *Attain Macroeconomic Stability and Convergence*
3. *Enhance Regional Cooperation and Fiscal and Monetary Policy Harmonisation*
4. *Invest in Digital Transformation and Infrastructure*
5. *Financial market integration*

Key Targets

1. *Finalise and operationalise legal instruments for the establishment of three (3) Monetary Union Institutions by 2030/31*
2. *Develop an interoperable regional payment system by 2030/31*
3. *Fully integrate the regional financial market (cross-border banking, mobile money interoperability, capital markets harmonisation) by 2028/29*
4. *Implement the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on currency acceptability and convertibility of Partner States domestic currencies by the Central Banks by 2027/28*



SDO 5: Development of Regional Infrastructure

Well-developed infrastructure is a key enabler for the EAC integration. The EAC Vision for 2050 is to have infrastructure systems that facilitate the reduction of costs and hence increase the competitiveness of the region in attracting investments and reducing the cost of doing business in the region. For sustained growth and development, the region's agenda is to develop a well-integrated infrastructure offering globally competitive services. This involves connecting various infrastructure networks to facilitate regional and international transactions while promoting industrial development.

4.7.5.1 Road Network

Modernisation of the regional road transport network enhances the efficiency of transporting people and goods. It results in significant benefits, including time savings, improved road safety, reduced costs, increased efficiency, and overall economic gains. The road transport sector strategy therefore focuses on development and modernisation of regional transport corridors, implementation of multi-national road development programmes, transit and trade facilitation, development of climate resilient infrastructure, harmonisation of road transport standards and policies, and rehabilitation and maintenance of the existing roads.

Sector Priority Area: *Improvement of Road inter-Connectivity and Operations Across the Region*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Implement the Multinational Road Development Programme*
2. *Implement the Transit and Trade Facilitation Programme*
3. *Sustainable and Smart Mobility Programme-PPP, Climate Resilient Infrastructure, Maintenance and Safety*

Key Targets

1. *Conduct feasibility studies and detailed Designs for at least eight (8) multinational roads by 2030/31*
2. *Complete the architectural and engineering designs of at least eight (8) One Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) by 2030/31*
3. *Coordinate the implementation of at least 3 transit and transport facilitation programmes by 2030/31*
4. *Coordinate the implementation of at least three (3) sustainable mobility programmes by 2030/31*

4.7.5.2 Railway Network

A well-developed system is essential for complementing other transport infrastructure, offering economical bulk haulage for regional exports and imports, thereby reducing business costs. The EAC Railway Master Plan, developed in 2010, aims to rejuvenate existing railways in Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda, with extensions planned for Rwanda, Burundi, and potentially South Sudan within the framework of the AfCFTA. However, challenges include insufficient investment, technical expertise, and inconsistencies in policy and regulatory frameworks, which hinder effective cross-border rail connectivity.

Sector Priority Area: Development of an Efficient Railway System to Enhance Regional Integration.

Strategic Interventions

1. *Implement regional railway network expansion initiatives such as studies and innovative financing.*
2. *Climate-proof railway infrastructure for resilience – mitigation and adaptation initiatives*
3. *Enhance interoperability for the regional railway network.*
4. *Develop the capacity for centres of excellence for railway capacity building (Human Resource), ICT and technology development (e.g. spare part manufacture)*

Key Targets

1. *Conclude at least two (2) studies for railway network expansion by 2030/31*
2. *Conduct at least two (2) climate focussed studies, and capacity building programme implemented, targeting 50 railway experts in the region by 2028/29.*
3. *At least 3 Centres of excellence developed for railway capacity building (Human Resource), ICT and technology development (e.g. spare part manufacture) by 2028/29*

4.7.5.3 Maritime Transport

The maritime transport sector's aim is to develop a safe, secure, and efficient maritime transport system, support regional integration, and enhance global competitiveness. This requires upgrading maritime transport infrastructure, adopting new technologies, and aligning with international regulations.

Sector Priority Area: Development of a safe, secure, and efficient maritime transport system.

Strategic Interventions

1. *Develop sustainable blue economy policies*
2. *Review policies and regulations governing Maritime Transport and Ports in line with international best practices*

3. *Enhance safety and security of both inland waterways and the Indian Ocean*
4. *Implement projects in the Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika Transport Programs under the Integrated Corridor Development Initiative (Intermodal Strategy)*
5. *Modernisation of Port and Inland Container Terminals*

Key Targets

1. *Develop a sustainable blue economy policy by 2027/28*
2. *Develop Policies and regulations governing Maritime Transport and Ports, aligned with international best practices by 2027/28*
3. *Twenty (20) % reduction in number of security incidents in both inland waterways and the Indian Ocean by 2030/31*
4. *Implement 3 projects in the Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika Transport Programs under the Integrated Corridor Development Initiative by 2029/30*
5. *Design three (3) additional ports and modernise at least 2 ports by 2030/31*
6. *Construct at least 2 additional container terminals at the ports and inland container terminals by 2028/29*

4.7.5.3 Civil Aviation

Civil Aviation provides worldwide transportation network, which makes it essential for regional and global business and tourism, supporting economic growth, connecting people, facilitate global trade, and contribute to the overall societal well-being. Modernisation and expansion of regional airports, liberalisation of the regional airspace, aviation safety, and alignment with regional and international aviation standards and regulations remain top priorities.

Civil aviation sector enhances economic growth, societal well-being, and global connectivity. It fosters trust in air travel, enabling businesses to thrive through efficient travel and trade. Furthermore, it enhances international relations and supports tourism, all while ensuring the safety of passengers and crew. The major challenges observed were, budgetary constraints, and staffing shortage.

The mandate of the Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA) is to enhance and coordinate civil aviation safety and security oversight across the East African Community (EAC) Partner States. The Agency ensures continued compliance with international standards, promotes operational efficiency, and supports the development of a safe, secure and efficient civil aviation system in the region.

One of CASSOA's notable achievements is the continuous update of harmonized civil aviation regulations and technical guidance materials (TGMs) to align with international safety and security standards. These harmonized regulations and TGMs have strengthened aviation safety and security by ensuring uniform standards across all Partner States and improving compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards and recommended practices.

In addition, CASSOA plays a key role in coordinating training programmes for aviation experts from Partner States, thereby enhancing regional capacity and technical proficiency.

The Agency also facilitates the sharing of technical experts (human resources) across the region to address gaps in oversight capabilities and promote mutual support.

Furthermore, CASSOA conducts technical support missions to Partner States to assist in strengthening their aviation safety and security oversight systems and to support their preparedness for ICAO's Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) and Universal Security Audit Programme (USAP).

Over the past five years, CASSOA has faced several key challenges. These include persistent budgetary constraints, shortage of specialized aviation experts—particularly in incident and accident investigations, limited capacity in some Partner States to meet international aviation standards, delayed implementation of harmonized technical guidance materials, and difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified personnel.

Sector Priority Area: Development of safe, secure, efficient and competitive civil aviation systems by 2031.

Strategic Interventions

1. *Liberalisation of air transport in the EAC in line with YD.*
2. *Implement the Single African Air Transport Market.*
3. *Establish a Seamless EAC Upper Flight Information Region.*
4. *Expand and modernise air navigation and airport infrastructure.*
5. *Expand regional tourist airport connections.*
6. *Harmonise and Domesticates YD Regulation and Civil Aviation Policies.*
7. *Establish Aviation centres of excellence.*

.Key Targets

1. *Fully Liberalize air transport in the Region achieved by 2026/2027.*
2. *Fully implement the Single African Air Transport Market by 2028/29.*
3. *Establish the EAC Upper Airspace seamless operation in the Region by 2029/30.*
4. *Expand and modernise eight (8) major regional airports infrastructure by 2029/30*
5. *Expand and modernise eight (8) tourist airport connections by 2028/29.*
6. *Fully domesticate the YD Regulations and Civil Aviation Policy by 2026/27*
7. *Operationalize Multilateral Agreement on Aircraft Accident Investigation by 2026/2027.*

Sector Priority Area: Strengthen corporate governance and operational efficiency in civil aviation

Strategic Interventions

1. *Implement Risk Based Oversight Framework*
2. *Attain and Maintain Qualified and Competent Agency/PS personnel*

3. *Support Partner States to Compliance with ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs)*
4. *Operationalize the Centre for Aviation Medicine*
5. *Establish and implement secondment program*
6. *Keep Abreast with Technological Changes/Advancement*
7. *Support Partner States in establishing and implementing Aviation Cyber Security Functions*

Key Targets

1. *All (8) Partner States achieve above global average score in safety and security audits and inspections by 2030/31*
2. *All Partner States delegate at least 3 functions to CASSOA by 2030/31*
3. *Operationalise a regional aviation cyber security coordination mechanism, with aligned policies in at least 6 Partner States by 2028/29*

4.7.5.5 Energy

The Energy sector is concerned with expanding access to reliable, affordable, and environmentally sustainable energy sources, enhancing energy planning, and advancing renewable energy and efficiency technologies. The 7th EAC Development Strategy highlights initiatives such as building additional interconnection power lines between Partner States, constructing renewable power plants to increase the proportion of renewables in the regional energy mix, pursuing regional energy integration for improved security, promoting the efficient use of energy resources, widening access to affordable and clean energy, and supporting the adoption of energy-efficient appliances and technologies.

Sector Priority Area: *Increasing access to sufficient, reliable, affordable, and environmentally friendly energy sources in the region*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Develop and strengthen the regional electricity market*
2. *Expand access to affordable and clean energy*

Key Targets

1. *Develop at least 7 policy and regulatory frameworks for strengthening the regional electricity market by 2030/31*
2. *Develop and implement at least 10 programmes and framework for enhanced use of clean energy by 2030/31*

4.7.5.6 Communications

The Communications sector focuses on improving regional integration and global competitiveness by developing quality communications infrastructure and harmonising communications policies among Partner States. Key interventions include development of an integrated backbone broadband networks; promotion of universal access and competition; development and implementation of cybersecurity frameworks

Sector Priority Area: Development of Communication Infrastructure

Strategic Interventions

1. *Finalize frameworks for cross-border interconnections and infrastructure sharing*
2. *Develop and implement policy and regulatory frameworks for authorization, universal access, harmonized spectrum policy, competition and tariffs*
3. *Develop and implement cybersecurity policy and regulatory frameworks encompassing digital identity management, data protection and privacy, intellectual property rights*
4. *Promote ICT standardization and conformity assessment in the Partner States*

Key Targets

1. *Develop the Policy and Regulatory Framework for cross-border interconnection and infrastructure sharing by 2027/28*
2. *Develop policy and regulatory frameworks for authorization, universal access, harmonized spectrum policy, competition and tariffs by 2028/29*
3. *Develop cybersecurity policy and regulatory frameworks encompassing digital identity management, data protection and privacy, intellectual property rights by 2028/29*
4. *Conduct ICT standardization and conformity assessment in the Partner States by 2029/30*

4.7.5.6 Meteorological Services

The EAC region is affected by a range of weather and climate related hazards that often translate into natural disasters principally arising from drought, severe storms, tropical cyclones, and perennial floods. These and other weather and climate related disasters account for over 75% of the natural disasters affecting the region. The Protocol on Meteorological Services allows Partner States to cooperate in the planning, designing and development of weather and climate observation networks and meteorological telecommunication systems, the processing and analysis of data and sharing of meteorological information and the development of early warning systems.

Sector Priority Area: Improvement of meteorological services in the region to support the regional integration process

Strategic Interventions

1. *Provide weather services for Disaster Risk Reduction.*
2. *Enhance capacity in short, medium, and long-range weather forecasting and climate change prediction and monitoring.*
3. *Implement the Quality Management System (QMS) for Aeronautical Meteorological Services*
4. *Upgrade and modernise National Meteorological Infrastructure (including Observation Network, Tele- communication Network, computing facilities. and meteorological information dissemination facilities).*
5. *Harmonise Meteorological Policies.*
6. *Expand access to Meteorological Services for the marine, aviation, agriculture and food security, environment, water resources, energy, other social economic sectors.*
7. *Ratification and Implementation of the Protocol on Cooperation in Meteorological Services.*

Key Targets

1. *Increase by 20% access to Weather Services for Disaster Risk Reduction by 2027/28*
2. *Improve by 20% the accuracy of short, medium, and long-range weather forecasting and climate change prediction and monitoring by 2028/29*
3. *Implement the Quality Management System (QMS) for Aeronautical Meteorological Services by 2027/28*
4. *All 8 Partner States upgrade or modernise National Meteorological Infrastructure to meet the set World Meteorological Organization (WMO) recommended standards by 2027/28*
5. *Harmonize Meteorological Policies by 2027/28*
6. *At least 20% increase in the number of outlets for Meteorological Services for the marine, aviation, agriculture and food security, environment, water resources and energy by 2029/30*
7. *Ratify and implement the Protocol on Cooperation in Meteorological Services by 2028/29*



SDO 6: Strengthening the Regional Governance, Political Commitment, Accountability and Inclusivity to Improve Peace and Security

The EAC Political Federation is the 4th Pillar of EAC integration. The EAC Vision 2050 puts a high premium on good governance, defence, peace and security. The Vision asserts that good democratic governance is the bedrock of growth, poverty eradication and sustainable human development. Good governance mobilizes and utilizes local and external resources to drive development. The key elements of good governance include **i) rule of law and law enforcement, ii) ethics and anti-corruption, ii) freedom of expression, participation and inclusiveness, and) social cohesion.**

A stable and predictable security environment is essential for the region's socio-economic development and political stability. The UN Sustainable Development Goal 17 is to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”, thus further emphasizing the need for peaceful co-existence within and among societies.

The 7th EAC Development Strategy therefore prioritizes the ratification of all outstanding Protocols under political affairs; strengthening of democratic principles and governance, and harmonisation of political systems; strengthening of national institutions that run the political affairs of the Partner States; establishment of a political dialogue forum; and fasttracking the conclusion of the EAC Political Confederation Constitution.

On the peace and security front, the Strategy prioritizes the establishment of Directorate of Peace and Security at EAC Secretariat; implementation of Protocol, strategies and other existing mechanism towards sustainable peace and security in the Region; strengthening of the regional security architecture and early warning systems; data protection and implementation of cybersecurity models to curb espionage and infiltration of info; stronger collaboration and consultation among Partner States on peace and security matters; establishment of a common defense and security policy; strengthening of intelligence gathering and law enforcement capacities; and operationalization of the Protocol on Cooperation in defense as well as Protocol on Peace and Security to foster the implementation of common/joint security mechanisms.

The key thrust of the region’s international relations is to build a unified foreign relations architecture, harmonize policies that promote regional cooperation and international relations, and develop a regional framework that enables the EAC to have a single/common position in international forums and other global forums

The Strategy has identified the following priority areas, strategic interventions and targets under the three sub-sectors comprising the Political Federation Pillar.

