SUMMARY REPORT

APRIL 2026

# Domestication and Implementation of Regional and Continental Agricultural Policies

## in the East African Community (EAC)

AGRA
Sustainably Growing Africa's Food Systems

FANRPAN
Policies for a Food Secure Africa

EAC
JUMUIYA YA AFRIKA MASHARIKI

## Acknowledgement

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## Suggested citation

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[1]FANRPAN, [2]AGRA, [3]EAC



# Executive Summary

*Agriculture offers significant potential to absorb and empower youth and strengthen food systems resilience.*

This assessment examines the domestication and implementation of key continental and regional agricultural policy frameworks in the East African Community (EAC), focusing on their effectiveness in advancing agricultural transformation, regional integration, and youth inclusion. It responds to persistent gaps between political commitments and implementation, uneven progress across Partner States, and rising pressure to deliver inclusive growth and employment in a region where youth comprise over 60% of the population. While agriculture offers significant potential to absorb and empower youth and strengthen food systems resilience, this potential remains constrained by weak policy coherence, inadequate financing, and limited accountability.

The assessment reviewed four continental frameworks and seven EAC regional frameworks:

## Continental level

- Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)
- African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)
- Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health (AFSH) Action Plan
- African Agribusiness Youth Strategy (AAYS)

## Regional level

- EAC Regional Agriculture Investment Plan (RAIP)
- EAC Food and Nutrition Security Strategy (FNSS)
- EAC Youth Policy
- EAC Industrialisation Policy
- EAC Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Protocol and Standards
- EAC Seed and Plant Varieties Bill
- EAC Fertilizer Policy and Bill

The assessment focused on four strategic areas critical to agrifood systems transformation in the EAC: seeds and plant varieties, soil health and fertilizer, trade, and markets. Youth inclusion was examined as a cross-cutting dimension across all frameworks.

## Key Cross-Cutting Findings

**1** While political endorsement of continental and regional frameworks is strong, **implementation remains uneven**, particularly among newer and fragile Partner States, due to institutional capacity gaps and delayed domestication. Overall, the regional BR4 performance indicates that the **EAC is not on track to meet the Malabo 2025 targets**, particularly in agricultural financing, hunger reduction, and intra-African agricultural trade.

**2** **Public financing for agriculture, nutrition and youth programming remains insufficient**, with most countries failing to meet the 10% CAADP/Malabo target, constraining effective delivery.

**3** **Weak coordination and fragmented mandates across sectors** continue to undermine policy coherence and slow implementation, especially at sub-national levels.

**4** **Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and data systems are underdeveloped,** limiting accountability, learning, and evidence-based adjustment.

**5** **Despite strong rhetorical commitments, youth inclusion remains largely aspirational** due to limited institutional mechanisms, weak budget allocations, and the absence of measurable indicators across most frameworks.

## PRIORITY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### FOR THE EAC SECRETARIAT

1 **Establish a multi-sectoral coordination unit** to align implementation of agriculture, trade, youth, nutrition and climate frameworks.

2 **Develop a harmonised regional M&E framework**, aligned with CAADP Biennial Review processes and African Union scorecards.

3 **Institutionalise regional youth engagement**, including a Youth in Agriculture Platform linked to AAYS objectives.

4 **Mobilise regional technical and financial resources and partnerships** to support implementation, knowledge sharing and scalable best practices.

### FOR EAC PARTNER STATES

1 **Mainstream and domesticate regional frameworks** by aligning CAADP, AfCFTA, AAYS, AFSH and FNSS priorities within National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIPs) and sectoral policies.

2 **Increase domestic investment in** agriculture**,** nutrition and youth-responsive programming, including dedicated budget lines aligned with CAADP/Malabo commitments.

3 **Strengthen inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms** to enable whole-of-government implementation across agriculture, trade, youth, health and climate.

4 **Operationalise youth inclusion** through formal participation platforms, innovation hubs, agripreneur incubators and targeted financing windows.

# Contents



# Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **AAYS** | African Agribusiness Youth Strategy |
| **AfCFTA** | African Continental Free Trade Area |
| **AFSH** | Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health |
| **AIDA** | Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa |
| **AIS** | Africa Industrialisation Strategy |
| **ARDP** | Agriculture and Rural Development Policy |
| **AU** | African Union |
| **BR** | Biennial Review |
| **CAADP** | Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme |
| **COMESA** | Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa |
| **DRC** | Democratic Republic of Congo |
| **EAC** | East African Community |
| **FNSS** | Food and Nutrition Security Strategy |
| **ICT** | Information and Communications Technology |
| **IGAD** | including Intergovernmental Authority on Development |
| **ISFM** | Integrated Soil Fertility Management |
| **M&E** | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| **NAADS** | National Agricultural Advisory Services |
| **NAIP** | National Agriculture Investment Plan |
| **NCTTCA** | Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority |
| **PPP** | Public-Private Partnership |
| **RAIP** | Regional Agricultural Investment Plan |
| **RAP** | Regional Agricultural Policy |
| **RASIP** | Regional Agrifood Systems Investment Plan |
| **REC** | Regional Economic Community |
| **SADC** | Southern African Development Community |
| **SME** | Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises |
| **SPS** | Sanitary and Phytosanitary |
| **TVET** | Technical and Vocational Education and Training |

# Introduction

Africa is experiencing a demographic shift, with its population projected to double by 2050 and youth accounting for over 60% of the total. This surge presents both an opportunity and a challenge, as youth unemployment continues to rise amid limited formal employment opportunities. Tackling this growing crisis demands bold and strategic interventions that not only create jobs but also foster inclusive, sustainable economic growth. Agriculture stands out as one of the most promising sectors to absorb and engage the continent's youth meaningfully. As Africa's largest employer and a cornerstone of economic activity, agriculture has vast potential to provide dignified employment, stimulate entrepreneurship, and reduce poverty. However, realising this potential requires a transformation of the sector from subsistence to market-oriented, technology-driven, and youth-led agribusiness. In response to these challenges, several continental and regional policy frameworks have been developed to guide agricultural transformation, regional trade, and youth participation in agrifood systems.

The East African Community (EAC) is a regional organisation established to promote integration and collaboration among eight Partner States, comprising the Republic of Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Kenya, Republic of Rwanda, Federal Republic of Somalia, Republic of South Sudan, Republic of Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania. The EAC focuses on enhancing economic, political, and social integration, with agriculture playing a central role in regional development.

Aligned with the African Union's (AU's) Agenda 2063 and First Five-Year Priority Programme, this assessment examines the extent to which EAC's agricultural and trade policy frameworks integrate youth concerns and support food systems transformation. It provides evidence-based insights and recommendations to guide policymakers and stakeholders in creating an enabling environment for youth-led agricultural development.

The interrelated objectives of this policy assessment are to:

- Assess the implementation status of regional frameworks related to seeds and plant varieties, soil health and fertilizer, trade, and markets in the EAC.
- Identify opportunities and challenges in the domestication of these frameworks at the national level.
- Examine the coherence between key continental agriculture, trade and youth-related frameworks and EAC policies.
- Evaluate the extent of youth inclusion in regional agricultural policies.
- Provide recommendations to address implementation gaps, enhance food systems, and boost youth employment and regional integration.

This policy assessment focuses on seeds and plant varieties, soil health and fertilizer, trade, and markets because they are critical enablers of agricultural transformation, regional integration, and youth employment in the EAC. These components directly influence productivity, market access, and the inclusivity and resilience of food systems, and are therefore essential for creating an enabling environment for young people's meaningful engagement in agriculture and agrifood systems.

# Implementation Status of Key Policy Frameworks

This section summarises the implementation status of selected continental and regional policy frameworks that influence agrifood systems transformation in the EAC. These frameworks were selected because of their relevance to agricultural productivity, trade integration, input systems (seeds and fertilizers), and youth participation in agriculture.

Continental Policies

- Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)
- African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)
- Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health (AFSH) Action Plan
- African Agribusiness Youth Strategy (AAYS)

Regional Policies

- EAC Regional Agriculture Investment Plan (RAIP)
- EAC Food and Nutrition Security Strategy (FNSS)
- EAC Youth Policy
- EAC Industrialisation Policy
- EAC Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Protocol and Standards
- EAC Seed and Plant Varieties Bill
- EAC Fertilizer Policy and Bill

***Figure 1.*** *Four continental and seven regional EAC policies selected for review*

# Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)

The CAADP, established in 2003, is a key framework under the AU's Agenda 2063, aimed at driving agricultural transformation across Africa. Its core objective is to eliminate hunger, reduce poverty, and stimulate economic growth through agriculture-led development. CAADP has strong potential to generate employment for at least 30% of youth in agricultural value chains, while promoting preferential participation of women and youth in agribusiness. A key commitment is that countries allocate at least 10% of national budgets to agriculture and rural development, with a target of 6% annual agricultural growth.

## Ratification, Domestication and Implementation

The EAC has prioritised the domestication and implementation of the CAADP and has adopted the associated processes. In 2017, the EAC developed and adopted a CAADP Compact aligned with the Malabo Declaration's goals and targets, which was signed by all major stakeholders in line with the CAADP principle of inclusiveness. These included Partner States, the EAC Secretariat, the AU/NEPAD, academia, research institutions, farmer organisations, the private sector, development partners and civil society. The Compact sets out shared commitments and expectations, providing a framework for long-term partnership and aligned investment in the agricultural sector.

To operationalise the Compact at regional level, the EAC developed the Regional Agriculture Investment Plan (RAIP, 2018–2025), which guides and harmonises national agricultural priorities while supporting regional and cross-border programmes. Anchored in the EAC CAADP Compact and Results Framework,[1] the RAIP addresses transboundary issues such as trade, market integration and shared natural resource management, and complements National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIPs).

EAC Partner States have demonstrated strong political will by signing CAADP compacts and participating in the CAADP Biennial Review (BR) process to track progress. The Compact and RAIP together support the domestication of CAADP at national level through NAIPs, which serve as the primary vehicles for implementing CAADP principles and coordinating agricultural investment.

However, despite widespread ratification, implementation has varied across countries, with disparities in resourcing, institutional coordination, and progress on policy targets.

Overall, the regional BR4 results indicate that the EAC is not yet on track to meet the Malabo 2025 targets, with persistent gaps in agricultural financing, poverty reduction, and intra-African agricultural trade across Partner States. The findings indicate that while all EAC Partner States have committed to the CAADP/Malabo process, progress remains uneven.

1. EAC. 2017. EAC Partner States sign CAADP Compact to transform Agriculture for inclusive economic development. East African Community.

Rwanda continues to lead regionally with a BR4 score of 8.07, though it still falls short of the 9.29 benchmark, while Burundi is the only EAC country to surpass the 10% CAADP public expenditure target, allocating 13.27% of its national budget to agriculture. Uganda and Kenya show steady improvement but remain below target, and Tanzania's performance declined compared to BR3. Overall, the EAC achieved an average BR4 score of 5.61, confirming that the region is not on track to meet Malabo 2025 targets, with persistent gaps in agricultural financing, hunger and poverty reduction, and intra-African trade, despite progress in climate resilience and mutual accountability.

