Institute of Economic Affairs

Fundamental Lessons from Regional Economic Communities for the African Continental Free Trade Area:

A Case Study of the East African Community

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Written by:

1. David Owiro
2. Joan Akoth

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Economic Affairs

5th Floor ACK Garden House, 1st Ngong Avenue
P.O. Box 53989-00200 Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: 242-20-2721262, 2717402
Fax: 254-20-2716231
Cell: 0724-256510, 0733-272126
Email: admin@ieakenya.or.ke
Website: www.ieakenya.or.ke

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

In January 2012, the African Union (AU) Heads of States agreed to unite the economies of Africa into a single free trade area. Subsequently, in May 2019, all 55 AU member states apart from Eritrea signed the agreement establishing the Africa Continental Free Trade Area agreement (AfCFTA). The AfCFTA's objective is to create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments, and thus pave the way for accelerating the establishment of the Continental Customs Union and the African customs union.

Anyanwu 2014 and UNDP 2011 note that the harnessing of regional integration can drive growth and poverty reduction in Africa. Moreover, regional integration exposes domestic producers to regional markets and provides forward and backward linkages to more sophisticated regional value-chains, thus increasing chances of African economies in finding more competitive global market niches.

Specifically, regional integration can alleviate constraints to export competitiveness that are due to small sizes of African economies. Regional integration further promotes product and export diversification, stimulating innovation, productivity and competitiveness.

The establishment of AfCFTA and the creation of various Regional Economic Communities (RECs) is part of the wider effort by African governments to pursue integration through free trade, and developing customs union and common market (AU2014). Therefore, understanding how to overcome the various constraints to regional integration at the regional level can help enhance implementation and management of a free trade area at the continental level.

1.2. How can RECs offer lessons for successful implementation of the AfCFTA?

African economic integration is gradual with inter-RECs, and RECs seen as building blocks to the continental wide FTA.

In pursuit of inclusive development, Africa has developed an overarching integration and complementary approach through which the eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) form the foundational building blocks to the continent-wide AfCFTA.

Bisong (2020) observes that the AfCFTA agreement recognises RECs as building blocks of the AfCFTA by contributing to the finalisation, implementation of the AfCFTA, and mediation of disagreements by:- providing a common basis for negotiating positions taken by member states and providing technical back up and coordination of their negotiating positions; leveraging on RECs institutions, instruments and mechanism to aid implementation of AfCFTA protocols and ensuring harmonization of regional customs practises with the continental; and, negotiating solutions to trade restrictive practices undertaken by member states that undermine regional commitments, ultimately reducing intra-African trade and non-trade barriers.

Understanding integration constraints, hindrances to implementation of institutional infrastructure, and other challenges within RECs will provide insights into current intergovernmental negotiation bottlenecks on the AfCFTA.

Regional Economic Communities offer a testing ground for vital learnings in the implementation of AfCFTA

Mangeni (2016) concludes that the RECs provide a solid ground for experiential learning that is important in ensuring successful implementation of the AfCFTA. He further notes that the entry points for African economic integration have been the current existential issues that regional authorities face, including: drought and desertification for IGAD, peace and security for ECOWAS, infrastructure and industrialization for SADC, trade and financial facilitation for COMESA; and nostalgia over a beloved economic community that collapsed in 1977 in EAC.

The RECs have also implemented additional special programs to address specific challenges within Africa's complex development challenges. For example, COMESA has now prioritized digitization of its programs in order to position itself for the information age. ECOWAS addresses peace and security through a standing peace keeping force, namely ECOMOG; SADC addressed its inequality challenges through infrastructure and industrialization programs; COMESA pioneered trade facilitation and the FTA to address the constraints of small markets and thick borders; and IGAD addressed the existential threats of drought, desertification and climate change.

Therefore, examining how the RECs have innovated to deal with their developmental challenges as well as the traditional flows of trade and investment and concomitant movement of persons and capital is vital to understanding the progression of regional economic integration in Africa as a whole. Valuable evidence to this end, can also come from a review of the role of the enabling factors and programmes, such as policies that encourage innovations in agriculture, infrastructure, industrialization, technology transfer and, political and macroeconomic stability, within RECs, such as the EAC.