4.7.6.1 Political Affairs

Sector Priority Area: *Development of the constitutional framework for EAC political confederation, establishment of regional structures and building institutional capacity through development of regional policies.*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Establish the EAC Political Confederation*
2. *Enhance Capacity of Governance Institutions*
3. *Deepen Youth and Civil Society Engagement on EAC Political Integration*
4. *Harmonisation of Policies Across Sectors*
5. *Enhance Stakeholder Participation in Promoting Regional Governance*

Key Targets

1. *Adopt the Political Confederation Constitution by 2027/28*
2. *Finalise the Protocol on Good Governance and the Protocol on Preventing and Combating Corruption by 2026/27*

3. *Expand, formalise and structure youth and civil society engagement in key EAC decision-making structure for political integration by 2027/28*
4. *Develop a comprehensive policy harmonisation framework for Foreign Policy Coordination, on Defence and Security sectors by 2027/28*

4.7.6.2 International Relations

Sector Priority Area: Strengthening of the Communities diplomatic relations in regional, continental and international arena the international arena

Strategic Interventions

1. *Project regional interests in international fora*
2. *Coordinate and harmonize Partner States Foreign Policies*
3. *Partner States provide visa and consular services on behalf of each other*
4. *Enhance cooperation and collaboration with the AUC, RECs, UN and other international organisations*

Key Targets

1. *Establish and maintain at least five (5) collaborations/partnerships to project*
2. *regional interests in international fora by 2030/31*
3. *Harmonise Partner States Foreign Policies by 2027/28*
4. *Develop/Implement a framework for Partner States to provide consular services on behalf of each other by 2027/28*
5. *Implement the EAC Vision 2050 in alignment with other international development frameworks by 2030/31*
6. *At least one (1) new cooperation agreement concluded annually*

4.7.6.3 Peace & Security

Sector Priority Area: Strengthening regional governance, political commitment, accountability and inclusivity to improve peace and security, in the build-up to an EAC Political Confederation

Strategic Interventions

1. *Strengthening EAC capacities to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts and other peace and security threats*
2. *Enhance communities and stakeholders' involvement and participation in implementation of EAC peace and security interventions*
3. *Develop an Enabling Institutional Structure to Support the Council of Ministers on Peace and Security Matters*
4. *Operationalise Joint Cross-Border Security Operations*

5. *Institutionalise the Annual EAC Peace and Security Forum/Conference*
6. *Strengthen Climate Change, Peace, and Security nexus*
7. *Counter Terrorism, Violent Extremism (CVE) and Transnational Threats*
8. *Operationalise and roll out of the EAC Women & Youth Peace and Security Strategies; and protection of children affected by armed conflicts*
9. *Adopt and operationalise the Regional Policy on Refugee Management and Forced Displacement.*
10. *Maritime Domain Awareness and Security*

Key Targets

1. *Finalise and deploy the Integrated EAC Early Warning System in 8 Partner States by 2030/31*
2. *Establish and link Eight (8) National Early Warning Centres with operational grassroots field monitors to the Regional Early Warning Centre by 2030/31*
3. *Implement cross-border joint initiatives to promote peaceful coexistence and good neighbourliness among transboundary and border communities in EAC Partner States by 2030/31*
4. *Engage at least 10 CSOs, academic institutions, and think tanks particularly those focused on women and youth in conflict prevention, management, and resolution activities by 2030/31*
5. *Operationalise bilateral and multilateral security cooperation arrangements among Partner States and neighbours by 2030/31*
6. *Roll out the Regional CT Strategy & Transboundary security Framework, support national CVE stakeholders, and local community-based resilience programs by 2030/31*
7. *Strengthened maritime surveillance and early warning systems on the regional water bodies by 2030/31*

4.7.6.4 Defence Liaison

The Defence Liaison aims to promote peace and security within the East African Community (EAC) through defence cooperation, military training, joint operations, information exchange, and counter-terrorism efforts. The sector faces challenges from emerging conflicts and underfunding. One option is to commercialize military services during peacetime.

Sector Priority Area: Promotion of peace, security, stability and good neighbourliness within the Community.

Strategic Interventions

1. *Operationalize the EAC Mutual Defence Pact*
2. *Enhance Joint Military Exercises and Capacity Building Framework*

3. *Strengthen Conflict Prevention Mechanisms*
4. *Enhance Counter-Terrorism Collaboration and Border Security*
5. *Promote Defence Industrial and Research Cooperation*

Key Targets

1. *All (8) EAC Partner States ratify the EAC Mutual Defence Pact by 2028/29*
2. *Conduct two (2) diversified exercises per year (including cyber, hybrid, inter-agency, and multi domain operations) by 2030/31*
3. *Establish and operationalise the EAC conflict early warning system by 2030/31*
4. *Establish the regional counter-terrorism coordination & border security framework by 2028/29;*
5. *Launch four (4) joint defence industrial & research initiatives in 2030/31*



SDO 7: Institutional Strengthening, Compliance and Accountability

4.7.7.1 Overall Coordination

The executive office discharges the overall role of coordinating the formulation, implementation and tracking of the progress towards the realization of the Community's Vision and objectives spelt out in the EAC Treaty. Further, the office articulates the regions development agenda and provides strategic advice to the EAC policy organs and Partner States and ensures that there is a seamless coordination and close collaboration among the Organs and Institutions in delivering on the mandates. The leadership role of the executive office is therefore very critical to the successful implementation of the 7th EAC Development Strategy.

Sector Priority Area: *Effective coordination of policy formulation, implementation and performance management.*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Oversee the formulation and implementation of the Community's policies and strategies*
2. *Articulate EAC integration agenda at regional and international fora for enhanced image and support*

Key Targets

1. *Implement a stronger EAC Performance Management System by 2030/31*
2. *Transform the EAC Secretariat into a Commission by 2028/29*

3. *Finalise and Implement the Schedule of Sanctions by 2030/31*
4. *Implement the EAC Digital Transformation Policy and Strategy by 2030/31*
5. *Implement at least 80% of Summit and Council Decisions and Directives annually*
6. *Negotiate and sign at least 5 MoUs on bilateral cooperation with regional and international organisations by 2030/31*

4.7.7.2 Corporate Communication & Public Affairs

Sector Priority Area: Awareness creation and popular participation of the East African Citizens in the EAC integration process

Strategic Interventions

1. *Strengthen Communication as a Strategic Pillar*
2. *Promote a Unified EAC Identity through Strategic Branding*
3. *Increase Investment in Digital Communication Platforms*
4. *Broaden Public Education on Regional Integration*
5. *Enhance Collaboration between EAC Organs and National Communication Teams*

Key Targets

1. *Develop Communication Strategy 2026/2027- 2030/2031 by 2026/27 to implement the 7th EAC Development Strategy*
2. *Finalise and promote the new EAC Brand Architecture by 2026/27*
3. *Develop digital communication platforms such as social media, websites, and mobile applications to reach a broader, tech-savvy audience, particularly by 2027/28*

4.7.7.3 Legal & Judicial Affairs

Sector Priority Area: Provision of efficient legal support to Organs and Institutions

Strategic Interventions and Targets

1. *Enhance Legal Harmonisation as a Key Pillar of Regional Integration*
2. *Continuous Judicial Capacity Building*
3. *Promote Legal Awareness Among Citizens and Businesses*
4. *Enhance Digitisation of Legal Services*
5. *Operationalise the Financial and Administrative Autonomy for EAC Organs*

Key Targets

1. *Harmonize at least three (3) laws related to trade, customs, immigration, and social security to ensure they align with EAC protocols by 2030/31*
2. *Conduct annual public legal education campaigns to raise awareness among citizens, businesses, and professionals about EAC laws, rights, and obligations under regional*

agreements by 2030/31

- 3. Establish an online platform for accessing EAC legal documents, case law, and legal resources by 2026/27*
- 4. Finalize the study on financial and administrative autonomy of the EALA and EACJ*

4.7.7.4 Regional Statistics

Evidence-based policymaking across the Community hinges on the effective use of quality and comparable data. To generate reliable community-level statistics, Partner States should fully adopt harmonized methodologies and tools that reflect international standards and best practices. As the demand for timely and granular data grows, there's a global shift toward innovative approaches, leveraging emerging data sources such as big data, satellite imagery, and administrative records. Advancements in statistical techniques, particularly those powered by artificial intelligence and machine learning, are redefining data production and analysis. To meet these evolving needs, it is vital to establish the requisite infrastructure that supports systems and processes which are: Robust and agile, Integrated across sectors and institutions, and Capable of advanced analysis, dissemination, and user engagement. The modernisation of statistical systems within the Community and advocacy for use of Community Statistics will enhance the relevance, accessibility, and utility of data, thereby enriching planning, policy formulation, and evidence-driven decision-making at national, regional, and global levels.

Sector Priority Area: Strengthening the East African Community (EAC) Statistical System (CSS) through the harmonisation, modernised compilation, and effective dissemination of Community Statistics.

Strategic Interventions

- 1. Establish a Community Statistical System underpinned by a legal and institutional framework*
- 2. Accelerate the Digital Transformation and Data innovation of Statistical Systems within the Community*
- 3. Institutionalise Statistical Capacity Strengthening and Harmonisation Across the Community*
- 4. Promote dissemination and use of quality statistics within the Community.*

Key Targets

- 1. Establish and operationalise the East African Statistical Bureau by 2027/28*
- 2. Develop three (3) tools for real-time statistical reporting and data exchange (online platforms, mobile applications, and automated data collection tools) by 2028/29*
- 3. Establish at least five (5) regional data hubs for sectors such as trade, agriculture, demography, health, and environment by 2027/28*
- 4. Support all Partner States in integrating emerging data sources and methodologies for production of official statistics (machine learning, big data analytics, and data visualization tools) by 2028/29*

5. *Develop a regional framework for ethical and secure public–private data partnerships, including standards for data privacy and interoperability by 2026/27*
6. *Develop eighteen (18) regional statistics harmonisation frameworks/ guidelines by 2028/29.*
7. *Support all Partner States to implement all the adopted harmonized statistical methodologies and practices for compilation of Community Statistics by 2030/31*
8. *Increase the number of community statistical products released on timely and regular manner from two (2) to seven (7) by 2030/31*
9. *Increase the number of data users accessing Community statistics online platforms by 50% by 2030/31.*
10. *Hold at least one annual data dissemination forum and/or data user-producer dialogue*
11. *Establishing Community Statistical system (CSS) underpinned by a legal institutional framework established by 2030/31; (This is the strategic intervention i) above, with its corresponding targets in the Implementation Matrix)*
12. *Harmonized regional standards/frameworks for compilation of regional comparable statistics developed and adopted by 2030/31;;(catered for under vi) and vii) above*
13. *Institutionalizing A peer review mechanism and audit to regularly assess data quality and adherence to the regional compilation frameworks institutionalised by 2030/31.Target vi) above caters for this. Each guideline has a corresponding compliance assessment framework used to assess compliance and adherence to the recommendations in each of the guidelines.*

4.7.7.5 Planning, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

One of the key strategies emphasizes creating a strong coordination mechanism to ensure seamless integrated planning across all sectors. This enhanced coordination aims to foster synergy, minimize redundant efforts, and maximize the effective use of resources, ultimately driving cohesive and impactful regional development. Additionally, continuous capacity-building initiatives will play a vital role in improving the quality of research needed for evidence-based policymaking and strategic planning throughout the EAC Organs and Institutions. The regional monitoring and evaluation system will also undergo significant improvements to enable comprehensive reporting on results at the impact level.

The EAC Vision 2050 proposes the establishment of a forum for national planning authorities to among others ensure harmonisation, consistency, information sharing and inter-state learning for improved coordination of regional planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

A key tenet of the Community’s monitoring and evaluation system is to regularly track the status of implementation of each Partner States’ obligations, with findings made public, for example, in an annual “State of EAC Integration” scorecard.

Sector Priority Area: Strengthening the Regional Planning, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Functions

Strategic Interventions

1. *Effectively coordinate the formulation of the Community's and sector-specific medium and short- plans*
2. *Enhance the policy research and analysis function at the EAC Secretariat*
3. *Implement the EAC Quality Management System*
4. *Institutionalise the Results-Based M&E System across All EAC Organs and Institutions*
5. *Conduct Thematic and Sector Evaluations*
6. *Enhance the East African Monitoring System (EAMS) for Comprehensive Reporting*
7. *Enhance Inclusive and Continuous Stakeholder Engagement in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Processes*

Key Targets

1. *Establish a forum for national planning authorities by 2027/28*
2. *Conduct mid-term review of the 7th EAC development Strategy by 2028/29*
3. *Conduct the End-term review of the 7th EAC Development Strategy by 2030/31*
4. *Formulate the 8th EAC Development Strategy by 2029/30*
5. *Conduct at least ten (10) Policy Research Studies by 2030/31*
6. *All Organs and Institutions ISO certified by 2030/31*
7. *All EAC Organs and Institutions adopt the Results Based M&E System by 2030/31*
8. *Conduct at least three (3) Thematic and Sector-specific Evaluations in 2028/29, and 7 in 2030/31*
9. *At least 80% active participation of all stakeholders in M&E Activities through regular communication, inclusive feedback mechanism, and capacity building initiatives by 2030/31*

4.7.7.6 Resource Mobilisation

Sector Priority Area: *Enhancing sustainable mechanisms for mobilising resources to implement EAC Programs and Projects*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Increase and sustain support from existing, lapsed and new Development Partners (DPs)*
2. *Initiate and grow funding from new and non-traditional funding sources*
3. *Strengthen coordination, capacity and governance systems for resource mobilization across EAC Organs and Institutions*

Key Targets

1. *Develop and implement instruments to initiate the Private Sector Fund by 2030/31*
2. *Develop and operationalize tools to initiate the East African Development Fund by*

2030/31

3. *Initiate and conclude Accreditation to the Adaptation Fund by 2026/27.*
4. *Develop and operationalize a resource mobilisation coordination, capacity and governance systems by 2030/31*

4.7.7.7 Financial Management

Sector Priority Area: *Enhance the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of financial resource management and reporting, ensuring sustainable funding and value for money*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Strengthen financial governance through timely, accurate, and compliant reporting*
2. *Develop EAC Public Finance Management Act by reforming existing regulations to strengthen governance, transparency, fiscal discipline, and value for money.*
3. *Strengthen the performance-based budgeting process to enhance coordination, budget formulation, execution and mainstream gender-responsive budgeting to promote equity and accountability across Organs and Institutions*

Key Targets

1. *Develop a centralized, integrated financial management information system (IFMIS) across all EAC Organs and Institutions by 2030/31*
2. *100% compliance with applicable Financial Rules and Regulations, Global Standards and internal policies each Financial Year*
3. *Develop and implement EAC Public Finance Management (PFM) Act and revised Financial Rules and Regulations (FRR) and other Financial Frameworks by 2028/ 2029*
4. *Develop Results-Based Budgets, budget frameworks and budget allocations for all EAC Organs and institutions before 30th June each Financial Year*
5. *Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) 100% integrated across all EAC Organs and Institutions by 2030/31*

4.7.7.8 Internal Audit

Sector Priority Area: *Provision of independent assurance to all EAC Internal Audit Stakeholders on the status of capabilities of EAC Organs and Institutions*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Expand internal audit coverage of auditable areas*
2. *Enhance governance, risk management and internal controls. Automate internal audit and risk management processes and continuous professional development*

Key Targets

1. *Expand internal audit coverage to 20 auditable areas by 2030/31*

2. *Automate all internal audit and risk management processes by 2028/29*

4.7.7.9 Human Resource Management

Human Capital Management is critical in delivering the overall mandate of the Community. High staff turnover and recruitment delays have disrupted the Secretariat's institutional memory and continuity. As staff near the end of their service, morale and productivity often decline. Additionally, the Secretariat's capacity is limited since staff-related issues like recruitment, progression, discipline, and sanctions are addressed at the policy rather than management level. These challenges can best be tackled by a more empowered human resource function whose mandate goes beyond the rather routine activities mainly focusing on administrative functions.