Newer Partner States (Somalia, South Sudan and the DRC) continue to face structural and institutional constraints. Somalia and South Sudan have yet to finalise operational NAIPs or allocate adequate financing, recording BR4 scores of 2.49 and 3.51 respectively, while the DRC did not report in BR4.

Delays in adopting key frameworks, uneven integration of newer members, and trade-related bottlenecks, such as the absence of regional export guidelines and 'green channels' for perishable goods, continue to undermine implementation.

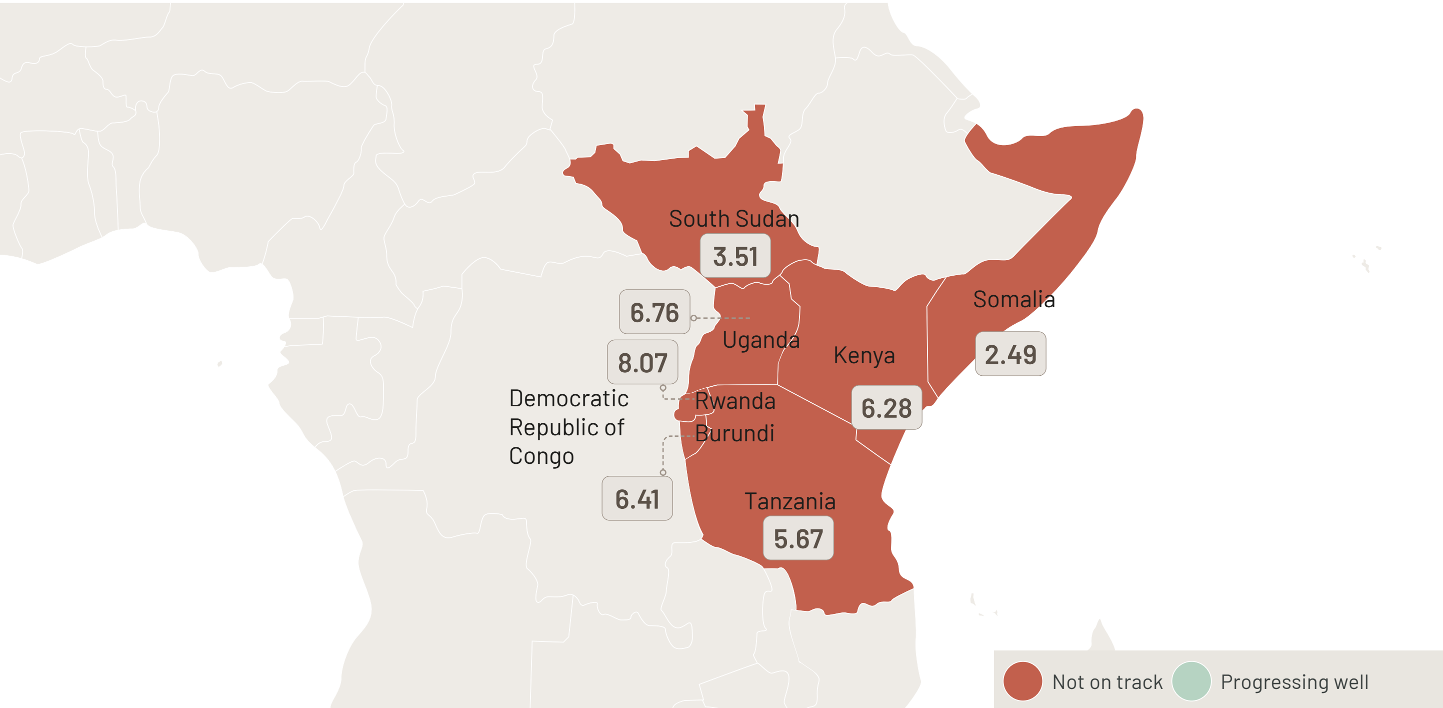



***Figure 2.*** *4th CAADP BR Scores (2015-2023) (Source: 4th CAADP BR report).*

***Table 1.*** *Status of the CAADP framework implementation*

| Country | Legal and Regulatory Changes | Institutional Frameworks | Financial Commitments (Target of 10%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Burundi | Developed NAIP (2021-2026) | Aligned to vision 2025 | Above target (13.2%) |
| Kenya | Gradual alignment via Agricultural Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy (ASTGS) (2019-2029) | Ongoing reforms; Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (MoALF) implementing ASTGS | Below target (4.0%) |
| Rwanda | Aligned policies; Soil Information Service Project (2020) | Fifth Strategic Plan for Agriculture Transformation (PSTA IV, 2018-2024); RAB and National Agricultural Export Development Board (NAEB) operational | Below target (8.6%) |
| Somalia | Integration ongoing | Weak institutions; integration into CAADP | Below target (1.7%) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| South Sudan | CAADP Compact signed 2013; weak framework | Fragmented; reliance on donors | Below target (3.0%) |
| Uganda | Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan (ASSP) II (2020/21–2024/25) aligned to National Development Plan (NDP) III | Draft frameworks; Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) coordination | Below target (3.3%) |
| Tanzania | Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP) II (2017/18–2027/28) with tax/levy reforms | One-stop centre for investors; MoA coordination | Below (4.4%) |

## Alignment with Continental and REC Policies and Frameworks

EAC's agricultural policy instruments are broadly consistent with continental frameworks such as Agenda 2063, the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation, and the Africa Agribusiness Youth Strategy (AAYS). At regional level, the EAC RAIP reflects similar objectives to those of other RECs, including the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP), in harmonising strategies for seeds, fertilizer, trade, and youth inclusion.

## Implementation Barriers and Opportunities Across Partner States

Despite strong political commitment to the CAADP/Malabo process, implementation across EAC Partner States remains uneven. Progress is constrained by financing shortfalls, institutional and monitoring gaps, delays in framework adoption by newer members, and weak operationalisation of youth engagement. Addressing these challenges presents opportunities to accelerate implementation through targeted support to newer Partner States, strengthened regional accountability mechanisms, and more coherent, youth-responsive investment planning.

***Table 2.*** *Priority CAADP implementation barriers and leverage points across EAC Partner States*

| Barrier | Description | Implication | Opportunity |
|---|---|---|---|
| Inadequate financing | None of the EAC countries have consistently met the commitment to 10% public expenditure under the Maputo Declaration, reaffirmed under Malabo; Rwanda's PSTA IV requires USD 3 billion over six years, and Uganda's allocations remain below target despite indirect investments. | Insufficient resources to implement NAIPs and achieve CAADP/Malabo targets, slowing agricultural transformation. | Mobilise domestic resources and align financing through RAIP- and Malabo-aligned investment planning; leverage AU BR and peer accountability mechanisms. |
| Monitoring and accountability gaps | Weak monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks limit the ability to track implementation progress and evaluate outcomes. | Reduced transparency, weak accountability, and limited evidence-based policymaking. | Establish a harmonised regional M&E framework aligned with RAIP and the Malabo Declaration, including youth-specific indicators and digitised BR reporting. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Delays in framework adoption** | DRC has not finalised its CAADP compact; Somalia is still integrating into EAC policy frameworks. | Slower regional harmonisation and uneven implementation across Partner States. | Provide targeted technical assistance and institutional strengthening to Somalia and DRC to fast-track NAIP and compact development; encourage peer-learning exchanges |

# African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

The AfCFTA is a flagship initiative of the AU's Agenda 2063 aimed at fostering inclusive and sustainable development across Africa.  By creating a single market for goods and services, AfCFTA seeks to deepen economic integration, promote the free movement of people, and facilitate trade. The agreement covers trade in goods and services, investment, intellectual property rights, competition policy, and digital trade, with a central objective of progressively eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers, liberalising services, enhancing investment cooperation, and improving customs procedures. AfCFTA has the potential to lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty and raise the incomes of a further 68 million people.

## Ratification, Domestication and Implementation

Six EAC Partner States have ratified the AfCFTA Agreement and deposited their instruments of ratification (Figure 3). South Sudan and Somalia have signed the agreement and are currently in the process of ratification and integration. Kenya and Rwanda were among the first countries to ratify the agreement and have advanced considerably in legal domestication and institutional setup. Uganda has also made substantial progress, including establishing a dedicated Ministry for EAC Affairs to oversee integration. Tanzania and **Burundi** ratified the agreement in 2021 and have initiated legal and institutional reforms aligned with AfCFTA and EAC frameworks. The DRC, having joined the EAC in 2022, committed to adopting relevant regional laws and protocols, while Somalia ratified EAC membership in March 2024 and is now integrating into both EAC and AfCFTA frameworks.

## Alignment with Continental and REC Policies and Frameworks

At its core, the AfCFTA seeks to establish a unified African market by removing trade barriers, reducing tariffs and harmonising trade-related regulations across the continent. These objectives are complementary to the EAC's long-standing economic integration agenda, as reflected in its Customs Union (2005) and Common Market Protocol (2010), which promote the free movement of goods, services, capital and people within the bloc.

EAC Partner States have embraced the AfCFTA as a reinforcing instrument for existing regional frameworks. Legal harmonisation efforts, including the alignment of national trade, investment and customs laws with AfCFTA protocols, signal a deliberate effort to ensure regulatory coherence across national, regional and continental levels. This coherence is essential for reducing administrative barriers to cross-border trade and ensuring that regional and continental initiatives operate synergistically.