Linear liberalization implies that what has already been agreed to at the RECs can be adopted by the AfCFTA to avoid complex bilateral negotiations.

The AfCFTA has long transition periods of 10 to 15 years and lower thresholds for market opening of around 90 percent of total product lines, mean that the Tripartite and the RECs, which have deeper integration goals, will be responsible for keeping the continental market integration agenda functional, as the timeline for achieving all the objectives of the AfCFTA are longer.

However, under the linear approach to tariff elimination, if initial deeper cuts were agreed, the AfCFTA would become effective much sooner; rather than if complex and multiple bilateral negotiations were the approach.

Mangeni (2016) observes that, this approach would also require confirmation that general rules of origin with clear cross-cutting thresholds, which are much quicker to negotiate, would be used, rather than the often-drawn-out exercise examining every product line and developing specific rules over thousands of product lines.

Therefore, furthering and strengthening RECs would enhance implementation of the AfCFTA initiative.

1.3. Policy Gaps and Study Objectives

Regional integration has been pursued by African countries for over two decades now, while it has resulted in significant trade liberalization, many RECs are yet to achieve their integration milestones, and those who have did so under delayed timelines and amid a myriad of challenges.

It is not an understatement to note that regional integration has not gone according to plan; neither has it lived up to its expectations with regard to boosting export competitiveness, enhancing productivity, promoting specialization, increasing diversification of economies and graduating countries into higher value commodity value chains in regional and global markets. It is important for policy makers to understand the challenges faced within RECs so as to avoid the same pitfalls in the implementation of the AfCFTA.

As the ACFTA comes into force, the study will provide negotiators with relevant information as they enter into the second phase of the negotiations, as well as provide specific recommendations to help national governments, regional economic communities and the African Union to put in place mechanisms that enhance achievement of integration goals for the benefit of African nations.

The African Union Commission notes that the East African Community (EAC) is the most advanced REC, having achieved a common market, with the goals of a monetary union and ultimately a political federation remaining. Since 2005, EAC partner states have progressed in implementing a customs union, including the application of a common external tariff; the application of EAC rules of origin criteria; the internal removal of tariffs for goods meeting those criteria; and the elimination of non-tariff barriers. In 2010, the EAC established a common market, and EAC partner states have continued to facilitate the free movement of persons, workers, goods, services and capital, and the rights of establishment and residence (AUC 2019).

To facilitate the movement of goods across borders, 15 one-stop border posts have been earmarked for development, and13 have been constructed and are operating. This has reduced the average time to cross borders by about 84%.

> "The customs union and common market protocols contributed to boosting intra-EAC trade from USD 2.7 billion in2016 to USD 2.9 billion dollars in 2017. In addition, infrastructure development has advanced with a focus on regional roads, railway lines and air and water transport.
>
> The Monetary Union, signed in 2013, is expected to be in place by 2024. To establish institutions to support it, the EastAfrican Legislative Assembly passed bills for the East African Monetary Institute and East African Bureau of Statistics.
>
> The EAC registered a key milestone in political integration with the Summit's adoption of the EAC Political Confederations a transitional model for the EAC Political Federation. The Council of Ministers has since approved the nomination of constitutional experts, with drafting of the confederation's constitution expected to start in 2019."

-African Union Commission, 2019

However, challenges persist. For instance, the customs union and common market are not yet fully operational. And EAC faces significant challenges of human capacity and of funding its own programmes.

Understanding these challenges within the EAC offers insight that can lead to successful implementation of the AfCFTA.

Specific study objectives are:

- Undertake a literature review on the performance of the EAC to identify the challenges hindering its successful implementation.
- Develop a matrix for the challenges faced by EAC in regional integration and Identify the reforms relevant for both member states and EAC's successful implementation and fashion the recommendations to the commitments under the AfCFTA
- Conduct an online survey among stakeholders and private sector members to identify their hindrances within the regional trading frameworks

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2.0 Methodology

The study was conducted mainly through desk review and participatory methods of data collection through Key Informant Interviews, providing a versatile and practical approach to the study.