A joint EAC/GIZ benchmarking Mission to ECOWAS in February 2024 highlights that, in 2015, the EAC Council of Ministers approved the Institutional Review Report which recommended a change in the EAC's institutional arrangements, starting with the consolidation milestone where the EAC Secretariat would eventually be transformed into a Commission. The Report of the Mission further recommended that the EAC develop a comprehensive roadmap for implementation of the Council directive on transforming the Secretariat into a Commission. The transition requires amendment of the relevant Articles of the Treaty to provide for the establishment of the Commission and define the roles and responsibility of the proposed Commission.

To tackle these challenges, the Strategy prioritizes the following specific interventions and targets.

Sector Priority Area: Strengthening EAC institutional and Human resource management & development frameworks

Strategic Interventions

1. *Attract, develop, and retain competent staff (filling the vacant positions in the Approved structure)*
2. *Digitize EAC Recruitment Process*
3. *Continuous Capacity Building for EAC Staff*
4. *Complete the implementation of the Institutional Review Recommendations*
5. *Strengthen inter- organ/ institutional collaboration and co-operation and develop the HR Development Strategy and other policies and manuals to complement the 6th EAC Development Strategy*
6. *Improve processes, systems, and infrastructure to provide high levels of efficiency, quality, and cost effectiveness by building the capacity of the Governance structure, EAC Management and Staff*
7. *Strengthen EAC's culture of excellence to attain the EAC goals through improved performance*

Key Targets

1. *Recruit staff for all existing staff positions by 2026/27*
2. *Develop and implement an EAC staff succession plan by 2030/31.*
3. *Operationalise the Applicant Tracking System by 2028/29*
4. *Conduct a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) and Implement 100% of recommendations of the TNA Report by 2030/31*
5. *Complete the implementation of all recommendations of Institutional Review by 2030/31*
6. *Fully implement the HR Strategy by 2030/31*
7. *Operationalise the performance management system in all Organs and Institutions by 2030/31*

4.7.7.10 Administration

Sector Priority Area: Strengthening of EAC institutional and administrative frameworks

Strategic Interventions

1. *Strengthen Security Services*
2. *Strengthen Store management and control*
3. *Improve Protocol Services*
4. *Enhance efficiency in conferencing services for the Community.*
5. *Timely and Transparent Procurement Processes*
6. *Provision of Efficient Estates Management Services*

Key Targets

1. *Implement the EAC Security Policy and Safety Strategy by 2030/31*
2. *Develop and implement the Protocol Handbook/Manual by 2030/31*
3. *Develop and implement the e-procurement tools by 2030/31*

4.7.7.11 Information and Knowledge Management

Sector Priority Area: Strengthening EAC's Knowledge Management and Improving Information Access

Strategic Interventions

1. *Improve access and preservation of EAC information and knowledge for effective EAC Integration*
2. *Enhance the network and sharing of data, information, and knowledge among the EAC Organs, Institutions and Coordinating Ministries*

Key Targets

1. *Update the EAC information and knowledge resources Quarterly*
2. *Acquire and fully implement KOHA as the Integrated Library Management System (ILMS) across EAC Organs and Institutions by 2030/31*

4.7.7.12 Management Information

Sector Priority Area: *Improve Management of EAC Records and Archives*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Regulated environment for documentary heritage management.*
2. *Capacity building.*
3. *Implement the Disaster Management and Recovery Plan for EAC records and archives.*

Key Targets

1. *Review and roll-out the EAC Records and Archives Management Policy to all organs and Institutions for implementation by 2026/27*
2. *Develop and implement a capacity programme on advanced records and archives management trends by 2030/31*
3. *Develop and implement a Disaster Management Plan for the EAC records and archives by 2030/31*

4.7.7.13 Corporate Information and Communication Technology

Sector Priority Area: *Strengthening the Corporate ICT function as an enabler of the EAC integration*

Strategic Intervention: *Enhance Digital Connectivity & ICT Infrastructure*

Key Targets

1. *Implement interoperable digital systems for HR, procurement, and administration by 2028/29*
2. *Harmonize data protection and cybersecurity laws across Partner States by 2030/31.*
3. *Develop and enforce regional digital policies and regulatory frameworks by 2030/31.*
4. *Digitize HR functions including e-recruitment and performance management by 2030/31.*
5. *Establish and operationalise digital dashboards for real-time monitoring and evaluation by 2030/31.*

4.7.7.14 Legislation & Oversight

Sector Priority Area: *Strengthening Legislation and Oversight for the Community*

Strategic Interventions

1. *Legislative Harmonisation and Alignment with EAC Integration Goals*
2. *Enhance oversight to ensure good governance and attainment of EAC integration objectives*
3. *Institutionalise Regular Public Engagement*
4. *Formalize Collaboration Mechanisms with National Parliaments*
5. *Digital Transformation of Legislative Processes*
6. *Strengthen Institutional Capacity and Staff Development*
7. *Strengthen Regional and International Partnerships for Legislative Support*

Key Targets

1. *Enact 50 Bills to align regional laws with the broader EAC integration agenda by 2030/31*
2. *Establish and implement a formal collaboration mechanism between EALA and national parliaments on regional legislation by 2030/31*
3. *Implement ICT- supported initiatives for enhanced effectiveness and efficiency in the conduct of EALA business by 2030/31*
4. *Establish 4 new partnerships with regional and international parliamentary bodies for exchange of best practices and knowledge sharing by 2030/31*

4.7.7.15 Justice & Rule of Law

The East African Court of Justice faces challenges stemming from a shortage of judges, caused by resignation, delayed nomination and expiration of judicial tenure. The shortage, especially, in the First Instance Division has led to delays and a growing backlog of cases.

These challenges are further exacerbated by Judges being called to national duties due to the ad hoc nature of the Court, which disrupts the hearing and timely resolution of cases. Furthermore, the Treaty restricts the number of judges to ten in the First Instance Division and five in the Appellate Division, even as the membership of Partner States continues to grow. This limitation has created a gap in representation, with three Partner States currently lacking judges in the Appellate Division, thereby undermining the balance and inclusivity of the Court

Without amending the Treaty to address the current representation gap, underrepresented Partner States will remain unable to assume the rotational position of Judge President. In addition to this structural imbalance, the Court continues to grapple with other pressing challenges, including financial constraints, a shortage of legal researchers, and persistent delays in securing financial and administrative autonomy, all of which hinder its efficiency and independence

The capacity of the East African Court of Justice can be significantly strengthened by explicitly extending its jurisdiction, pursuant to Article 27(2) of the Treaty, to include human rights and trade disputes. Such an expansion would empower the Court to adjudicate violations of Community law more comprehensively, thereby enhancing its credibility and reinforcing Partner States' confidence that regional commitments will be upheld

Sector Priority Area: Strengthening of the Judicial and administrative function of the Court.

Strategic Interventions

1. *Institutionalise predictable and well-resourced Court for timely, accessible, and regionally representative delivery of justice.*
2. *Strengthen and improve the design of the Court under the Treaty*
3. *Deepen Regional Judicial Engagement*
4. *Application of virtual court sessions and digital communication tools to optimize operational efficiency and expand regional accessibility to the Court's proceedings.*

Key Targets

1. *Hear at least thirty (30) Matters annually*
2. *Extend the Court's jurisdiction to other Original, Appellate and Human Rights Matters by 2030/31*
3. *Attain permanency of Services of Hon Judges by 2030/31*
4. *Hold one (1) rotational Judicial Conference annually to deliberate on jurisprudence of the EACJ and to reach resolutions on the implementation of the Court's decisions*
5. *Hold one (1) Court Session annually to bring justice closer to EAC citizens*
6. *Mobilise US\$1 million financial and logistical support the rotational Judicial Conferences and Court sessions by 2030/31*
7. *Establish least five (5) platforms of data to facilitate access to Court proceedings by 2028/29*
8. *Upgrade at least two (2) core ICT systems to achieve 98% system uptime by 2028/29*

4.7.7.16 Financial Services

The East African Development Bank (EADB) was established in 1967 as one of the key institutions of the East African Community. The Bank has earned a strong reputation as a provider of long-term financing for a wide range of development projects in the PartnerStates, and has played a vital role in the region's economic development by offering tailor-made financing solutions through products and services such loans, equity investments, trade finance and guarantees and influencing policy interventions to support sustainable and inclusive economic development of the East African region.

EADB's mission is to promote sustainable socio-economic development in East Africa by providing development finance, support, and advisory services to eligible public and private enterprises.

To achieve this mission, the Bank's Strategic Plan for 2024–2028 prioritizes the following strategic focus areas:

1. *industrialisation and manufacturing,*
2. *infrastructure development,*
3. *agriculture, agro-processing, food security, and rural development,*
4. *social services, and*
5. *climate change mitigation and environmental management.*

These focus areas are closely aligned with the strategic development objectives of the East African Community for the next five years.

Sector Priority Area: Strengthening of the Bank's operational capacity and risk management

Strategic Interventions

1. *Improve development outcomes through aspirational balance sheet growth supported by adequate funding*
2. *Create an environment that fosters high performance through improvement in the management of human resources*
3. *Automate systems and processes*
4. *Enhance awareness of EADB services through branding and marketing,*
5. *Proactive Enterprise Risk Management*

Key Targets

1. *Grow the Bank's Total Assets by 10 % annually*
2. *Develop and implement a capacity building programmes for high and sustainable human resource productivity by 2030/31*
3. *Upgrade the banking and financial management systems by 2027/28*
4. *Implement Document Management system (DMS) by 2027/28*
5. *Implement Audit management system by 2030/31*
6. *Digitize and automate HR processes by 2027/28*
7. *Enhance IT security around bank information and information system by 2027/28*
8. *Update the Bank's network and storage by 2027/28*
9. *Create a new EADB Brand 2027/28*
10. *Update Risk Management Policies, Procedures, and Processes by 2030/31*

In executing its strategy, EADB will collaborate with development finance institutions (DFIs), multilateral development banks (MDBs), commercial banks, and public agencies responsible for promoting specific sectors. In addition, the Bank will partner with the EAC Secretariat to support the implementation of targeted development solutions in the Partner States.



CHAPTER 5

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY



5.1 Implementation of the 7th EAC Development Strategy

The implementation of the 6th EAC Development Strategy (2021–2025) encountered notable challenges that impeded the realization of its intended objectives. While the strategy outlined ambitious and transformative goals across the integration pillars, progress was hindered by a combination of structural, institutional, and political constraints. A key impediment was the insufficient political will and lack of sustained commitment at both national and regional levels. Although the Strategy was endorsed by Partner States, its execution revealed gaps in ownership and accountability, with varying degrees of prioritization across the EAC. This absence of deliberate and concerted effort undermined the coherence and pace of implementation. Additionally, delayed or partial domestication of regional decisions into national frameworks further compromised the effectiveness of regional initiatives.



Success hinges on coordinated action, clear accountability, and robust partnerships between the EAC Secretariat, Institutions, Organs and Institutions, Partner States, and development actors

Equally significant was the limited engagement of EAC citizens in the strategic process. The Strategy did not sufficiently embed inclusive consultation mechanisms or continuous public participation, thereby weakening citizens' ownership and support of the integration agenda. This disconnect reduced the visibility of the Strategy among stakeholders and contributed to low levels of awareness and advocacy at the grassroots level. Moreover, institutional inefficiencies, inconsistent resource mobilization, and weak monitoring and evaluation systems compounded implementation challenges. Some programmes lacked the necessary funding or operational clarity to move beyond planning stages. As a result, while there were pockets of success in specific sectors, overall implementation was uneven and failed to deliver the full value envisioned.

Moving forward, the 7th EAC Development Strategy must incorporate lessons from this period by strengthening political accountability frameworks, embedding structured and continuous citizen engagement, and enhancing coordination across Partner States. Reaffirming political commitment and cultivating a participatory approach at all levels will be critical in ensuring more impactful and sustainable implementation of the regional development agenda.

5.2 Implementation Arrangements and Mechanisms

Effective implementation of the 7th EAC Development Strategy necessitates a robust, multi-tiered governance and coordination framework that promotes synergy, accountability, and alignment across regional and national actors. Drawing on lessons from existing regional economic communities, the EAC will adopt a holistic mechanism that ensures institutional coherence and functional complementarity. The implementation will be undertaken through a coordinated, multi-level framework involving the EAC Secretariat, Organs, Institutions, and Partner States. The approach is anchored in the principles of subsidiarity, complementarity, ownership, and mutual accountability to ensure effective delivery of the Strategy's objectives.

Strategic oversight and policy direction

The Summit of EAC Heads of State will retain overarching responsibility for political leadership and strategic policy direction. This high-level body will be supported by the Council of Ministers, which shall provide policy guidance and ensure the alignment of implementation efforts with the approved Strategy. These bodies will also oversee intersectoral collaboration and mobilize regional political will to address shared development priorities. Coordination and accountability will be reinforced through regular meetings of Sectoral Councils and Committees, the annual review of the Development Strategy, and the application of the joint results monitoring framework.

Institutional coordination and secretariat leadership

The EAC Secretariat will serve as the principal coordinator of implementation activities, facilitating inter-institutional coordination, mobilizing technical and financial resources, and ensuring the mainstreaming of the Strategy into partner states' development plans. It will also be responsible for harmonising policies, standards, and legal frameworks critical to deepening regional integration. The Secretariat shall work in close collaboration with specialized institutions and autonomous agencies under the EAC umbrella to advance sector-specific objectives.

The EAC Institutions will lead sector-specific implementation in accordance with their mandates, working in close collaboration with Partner States and the Secretariat to deliver on agreed regional programmes and report on results.

The Partner States will be responsible for domesticating regional commitments by integrating Strategy priorities into their national development plans and budgets, harmonising relevant policies and legislation, providing timely financial contributions, and reporting on progress to the Secretariat.

Partnerships and stakeholder engagement

Consistent with the integration dimensions, particularly in trade, production, infrastructure, and institutional integration, the EAC will strengthen engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders. These include the private sector, civil society, academia, development partners, and non-state actors. Their involvement will be formalised through inclusive platforms and dialogue mechanisms to ensure transparency, shared ownership, and mutual accountability throughout the implementation cycle.

Monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management

A results-based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system will be institutionalised to assess performance, track progress, and provide data-driven feedback for policy refinement. The

system will employ a harmonized set of performance indicators aligned with regional goals and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The EAC Secretariat, in conjunction with partner states, will generate periodic progress reports to inform strategic reviews and evidence-based decision-making.

Resource mobilization and financial sustainability

Sustainable financing will be secured through a combination of contributions from partner states, support from international development partners, and innovative financing mechanisms such as public-private partnerships. The EAC will also explore regional investment platforms to leverage private capital for strategic regional projects. Institutional capacity for resource planning and fiduciary management will be strengthened to ensure optimal use of available resources.

5.3 Institutional Frameworks

EAC leadership

The leadership and governance structure of the East African Community (EAC) is designed to promote collaboration and efficient decision-making among Partner States. At the highest level is the Summit of Heads of State, consisting of the leaders from each Partner State, who set the strategic direction and vision of the Community.

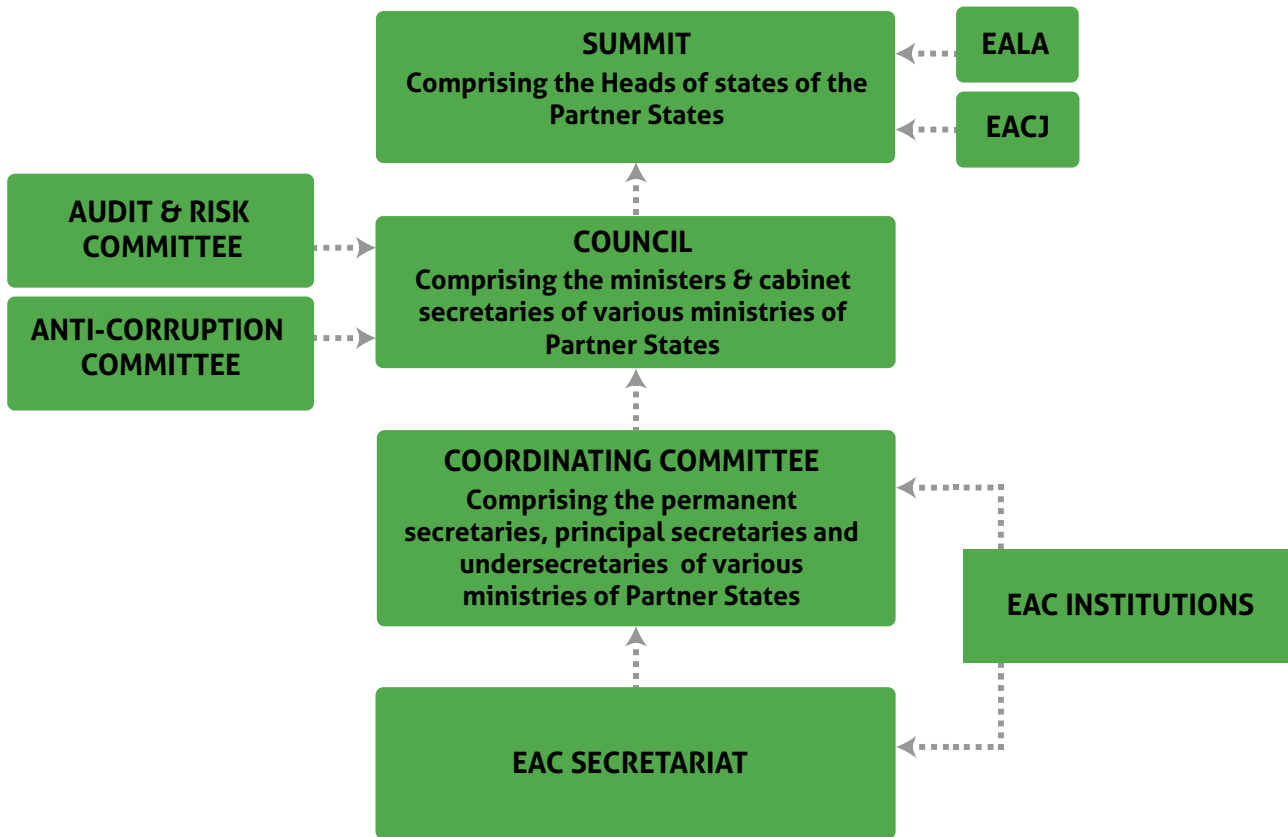
The Summit is supported by the Council of Ministers, composed of Ministers from the Partner States responsible for EAC affairs, who manage policy coordination and oversee the implementation of decisions.

The Coordination Committee consists of Permanent/Principal and Under Secretaries responsible for EAC Affairs. The Coordination Committee submits reports and recommendations to the Council, implements Council decisions, oversees and coordinates Sectoral Committees, and undertakes additional functions as assigned by the Treaty.

Sectoral Committees are responsible for preparing implementation programs and priorities for various sectors, monitoring and reviewing program implementation, submitting reports and recommendations to the Coordination Committee, and performing any additional functions conferred by the Treaty.

The Secretariat serves operational engine, coordinating the day-to-day administration of EAC affairs, convening meetings, and ensuring alignment across all EAC institutions and activities.

Figure 1: Governance and leadership structure of the EAC



The effectiveness of regional development strategies hinges on the strength and coherence of institutional frameworks. Within the EAC, various institutions and organs play complementary roles in facilitating the design, implementation, and monitoring of development interventions. However, the performance of these institutions is often constrained by overlapping mandates, inadequate coordination mechanisms, and insufficient resourcing.

To ensure optimal delivery on regional priorities, it is imperative to streamline institutional responsibilities, enhance inter-organ coordination, and establish robust governance and accountability mechanisms. A clear delineation of roles, anchored in the EAC Treaty and aligned with evolving integration objectives should guide institutional reforms. Moreover, the capacity of key institutions, including the EAC Secretariat, specialized agencies, and sectoral councils, must be systematically strengthened to deliver on the Strategy’s ambitious agenda.

Building synergies with national institutions is equally critical. Regional integration initiatives must be internalized within national development frameworks, supported by well-functioning National Focal Points and inter-ministerial coordination structures. The empowerment of these linkages will facilitate the domestication of EAC policies and ensure consistency between regional and national implementation efforts.

5.4 System-wide Aspects and Issues

The successful implementation of the EAC Development Strategy requires an integrated, system-wide approach that addresses cross-cutting enablers and constraints. Key system-wide issues include policy coherence, financing mechanisms, stakeholder engagement, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and risk management. Policy coherence across sectors and levels of governance must be actively pursued to avoid fragmentation and ensure alignment with EAC priorities. This entails harmonising regional policies with national development plans and fostering intersectoral collaboration. Sustainable financing is another critical pillar. The Strategy's ambitions necessitate predictable and diversified funding sources. This includes not only contributions from Partner States, but also enhanced mobilization of development partner support, private sector investment, and innovative financing instruments. Strengthening financial management and accountability systems will further bolster resource utilization and donor confidence.

Stakeholder participation must be deepened through inclusive mechanisms that engage civil society, the private sector, academia, and local communities. Such engagement enhances transparency, fosters ownership, and enriches policy and program design. Additionally, effective M&E systems are essential for tracking progress, informing decision-making, and promoting adaptive management. The EAC should invest in data systems, capacity development, and institutional arrangements that facilitate timely and credible reporting.

In safeguarding Strategy implementation, a proactive approach to risk management, including political, environmental, and economic risks, is vital. This requires scenario planning, contingency frameworks, and strengthened early warning systems.

5.5 Risk Analysis and Mitigation

The implementation of the 7th EAC Development Strategy takes place in a complex and evolving regional and global environment, characterized by a mix of opportunities and significant systemic risks. A comprehensive policy-level risk analysis highlights critical areas that may constrain progress if not proactively addressed. These risks span governance, finance, institutional capacity, socioeconomic integration, environmental sustainability, digital transformation, and regional coordination. Each of these has varying degrees of likelihood and potential impact on strategic outcomes.

Foremost among the risks is the *delayed implementation and legal harmonisation of regional protocols*, largely attributed to divergent national priorities and legislative inertia within Partner States. This remains a high-impact, likely scenario that undermines the operationalization of the Common Market and Customs Union. In response, the Strategy proposes accelerated domestication processes, legal reform support, and establishment of compliance monitoring mechanisms across all Partner States.



Building resilience against fiscal, political, and climate shocks demands proactive risk management and regional solidarity.

Resource mobilization constraints, driven by persistent under-funding and heavy reliance on donor support, pose a severe threat to the sustainability of regional programmes. With a very high likelihood of occurrence, this risk necessitates the internationalization of the EAC Development Fund, the use of innovative financing mechanisms such as PPPs and blended finance, and improved domestic revenue mobilization.

The Strategy also identifies *institutional capacity constraints* and *fragmented coordination* as persistent challenges that impede implementation effectiveness. These include limitations in technical expertise, data systems, and inter-institutional collaboration. To address this, the EAC will invest in capacity development, modernise its digital systems, and enhance internal governance mechanisms.

Environmental risks, especially those linked to *climate-induced disasters*, remain pronounced due to increasing climate variability and trans-boundary ecological pressures. These risks, which are highly likely to materialize, threaten food systems, water security, and livelihoods. The Strategy will prioritize regional climate resilience programs, investment in early warning systems, and the mobilization of global climate finance to mitigate these effects.

Regional political instability owing to some inter-state tensions and varying levels of political commitment across the region present an enduring risk, capable of derailing integration momentum. Although moderate in likelihood, its impact is significant. Strengthened regional peace and security frameworks, inclusive governance dialogue, and enhanced political accountability mechanisms will be critical countermeasures.

Additional areas of concern include inadequate infrastructure financing, weak labour market integration in the face of high youth unemployment, and the widening *digital divide*. Each of these presents both developmental risks and strategic imperatives. As such, the Strategy outlines targeted interventions including investment in regional transport and energy corridors, harmonisation of labour laws and vocational education systems, and scaling up ICT infrastructure and digital skills development.

Finally, inconsistent implementation of integration targets and limited uptake of regional research, innovation, and science and technology programmes reflect both institutional inertia and resource gaps. To mitigate these, the Strategy proposes internationalizing a results-based Monitoring and Evaluation framework, expanding the mandate of regional innovation institutions such as EASTECO, and mainstreaming STI across sectoral initiatives.

Overall, the EAC's 7th Development Strategy is underpinned by a robust risk mitigation framework that integrates foresight, responsiveness, and institutional resilience. Aligning risk management with strategic priorities will ensure that the Strategy ensures that regional integration remains on course, resilient, and responsive to emerging challenges.

Table 26: Risk analysis

Risk	Risk Rating	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation Measures
Delayed implementation of regional protocols and legal harmonisation	High	Likely	High	Accelerate ratification processes; enhance Partner States' legal reform support; establish compliance tracking and reporting mechanisms.
Resource mobilization gaps and high donor dependency	Very High	Very Likely	Very High	Expand domestic revenue mechanisms; operationalize the EAC Development Fund; leverage PPPs and blended finance instruments.
Institutional capacity constraints	Medium	Likely	Moderate	Scale up human resource development; invest in digital tools; streamline coordination among Organs and Institutions.
Rising climate-induced disasters and environmental degradation	High	Likely	High	Implement regional climate resilience programs; secure climate finance; strengthen early warning systems.
Political instability and varying levels of commitment across Partner States and inter-state-tensions	High	Moderate	Very High	Strengthen EAC regional governance, peace and security frameworks; promote inclusive governance dialogue; enforce political accountability at the regional level.
Inadequate infrastructure financing and connectivity gaps	High	Likely	High	Prioritize infrastructure in regional investment plans; attract concessional loans and grants; coordinate cross-border infrastructure delivery.
Weak labour market integration and high youth unemployment	Medium	Very Likely	Moderate	Harmonize labour laws; invest in regional TVET programs; incentivize youth entrepreneurship and MSMEs.
Digital divide and slow uptake of digital transformation	Medium	Likely	Moderate	Enhance digital infrastructure investment; harmonize ICT regulatory frameworks; promote digital literacy across the region.
Low uptake of regional research, innovation and STI programs	Medium	Moderate	Moderate	Increase STI financing; strengthen EASTECO's coordination mandate; mainstream innovation in sector strategies.
Inconsistent implementation of regional integration targets	High	Likely	High	Operationalize the regional monitoring & evaluation framework; enforce compliance mechanisms; link national performance to regional outcomes.



CHAPTER 6

FINANCING AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FRAMEWORK



6.1 Introduction

The financing landscape for regional development has undergone a fundamental shift in recent years. Traditional donor funding, historically anchored in aid-driven models, is increasingly transitioning toward trade-oriented partnerships. As a result, Official Development Assistance (ODA) is progressively declining in volume and predictability. This trend presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the EAC to reimagine its financing architecture. At the same time, EAC Partner States are grappling with intensifying national fiscal pressures and competing domestic priorities, which constrain their capacity to allocate substantial resources for regional integration initiatives. This fiscal reality calls for innovative, diversified, and sustainable financing mechanisms to ensure the implementation of the EAC Development Strategy.



Innovative, predictable, and sustainable financing mechanisms will be the lifeblood of the 7th EAC Development Strategy

In response to these evolving dynamics, the EAC recognizes the imperative to broaden its funding base through enhanced domestic resource mobilization and by fostering private sector participation in regional development. Strengthening tax systems, improving public financial management, and curbing illicit financial flows will be critical to expanding fiscal space within Partner States. Equally, creating an enabling investment climate through regulatory reforms, risk mitigation instruments, and public-private partnership (PPP) frameworks will catalyse private sector investments in priority sectors such as infrastructure, manufacturing, and services.

Moreover, blended finance mechanisms and climate financing instruments offer untapped potential to unlock additional resources. Strategically leveraging development finance institutions (DFIs), diaspora capital, and innovative financing tools, including green bonds and social impact investments, will enable the EAC to bridge critical funding gaps. As the region pivots toward a self-reliant, market-driven integration model, the financial strategy of the EAC will prioritize sustainability, efficiency, and ownership. This paradigm shift will be underpinned by stronger accountability mechanisms, results-oriented programming, and alignment with the principles of mutual benefit, regional solidarity, and shared prosperity.

6.2 Overview of financing needs by strategic area

The implementation of the 7th EAC Development Strategy requires a robust financing framework that aligns with the strategic priorities outlined in the Strategy. Each thematic area will require targeted investments in infrastructure, human capital, institutional capacity, technology, and cross-border initiatives. An initial cost estimation indicates significant resource requirements over the strategy period, with infrastructure and

trade facilitation accounting for the largest share, followed by health, education, climate resilience, and digital transformation.

6.3 Resource mobilization plan

To respond to the shifting donor landscape and constrained national budgets, the EAC will adopt a multi-pronged resource mobilization approach grounded in sustainability and ownership.

Domestic Public Finance:

Recognizing the diminishing trajectory of external aid, Partner States are urged to enhance domestic resource mobilization through tax reforms, broadening the tax base, combating illicit financial flows, and improving efficiency in public expenditure. A portion of nationally mobilized revenues will be earmarked to support regional programmes, particularly those with direct socio-economic spillovers.