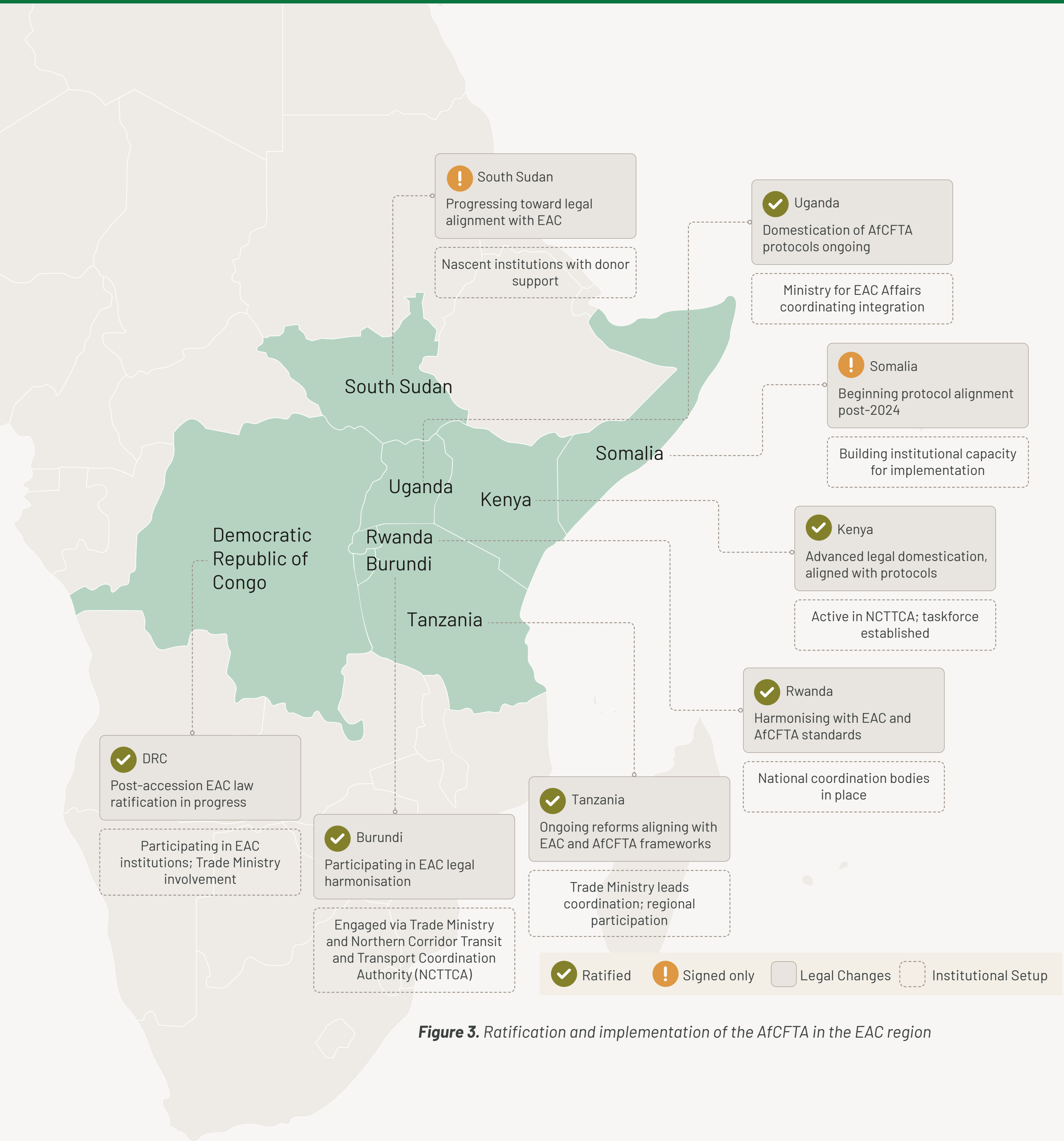



***Figure 3.*** *Ratification and implementation of the AfCFTA in the EAC region*

Countries such as Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda have made notable progress in domesticating AfCFTA provisions, supported by active participation in regional coordination mechanisms such as the Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority (NCTTCA). These mechanisms contribute to operationalising both EAC and AfCFTA trade facilitation objectives by strengthening transport and logistics infrastructure, improving customs efficiency and reducing transit times along key trade corridors such as the Mombasa–Kigali and Mombasa–Kampala corridors.

These efforts are further reinforced by broader sub-regional integration initiatives, including those under the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). Institutions such as the Trade and Development Bank (TDB) play an important role in supporting infrastructure development, trade finance and investment promotion across EAC and COMESA partner states, strengthening alignment between AfCFTA and REC-level frameworks.

## Implementation Barriers and Opportunities Across Partner States

Despite progress, AfCFTA implementation across the EAC remains uneven. Capacity and legal alignment challenges persist in several Partner States, particularly newer and fragile members, while financing and data gaps constrain trade facilitation and limit the ability to assess inclusive outcomes. These challenges also present opportunities to accelerate implementation through targeted legal and institutional support, expanded use of AfCFTA instruments, and stronger regional coordination and peer learning.

***Table 3.*** *Priority AfCFTA implementation barriers and leverage points across EAC Partner States*

| Barrier | Description | Implication | Opportunity |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Institutional and capacity constraints** | Nascent systems and limited human resources slow integration, particularly in South Sudan and Somalia; DRC is still aligning national laws with EAC and AfCFTA requirements. | Slower and uneven pace of AfCFTA implementation across Partner States. | Support Somalia and DRC to complete legal and institutional alignment with AfCFTA requirements. |
| **Uneven legal and regulatory harmonisation** | Kenya and Rwanda have made notable progress, while other countries continue to navigate complex domestic reforms. | Inconsistent application of AfCFTA provisions across the region. | Provide targeted support for legal harmonisation through development partners and regional institutions. |
| **Weak data and monitoring systems** | Lack of disaggregated data on AfCFTA beneficiaries, particularly youth, women and informal traders. | Difficulty assessing equitable outcomes and tracking progress. | Establish regional coordination mechanisms to improve transparency, benchmarking and performance monitoring. |

# Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health (AFSH) Action Plan

The AFSH Action Plan is a 10-year continental framework adopted in June 2023 by the AU **to address declining soil fertility and low agricultural productivity.** With an **estimated 75% of the continent's cultivated land degraded**, the plan promotes sustainable fertilizer use, integrated soil fertility management (ISFM), enabling policies, farmer capacity-building, and increased investment in soil health.2 The goal is to ensure that soil health is addressed in a **holistic, sustainable, and context-specific manner**, benefiting all agricultural sub-sectors, including crop farming, livestock, inland fisheries, and forestry.

## Ratification, Domestication and Implementation

The AFSH Action Plan, while not a legally binding treaty requiring ratification, has received political endorsement and programmatic support from EAC Partner States, most notably through Kenya's hosting of the AFSH Summit in May 2024. The Summit led to the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration on Fertilizer and Soil Health, formalising continental commitment to restoring soil health, improving fertilizer use and promoting sustainable agricultural productivity.

At the national level, countries such as Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda have taken steps to align agricultural and soil management strategies with the AFSH Action Plan, including promoting balanced fertilizer use, scaling up ISFM and strengthening soil health monitoring systems. These efforts are embedded in updated national policies and increasingly reflected in NAIPs, indicating gradual domestication of continental goals.

Regionally, the EAC has anchored these commitments within its broader policy frameworks, particularly the RAIP, which coordinates implementation of CAADP and soil health objectives across Partner States.

2. African Union. 2023. Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan (2023-2033). Addis Ababa: African Union.

## Alignment with Continental and REC Policies and Frameworks

Implementation of the AFSH Action Plan in the EAC is closely aligned with continental frameworks including CAADP and the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security. EAC Partner States have adopted the CAADP Compact and developed the RAIP to harmonise national investments with regional priorities, with soil health positioned as a central pillar for improving productivity and resilience through sustainable land management.

Institutionally, the African Union Commission (AUC) has designated the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) as the Secretariat for the Soil Initiative for Africa and the AFSH Action Plan, with coordination support from the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), including the EAC. Within the EAC, the Sectoral Council on Agriculture and Food Security oversees policy domestication, ensuring soil health commitments are embedded in regional strategies and monitored for alignment.

The EAC's 2024 regional review on Highly Hazardous Pesticides further demonstrates growing policy coherence between soil health, plant protection and environmental safety, reinforcing the principles of sustainable land management promoted under the AFSH Action Plan.

## Implementation Barriers and Opportunities Across Partner States

Despite strong political commitment, implementation of the AFSH Action Plan across EAC Partner States remains uneven. Financing shortfalls, fragmented institutional arrangements, technical capacity gaps in soil health systems, and weak monitoring constrain progress. Addressing these challenges presents opportunities to accelerate implementation through closer integration of soil health priorities into RAIP and NAIPs, strengthened regional coordination, scaled b, and a harmonised soil health monitoring framework aligned with CAADP processes.

***Table 4.*** *Priority AFSH Action Plan implementation barriers and leverage points across EAC Partner States*

| Barrier | Description | Implication | Opportunity |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Inadequate financing** | Few countries have met the Maputo Declaration (reaffirmed under Malabo) commitment to allocate 10% of national budgets to agriculture; fiscal pressures from COVID-19 and rising public debt have constrained funding. | Limited investment in soil health monitoring, fertilizer subsidy programmes and extension services. | Integrate soil health goals into RAIP and NAIPs to better align domestic resource mobilisation with continental priorities. |
| **Limited technical capacity** | Gaps in soil testing, data management and ISFM implementation persist in some countries. | Restricted ability to operationalise soil health interventions effectively. | Leverage FARA's role as continental secretariat to strengthen capacity-building and technical assistance through AUDA-NEPAD and EAC structures. |
| **Weak data and monitoring systems** | Lack of disaggregated data on AFSH Action Plan interventions limits the ability to quantify outcomes, track beneficiaries (including youth and women) and identify bottlenecks. | Evidence-based planning, performance tracking and accountability are constrained. | Develop a regional soil health monitoring and reporting framework integrated into CAADP tracking mechanisms. |

# African Agribusiness Youth Strategy (AAYS)

The AAYS is a continental policy initiative designed to promote youth involvement in agribusiness and create harmonised employment opportunities across Africa.[3] However, unlike some continental policy instruments, the AAYS is not a legally binding framework, and therefore does not require formal ratification by Member States. As a result, domestication and implementation across EAC Partner States remain uneven, with most countries integrating youth agribusiness priorities indirectly through broader agricultural or youth development policies. It serves as a reference framework for AU Member States to integrate youth agribusiness into NAIPs, youth employment strategies, entrepreneurship development plans, and national qualification frameworks, while allowing flexibility in national implementation.

## Ratification, Domestication and Implementation

To date, no EAC Partner State has formally ratified or adopted the AAYS as a binding legal instrument. Domestication therefore remains uneven and largely aspirational, with youth-focused actions embedded in broader agricultural or national youth policies rather than explicitly aligned with AAYS. Nevertheless, at least half of EAC countries are implementing ambitious initiatives that closely reflect AAYS priorities, indicating that the strategy is being indirectly domesticated in practice.

At regional level, the EAC Youth Policy (2016–2026) provides a foundation for youth empowerment, complemented by frameworks such as the EAC Climate Change Master Plan (2021–2031), which highlights green jobs and agribusiness opportunities. National governments have also established Youth Development Funds, Youth Councils and related institutional reforms to support youth agribusiness enterprises.

Country experiences demonstrate growing momentum. Kenya has promoted urban and digital agriculture through initiatives such as City Shamba, ASTGS-supported incubation and Digital Farmers Kenya. Uganda has expanded youth access to land, finance and mentorship through YETA and innovative models such as Akatale on Cloud, a black soldier fly initiative. Rwanda's PSTA IV includes explicit youth employment and entrepreneurship targets, supported by the ICT-based Hinga Weze extension platform. Tanzania's Building a Better Tomorrow–Youth in Agribusiness (BBT-YIA) programme represents the region's most ambitious effort, while Burundi, South Sudan, Somalia and the DRC are at earlier stages but host emerging youth-led agribusiness enterprises.