Key informant interviews are qualitative in-depth interviews with people/experts who are knowledgeable on matters of regional integration and international trade policy. The purpose of key informant interviews is to collect information from a wide range of people—including policy makers, EAC secretariat, Private sector representatives, donor community, and relevant professionals—who have first-hand knowledge about EAC regional integration and the ACFTA.

In order to ensure that the quality and nature of information collected is of the required quality threshold the consultant will undertake systematic steps to gathering and analysing information through:

- careful selection of key informants,
- preparation of interview guides in advance,
- wording questions precisely and simply,
- properly recording and analysing the findings, and
- verification of information and findings.

This ensured that the method provides valuable information with high credibility.

This method was also suitable because the study was undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic thereby ruling out movements and gatherings.

2.1. Desk Reviews

Desk review comprised analysing EAC policy documents to review the commitments made by member countries, status of implementation, key challenges and solutions. The purpose of this exercise is to provide a clear picture of the progress of implementation of commitments by EAC member states, and the challenges they face in order to determine priority areas for the continent to address for enhanced implementation of the AFCFTA.

2.2. Key Informant Interviews

As aforementioned, the study used Key informant interviews to collect the required information. The KIIs involved sharing questionnaires with trade experts who are knowledgeable on matters of regional integration and international trade policy. The target responses included policy makers, EAC secretariat, Private sector representatives and the Civil Society Organisations working on the EAC regional integration issues as well as relevant professionals who have first-hand knowledge about EAC regional integration and the AfCFTA.

The questionnaires were shared among the KIs between 16th July 2020-30st June 2020.

2.2.1. Steps and procedures in undertaking the Key Informant Interviews.

Preparation of interview guide

The consultant prepared an interview guide that lists the broad topics and issues to be covered during the interview (See annex A)

Because the purpose of key informant interviews is to explore a few issues in depth, the number of items listed in an interview guide is, in most instances, limited to between 5 and 7 study questions in order for the discussion not to become superficial. Fewer items leave more time to pursue leads. The number of study questions are kept to a minimum since they may be expanded with a list of secondary questions.

KIIs enables the consultant to collect information from key experts and policy makers on the key subjects of the study.

Assessing Available Information

After formulating the study questions, the next step is to conduct a review of available information.

Selection of Key Informants

The quality of key informant interviews rests largely on choosing the right informants. Undoubtedly the most important consideration is that informants possess an intimate knowledge of the subject on which they will be interviewed. Such knowledge may be based on their special social positions, experience, participation in the project or program, or professional expertise.

Government officials, academic scholars and experts, local leaders, representatives of specialized groups, and members of the target populations usually make good key informants in project and program settings. Depending on the nature and scope of an inquiry, the researchers identify appropriate groups from which the key informants are drawn and then select a few individuals from each group. The number of key informants will be between 15 to 35 experts.

Key Informants will be drawn from:

- Policy makers working in EAC Coordination ministries within member states.
- EAC secretariat
- Private sector associations active in regional integration
- International Trade policy experts and professionals

Collecting information/conducting interviews.

The consultant will follow already existing guidelines and principles in conducting key informant interviews, focusing on initial contact with informants, wording and sequencing of questions. As mentioned above, the main format of data collection will be through self-completed online forms shared via IEA-Kenya's website and social media handles, as well as through targeted emails sent to resource persons drawn from the above categories.

2.3. Assessing Suitability of Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews are useful because the study requires general, descriptive information on the status of EAC performance and key challenges to inform decision-making for implementation of the AfCFTA.

2.3.1. Advantages

The main advantages are the following:

- Key informant interviews often provide data and insight that cannot be obtained with other methods, since information will come directly from knowledgeable people. Key informants may offer confidential information that would not be revealed in other settings.
- Key informant interviews provide flexibility to explore new ideas and issues that had not been anticipated in planning the study but that are relevant to its purpose.