Development Partner Contributions:

Although Official Development Assistance (ODA) is declining, development partners remain crucial for targeted support especially in areas such as climate action, peace and security, and capacity development. The EAC will align its strategic priorities with global and continental frameworks (e.g., SDGs, Agenda 2063) to maintain relevance and attract concessional funding. Efforts will be made to deepen dialogue and co-financing partnerships with traditional and non-traditional donors.

Private Sector and PPP Mechanisms:

Given the scale of investment needed, especially in infrastructure and industrial development, private sector participation is indispensable. The EAC will develop and harmonize regional Public-Private Partnership (PPP) frameworks, work with Partner States to develop instruments to de-risk investments through credit guarantees and viability gap funding, and promote regional value chains to enhance private sector appeal. Special emphasis will be placed on cross-border projects that offer shared economic returns.

Innovative Financing Instruments:

To close financing gaps, the EAC will work with development finance institutions to design a pipeline of bankable regional projects that will enable Partner States pursue innovative instruments such as Green and Blue Bonds for climate and ecosystem protection, Blended Finance to leverage concessional funds and attract private capital, Diaspora Bonds to tap into regional solidarity and external savings.

Creation and operationalization of dedicated financing instruments:

These funds will be established through enabling instruments, formal governance structures, and clearly defined operational guidelines. Management will be centralized under the EAC Secretariat, with strong fiduciary controls, transparent reporting, and alignment to programme-based budgeting. Disbursement will be linked to strategic priorities and performance outcomes, ensuring that resources flow to the most impactful interventions. In parallel, the EAC will develop capacity in fund administration and monitoring to maintain credibility with contributors and beneficiaries.

The financing base for these funds will be deliberately diversified. Expected sources include earmarked Partner State contributions, proceeds from service fees charged by EAC Organs

and Institutions, targeted allocations from domestic public finance reforms, and support from traditional and non-traditional development partners. The formal decision by the Council of Ministers to establish these funds will be required before full implementation, with a view of ensuring that the legal, institutional, and political foundations are in place for these special funds to operate effectively and to deliver on the Community's integration and development objectives

6.4 Financing Needs assessment

The ambitious vision of the 7th EAC Development Strategy is powered by a clear and actionable investment plan. The total estimated requirement of US\$795.8 million thoughtfully translates our shared ambitions into a concrete roadmap for progress, strategically allocating resources to turn high-level goals into tangible results for the citizens of East Africa. This deliberate distribution across the seven Strategic Development Objectives (SDOs) reflects a careful prioritization to maximize developmental impact and accelerate the benefits of integration.

A key strength of this plan is its sophisticated approach to financing. By categorizing each SDO based on its ability to attract different types of investment, we open the door to a powerful coalition of partners. This strategic classification allows us to tailor our engagement, creating exciting opportunities to blend public funding, development partner grants, and private capital in the most effective way possible. The following table details this approach, showcasing the diverse and compelling investment opportunities within each objective.

Table 27: SDO Investment Analysis

Strategic Development Objective (SDO)	Estimated Cost (US\$ million)	% of Total
SDO 1: Deepening Regional Trade Integration	64.3	8.1%
SDO 2: Enhance Production, Productivity, and Value Addition	199.2%	25.0%
SDO 3: Strengthen the Social Dimensions of Integration	244.7	30.7%
SDO 4: Implementation of the EAC Monetary Union Roadmap	9.4	1.2%
SDO 5: Development of Regional Infrastructure	78.1	9.8%
SDO 6: Strengthening Regional Governance, Peace and Security	83.2	10.5%
SDO 7: Institutional Strengthening, Compliance & Accountability	116.9	14.7%
Total Estimated Cost	795.8	100%

Funding Gap Analysis

This five-year strategy charts a bold and transformative course for the region, powered by a visionary investment of US\$795.8 million. This capital is the essential catalyst that will deepen integration, stimulate inclusive economic growth, and build lasting resilience for all Partner States. To fully activate this ambitious vision, an annual investment of approximately US\$159.16 million will empower all seven Strategic Development Objectives to advance in parallel.

Building on the strong foundation of existing partnerships, historical "business-as-usual" contributions from Partner States and development partners are projected to provide a solid base of US\$450.42 million. This committed foundation, equating to US\$90.08 million annually, covers 56.6% of the total need and demonstrates a profound commitment to the regional agenda.

The remaining US\$345.42 million represents a dynamic opportunity to expand our coalition of partners and innovate our financing approaches. This 43.4% of the budget is not merely a gap, but a strategic opening to engage private sector investment, pioneer new blended finance models, and attract catalytic funding from new development allies. By embracing this opportunity, we can collectively secure the resources needed to fully realize the transformative potential of this agenda and unlock a new era of prosperity.

6.5 Institutional arrangements for financial management

Effective financial governance is central to the success of the Strategy. The EAC Secretariat, in collaboration with Partner States, will strengthen existing financial oversight mechanisms, enhance transparency in fund utilization, and integrate programme-based budgeting. A centralised financial coordination unit will be tasked with:

- *Monitoring disbursements and expenditures.*
- *Reporting to stakeholders and development partners.*
- *Ensuring alignment with strategic priorities.*

Capacity building in financial management and results-based monitoring will be prioritized at both regional and national levels.

6.6 Risk management in financing

The financing strategy faces risks including:

- *Macroeconomic shocks affecting domestic revenue mobilization.*
- *Volatility in donor commitments and disbursements.*
- *Low private sector confidence due to regulatory uncertainty.*
- *Exchange rate fluctuations impacting external borrowing.*

To mitigate these risks, the EAC will:

Diversify funding sources: To mitigate financing risks and ensure the long-term sustainability of the 7th EAC Development Strategy, the Community will pursue a deliberate strategy to diversify its sources of funding. Key interventions will include mobilizing non-traditional donors and philanthropic actors, enhancing domestic resource mobilization through improved tax systems and earmarked levies, and scaling up private sector engagement through public-private partnerships and impact investment

platforms. The EAC also plans to leverage capital markets by introducing innovative instruments such as green, blue, and social bonds, and blended finance mechanisms that combine concessional and commercial funding. Broadening the mix of contributors and instruments, the EAC aims to reduce funding volatility, enhance financial autonomy, and strengthen resilience in implementing its regional integration and development agenda.

Establish risk-sharing facilities: The establishment of risk-sharing facilities presents a practical and forward-looking approach to mitigating financial and investment-related risks, particularly in attracting private sector participation and leveraging non-traditional financing mechanisms. Risk-sharing facilities are financial instruments or institutional arrangements that allow public and private entities to jointly absorb or mitigate the risks associated with large-scale development investments. In the East African region, such risks often include political and regulatory uncertainties, credit and payment default, foreign exchange volatility, and project implementation delays. Regional risk-sharing facilities will enable the EAC to significantly improve the risk-return profile of strategic investments, especially in infrastructure, energy, agriculture, and digital transformation, which are typically capital-intensive and long-term in nature. These facilities can take several forms, including partial credit guarantees, political risk insurance, viability gap funding, and first-loss capital arrangements.

A regional guarantee fund, for example, could be capitalized by Partner States, development partners, and regional development banks. This fund would provide partial guarantees to private investors or financial institutions financing EAC-aligned projects, thereby reducing perceived investment risks and lowering the cost of capital. Similarly, collaboration with multilateral institutions such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Trade and Development Bank (TDB), and the Africa Guarantee Fund (AGF) can enable the deployment of blended finance instruments where concessional funding absorbs first losses, making projects more bankable.

Risk-sharing facilities will also play a vital role in incentivizing public-private partnerships (PPPs). These instruments can encourage greater private sector engagement in projects that may otherwise be deemed too risky, such as cross-border infrastructure or projects in fragile or underdeveloped areas. To operationalize this, the EAC Secretariat will work with relevant regional financial institutions and development partners to design a scalable risk-sharing mechanism tailored to the unique risks of regional integration projects. This will be complemented by developing standardised risk assessment frameworks, capacity building for national implementing agencies, and integrating risk-sharing arrangements into project structuring from inception. Ultimately, risk-sharing facilities are not just financial tools but also represent a commitment to de-risking the regional development landscape and unlocking capital flows that are critical to achieving the Strategy's transformative goals.

Promote fiscal discipline among Partner States: Promoting fiscal discipline among EAC Partner States is a foundational component of the risk mitigation strategy underpinning the 7th EAC Development Strategy. Given the evolving financing context marked by dwindling donor contributions, rising debt burdens, and growing domestic expenditure pressures, maintaining fiscal discipline has become more critical than ever. Without it, the capacity of Partner States to contribute to and sustain regional programmes is significantly weakened, increasing the vulnerability of the EAC integration agenda to funding shortfalls and implementation delays.

To mitigate these risks, the EAC will **advocate for prudent fiscal management** practices across Partner States. This includes adhering to established fiscal rules and frameworks, such as fiscal deficit and debt-to-GDP ratio thresholds, as well as improving the credibility and predictability of national budgets. Emphasis will also be placed on medium-term expenditure frameworks that prioritize strategic regional commitments, enabling better alignment of national development plans with EAC priorities.

Fiscal transparency and accountability will be promoted through regular reporting, peer reviews, and dialogue on public finance performance. Strengthening institutions such as national audit offices, revenue authorities, and budget oversight bodies will enhance financial governance and reduce the risk of mismanagement or inefficiencies that could derail regional initiatives.

Implement early-warning systems and adaptive management protocols: EAC will implement early-warning systems and adaptive management protocols to provide a proactive approach to anticipating, identifying, and responding to financial and operational risks that may disrupt the mobilization or utilization of resources. Complementing early detection, adaptive management protocols offer the flexibility and responsiveness needed to recalibrate programmes, budgets, or timelines in light of evolving circumstances. These protocols will be built into the EAC's financial governance and implementation structures to allow for mid-course corrections without compromising strategic objectives. Adaptive management will be institutionalised through periodic risk assessments, stakeholder consultations, and learning reviews. This approach ensures that financing decisions remain dynamic, forward-looking, and resilient to shocks, while reinforcing accountability and transparency. Together, early-warning systems and adaptive management protocols will enable the EAC to navigate an increasingly uncertain financing environment with agility, ensure the continuity of critical development initiatives, and strengthen the overall credibility of the Strategy's implementation.



CHAPTER 7

THE MONITORING & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK



7.1 Introduction

Effective monitoring and evaluation is essential to ensuring that strategic goals translate into measurable outcomes. Under the 6th EAC Development Strategy, however, the performance tracking mechanisms encountered several institutional and operational challenges that limited the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the M&E system.



A rigorous, transparent M&E system will ensure progress is tracked, lessons are learned, and citizens see the results of regional integration.

Key weaknesses included inadequate staffing and technical capacity for M&E functions both at the regional and Partner State levels, limited budgetary allocations for M&E activities, and fragmented M&E roles across institutions. Additionally, the absence of harmonized indicators and methodologies, coupled with underdeveloped data management and information systems, significantly hindered timely, accurate, and consistent performance reporting.

Furthermore, the lack of coordination between regional and national M&E actors impeded the alignment of priorities, aggregation of results, and generation of evidence for policy decision-making. These gaps contributed to weak feedback loops, limiting adaptive management and learning.

In the 7th EAC Development Strategy, a revitalized and results-oriented M&E framework will be established to ensure robust performance tracking, evidence-based decision-making, and greater accountability. Key measures include:

7.2 Reporting and Feedback Mechanism

The Strategy will apply a streamlined, results-based reporting system to track progress, ensure accountability, and guide timely decision-making. Regular performance updates through annual, mid-term, and end-term reports, will draw on harmonized indicators from regional and national M&E systems. These reports will be presented to the Council of Ministers and other governance organs to enable strategic adjustments and maintain alignment with the Strategy's objectives.

Feedback loops will be strengthened by engaging Partner States, civil society, the private sector, and development partners in review processes. Findings will be shared through concise dashboards, briefs, and learning notes to promote transparency, cross-country learning, and adaptive management. Key performance data will be made publicly accessible, with recognition for strong performance and corrective action for persistent gaps, fostering a culture of results across the EAC.

The 7th EAC Development Strategy embeds an adaptive learning mechanism to ensure that implementation remains responsive to evolving regional dynamics and partner state priorities. Continuous monitoring will be complemented by structured midterm reviews that critically assess progress against set targets, identify emerging challenges, and capture lessons learned. These reviews will not only track technical and financial performance but also assess the relevance of strategic interventions in light of shifting socioeconomic, political, and environmental conditions. The findings will feed directly into a policy recalibration process, adjusting priorities, refining delivery approaches, and, where necessary, reallocating resources across sectors or programmes to maximize impact. This feedback loop is designed to keep the Strategy agile, evidence-driven, and better aligned with both regional aspirations and national development contexts, thereby enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of EAC integration efforts.

7.3 Institutional Strengthening

Enhancing the staffing and technical capacity of the M&E units within the EAC Secretariat and Partner States to ensure professional, timely, and consistent delivery of M&E functions.

The challenges observed during the implementation of the 6th Strategy particularly the inadequacy of M&E personnel, undefined roles, and weak organisational capacity highlighted the urgent need to reinforce institutional structures responsible for tracking and reporting progress across the region.

A comprehensive development of human, technical, and organisational capabilities necessary to ensure that M&E systems are functional, reliable, and integrated into decision-making processes is imperative at both the regional and Partner State levels. Key elements of institutional strengthening will include:

Human Resource Development

- *Recruitment of qualified M&E professionals at the EAC Secretariat and within Partner States to bridge existing staffing gaps.*
- *Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for M&E personnel at each level of the results chain to avoid duplication and promote accountability.*
- *Establishment of dedicated M&E units within relevant departments and institutions, equipped with adequate staff and resources.*

Organisational Capacity Building

- *Development of M&E policies, standard operating procedures, and reporting frameworks to formalize and streamline performance management functions.*
- *Strengthening inter-departmental coordination within the EAC Secretariat to ensure M&E is embedded in all programmatic areas.*
- *Enhancing institutional mandates for M&E bodies to improve authority and influence in decision-making and resource allocation.*

Tools and Infrastructure Enhancement

- *Provision of essential tools and digital infrastructure, including data collection software, analysis platforms, and reporting dashboards to modernise performance tracking.*

- *Establishment of an integrated Regional M&E Management Information System (RMIS) that connects national and regional databases for real-time data sharing and aggregation.*

Institutional Linkages and Coordination Mechanisms

- *Formalization of coordination frameworks between the EAC Secretariat, Partner States, and implementing institutions to ensure synchronized M&E practices.*
- *Institutionalization of joint performance reviews and evaluation forums to promote shared learning and mutual accountability.*

Sustainability and Continuous Improvement

- *Embedding M&E capacity development into broader institutional development plans and budgets to ensure sustained progress beyond the strategy period.*
- *Encouraging adaptive management by creating feedback loops that allow for iterative improvement based on evidence and learning.*

7.4 Resource allocation for M&E function

Ring-fencing dedicated budgets for M&E activities across all levels of strategy implementation, with clear provisions for routine data collection, analysis, reporting, and dissemination. Under the 6th EAC Development Strategy, limited and inconsistent budget allocations significantly constrained the effectiveness of M&E operations. This resource gap impeded key activities such as data collection, performance assessments, capacity building, and dissemination of findings, ultimately undermining the credibility and utility of M&E outputs. To address this critical bottleneck, the 7th Development Strategy prioritizes strategic and structured resource allocation as a foundational element of a strengthened M&E framework. This entails:

Dedicated M&E budget lines:

Establishing clearly defined and ring-fenced budget lines for M&E functions at both the EAC Secretariat and Partner State levels. These allocations will support core functions such as baseline studies, mid-term and end-term evaluations, field monitoring missions, system upgrades, and stakeholder consultations.