## Alignment with Continental and REC Policies and Frameworks

The AAYS is well aligned with several high-level policy frameworks, including the AU's Agenda 2063, the Malabo Declaration, and the CAADP. It is also complementary to regional efforts such as the EAC Youth Policy and the EAC-FAO Youth in Agriculture programme. However, national-level alignment remains inconsistent. Many EAC countries have overlapping commitments to multiple RECs, including Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), COMESA, and SADC, which leads to conflicting or fragmented policy adoption and diluted implementation capacity. While the AAYS shares goals with these frameworks, the absence of harmonised implementation mechanisms across RECs has limited its impact. To achieve full policy coherence, EAC Partner States must embed AAYS priorities within their NAIPs, youth employment strategies, and agricultural transformation frameworks, ensuring that goals, indicators, and investments align across levels.

3. African Union. 2022. African Agribusiness Youth Strategy. Addis Ababa: African Union.

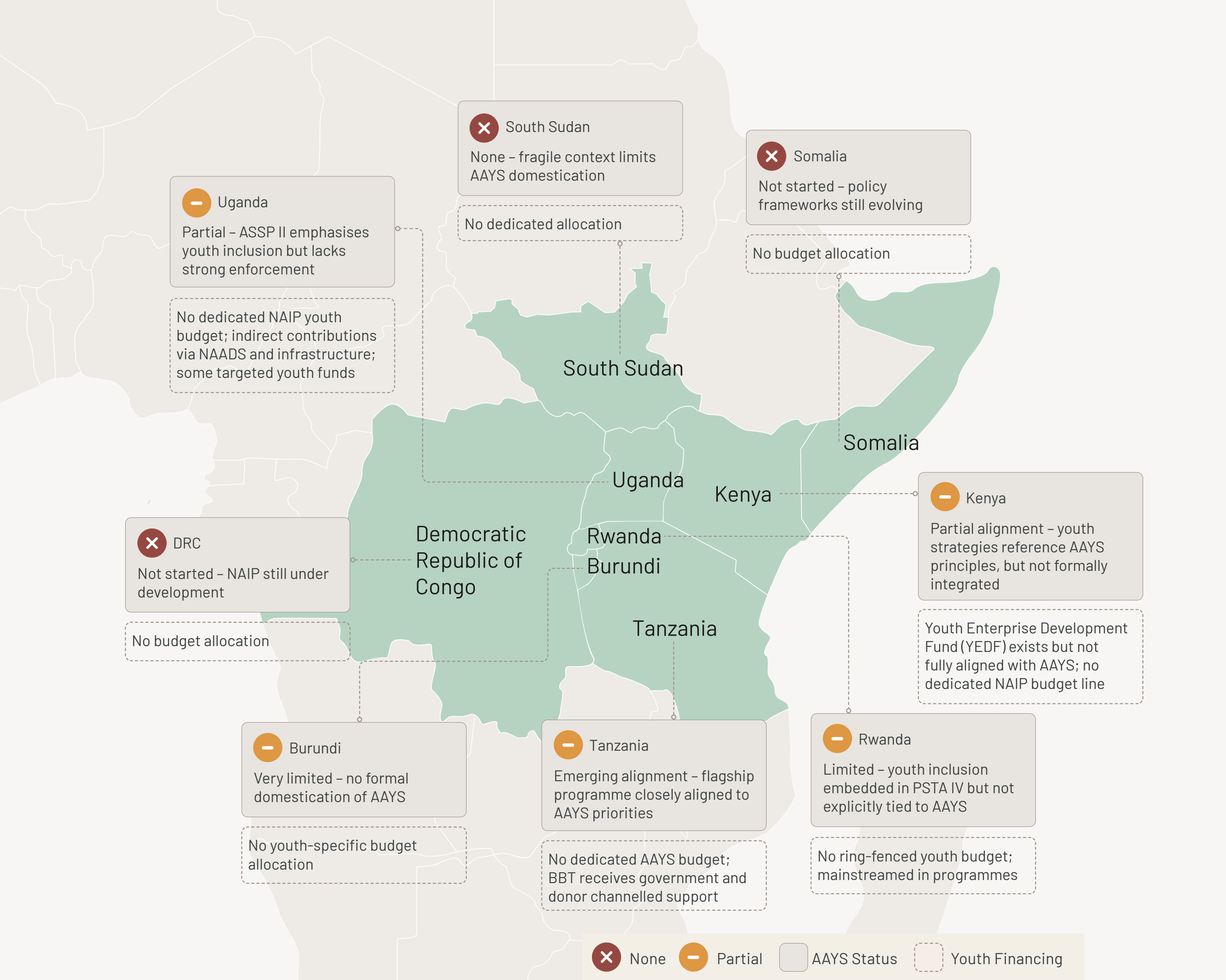



***Figure 4.*** *AAYS domestication in EAC Partner States*

## Implementation Barriers and Opportunities Across Partner States

Implementation of the AAYS across the EAC remains uneven due to weak legal domestication, limited integration into national planning processes, and inadequate mechanisms to track youth outcomes. These constraints have limited accountability, sustainability, and scale. At the same time, the AAYS offers a strong framework to unlock youth participation in agriculture if embedded more systematically in national policies, financing frameworks, and regional monitoring systems.

***Table 5.*** *Priority AAYS implementation barriers and leverage points across EAC Partner States*

| Key Barriers | Implication | Opportunities for Action |
|---|---|---|
| **Lack of formal ratification and legal domestication** | Weak accountability and fragmented execution of the AAYS across EAC Partner States. | Develop and adopt national AAYS protocols and legislative instruments. |
| **Limited integration with national agricultural and youth policies** | AAYS priorities are not systematically embedded in national planning and implementation processes. | Mainstream AAYS into NAIPs and youth employment strategies. |
| **Institutional fragmentation and weak monitoring capacity** | Duplicated efforts, inefficiencies, and limited ability to track impact or scale successful models due to lack of youth-specific indicators. | Establish regional M&E frameworks with youth indicators and peer learning platforms. |

# EAC Regional Agriculture Investment Plan (RAIP)

The EAC RAIP (2018–2025) is the region's strategic framework for transforming agriculture. The RAIP serves as the primary regional instrument for operationalising the CAADP Compact within the EAC by aligning regional agricultural priorities and supporting the coordination of National Agriculture Investment Plans (NAIPs). It aimed to address food insecurity, low productivity, and trade barriers, while ensuring coherence with the CAADP Results Framework and complementarity with NAIPs. The RAIP also mobilised financial and technical support for advancing regional integration, agricultural development, and poverty reduction. However, as part of the new CAADP Kampala Declaration and the CAADP Strategy and Action Plan (2026–2035), the RAIP is now being revised into the Regional Agrifood Systems Investment Plan (RASIP). The RASIP reflects a more holistic approach that integrates food systems, climate resilience, nutrition, gender, youth inclusion, and digital innovation.

## Ratification, Domestication and Implementation

A review of RAIP implementation across the EAC shows that while political commitment exists, progress remains uneven. Rwanda continues to set the regional benchmark with strong policy alignment and consistent performance in the CAADP BR, while Kenya and Uganda demonstrate moderate but steady progress. Tanzania and Burundi are constrained by weak coordination and underfunding, whereas South Sudan and Somalia are still in early stages of integration due to fragility and late accession. A common challenge across all Partner States is the inadequate allocation of public resources to agriculture, falling short of the 10% CAADP target. The transition from RAIP to RASIP offers an important opportunity to consolidate gains, harmonise efforts, and close gaps in financing, monitoring, and youth and gender inclusion.

While ratification is not a precondition, effective domestication into national planning documents such as NAIPs is a key indicator of commitment. Countries that have revised their NAIPs to reflect RAIP priorities tend to show stronger implementation momentum. Regional harmonisation is constrained by the absence of a common monitoring framework and by disparities in institutional capacity. There is an urgent need for regional technical support and peer learning platforms to facilitate consistent EAC Agriculture and Rural Development Policy (ARDP) implementation across the EAC.

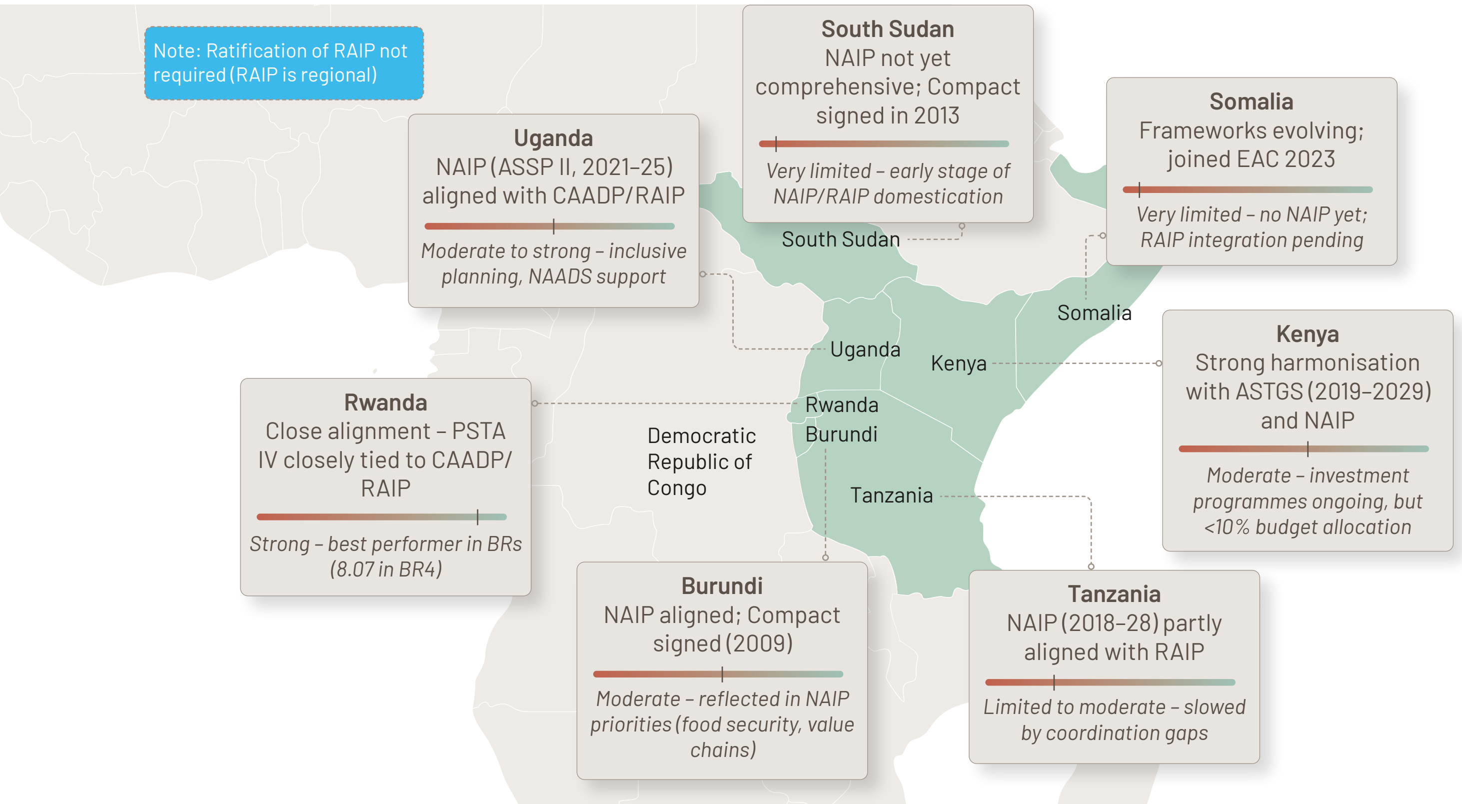



*__Figure 5.__ Ratification and implementation of the RAIP in the EAC*

## Alignment with Continental and REC Policies and Frameworks

The RAIP is aligned with key continental and REC frameworks, including the CAADP, the Malabo Declaration, and Agenda 2063. It also supports the AfCFTA agenda and complements related policy frameworks under COMESA and IGAD.