2.3.2. Limitations

Some disadvantages of this method are as followed:

- Findings can be biased if the informants are not carefully selected.
- Findings are susceptible to interviewer biases. For example, the interviewer picks up information and ideas that confirm his or her preconceived notions, gives more credence to the views of elites than to those from lower socio-economic strata, or responds more to vivid descriptions and selective data than to abstract ideas and explanations. Thus, it is imperative that investigators become familiar with these pitfalls.

3

3.0 Literature Review

3.1. Conceptual issues on challenges of regional integration in Africa

Charaf-Eddine and Strauss 2014 define regionalism in Africa as the 'formal institutions' and political processes that guide regional integration outcomes. They note that due to the incredibly low capabilities of most African states, insufficient institutional capacity exists for member states to participate effectively in regional forums that take place through supranational institutions. Low levels of economic development and severe economic disparities between states compound and underlie this problem.

Foundational factors impact the ability of a REC partner state to implement protocols and advance credible supranational institutions.

The underlying conditions fundamental for a nation to share effectively in a regional economic community do not make a difference at low degrees of integration. Only when discussing deeper integration in the context of a monetary union with a common currency (Krugman, 1993; Bayoumi and Eichengreen, 1992) are they pertinent to guarantee that integration is plausible and can be economically beneficial and sustainable.

Preconditions for joining a REC other than geographic membership are important in locking REC members into economic, social, and political policies that promote the common interest of the REC.

The necessary national and regional conditions for engaging in regional integration have not, however, been elaborated upon for situations of extreme underdevelopment in governance structures, institutions, and economic development. These 'foundational' factors are important as they impact the ability of a REC to implement protocols and advance credible institutions.

Only the more advanced conditions required for integrating into a monetary union with common currency, such as trade openness, macroeconomic convergence, and alignment of business cycles, have properly been detailed in the literature (Broz, 2005).

Contentions progressed in view of the European context note that it may be conceivable to fulfil membership criteria ex post regardless of whether they are not satisfied ex ante, as alignment of business cycles depend upon the degree of trade integration, and the latter should increase from regional integration (Frankel and Rose, 1997; Charaf-Eddineand Strauss 2014).

As for Africa, it is yet to be comprehensively debated on what minimum conditions could be required for REC membership, and if these conditions can be fulfilled ex post regardless of whether they fail to be met ex ante. The danger of having 'conditionality' (in the form of membership requirements) is that it will permanently exclude weaker members, while the danger of not having it is that it will undermine the credibility of RECs owing to a lack of policy implementation (Charaf-Eddineand Strauss 2014).

REC membership requirements for Africa do not have to mirror the more complex institutional arrangements of the European Union. Draper (2012) notes that an important foundation for closer regional integration in Africa could be cooperation sought on the basis of security issues.

However, effective enforcement of integration conditions (of whatever sort) needs to be improved. This is strongly linked to the presence of rules-based institutions (AfDB, 2014), in which a legal architecture exists to respond to any derogation from regional rules by REC members.

Political economy within RECs is a hindrance just as much as technical capacity impeding the implementation of regional integration agreements.

Challenges in the implementation of regional integration go beyond technical matter, they are shaped by political economy considerations and impediments arising from the design and control of institutions. Political economy shows that 'political will' is
determined by wider structural forces (AfDB, 2014). Regional outcomes reflect institutional arrangements driven by local, regional, and global concentrations of economic power.

Charaf-Eddine 2014 notes that the balance of interests and power may then be reflected in technical issues (such as tariff settings). They note as follows:

> "…the question of why cargo sits for long periods at African ports has technical dimensions, related to a lack of infrastructure and managerial capacity, but also political economy dimensions related to the orientation of the private sector resulting from them pursuing their best interests. The World Bank (2013) notes that: 'A large portion of dwell time can be explained by collusion between controlling agencies, port authorities, private terminal operators, logistics operators, and some shippers. And even if this collusion may have its origins in economic decay, it is the social arrangements that then indirectly work to maintain the status quo."