Mainstreaming M&E in programme planning:

Embedding M&E budgeting within all regional projects and programmes during their design and approval phases. This ensures that M&E is not an afterthought but an integral component of implementation and accountability mechanisms.

Mobilization of external support:

Engaging development partners and technical cooperation agencies to complement domestic resources for M&E, particularly in areas such as system modernisation, capacity development, and independent evaluations. Strategic alignment with partners will be pursued to avoid duplication and ensure efficiency.

Cost-sharing frameworks:

Encouraging Partner States to co-finance regional M&E activities, including joint monitoring missions, peer reviews, and harmonized data collection efforts. This approach not only

eases the fiscal burden but also promotes shared ownership and accountability.

Results-based budgeting:

Linking M&E investment to results and performance metrics by aligning resource allocation with the delivery of tangible outcomes. This reinforces the value of M&E as a tool for strategic decision-making and improved service delivery.

Periodic financial reviews:

Conducting regular reviews of M&E financial performance to ensure transparency, accountability, and value for money. These reviews will inform future budget planning and adjustments to reflect emerging needs and lessons learned.

7.5 Systems integration

Establishing an integrated regional M&E information management system to facilitate real-time data sharing, improve analytics, and support interoperable platforms between the EAC and Partner States. A critical component of strengthening the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework under the 7th EAC Development Strategy is the establishment of an integrated and interoperable M&E Information Management System. This measure addresses the persistent challenges of fragmented data systems, siloed reporting channels, and the lack of centralized platforms for performance tracking observed during the implementation of the 6th Strategy. Currently, disparate data collection tools and uncoordinated reporting protocols across EAC Organs, Institutions, and Partner States hinder timely access to reliable data. The absence of a unified digital platform has made it difficult to consolidate information, track regional progress consistently, and generate comprehensive reports to inform strategic decisions.

To address these gaps, the 7th EAC Development Strategy proposes a regionally coordinated digital M&E system that allows for real-time data sharing, analytics, and performance monitoring. This integrated platform will serve as a centralized repository for strategic indicators, project outcomes, evaluation findings, and lessons learned. It will promote transparency, support result-based management, and foster alignment of M&E efforts across sectors and Partner States.

7.6 Methodological harmonisation

Developing and adopting standardized indicators and methodologies that align with regional and international best practices to ensure comparability and coherence in reporting across sectors and jurisdictions. One of the critical impediments to effective performance measurement under the 6th EAC Development Strategy was the absence of a harmonized approach to monitoring and evaluation methodologies across the EAC Secretariat and Partner States. Disparate indicator definitions, inconsistent data collection tools, varying evaluation standards, and uncoordinated reporting formats resulted in fragmented data that could not be reliably aggregated or compared at the regional level. This lack of coherence compromised the accuracy, utility, and credibility of regional performance assessments.

To address this, the 7th Development Strategy places strong emphasis on methodological harmonisation as a cornerstone for an integrated and results-based M&E system. This involves the development, adoption, and implementation of standardized tools, processes, and indicators across all levels of the Community. Key actions will include:

7.7 Coordination and governance

Strengthening institutional coordination through a structured M&E governance framework, including inter-agency working groups, regular performance reviews, and stakeholder engagement mechanisms. A key lesson from the implementation of the 6th Development Strategy is the critical importance of a well-coordinated and clearly governed M&E ecosystem. The absence of coherent institutional arrangements and unclear delineation of roles between the EAC Secretariat, Sectoral Councils, Partner States, and implementing agencies contributed to fragmentation, duplication of efforts, and inefficiencies in performance monitoring.

In the 7th EAC Development Strategy, the Community will place strong emphasis on establishing a coordinated and accountable governance structure for M&E to promote synergy, consistency, and effectiveness in tracking the implementation of regional priorities. To that end, the following measures will be implemented:

Clarification of roles and responsibilities:

A clear definition and documentation of mandates, functions, and responsibilities of M&E units at both regional and national levels will be developed. This will ensure that the EAC Secretariat, Partner States, implementing institutions, and other stakeholders operate within a coordinated and mutually reinforcing framework.

Institutionalization of coordination mechanisms:

The EAC will establish formal coordination structures such as a Regional M&E Technical Working Group (RMTWG), composed of representatives from Partner States' M&E departments, the EAC Secretariat, and relevant stakeholders. This platform will meet regularly to align reporting standards, share progress updates, address bottlenecks, and harmonize efforts.

Alignment with national systems:

The regional M&E framework will be synchronized with national monitoring systems to promote coherence and avoid parallel reporting structures. This integration will facilitate streamlined data flows, better aggregation of results, and alignment of regional indicators with national development plans.

Strengthened oversight and accountability:

The EAC will enhance oversight mechanisms through regular performance reviews by the Council of Ministers and reporting to the Summit. These high-level forums will be supported by structured feedback loops to ensure that evaluation findings inform strategic and policy decisions at all levels.

Multi-stakeholder engagement:

Coordination efforts will extend to development partners, civil society, academia, and the private sector to enhance transparency, inclusivity, and evidence-based advocacy. Stakeholder engagement guidelines will be developed to support participatory M&E processes.

Legal and policy frameworks:

Where necessary, the EAC will review or develop policies, protocols, and legal instruments to formalize coordination and governance arrangements. This will ensure institutional stability, continuity, and enforcement of accountability measures across all actors involved in strategy implementation.

7.8 Learning and accountability

Institutionalizing a culture of learning and accountability by producing periodic performance reports, conducting independent evaluations, and ensuring that findings feed back into policy formulation and strategic planning. Learning and accountability are cornerstone principles of an effective results-based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system. In the context of the 7th EAC Development Strategy, these principles will be strengthened to ensure that implementation is not only assessed, but that performance insights are actively used to improve strategic decision-making, promote institutional transparency, and foster continuous improvement. Under the 6th Strategy, learning mechanisms were weakly embedded, and performance data often failed to translate into actionable recommendations or policy shifts. Moreover, accountability structures were undermined by fragmented reporting processes, limited access to information, and inconsistent follow-up on evaluation findings. To address these gaps, the 7th Strategy will institutionalise a more structured approach to learning and accountability by focusing on the following interventions:

Regular performance reviews and feedback loops:

Establishing mandatory annual performance reviews, mid-term, and end term evaluations that involve stakeholders at all levels regional institutions, Partner States, civil society, and the private sector. These reviews will serve as platforms for critical reflection, identifying implementation bottlenecks, sharing best practices, and adjusting strategies where necessary.

Results communication and knowledge management:

Developing targeted communication products such as policy briefs, success stories, dashboards, and learning notes to disseminate results and lessons learned across the EAC ecosystem. This will promote organisational learning and encourage adaptive programming.

Accountability to citizens and stakeholders:

Enhancing transparency through public access to performance data and reports and establishing participatory review mechanisms where citizens and non-state actors can provide feedback on the performance of regional interventions.

Incentives and performance culture:

Embedding accountability through incentives and recognition for institutions and departments that demonstrate exemplary performance.

At the same time, corrective measures will be instituted where underperformance is persistent and unaddressed.

Evidence-informed policymaking:

Mainstreaming the use of M&E evidence in planning, budgeting, and policy development processes to ensure that strategic decisions are data-driven and results-focused.

7.9 Tracking Ongoing Programmes and Flagship Projects

To strengthen evidence-based monitoring and accountability, the 7th EAC Development Strategy will systematically track ongoing regional programmes alongside flagship projects being implemented by Partner States. Annex I provides a consolidated list of ongoing projects and programmes coordinated by the EAC Secretariat, Organs, and Institutions. These include critical initiatives such as the Regional Fiscal and Monetary Integration Programme, Customs & Trade Facilitation, Climate Smart Agriculture Initiative, Lake Victoria Basin Climate Resilience Projects, Digital Integration, and Regional Health Research and Disease Surveillance programmes. Collectively, these projects, spanning trade, agriculture, health, environment, ICT, and infrastructure, demonstrate the Community's commitment to integration while addressing emerging challenges like climate change, digitalization, and post-pandemic recovery.

Annex II highlights EAC flagship projects initiated by Partner States to accelerate integration and shared prosperity. These include transformative cross-border infrastructure corridors, renewable energy interconnectors, major agricultural value-chain projects, and industrial hubs positioned as regional centres of excellence. Flagship projects are designed to deliver high visibility, regional impact, and long-term socioeconomic transformation. Embedding them into the M&E framework with clear objectives, budgets, and timelines will improve accountability and alignment with the Community's results-based management system.

By formally annexing these two project portfolios to the Strategy and subjecting them to harmonized M&E tools, including standardized reporting templates and regular joint review missions, the Community will strengthen performance tracking, enhance transparency, and ensure that ongoing and flagship projects contribute directly to the strategic objectives of the 7th EAC Development Strategy.

7.10 Log Frame

Strategic Development Objective (SDO)	Outcome Statement	Outcome/Objective Indicators	Baseline (2025/26)	Target (2030/31)	Alignment
SDO 1: EAC Regional trade integration	Increased trade and investment in the EAC region	Intra-EAC trade as % of total trade % implementation of CET tariff lines NTBs resolved as % of total reported	Intra-EAC trade: 12% 70% CET compliance 10% NTBs resolved	25% 100% 80%	SDG 17.10, AfCFTA, Agenda 2063 Goal 2
SDO 2: Strengthen productive and social sectors	Increased intra-EAC trade in goods and services and free movement of persons	Number of Partner States with mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) % increase in cross-border labour mobility % increase in service trade volume	<3 MRAs Baseline mobility data TBD	8 MRAs 25% increase in mobility 40% increase in service trade	SDG 8.5, SDG 10.7, Agenda 2063 Goal 1
SDO 3: EAC Monetary Union	Milestones for Monetary Union accomplished	Number of Partner States meeting convergence criteria Operationalization of EAMI and related institutions	4 Partner States compliant 0 institutions operational	8 Partner States 4 institutions fully operational	SDG 8.10, Agenda 2063 Goal 17
SDO 4: Regional Infrastructure Development	Improved efficiency in regional infrastructure and services	% of border posts upgraded to Smart OSBPs Km of road/railway network constructed or rehabilitated- % increase in cargo moved by rail	0 Smart OSBPs Baseline infra-TBD	50% Smart OSBPs+30% road/rail km 50% increase in rail cargo	SDG 9.1, Agenda 2063 Goal 10
SDO 5: Regional Governance, Peace & Security	Improved governance, accountability and regional stability	% of Partner States with functioning national early warning mechanisms Conflict incidence rate (regional average) % of population with trust in regional institutions	TBD	All States Conflict rate reduced by 40% 50% institutional trust	SDG 16.1, 16.6, Agenda 2063 Goal 11
SDO 6: Institutional Strengthening	Improved organisational capacity and efficiency of EAC institutions	% increase in budget execution- Number of EAC organs with ISO-certified systems Evidence-based policy briefs produced annually	Baseline data TBD	+90% execution All key institutions ISO-certified 20+ policy briefs/year	SDG 16.6, Agenda 2063 Goal 12

Strategic Development Objective (SDO)	Outcome Statement	Outcome/Objective Indicators	Baseline (2025/26)	Target (2030/31)	Alignment
SDO 7: Citizen Participation	Increased visibility of EAC and citizen engagement	% of citizens aware of EAC initiatives Participation in regional consultations EAC brand index	<30% awareness	70%+ awareness Each Partner State annually engaged	SDG 16.7, Agenda 2063 Goal 17
Cross-Cutting: STI	Increased availability and adoption of STI	% of GDP invested in R&D Number of regional innovation hubs % adoption of digital trade systems	<0.5% R&D <5 hubs	≥1% R&D 10+ hubs 100% digital trade platform adoption	SDG 9.5, Agenda 2063 Goal 2
Cross-Cutting: Gender, Youth & Inclusion	Increased youth and gender participation in development	% of women/youth in formal employment Gender-responsiveness score of regional programs Inclusion index	Women: 40% formal labour Low gender scoring	Women/youth: 50%+ All programs gender-scored	SDG 5.5, SDG 8.6, Agenda 2063 Goal 6
Cross-Cutting: Climate Resilience	Climate change mainstreamed across EAC programs	# of sectors with climate adaptation plans % of infrastructure projects climate-screened % of budget tagged for climate	Few/no plans <10% climate-tagging	All sectors integrated 30% climate-tagged projects	SDG 13.2, Agenda 2063 Goal 7

8.

Annex 1: Alignment of AU 2063, SDG 2030 and EAC Vision 2050 Goals

AU2063 Description	SDGs	Description	EAC 2050	Aspiration Description
Goal 1 A high standard of living, quality of life and well-being for all citizens.	Goal 1	End poverty	Goal 1	Enhanced inclusiveness in development and socio-economic transformation.
	Goal 2	End hunger	Goal 3	Achievement of high per capita income to give the population adequate purchasing powers and improved quality of life.
	Goal 8	Economic Growth	Goal 4	Economic empowerment of the citizens to spur growth and fast track poverty reduction.
	Goal 11	Population living in slums		
Goal 2 Well educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology, and innovation.	Goal 4	Equitable education	Goal 5	Building EAC's ICT capacities to encourage innovation and increase competitiveness.
Goal 3 Healthy citizens	Goal 3	Healthy lives and well-being	Goal 1	Enhanced inclusiveness in development and socio-economic transformation.
Goal 4 Transformed economies	Goal 8	Promote sustained economic growth	Goal 7	Articulation of pro-active policies aimed at linking employment targets to skills development initiatives.
	Goal 9	Resilient infrastructure	Goal 9	Increased partnership between the public and private sectors for economic transformation.
			Goal 13	Free movement of people, labour, goods, services, and capital
Goal 5 Modern agriculture	Goal 2	End hunger and food insecurity	Goal 5	Building EAC's ICT capacities to encourage innovation and increase competitiveness.
Goal 6 Blue/ ocean economy for economic growth	Goal 14	Conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas, and marine resources	Goal 10	A better environment for inter and intra-regional trade and investment.
2063 Description	SDGs	Description	EAC 2050	Aspiration Description

AU2063 Description	SDGs	Description	EAC 2050	Aspiration Description
Goal 7 Climate resilient and sustainable economies	Goal 6	Sustainable use of water and sanitation for all	Goal 10	A better environment for inter and intra-regional trade and investment.
	Goal 7	Access to affordable sustainable modern energy for all		
	Goal 13	Combat climate change		
	Goal 15	Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems		
Goal 8 United Africa				
Goal 9 Continental financial and monetary institutions			Goal 9	Increased partnership between the public and private sectors for economic transformation.
Goal 10 World class infrastructure	Goal 9	Resilient infrastructure	Goal 2	Access to modern, fast, and affordable infrastructure that is essential for economic development and wellbeing of the population.
Goal 11 Democracy, human rights, and justice	Goal 16	Peaceful and inclusive societies	Goal 14	Rights of establishment and rights of residence.
Goal 12 Capable institutions and leadership	Goal 16	Peaceful and inclusive societies	Goal 12	Building sound economic institutions, legal and policy frameworks needed for the long-term socio-economic transformation.
			Goal 6	Zero tolerance to corrupt practices and misuse of development resources.
Goal 13 Peace and security	Goal 16	Peaceful and inclusive societies		
Goal 14 Stable and peaceful Africa				
Goal 15 Fully functional and operational APSA				
Goal 16 African cultural renaissance				
Goal 17 Gender equality	Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	Goal 11	That the needs of special groups are addressed in an inclusive and participatory manner.
Goal 18 Engaged and empowered youth		Equitable education	Goal 8	Job creation initiatives to provide for current and future needs of the bulging youth population.
	Goal 4			
	Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls		

AU2063 Description	SDGs	Description	EAC 2050	Aspiration Description
Goal 19 Africa partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence	Goal 17	Global partnership for sustainable development		
Goal 20 Africa rising	Goal 10	Reduce inequality within and among countries		
	Goal 17	Global partnership for sustainable development		

9.