## Implementation Barriers and Opportunities Across Partner States

Several implementation barriers impede the effective delivery of RAIP priorities, particularly in relation to youth inclusion and institutional coordination. Table 6 highlights the implications of these constraints and provides practical opportunities to strengthen coherence, resourcing, and accountability across regional and national frameworks.

***Table 6.*** *Priority RAIP implementation barriers and leverage points across EAC Partner States*

| Barrier | Description | Implication | Opportunity |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Limited mainstreaming of youth inclusion** | RAIP recognises youth as key to transformation, with initiatives in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania, but youth targets are not systematically embedded. | Youth engagement remains fragmented and largely donor-driven, limiting scale and sustainability. | Embed youth-specific goals and budget lines in NAIPs; institutionalise youth participation in RAIP governance; scale youth-led agribusiness incubation. |
| **Weak institutional mechanisms for youth engagement** | Existing initiatives operate without strong, formalised institutional platforms at regional and national levels. | Limited coordination and accountability for youth-focused interventions. | Institutionalise youth participation within RAIP and future RASIP governance structures. |
| **Overlapping REC memberships** | RAIP aligns with CAADP, Malabo, Agenda 2063 and AfCFTA, but overlapping REC memberships lead to duplicative reporting and fragmented implementation. | Increased transaction costs and reduced coherence across regional and continental commitments. | Streamline coordination across RECs; strengthen integration of RAIP into NAIPs to align with continental and global goals. |

# EAC Food and Nutrition Security Strategy (FNSS)

The EAC FNSS, launched in 2018, is the region's primary framework for addressing food insecurity and malnutrition and is anchored in the EAC Food and Nutrition Security Policy (FNSP) adopted in 2014. Building on the EAC ARDP, the FNSS expands the focus beyond agricultural production to position nutritional outcomes as a central measure of success, adopting a systems approach to ensure food systems deliver food that is sufficient, safe, diverse and nutritionally adequate.

## Ratification, Domestication and Implementation

The FNSS is not a legally binding instrument requiring parliamentary ratification but was regionally endorsed by the EAC Council of Ministers. Its effectiveness therefore depends on integration into national strategies, policies and development plans by individual Partner States.

Progress in domestication varies across the region. Rwanda and Uganda have made notable efforts to reflect FNSS principles in national nutrition action plans, including school feeding programmes, maternal nutrition campaigns and food fortification initiatives. Kenya shows moderate alignment through community health programmes and food safety legislation, while Burundi and South Sudan demonstrate limited progress due to capacity constraints and weak institutional coordination.

A major constraint to full implementation is the **budgetary architecture** of Partner States. Nutrition programmes remain **heavily donor-dependent**, with limited integration into domestic public expenditure frameworks, while the absence of a harmonised **M&E framework** constrains progress tracking and region-wide learning.

## Alignment with Continental and REC Policies and Frameworks

The EAC FNSS demonstrates **strong alignment** with key continental and regional policy frameworks, positioning it as an important instrument for advancing shared food system, nutrition and human development objectives across Africa. By reinforcing continental commitments on nutrition, resilience and inclusive development, and aligning with regional drought resilience and early warning initiatives, the FNSS supports coordinated, multi-sectoral action across agriculture, health, education and social protection. Overlapping memberships across RECs highlight the importance of strengthened harmonisation and joint planning to ensure coherent implementation and reduce duplication.

Continental Policies

| | |
|---|---|
| **CAADP – Pillar 3** | Food and nutrition security; multi-sectoral approaches integrating agriculture, health, education and social protection to address malnutrition and improve dietary outcomes. |
| **Malabo Declaration** | Nutrition targets, including halving stunting among children under five and increasing household dietary diversity through nutrition-sensitive agriculture, food fortification, and maternal and child nutrition. |
| **AU Agenda 2063** | Human capital development, inclusive growth and gender equity, with improved nutrition outcomes supporting education, productivity and economic participation. |

Regional Policies

| | |
|---|---|
| **IGAD Drought Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI)** | Early warning systems, nutrition surveillance, emergency preparedness, and resilience-building in the context of climate-induced shocks and protracted crises. |
| **Regional Economic Community Coordination (EAC, IGAD, COMESA)** | Need for harmonised planning, streamlined institutional roles, pooled technical assistance and consolidated monitoring to reduce duplication and improve policy coherence. |

***Figure 6.*** *FNSS alignment with regional and continental level policy*

## Implementation Barriers and Opportunities Across Partner States

Despite its strategic relevance, implementation of the EAC FNSS remains uneven across Partner States. Low domestic financing, weak regional monitoring, and limited sub-national awareness constrain sustainability and accountability. Addressing these gaps offers opportunities to strengthen integration of nutrition priorities into national systems and improve regional data coordination and learning.

Effective implementation of the FNSS requires strong coordination across sectors including agriculture, health, education, and social protection to address the multi-dimensional drivers of food insecurity and malnutrition.

***Table 7.*** *Priority FNSS implementation barriers and leverage points across EAC Partner States*

| Barrier | Description | Implication | Opportunity |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Low domestic investment in nutrition programming** | Most FNSS-related nutrition interventions are financed through short-term, donor-funded projects rather than integrated into national public expenditure frameworks. | Limited sustainability and fragmented planning and execution of nutrition interventions. | Embed FNSS priorities into national planning and budgeting frameworks to strengthen domestic resource allocation and accountability. |
| **Absence of a harmonised M&E system** | Data on nutrition outcomes are scattered, not standardised, and lack disaggregation by age and gender. | Inability to track progress, assess impact, identify gaps or support evidence-based policymaking at regional level. | Establish joint REC monitoring platforms with COMESA and IGAD and develop harmonised indicators linked to AU frameworks. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Limited awareness at sub-national level** | Low awareness of FNSS objectives among local officials and frontline workers, particularly in rural and marginalised communities. | Weak grassroots implementation and poor regional reporting on progress toward EAC and AU nutrition commitments. | Strengthen communication, capacity-building and institutionalised support mechanisms at sub-national level. |

Overall, the FNSS provides an important regional framework for addressing food and nutrition challenges in the EAC, although stronger coordination mechanisms, sustained financing, and improved monitoring systems are required to enhance its impact.

# EAC Youth Policy

The EAC Youth Policy provides a regional framework for promoting youth participation in economic development, including opportunities within agriculture and agribusiness value chains. Originally adopted in 2013 and revised in 2021 to reflect new dynamics and aspirations, the policy addresses key thematic areas such as education, employment, health, innovation, peacebuilding, and entrepreneurship. Importantly, it explicitly identifies agriculture and agribusiness as critical sectors for engaging youth, thereby positioning young people as central agents in driving food systems transformation and inclusive growth. Despite its strategic importance, implementation of the EAC Youth Policy remains uneven across Partner States due to weak institutional coordination, limited domestication at national level, and insufficient dedicated financing. The policy is anchored in the EAC's broader integration agenda and serves as a strategic tool to operationalise the AAYS at the regional and national levels.

## Ratification, Domestication and Implementation

The EAC Youth Policy has been ratified by the EAC Council of Ministers and the Summit of Heads of State; however, its domestication remains uneven across Partner States. Rwanda and Uganda have made more visible progress by embedding regional youth priorities into national development frameworks, supported by dedicated youth ministries and legal arrangements that enable cross-sectoral implementation. Rwanda's YouthConnekt model integrates entrepreneurship, mentorship and agribusiness incubation, while Uganda has institutionalised youth representation through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and related agrifood programmes.

In contrast, other Partner States have faced challenges in domestication due to bureaucratic inertia, limited legal harmonisation and competing policy priorities. In the absence of a uniform enforcement mechanism or a regional monitoring and accountability framework, implementation largely depends on national political will and the availability of financial and technical resources.

## Alignment with Continental and REC Policies and Frameworks

The EAC Youth Policy is closely aligned with key continental and regional frameworks, reinforcing its strategic role in promoting youth-led development, inclusive growth and agricultural transformation. By complementing continental strategies on youth, agriculture and trade, and creating synergies with REC initiatives, the policy provides a coherent foundation for harmonised, multi-sectoral implementation across agriculture, trade, innovation and climate resilience.

Continental Policies

| | |
|---|---|
| **AAYS** | Integration of youth into agricultural value chains through entrepreneurship and skills development. |
| **CAADP / Malabo Declaration** | Youth employment in agriculture and improved access to markets. |
| **AU Agenda 2063** | Aspiration 6 on youth-led development and Aspiration 1 on inclusive growth and sustainable development. |
| **AfCFTA** | Youth-led innovation and business participation in regional and continental markets. |

Regional Policies

| | |
|---|---|
| **COMESA and IGAD Youth Initiatives** | Synergies on youth empowerment, regional economic participation, and youth engagement in regional development and resilience agendas. |
| **EAC Industrialisation Policy** | Support for youth participation in industrial development, innovation and entrepreneurship. |

***Figure 7.*** *EAC Youth Policy alignment with regional and continental level policy*

## Implementation Barriers and Opportunities Across Partner States

Despite strong political endorsement, implementation of the EAC Youth Policy remains uneven across Partner States. Weak financing, limited coordination with sectoral policies, and insufficient systems to track youth outcomes constrain impact. These gaps present opportunities to strengthen integration with key sectors, institutionalise youth participation, and improve accountability through dedicated monitoring mechanisms.

***Table 8.*** *Priority EAC Youth Policy implementation barriers and leverage points across EAC Partner States*

| Barrier | Description | Implication | Opportunity |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Insufficient financing** | Youth development programmes are underfunded, heavily reliant on external partners, and not embedded in long-term national budgets. | Limited sustainability and reduced scale of youth policy implementation. | Integrate the Youth Policy into sectoral frameworks to secure cross-cutting budget support; engage private sector and development partners to fund scalable youth-led programmes. |
| **Weak institutional coordination** | Ministries responsible for youth operate in silos, with limited coordination with agriculture, education, finance and trade ministries. | Fragmented implementation and missed opportunities for cross-sectoral impact. | Integrate the Youth Policy into sector-specific strategies, particularly agriculture, industrialisation and digital innovation. |
| **Inadequate data and monitoring systems** | M&E systems are weak or absent, and data on youth participation is not systematically collected or disaggregated. | Limited ability to track progress, assess impact or support accountability. | Establish a regional scorecard or digital dashboard to track youth policy domestication and implementation. |

# EAC Industrialisation Policy

The EAC Industrialisation Policy (2012–2032) guides the transformation of the region from a raw-material-exporting economy into a competitive and diversified industrial hub, with a strong emphasis on agro-industrialisation. By promoting value addition, agro-processing, innovation and integration into regional and global value chains, the policy seeks to harness the region's agricultural potential. Its strategic objective is to drive structural transformation, increase intra-EAC trade, improve productivity and competitiveness, and create employment, particularly in sectors of comparative advantage such as agri-food processing, textiles, leather and pharmaceuticals. Agriculture is positioned as a central pillar for private sector investment, SME development and rural industrialisation.

## Ratification, Domestication and Implementation

The policy was adopted by the EAC Council of Ministers in 2012 and serves as a guiding framework for national industrialisation strategies across Partner States, with domestication reflecting differing national priorities and capacities. Kenya and Tanzania have made notable progress through the establishment of Special Economic Zones, Export Processing Zones and agro-industrial parks to stimulate value addition and cluster-based development, while Rwanda has focused on targeted investment in value chains such as horticulture and dairy through agro-industrial parks.

Despite these efforts, implementation across the region remains fragmented. Many Partner States face challenges aligning national industrialisation strategies with the regional policy due to inconsistent resource allocation, limited legal enforceability and technical capacity constraints. The absence of a binding protocol or regional monitoring framework further limits accountability and coordination.

## Alignment with Continental and REC Policies and Frameworks

The EAC Industrialisation Policy is strongly aligned with key continental frameworks supporting industrial transformation, regional integration and sustainable development. It aligns closely with the AfCFTA through its focus on strengthening regional value chains, promoting industrial competitiveness and facilitating intra-regional trade in processed goods. The policy also supports the CAADP, particularly Pillar 2 on market access and infrastructure, by emphasising agribusiness, agro-processing and value addition. It complements the AAYS by promoting enterprise development, SME support and job creation in agro-industrial sectors, and aligns with the Africa Industrialisation Strategy (AIS) and the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa (AIDA) through its emphasis on harmonised industrial policy, regional manufacturing hubs and competitive ecosystems.

In addition, the policy contributes to implementation of the AFSH Action Plan by stimulating demand for improved agricultural inputs through agro-industrial zones and processing clusters, strengthening linkages to soil health and input supply chains. Overall, it supports the AU's Agenda 2063 aspirations for inclusive growth, regional integration and sustainable economic transformation.

Continental Policies

| | |
|---|---|
| **AfCFTA** | Promotes regional value chains, trade facilitation, and industrial competitiveness. |
| **CAADP** | Supports agribusiness development, value addition, and agro-processing. |
| **AAYS** | Encourages youth enterprise development and SME support in agro-industrial sectors. |
| **AIS and AIDA** | Advances inclusive and integrated industrial development across the continent. |
| **AFSH Action Plan** | Stimulates demand for fertilizers and inputs through agro-industrial growth. |
| **AU Agenda 2063** | Contributes to inclusive growth, sustainable development, and regional integration. |

***Figure 8.*** *Summary of EAC Industrialisation Policy alignment*

## Implementation Barriers and Opportunities Across Partner States

Implementation of the EAC Industrialisation Policy remains uneven across Partner States due to financing constraints, infrastructure gaps, and regulatory and coordination challenges. These barriers limit SME growth, regional value chain development, and inclusive industrialisation. Targeted financing, regional infrastructure development, and regulatory harmonisation aligned with AfCFTA offer clear opportunities to accelerate implementation.

***Table 9.*** *Priority EAC Industrialisation Policy implementation barriers and leverage points across EAC Partner States*

| Barrier | Description | Implication | Opportunity |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Limited access to affordable and targeted financing** | Industrial start-ups and SMEs face constraints in accessing finance, particularly youth- and women-led enterprises that lack collateral or credit history. | Constrained growth of SMEs, exclusion of youth and women entrepreneurs, and limited industrial diversification. | Establish targeted financial instruments and strengthen public-private partnerships (PPPs) to unlock finance for agro-processing and industrial SMEs. |
| **Infrastructure deficits** | Erratic energy supply, poor road and rail connectivity, and weak ICT infrastructure across the region. | High cost of doing business, reduced investment, and weak cross-border industrial integration. | Invest in energy, transport and ICT infrastructure and develop regional agro-industrial corridors anchored in key value chains. |
| **Regulatory inconsistencies across countries** | Differing tax regimes, licensing requirements, investment codes and quality standards. | Investor uncertainty and barriers to cross-border investment and integrated industrial zones. | Harmonise regulatory frameworks and apply mutual recognition of standards under AfCFTA. |

# East African Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Protocol and Standards

The SPS Protocol and its associated standards are central to regional agricultural development, trade and public health. As a legally binding instrument under the EAC Treaty, the protocol safeguards human, animal and plant health by providing a harmonised regulatory framework that facilitates safe intra- and extra-regional trade. Through harmonised measures, laboratory systems, inspection protocols and mutual recognition mechanisms, it ensures compliance with food safety and quality requirements and supports implementation of the EAC Common Market Protocol, the FNSS, and the AfCFTA trade in goods agenda.

## Ratification, Domestication and Implementation

The SPS Protocol has been ratified by the majority of EAC Partner States and is in various stages of domestication. Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda have demonstrated leadership by establishing National SPS Committees, updating legislation, and improving coordination mechanisms across agriculture, trade, and health sectors. These countries have also upgraded laboratory testing capacity, border inspection points, and developed risk-based import/export protocols. However, other EAC countries, including Burundi, South Sudan, and the DRC, are still working to domesticate the protocol, hindered by institutional fragmentation, inadequate inter-ministerial coordination, and limited resources.

Implementation is further challenged by inconsistencies in the interpretation and enforcement of SPS regulations. While some countries have developed stand-alone SPS strategies, others subsume SPS under broader food safety or agricultural health frameworks, resulting in varied progress. The EAC Secretariat continues to support harmonisation efforts through technical working groups and regional training initiatives.

## Alignment with Continental and REC Policies and Frameworks

The SPS Protocol is closely aligned with a range of continental and global frameworks that shape the region’s trade, agriculture and food safety agenda. By promoting harmonised standards, reducing technical trade barriers and ensuring compliance with internationally recognised SPS measures, the protocol supports safe cross-border trade, strengthens regional integration under the AfCFTA, and enhances the credibility and competitiveness of EAC agricultural value chains. It also reinforces continental commitments on agricultural productivity, market access, food safety and nutrition, while indirectly enabling opportunities for youth participation in agribusiness and food exports through more predictable and robust trade systems.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Global Policies | **World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on SPS Measures** | Compliance with internationally recognised rules on plant and animal health and food safety, enhancing export credibility and competitiveness. |
| Continental Policies | **AfCFTA – Protocol on Trade in Goods (Annex 7 on SPS Measures)** | Harmonised SPS standards, reduction of technical trade barriers, facilitation of cross-border trade while maintaining health and safety standards. |
| | **CAADP** | Support to agricultural productivity, market access and food safety through improved regulatory environments. |
| | **Malabo Declaration** | Contribution to commitments on intra-African trade in agricultural commodities through strengthened SPS systems. |
| | **AFSH Action Plan** | Quality assurance of agricultural inputs, including fertilizers, and support to safe and sustainable agricultural production. |
| | **AAYS** | Indirect alignment by enabling predictable trade systems that create opportunities for youth in agribusiness, value addition and food exports. |
| Regional Policies | **FNSS** | Ensuring that traded food products are safe, nutritious and traceable, supporting food and nutrition security outcomes. |

***Figure 9.*** *Summary of SPS Protocol Policy alignment*

## Implementation Barriers and Opportunities Across Partner States

Implementation of the EAC SPS Protocol remains uneven across Partner States due to infrastructure and skills gaps, high compliance costs, and weak enforcement. These constraints undermine food safety, export readiness, and regional credibility. Addressing them offers opportunities to strengthen harmonisation through regional centres of excellence, digital SPS systems, and targeted capacity development.

***Table 10.*** *Priority SPS Protocol implementation barriers and leverage points across EAC Partner States*

| Barrier | Description | Implication | Opportunity |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Infrastructure deficits** | Lack of accredited laboratories, under-resourced border inspection posts, and outdated diagnostic facilities. | Delays and inaccuracies in SPS assessments; weakened food safety, export readiness, and regional credibility. | Invest via PPPs in laboratory upgrades; establish Regional SPS Centres of Excellence to support testing, research and standards. |
| **Technical capacity gaps** | Shortages of trained SPS personnel (inspectors, plant health officers, veterinary experts, food safety technicians), especially at decentralised levels. | Weak frontline enforcement and uneven implementation across countries. | Targeted youth capacity development (vocational training, fellowships, internships) and mainstream SPS skills into education systems. |
| **High compliance burden** | Prohibitive costs of certification, inspection and licensing; bureaucratic delays; limited advisory services—especially for youth-led enterprises and small exporters. | Exclusion of small exporters; reduced competitiveness and uptake of SPS systems. | Digital transformation (e-certification, traceability platforms, real-time dashboards) to reduce costs and delays. |

# EAC Seed and Plant Varieties Bill

The EAC Seed and Plant Varieties Bill (2018) seeks to harmonise seed certification, variety release procedures, and plant breeders' rights across Partner States. However, the Bill has not yet been fully ratified or enacted across all EAC countries and remains under review in several jurisdictions.It seeks to promote the production, certification, distribution and marketing of quality seed, safeguard plant breeders' rights, and facilitate regional seed trade. The Bill provides for the establishment of National Seed Authorities in each Partner State and introduces a regional seed variety release system allowing varieties registered in two or more Partner States to be released across the EAC. It also establishes a regional seed catalogue, recognises mutual phytosanitary certificates, and includes provisions on plant variety protection, border control, emergency actions and dispute settlement to support innovation, compliance and resilience.