Annex 2: EAC Secretariat Ongoing Projects and Programmes Monitoring Dashboard

Project ID	Project Title	Responsible Org	Sector	Project Manager / Coordinator	Start Date	Planned End Date	Project Amount (US\$)	Amount Spent (US\$)	% Financial Utilisation (2025)	Current Status Description	RAG Status	Issues & Risks
EAC-FM-001	Regional Fiscal & Monetary Integration	EAC Secretariat	Fiscal & Monetary Affairs	Teresia Ndivo	28-Jan-2013	31-Dec-2025	29,732,850	25,500,000	85.8%	Policy harmonisation drafts under review by Partner States	Amber	Slow ratification process by some Partner States
EAC-AG-001	Climate Smart Agriculture Initiative	EAC Secretariat	Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development	Jean Baptise Havugimana / Fahari Marwa	7-Feb-2024	31-Dec-2027	12,760,000	1,150,000	9.0%	Inception phase, procuring consultancy services	Green	None at this early stage
EAC-CT-001	Customs & Trade Facilitation Programme	EAC Secretariat	Customs & Trade	Jonathan Sessanga / Philip Wambugu	9-Jun-2022	30-Jul-2026	11,200,000	4,800,000	42.9%	OSBP equipment deployment at 60% completion	Green	Minor customs IT system interoperability issues
EAC-TW-001	Regional Roads Standards Harmonisation	EAC Secretariat	Transport & Works	Eng. Godfrey Enzama	8-Jun-2023	31-Dec-2025	1,399,587	550,000	39.3%	Draft standards developed, awaiting stakeholder validation	Amber	Delay in organizing regional validation workshop
EAC-TW-002	Northern Corridor Railway Feasibility Study	EAC Secretariat	Transport & Works	Eng. Godfrey Enzama	1-Dec-2021	31-Dec-2024	1,768,565	1,250,000	70.7%	Final report being drafted	Green	None

Project ID	Project Title	Responsible Org	Sector	Project Manager / Coordinator	Start Date	Planned End Date	Project Amount (US\$)	Amount Spent (US\$)	% Financial Utilisation (2025)	Current Status Description	RAG Status	Issues & Risks
EAC-TW-003	Lake Victoria Maritime Safety Project	EAC Secretariat	Transport & Works	Eng. Godfrey Enzama	TBD	TBD	1,700,000	0	0.0%	Awarding signing of MoU with development partner	Red	Project start delayed pending agreement finalization
EAC-ST-001	Regional Statistical Data Harmonisation	EAC Secretariat	Statistics	Samuel Njuru	30-Aug-2022	30-Jun-2027	29,000,000	8,500,000	29.3%	Training of National Bureau staff ongoing	Green	None
EAC-ICT-001	Regional Digital Integration Project	EAC Secretariat	Information and Communication Technology	Eng. Daniel Murenzi / Godfrey Kalema	9-Jun-2023	31-May-2028	15,000,000	3,200,000	21.3%	Broadband infrastructure mapping completed	Green	None
IUCEA-PL-001	Higher Education Innovation Programme	IUCEA	Programmes, Linkages, Exchange, Partnerships (IUCEA)	Mr. Meshack Obonyo	26-May-2016	31-Dec-2025	8,000,000	7,800,000	97.5%	Finalizing last round of research grants	Green	Nearing completion, focusing on sustainability
IUCEA-PL-002	Centres of Excellence Project	IUCEA	Programmes, Linkages, Exchange, Partnerships (IUCEA)	Dr. Cosam Chawanga Joseph	1-Nov-2019	31-Dec-2026	8,000,000	5,100,000	63.8%	Equipment delivered to 4 partner universities	Amber	Delays in procurement of specialized lab equipment
LVBC-ENV-001	Lake Victoria Basin Climate Resilience	LVBC	Environment, Natural Resources & Climate Change Office (LVBC)	Eng. Simon Otoung	15-Mar-2021	30-Nov-2025	750,000	600,000	80.0%	Community-based adaptation projects implemented	Green	None
EAC-PS-001	Peace, Security & Governance Programme	EAC Secretariat	Peace and Security	Didacus Kaguta	20-Feb-2023	31-Dec-2025	4,464,402	1,500,000	33.6%	Early warning system operational in 3 countries	Amber	Challenges in data sharing protocols between states

Project ID	Project Title	Responsible Org	Sector	Project Manager / Coordinator	Start Date	Planned End Date	Project Amount (US\$)	Amount Spent (US\$)	% Financial Utilisation (2025)	Current Status Description	RAG Status	Issues & Risks
EAC-CT-002	Digital One Stop Border Post Platform	EAC Secretariat	Customs & Trade	Jonathan Sessanga	1-Feb-2022	31-Dec-2026	17,876,000	6,500,000	36.4%	Software development phase 1 completed	Green	None
EAC-TIS-001	Trade in Services Liberalisation	EAC Secretariat	Trade in Services	Marie Angelique Umulisa	1-Apr-2024	30-Nov-2026	7,426,299	600,000	8.1%	Sensitization workshops conducted for stakeholders	Green	Complex regulatory negotiations
EAC-IT-001	EAC Export Promotion Programme	EAC Secretariat	International Trade	Marie Angelique Umulisa	1-Aug-2023	31-Jul-2027	43,760,000	8,100,000	18.5%	Identifying priority value chains for support	Green	None
LVFO-FISH-001	Lake Victoria Fisheries Stock Management	LVFO	Fisheries Development (LVFO)	Dr. Elysee Nzohabonayo	14-May-2021	13-May-2025	11,063,500	9,200,000	83.2%	Stock assessment surveys ongoing	Green	None
LVFO-FISH-002	Community Fisheries Livelihoods Improvement	LVFO	Fisheries Development (LVFO)	Dr. Edward Rukuunya	13-Jun-2020	12-May-2026	2,129,024	1,450,000	68.1%	Alternative livelihood groups formed and trained	Amber	Slow uptake of new aquaculture techniques
EAC-HR-001	Staff Capacity Building Programme	EAC Secretariat	Human Resource Management & Development	Aime Uwase / Ruth Simba / Godfrey Magadu	13-Jan-2025	12-Jan-2027	610,929	0	0.0%	Project not yet started	Green	N/A
EACCA-FIN-001	EACCA Institutional Strengthening	EACCA	Finance, Human Resource & Administration (EACCA)	Stellah Nyambeki Onyancha	1-Oct-2024	30-Apr-2027	1,005,389	0	0.0%	Project not yet started	Green	N/A
EAC-HLTH-001	Regional Integrated Disease Surveillance	EAC Secretariat	Health Services	Mr. Hakim Idris Lagu	28-Nov-2016	31-Dec-2026	27,250,000	22,500,000	82.6%	Lab network functional, focus on pandemic preparedness	Amber	Need for renewed donor funding to complete last mile

Project ID	Project Title	Responsible Org	Sector	Project Manager / Coordinator	Start Date	Planned End Date	Project Amount (US\$)	Amount Spent (US\$)	% Financial Utilisation (2025)	Current Status Description	RAG Status	Issues & Risks
EAC-RCE-001	Regional Centre of Excellence for VIHSCM	EAC_RCE_VIHSCM	EAC RCE-VIHSCM	Stephen Karengera / Rutungwa Eugene	1-Jul-2021	31-Dec-2026	28,068,000	18,000,000	64.1%	Training healthcare workers from all partner states	Green	None
IUCEA-PL-003	Eastern Africa Skills Transformation	IUCEA	Programmes, Linkages, Exchange, Partnerships (IUCEA)	Ms. Dorine Rwehera	9-Feb-2019	31-Dec-2029	15,260,000	10,500,000	68.8%	Curriculum development for 5 TVET fields complete	Green	None
LVBC-ENV-002	Lake Victoria Basin Water Sanitation	LVBC	Environment, Natural Resources & Climate Change Office (LVBC)	Eng. Arsene Mukubwa	1-Jan-2020	28-Feb-2026	75,101,000	52,800,000	70.3%	Major water infrastructure works 75% complete	Amber	Inflation impacting material costs and budget
EAC-PS-002	Conflict Prevention & Mediation Support	EAC Secretariat	Peace and Security	Didacus Kaguta	1-Jul-2023	30-Jun-2026	16,350,000	4,000,000	24.5%	Deploying liaison officers to hotspot areas	Green	Sensitive political context in some areas
EAC-CT-003	Rules of Origin Automation	EAC Secretariat	Customs & Trade	Flavia Busingye / Jean Baptiste Havugimana	1-Aug-2022	31-Jul-2025	16,677,000	10,200,000	61.2%	System testing phase with selected traders	Amber	Technical glitches during UAT, needing patching
EAC-IT-002	Standards & SPS Measures Harmonisation	EAC Secretariat	International Trade	Marie Angelique Umulisa	1-Aug-2020	30-Aug-2024	1,090,000	1,050,000	96.3%	Final draft standards awaiting adoption	Green	Nearing successful completion
EAC-IT-003	Trade Policy Review Mechanism	EAC Secretariat	International Trade	Marie Angelique Umulisa	1-Jan-2023	31-Dec-2025	436,000	200,000	45.9%	First review cycle for 2 countries underway	Green	None
EAC-HLTH-002	Regional Medicines Regulatory...	EAC Secretariat	Health Services	Dr. Eric Nzeyimana	1-Sep-2022	30-Aug-2025	4,360,000	2,100,000	48.2%	Joint assessment of regulatory agencies done	Green	None

Project ID	Project Title	Responsible Org	Sector	Project Manager / Coordinator	Start Date	Planned End Date	Project Amount (US\$)	Amount Spent (US\$)	% Financial Utilisation (2025)	Current Status Description	RAG Status	Issues & Risks
EAC-LI-001	Labour Mobility & Migration Policy	EAC Secretariat	Labour & Immigration	Stephen Niyonzima	1-Jul-2022	30-Jun-2025	3,270,000	1,800,000	55.0%	Draft protocol developed, consultations ongoing	Amber	Politically sensitive issue, slow consensus
LVBC-ENV-003	Transboundary Ecosystem Management...	LVBC	Environment, Natural Resources & Climate Change Office (LVBC)	Eng. Arsene Mukubwa	1-Jan-2022	31-Dec-2024	6,322,000	5,500,000	87.0%	Final evaluation and reporting phase	Green	None
IUCEA-PL-004	University-Industry Partnerships Programme	IUCEA	Programmes, Linkages, Exchange, Partnerships (IUCEA)	Ben Ruhinda	1-Apr-2021	31-Mar-2025	9,243,200	8,900,000	96.3%	Wrapping up, documenting success stories	Green	Nearing completion
EAC-HLTH-003	COVID-19 Response & Preparedness	EAC Secretariat	Health Services	Dr. Eric Nzeyimana	1-Dec-2023	30-Nov-2025	400,000	250,000	62.5%	Maintaining regional stockpile of PPE	Green	None
EAC-IR-001	Diaspora Engagement Initiative	EAC Secretariat	International Relations	Suma Mwakyusa / Alice Karara	1-Sep-2023	31-Aug-2025	400,000	150,000	37.5%	Mapping diaspora skills and investment interests	Green	None
EAC-LI-002	Social Security Benefits Portability Study	EAC Secretariat	Labour & Immigration	Stephen Niyonzima	1-Oct-2021	31-Oct-2025	400,000	320,000	80.0%	Study finalized, policy recommendations drafted	Green	None
EAC-AG-002	EAC-USAID Partnership for Food Security	EAC Secretariat	Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development	Myra J. Deya	29-Sep-2016	30-Sep-2026	30,000,000	28,500,000	95.0%	Long-running partnership, focus on resilience	Amber	Planning for phase-out and sustainability
EAC-HLTH-004	Regional Digital Health Initiative	EAC Secretariat	Health Services	Itete KARAGIRE	23-Jan-2024	31-Dec-2027	3,806,130	500,000	13.1%	Inception reports and workplan finalization	Green	None

Project ID	Project Title	Responsible Org	Sector	Project Manager / Coordinator	Start Date	Planned End Date	Project Amount (US\$)	Amount Spent (US\$)	% Financial Utilisation (2025)	Current Status Description	RAG Status	Issues & Risks
EAC-LI-003	Free Movement of Persons Protocol...	EAC Secretariat	Labour & Immigration	Stephen Niyonzima / Priscilla Ndayara	1-Jan-2023	31-Dec-2026	500,818	180,000	35.9%	Technical committees reviewing annexes	Amber	Security concerns from some Partner States
LVFO-FISH-003	Lake Victoria Fishing Community Support	LVFO	Fisheries Development (LVFO)	Dr. Edward Rukuunya	22-Dec-2021	30-Sep-2026	1,500,000	950,000	63.3%	Providing grants for community cold storage units	Green	None
EAC-HLTH-005	Regional Health Research Grants Scheme	EAC Secretariat	Health Services	Dr. Eric Nzeyimana	1-Dec-2023	31-Oct-2026	630,450	100,000	15.9%	Call for proposals published	Green	None
EAC-CT-004	Unspecified Customs & Trade Project 1	EAC Secretariat	Customs & Trade		1-Sep-2022	31-Oct-2027	2,140,000	400,000	18.7%	Awaiting project document finalization	Red	Lack of appointed project manager
EAC-CT-005	Unspecified Customs & Trade Project 2	EAC Secretariat	Customs & Trade		1-Jul-2023	30-Jun-2030	800,000	0	0.0%	Awaiting project document finalization	Red	Lack of appointed project manager
EAC-CT-006	Unspecified Customs & Trade Project 3	EAC Secretariat	Customs & Trade		1-Jul-2023	30-Jun-2030	300,000	0	0.0%	Awaiting project document finalization	Red	Lack of appointed project manager
EAC-FM-002	Regional Public Financial Management	EAC Secretariat	Fiscal & Monetary Affairs	Dr. Kessy Pantaleo	1-Aug-2022	31-Jan-2026	1,508,000	900,000	59.7%	Developing regional PFM guidelines	Green	None
EAHRC-RIC-001	Health Research Ethics Capacity Building	EAHRC	Research, Innovation & Capacity Development (EAHRC)	Fabian Mashauri	12-Mar-2024	30-Apr-2025	45,340	5,000	11.0%	Planning workshop conducted	Green	None

Project ID	Project Title	Responsible Org	Sector	Project Manager / Coordinator	Start Date	Planned End Date	Project Amount (US\$)	Amount Spent (US\$)	% Financial Utilisation (2025)	Current Status Description	RAG Status	Issues & Risks
LVBC-ENV-004	Lake Victoria Basin Biodiversity...	LVBC	Environment, Natural Resources & Climate Change Office (LVBC)	Eng. Arsene Mukubwa	1-Dec-2024	30-Nov-2027	552,957	0	0.0%	Project not yet started	Green	N/A
LVFO-FISH-004	Fisheries Resource Monitoring System	LVFO	Fisheries and Aquaculture Resources Monitoring (LVFO)	Dr. Robert Kayanda	1-Jan-2024	31-Jul-2025	203,278	50,000	24.6%	Procurement of monitoring equipment	Green	None
LVFO-FISH-005	Unspecified Fisheries Development Project	LVFO	Fisheries Development (LVFO)	Dr. Edward Rukuunya	1-Oct-2021		791,340	791,340	100.0%	Project completed, no formal closure date	Green	N/A
EAC-AG-003	Post-Harvest Loss Reduction Programme	EAC Secretariat	Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development	Fahari Marwa	1-Jul-2025	31-Dec-2027	1,440,867	0	0.0%	Project not yet started	Green	N/A

9.