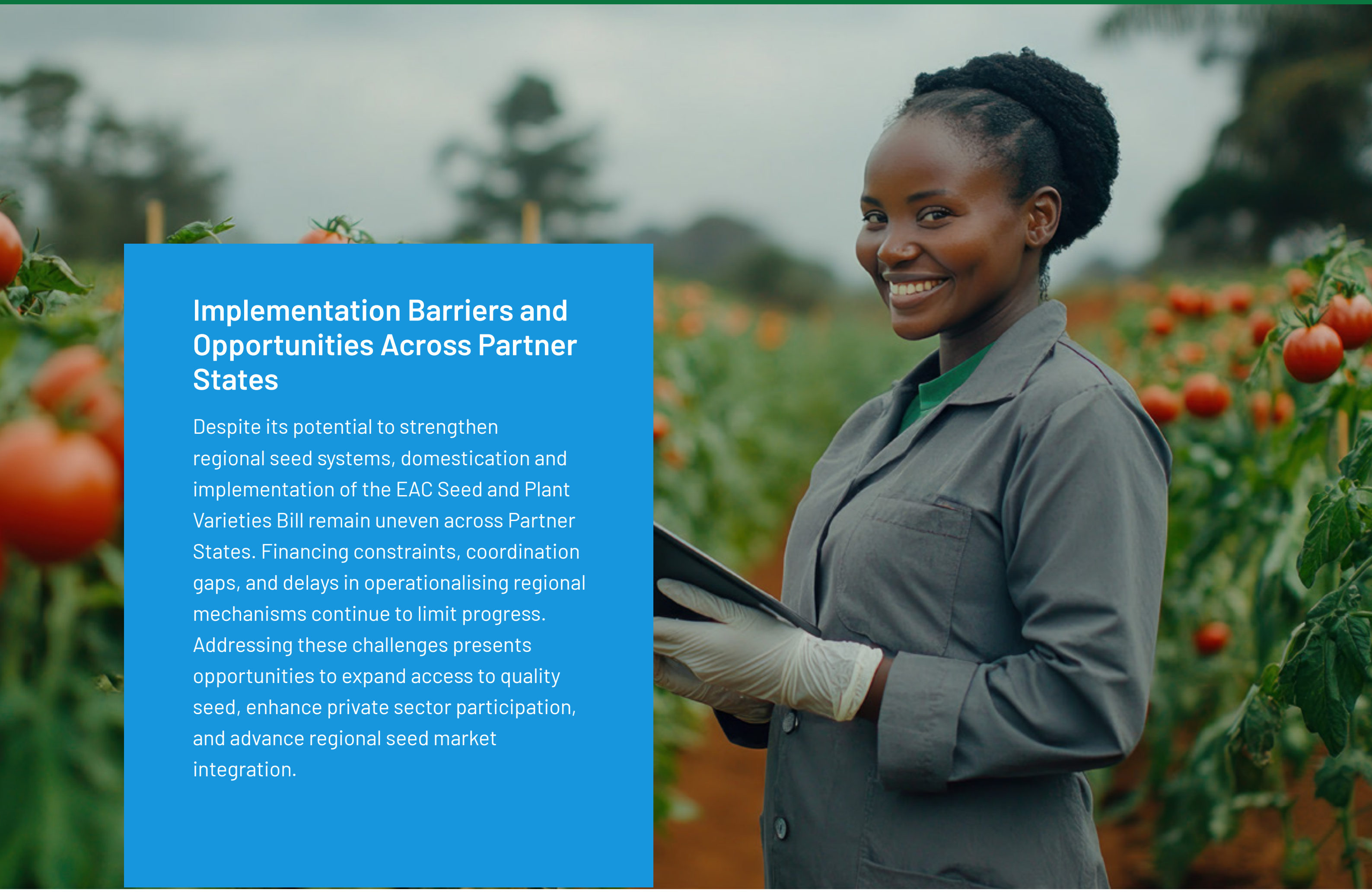
## Ratification, Domestication and Implementation

Enactment of the Bill by the East Africa Legislative Assembly (EALA) is pending. While most EAC countries already have national seed policies and regulations, domestication remains uneven. Countries such as Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania have relatively advanced seed systems, but weaker institutional capacity in Burundi, South Sudan, Somalia, and the DRC poses challenges for uniform enforcement. Once fully adopted, the Bill is expected to strengthen regional seed systems by promoting the availability of quality seed, improving regulatory harmonisation, and facilitating cross-border seed trade within the EAC.

Implementation of the Bill will require significant capacity building in areas such as seed testing, certification, and phytosanitary controls. For example, the Bill envisages joint border inspections and regional seed testing laboratories, yet disparities in infrastructure and resources across Partner States continue to slow progress.

## Alignment with Continental and REC Policies and Frameworks

The Fourth CAADP BR highlights the urgent need for harmonisation of seed policies and trade procedures to strengthen regional integration and boost intra-African trade.



## Implementation Barriers and Opportunities Across Partner States

Despite its potential to strengthen regional seed systems, domestication and implementation of the EAC Seed and Plant Varieties Bill remain uneven across Partner States. Financing constraints, coordination gaps, and delays in operationalising regional mechanisms continue to limit progress. Addressing these challenges presents opportunities to expand access to quality seed, enhance private sector participation, and advance regional seed market integration.

***Table 11.*** *Priority EAC Seed and Plant Varieties Bill implementation barriers and leverage points across EAC Partner States*

| Barrier | Description | Implication | Opportunity |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Limited financial resources** | Insufficient funding to support seed inspection services, laboratories, monitoring and enforcement. | Weak quality assurance, delayed implementation, and reduced effectiveness of the Bill. | Secure sustained financing to strengthen inspection services and laboratories and support an integrated regional seed system. |
| **Weak institutional coordination** | Limited coordination among ministries and regulatory agencies, and absence of a fully functional regional coordination unit for seed harmonisation within the Secretariat. | Fragmented implementation and slow progress in domestication across Partner States. | Strengthen institutional capacity and establish effective regional coordination mechanisms for seed harmonisation. |
| **Delays in operationalising regional systems** | Slow operationalisation of the regional seed catalogue and mutual recognition of seed certification across Partner States. | Reduced impact of the Bill and continued barriers to cross-border seed trade. | Accelerate implementation of the regional seed catalogue and mutual recognition mechanisms to ease cross-border seed trade. |

# EAC Fertilizer Policy and Bill

The EAC Fertilizer Policy (2021 Draft) was developed following directives from the EAC Council of Ministers and builds on the Regulatory Framework and Procedures for Fertilizer Marketing adopted in 2014. It provides a harmonised framework to guide legal instruments, strategies and programmes in the fertilizer industry, with the aim of ensuring farmers' access to affordable, safe and quality fertilizers across the region and building a competitive, profitable and sustainable fertilizer industry. Although the policy is not explicitly youth-targeted, it provides an enabling environment for youth participation through the promotion of SMEs, entrepreneurship, and skills development within agro-industrial value chains.

## Ratification, Domestication and Implementation

Progress in domestication of the Fertilizer Policy has been uneven across EAC Partner States. While some countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda have already developed or updated national fertilizer regulations and strategies, others including Burundi, South Sudan, Somalia, and DRC, face institutional and technical capacity gaps. Implementation is further constrained by weak enforcement of harmonised standards, fragmented regulatory systems, and insufficient investment in laboratories and inspection services.

## Alignment with Continental and REC Policies and Frameworks

Anchored in the EAC Treaty and the EAC Agriculture and Rural Development Policy and Strategy, the policy aligns with continental commitments including the Abuja Declaration, CAADP and the Malabo Declaration. It recognises fertilizer as a key driver of agricultural transformation, productivity and trade, while promoting gender responsiveness, private sector participation and climate resilience through priorities such as regulatory harmonisation, quality control, local production and blending, fertilizer use promotion, trade facilitation, and strengthened research, extension and training.

## Implementation Barriers and Opportunities Across Partner States

Despite efforts to harmonise fertilizer regulation and improve farmer access, implementation of the EAC Fertilizer Policy continues to face several challenges. Persistent tariff and non-tariff barriers, weak inspection and certification capacity, heavy dependence on fertilizer imports, and low fertilizer usage rates among smallholder farmers constrain the policy's effectiveness. At the same time, facilitative actions by the EAC Secretariat and development partners highlight clear opportunities to strengthen institutional coordination, improve quality control, promote local production, and enhance accountability through dedicated financing and monitoring frameworks.

***Table 12.*** *Priority EAC Industrialisation Policy implementation barriers and leverage points across EAC Partner States*

| Barrier | Description | Implication | Opportunity |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Persistent tariff and non-tariff barriers** | Tariff and non-tariff barriers persist despite the EAC Common External Tariff zero-rating fertilizer imports. | Continued high fertilizer prices and restricted cross-border movement of fertilizer. | Strengthen institutional coordination through the EAC Fertilizer Committee and advance enactment of the Draft EAC Fertilizer Bill. |
| **Weak inspection and certification capacity** | Limited capacity for inspection and certification enables adulteration and counterfeiting. | Reduced farmer trust, poor fertilizer quality, and lower productivity gains. | Strengthen quality control systems with support from development partners and regional standards development. |
| **Dependence on fertilizer imports** | Limited domestic production increases reliance on imports and exposure to global price fluctuations. | Increased vulnerability to global price volatility and supply shocks. | Promote local fertilizer production initiatives (e.g. phosphate-based fertilizers in Tanzania and Uganda) with support from development partners and improved investment in production capacity. |

# Cross-cutting Barriers and Opportunities Across EAC Agricultural Policy Frameworks

Across all assessed continental and regional frameworks, a common set of structural and institutional barriers continues to constrain effective domestication and implementation across EAC Partner States. Consolidating these recurring challenges highlights system-wide opportunities to improve coherence, efficiency, and impact while reducing duplication across policy areas.

***Table 13.*** *Cross-cutting barriers and system-wide opportunities for EAC Partner States*

| Cross-cutting barrier | Manifestation across frameworks | System-wide opportunity |
|---|---|---|
| **Insufficient and fragmented financing** | Most Partner States fall below the 10% CAADP/Malabo target; nutrition, youth, soil health, seed, SPS and fertilizer systems remain heavily donor-dependent, limiting sustainability and scale. | Embed regional priorities into national budgets and NAIPs; use RAIP/RASIP and AU accountability mechanisms to align domestic resources and blended finance. |
| **Weak inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordination** | Fragmented mandates across agriculture, trade, youth, health, environment and industry undermine coherence in CAADP, AfCFTA, FNSS, Youth, SPS, seed and fertilizer implementation. | Establish whole-of-government coordination mechanisms nationally and a multi-sectoral coordination function within the EAC Secretariat. |
| **Uneven institutional and technical capacity** | Newer and fragile Partner States face gaps in laboratories, inspection services, extension, SPS enforcement, seed certification, soil testing and industrial support institutions. | Target regional capacity-building, peer learning and technical assistance, prioritising Somalia, South Sudan and DRC through EAC-led platforms. |
| **Weak monitoring, evaluation and data systems** | Limited harmonised M&E frameworks, poor data disaggregation (youth, gender), and weak tracking of implementation across CAADP, AfCFTA, FNSS, AAYS, SPS and AFSH. | Develop harmonised regional M&E frameworks aligned with CAADP BR and AU scorecards, supported by digital dashboards and shared reporting tools. |
| **Slow domestication of regional frameworks** | Delays in adopting and operationalising AfCFTA protocols, seed catalogue, fertilizer bill, SPS systems, and AAYS reduce regional harmonisation and trade impacts. | Provide targeted legal and technical support to accelerate domestication and operationalisation of priority regional instruments. |
| **Limited operationalisation of youth inclusion** | Youth commitments remain largely rhetorical across CAADP, FNSS, AfCFTA, Industrialisation and AAYS, with few dedicated budgets, platforms or indicators. | Institutionalise youth participation, ring-fence youth-responsive financing, and integrate youth indicators across regional and national M&E systems. |
| **Infrastructure and systems gaps** | Deficits in laboratories, border posts, digital platforms, transport, energy and ICT affect SPS, seed, fertilizer, trade facilitation and agro-industrialisation. | Leverage PPPs and regional investment corridors to upgrade shared infrastructure and enable cross-border service delivery. |

# Youth Inclusion Across the Assessed Policy Frameworks

Youth inclusion is consistently recognised across continental and EAC regional policy frameworks as central to agricultural transformation, employment creation, and inclusive growth. Frameworks such as CAADP, the AAYS, the EAC Youth Policy, RAIP, and the FNSS explicitly acknowledge youth as key drivers of innovation, agribusiness development, and food systems resilience, while others, including AfCFTA, the SPS Protocol, and the Industrialisation Policy, offer indirect but significant entry points for youth participation through trade, value addition, compliance services, and agro-industrial development.

Despite this strong rhetorical commitment, youth inclusion remains uneven and largely aspirational in practice. Across most frameworks, youth priorities are weakly institutionalised, with limited formal participation mechanisms, inadequate domestic financing, and poor integration into national planning and budgeting processes. Youth-specific targets, indicators, and budget lines are largely absent from NAIPs and sector strategies, constraining scale, sustainability, and accountability. M&E systems rarely disaggregate data by age, further limiting the ability to track youth outcomes and inform adaptive policymaking.

Country experiences highlight growing momentum for youth inclusion. Kenya has expanded urban and digital agriculture (e.g. City Shamba, ASTGS-supported incubation, Digital Farmers Kenya), Uganda has improved youth access to land, finance, and mentorship (e.g. YETA and Akatale on Cloud), while Rwanda's PSTA IV sets explicit youth employment and entrepreneurship targets supported by a digital extension platform. Tanzania's BBT-YIA programme represents a particularly ambitious effort to operationalise youth inclusion. These examples suggest that embedding youth priorities in delivery systems, supported by coordinated financing, institutionalised platforms, and youth-sensitive monitoring, can strengthen the translation of policy commitments into practice.


***Figure 10.*** *Key challenges and opportunities for improved youth inclusion*

# Best Practices in Policy Domestication and Implementation in the EAC Region

Experiences across the region show that countries able to translate regional commitments into national development priorities typically combine legal and policy reform, coordinated institutional mechanisms, innovative financing and targeted capacity-building measures. Some examples of best practices from across the region include:

## 1. Strong institutional alignment and data-driven implementation in Rwanda

Rwanda has integrated regional priorities into its national development strategy through the Strategic Programme for Agricultural Transformation (SPAT). This framework aligns closely with CAADP principles and the EAC ARDP, it is supported by strong institutional mandates, dedicated budget allocations and robust monitoring systems. Rwanda's data-driven approach has contributed to strong performance in the CAADP BR.

## 2. Trade-enabled, digitally driven policy implementation in Kenya

Kenya's participation in the AfCFTA Guided Trade Initiative highlights the importance of enabling legislation, trade facilitation infrastructure and private sector collaboration. Kenya has also made effective use of digital tools for soil health mapping and smart extension services, supporting alignment with regional initiatives such as the AFSH Action Plan while localising interventions to farmer needs.

## 3. Dedicated institutions for regional policy coordination

Uganda has strengthened policy domestication through institutional coordination, notably by establishing a dedicated Ministry for EAC Affairs to streamline engagement across trade, agriculture and nutrition strategies.

Across these cases, PPPs have been a key enabler of successful domestication, particularly in fertilizer and soil health subsectors, where collaboration with agro-dealers, input manufacturers and farmer cooperatives has supported more rapid and scalable implementation. Emerging practices also underscore the importance of youth and women's engagement, as illustrated by Rwanda's youth agribusiness platforms and Kenya's county-based women agripreneur programmes.

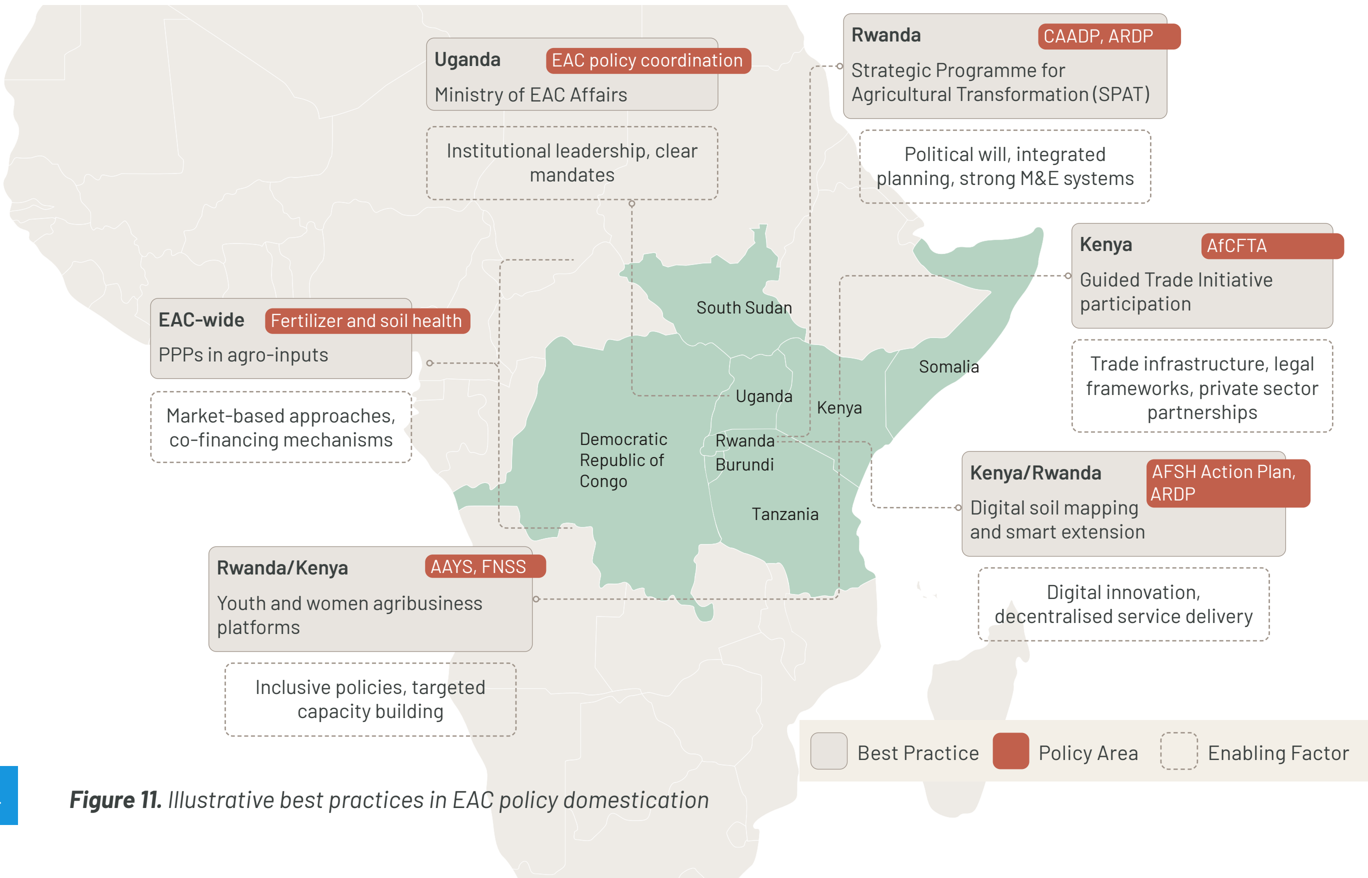



***Figure 11.*** *Illustrative best practices in EAC policy domestication*

# Recommendations

To accelerate the domestication and implementation of agricultural policy frameworks across the EAC, responsibilities must be clearly differentiated between the EAC Secretariat and Partner States, with a focus on coordination, delivery, and accountability.

## Recommendations for the EAC Secretariat

**Lead regional coordination across sectors** - Establish a small, dedicated multi-sectoral coordination unit to align agriculture, trade, youth, nutrition, and climate frameworks across directorates and track country-level progress against agreed milestones.

**Standardise monitoring and reporting -** Develop and roll out a harmonised regional M&E framework aligned with the CAADP Biennial Review and AU scorecards, and publish an annual State of Agriculture and Nutrition report.

**Formalise regional youth participation -** Establish a Regional Youth in Agriculture Platform to institutionalise youth engagement in policy dialogue, innovation exchange, and regional advocacy, aligned with AAYS objectives.

**Centralise knowledge and learning -** Operationalise a regional knowledge hub to consolidate tools, case studies, data dashboards, and implementation guidance accessible to governments and partners.

**Mobilise regional financing and partnerships** - Proactively broker regional partnerships and pooled financing with development partners, private sector actors, and philanthropic organisations to support priority initiatives including soil health, agribusiness, and nutrition.

## Recommendations for EAC Partner States

**Integrate regional commitments into national plans -** Domesticate CAADP, AfCFTA, AAYS, AFSH, and FNSS priorities by embedding them into NAIPs, sector strategies, and legal frameworks, with clear implementation timelines.

**Strengthen whole-of-government coordination** - Establish or reinforce inter-ministerial coordination platforms linking agriculture, trade, finance, health, education, and youth ministries to jointly plan and oversee implementation.

**Increase and ring-fence public financing -** Progress toward the 10% Malabo agriculture expenditure target and introduce dedicated budget lines for youth-focused, nutrition-sensitive, and climate-smart interventions.

**Scale private sector–led delivery -** Use PPPs and targeted incentives to expand agribusiness investment in fertilizer access, mechanisation, soil health, and value addition, prioritising youth- and women-led enterprises.

**Digitise data, monitoring, and accountability -** Deploy national digital monitoring platforms to track implementation, support real-time decision-making, and report disaggregated data by age, gender, and location.

**Move youth inclusion from policy to practice** - Establish youth innovation hubs, agripreneur incubators, and formal consultation mechanisms, supported by dedicated national funding windows.

**Fast-track AfCFTA implementation -** Simplify trade procedures, invest in market and border infrastructure, and support micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and youth entrepreneurs to participate in cross-border trade through AfCFTA-aligned reforms.

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