Annex 3: EAC Flagship Project List & Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Project Category	Project Name & Country	Description & Key Details (Length included)	Planned Completion Date	Baseline date	Physical Progress (%)	Financial Progress (%)	Key Upcoming Milestone	RAG Status	Issues & Risks
POWER GENERATION	Rusumo Falls Hydroelectric (Tanz, Rwanda, Bur)	80MW shared plant	Q3 2024	31-May-2024	95%	98%	Commissioning	Green	Final testing phase
	Karuma Hydro (Uganda)	600MW dam	Q4 2023	30-Apr-2024	100%	100%	Full operational capacity	Green	Operational
	Ruzizi III Hydro (DRC, Rwanda, Bur)	147MW shared plant	2026	15-May-2024	45%	40%	Main dam construction	Amber	Financing rounds closing
	Menengai Geothermal (Kenya)	105MW Geothermal	2025	31-May-2024	80%	75%	Steam field completion	Green	PPAs being finalized
	Kakono Hydro (Tanzania)	87MW dam	2027	01-Apr-2024	20%	15%	Resettlement completion	Amber	Land acquisition delays
	Singida Wind Farm (Tanzania)	100MW Wind Power	2024	30-Apr-2024	90%	85%	Grid connection	Green	Final commissioning
	Geothermal Development (Goma, DRC)	10MW Pilot Plant	2025	01-Mar-2024	25%	20%	Drilling phase	Amber	Technical challenges, volcanic activity

Project Category	Project Name & Country	Description & Key Details (Length included)	Planned Completion Date	Baseline date	Physical Progress (%)	Financial Progress (%)	Key Upcoming Milestone	RAG Status	Issues & Risks
	Nyabarongo II Hydro (Rwanda)	43MW Dam	2026	15-May-2024	30%	25%	Main construction start	Amber	Contractor mobilization
	Siti II Hydro (Uganda)	16.5MW Run-of-river	2025	28-Feb-2024	60%	55%	Turbine installation	Green	On track
	Lake Kivu Methane Gas (Extraction) (Rw-DRC)	300+MW Gas Plants	2025-2030	31-May-2024	Varies	Varies	FID for new blocks	Amber	Complex extraction agreements
POWER TRANSMISSION	Kenya-Tanzania Power Interconnector	High-voltage link	2025	28-Feb-2024	60%	55%	Tower construction complete	Amber	Supply chain delays
	Masaka-Mbarara Nkenda Transmission (Uganda)	132km line	Q2 2024	31-May-2024	100%	100%	Energized	Green	Operational
	Rwanda-Burundi Interconnector	Cross-border line	Q4 2024	30-Apr-2024	85%	80%	Commissioning	Green	On track
	Ethiopia-Kenya HVDC Link (Lolwe)	500kV, 1000+km line	2026	15-May-2024	70%	65%	Converter station work	Amber	Financing discussions ongoing
	Nkenda-Beni (Uganda-DRC)	Interconnector	2027	01-Jan-2024	15%	10%	Feasibility studies	Red	Security concerns in Eastern DRC
	Tanzania-Zambia Interconnector		2025	01-Mar-2024	40%	35%	Procurement of materials	Amber	Delays in contractor mobilization

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	Mombasa-Nairobi 400kV Line (Kenya)	Reinforcement line	2025	15-May-2024	50%	45%	Stringing of conductors	Amber	Right-of-way clearance
	Kigoma-Kasulu Grid Extension (Tanzania)	200km line to western regions	2025	01-Apr-2024	65%	60%	Substation erection	Green	Good progress
	Juba Power Distribution (South Sudan)	Capital city grid upgrade	2026	01-Jan-2024	20%	15%	Transformer delivery	Red	Funding and logistical challenges
	Northern Corridor Transmission (Kenya-Uganda-Rwanda)	Regional backbone	2028	01-Mar-2024	10%	5%	Feasibility study	Amber	Multi-country coordination
	Kilembe-Fort Portal Line (Uganda)	80km line	2024	31-May-2024	95%	90%	Energization	Green	Awaiting final testing
OIL PIPELINES	East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) (Ug-Tz)	1,443km heated crude pipeline	2025	31-May-2024	30%	25%	Main pipe laying begins	Amber	Financial Close achieved, land acquisition ongoing
	Mombasa-Nairobi Pipeline (Kenya)	450km products pipeline (Line 5)	Q4 2024	30-Apr-2024	95%	90%	Testing & Commissioning	Green	Nearing completion
	Nairobi-Eldoret Pipeline Extension (Kenya)	~325km products pipeline	2026	15-May-2024	15%	10%	Detailed design	Amber	Environmental impact assessments

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	Eldoret-Kampala Pipeline (Reverse Flow Upgrade) (Ke-Ug)	~320kmpipeline upgrade	2025	28-Feb-2024	40%	35%	Pump station upgrades	Amber	Technical feasibility studies
	Dar es Salaam-Morogoro Products Pipeline (Tanzania)	~200kmnew pipeline	2027	01-Jan-2024	5%	2%	Land acquisition	Red	Securing financing and right-of-way
REFINERIES	Hoima Refinery (Uganda)	60,000 bpd refinery	TBD	15-May-2024	15%	10%	Final Investment Decision	Red	Seeking lead investor after Albertine withdrawal
CIVIL AVIATION	New Bugesera Int'l Airport (Rwanda)	New Int'l Hub	2024	31-May-2024	85%	80%	Runway completion	Green	On track for 2024 opening
	JKIA Terminal 1B Expansion (Kenya)	Capacity upgrade	2023	30-Apr-2024	100%	100%	Operational	Green	Completed
	Maji Maji Airport Upgrade (Tanzania)		2025	01-Mar-2024	65%	60%	Terminal construction	Amber	Weather-related delays
	Kisumu Airport Int'l (Kenya)	Upgrade to Int'l	2023	31-Dec-2023	100%	100%	Operational	Green	Operational
	New Bukavu Airport (DRC)		2026	01-Jan-2024	10%	5%	Site preparation	Red	Funding constraints

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	Mwanza Airport Upgrade (Tanzania)		2025	28-Feb-2024	50%	45%	Control tower upgrade	Amber	Progressing steadily
	Juba Int'l Airport Expansion (South Sudan)	Runway & Terminal Upgrade	2025	15-May-2024	35%	30%	Runway rehabilitation	Amber	Procurement delays
	Goma Airport Rehabilitation (DRC)	Post-volcanic eruption	2024	30-Apr-2024	90%	85%	Re-opening	Green	Final safety checks
	Hoima Int'l Airport (Uganda)	Oil Region Airport	2024	31-May-2024	100%	100%	Operational	Green	Completed, awaiting operationalization
	Kigali Airport Expansion (Rwanda)	Capacity increase	2025	01-Mar-2024	60%	55%	New boarding gates	Green	On schedule
	Dodoma Airport Upgrade (Tanzania)	Capital City Airport	2025	01-Apr-2024	70%	65%	Terminal finishing	Amber	Material supply delays
	Kisangani Airport Modernization (DRC)		2026	01-Jan-2024	20%	15%	Design finalization	Red	Seeking external funding
	Eldoret Int'l Airport Cargo Hub (Kenya)		2025	28-Feb-2024	45%	40%	Cargo apron construction	Amber	Focus on agricultural export logistics
RAILWAYS	SGR Kenya Phase 2 (Nairobi-Malaba)	~270km Standard Gauge Railway	TBD	31-May-2024	25%	20%	Construction to Naivasha	Amber	Financing negotiations with China

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	SGR Tanzania (Dar-Mwanza/Isaka-Keza)	~1,219km Standard Gauge Railway	2026 (Phase 1)	30-Apr-2024	62%	58%	Dar-Morogoro section test runs	Green	Section nearing completion
	Mombasa Port Commuter Rail (Kenya)	~20km commuter line	2025	15-Mar-2024	40%	35%	Track laying	Amber	Coordinating with port operations
	Isaka-Kigali Standard Gauge (Rwanda)	~200km Standard Gauge Railway	TBD	01-Jan-2024	5%	3%	Feasibility & Studies	Red	Awaiting Tanzania SGR progress
	Goma-Bukavu Railway (DRC)	~150km line rehabilitation	2026	28-Feb-2024	20%	15%	Initial rehabilitation works	Amber	Security and access challenges
	Northern Corridor Metre Gauge Rehab (Ke-Ug-Rw)	~1,700km network rehab	2027	15-May-2024	30%	25%	Section-by-section commissioning	Amber	Aging infrastructure, slow progress
	Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) Rail	~1,200km new SGR	TBD	01-Mar-2024	2%	1%	Corridor planning	Red	Mega-project, funding a major challenge
	Dar es Salaam Metro Rail (Tanzania)	~20km Phase 1 urban rail	2025	30-Apr-2024	85%	80%	Test runs	Green	Nearing completion
	Kampala Metropolitan Rail (Uganda)	~100km commuter network	2028	01-Jan-2024	5%	3%	Feasibility study	Red	Early planning stage

Project Category	Project Name & Country	Description & Key Details (Length included)	Planned Completion Date	Baseline date	Physical Progress (%)	Financial Progress (%)	Key Upcoming Milestone	RAG Status	Issues & Risks
	Mtwara-Liganga Railway (Tanzania)	~350km mineral line	2027	28-Feb-2024	15%	10%	Land acquisition	Amber	Tied to mining development
PORTS & WATERWAYS	Bagamoyo Port (Tanzania)	Mega Port	TBD	01-Jan-2024	0%	0%	Final Agreement	Red	Project on hold, seeking new investor
	Lamu Port (Kenya) - Berths 4-23	First 3 berths operational	2030 (Full)	31-May-2024	30%	25%	Completion of Berth 4	Amber	Slow uptake of operational berths
	Bukasa Port (Uganda)	Inland Port on L. Victoria	2024	30-Apr-2024	75%	70%	Phase 1 completion	Green	On track
	Lake Victoria Transport (Marine Services)	Vessel acquisition	2025	15-May-2024	50%	45%	New vessel launch	Amber	Regional coordination ongoing
	Uvinza-Mpanda Railway to Lake Tanganyika	~350km rail link	TBD	01-Mar-2024	10%	8%	Studies	Red	Early stage, funding unclear
	Kigoma Port Upgrade (Tanzania)	Lake Tanganyika Hub	2025	31-May-2024	60%	55%	New cargo handling equipment	Green	Critical for DRC trade
	Mombasa Port Development (Kenya)	Dongo Kundu SEZ & New Berths	2027	30-Apr-2024	40%	35%	SEZ infrastructure	Amber	Public-private partnerships
	Dar es Salaam Port Expansion (Tanzania)	Berth Deepening & Equipment	2025	15-May-2024	70%	65%	Completion of dredging	Green	Improving efficiency

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	Juba River Port (South Sudan)	On Nile River	2026	01-Jan-2024	10%	5%	Site preparation	Red	Instability and funding
	Lake Albert Ports (Uganda/DRC)	(e.g., Butiaba, Ntoroko)	2025	28-Feb-2024	35%	30%	Basic jetty construction	Amber	Supporting oil sector logistics
ROADS	Arusha-Holili/Taveta-Voi Road (Tz-Ke)	~100km road upgrade	Q4 2024	31-May-2024	90%	85%	Final asphalt works	Green	Nearing completion
	Mombasa-Mariakani Highway (Kenya)	~30km dual carriageway	2023	30-Apr-2024	100%	100%	Operational	Green	Completed
	Ruzizi III Road (DRC)	~50km road construction	2025	15-May-2024	65%	60%	Bridge construction	Amber	Terrain challenges
	Kigali-Bujumbura Corridor (Rd, Rwanda-Bur)	~200km corridor upgrade	2025	01-Mar-2024	80%	78%	Section commissioning	Green	Good progress
	Kampala-Jinja Expressway (Uganda)	~77km expressway	2027	28-Feb-2024	15%	12%	Land acquisition	Red	Significant delays in compensation
	Mtwara-Mbamba Bay Road (Tanzania)	~500km road development	2026	01-Apr-2024	50%	45%	Earthworks	Amber	Steady progress
	LAPSSET Corridor Road (Kenya-Eth-SS)	~500km (Isiolo-Moyale section)	2025	31-May-2024	85%	80%	Final layer tarmac	Green	Nearly complete, enhancing Ethiopia trade
	Bukavu-Goma Road (DRC)	~150km vital link	2026	01-Mar-2024	40%	35%	Security permitting construction	Red	Extreme security challenges

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	Northern Corridor (Mombasa-Malaba) Rehab	~900km highway rehab	2026	30-Apr-2024	55%	50%	Continuous section upgrades	Amber	Ongoing maintenance under traffic
	Central Corridor Road (Dar-Burundi/Rwanda)	~500km (Tabora-Isaka) upgrade	2027	15-May-2024	25%	20%	Gravel to tarmac upgrade	Amber	Long distance, phased implementation
	Juba-Bor Road (South Sudan)	~200kmlifeline road	2025	01-Jan-2024	30%	25%	Drainage works	Amber	Weather and funding dependent
	Kigali-Cyanugu-Gatuna Road (Rwanda)	~80km to Uganda border	2024	31-May-2024	95%	90%	Marking and signage	Green	Final touches



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