Pursuit of regional integration goals should be implemented in the context of broader economic policies to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable economic development.

Regional integration is not an end in itself. In the African context its aim must be to generate inclusive growth and sustainable development. To achieve this, regional integration must work upon the factors that lead to growth and inclusiveness, especially the institutions and policies which enhance competitiveness. These goals should be part of regional integration progress indicators.

If effective regional integration is advanced but this does not lead to countries enhancing their economic competitiveness, upgrading social and political institutions, and reducing poverty levels and inequality, then regional integration has not necessarily served a useful purpose.

Charraf-Eddine and Strauss 2014 emphasize that enhanced regional integration attained through excessive protectionism and trade diversion, or reliant on exploitative working conditions, might enhance regional flows in the short run, but provides no firm basis for an economy to integrate and compete globally on a sustained basis. In order to ensure that regional integration progressively expands economic opportunities for all, it requires rules that differentiate harmful competition (competing in a zero-sum manner), and competition which is helpful in promoting advances in skills, technology and product quality. Doing so requires regionally agreed and enforced regulations which ensure that regional members cannot compete against one another on the basis of harmful competitive practices, such as through worsening labour standards or excessive use of costly investment incentives to attract footloose capital.

This will ensure that regional integration does not result in a race to the bottom, occasioned by destructive incentive competition between REC members to attract FDI as has arisen previously in the context of the East African Community (Tax Justice Network-Africa and ActionAid International, 2012).

These conceptual issues highlighted above often translate to financial challenges for implementing regional and continental integration agenda due to diverse priorities by member states, leaving them mostly donor funded; and, operational and coordination challenges due to hesitation to cede decision making to regional institutions; among others challenges.

In conclusion, addressing these conceptual issues will be as important in the implementation of RECs as well as for the AfCFTA.

3.2. Regional integration initiatives in Africa

Post-colonial African states in 1960 found themselves with countries too fragmented and weakened to assert themselves, the first African heads of states relied on integration to build on the continent's development. From the onset, there have been many initiatives over the last five decades with mixed results. We briefly provide an update of the most impactful initiatives on integration in the continent.

Organization of African Unity (OAU)

The OAU was established by 32 Heads of State and Government with the signing of the OAU Charter by 30 member states in May 1963.Its objectives are to promote unity and solidarity of African States; coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa; defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence; eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; promote international cooperation with due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Box: The key stages of a classical integration process

Free trade area: An agreement concluded between countries with a view to eliminating customs duties between them as well as quantitative restrictions on imports, while preserving their trade policy vis-à-vis third countries.
Customs union: The customs union is the strengthening of the free-trade zone in which member states adopt a common trade policy and common external tariffs.
Common market: A common market is characterized by the free movement of goods, services and capital between member states.
Monetary union: A set of countries that have adopted a common single currency. It ensures the integration of the common market.
Economic and monetary union: An economic and monetary union is the most advanced state of the economic integration process in which all countries have harmonized their economic, monetary and fiscal policies.

In 2002 the OAU was dissolved and replaced by the African Union (AU) by the Heads of State and Government in order to transform the it into a new organization capable of reconciling the realities of the new millennium by endowing itself with a more efficient organizational structure.

The Lagos Plan of Action

In 1980, following the poor economic performance of the African post-independence states in the 1970s, defined by high inflation, fiscal and trade deficits, poor growth, an emerging debt crisis, and concerns about Africa's ability to develop amid the uncertainties of globalization, the OAU adopted the Lagos Plan of Action which principally looked inwards upon Africa's national and collective self-sufficiency in the economic and social fields with a view the establishment of a new international economic order. It set forth a vast programme of development from 1980 to 2000.

The Abuja Treaty

The Abuja treaty was adopted in 1991 and entered into force in 1994 provided the main vision of realization of the integration to kick-off meaningful economic development on the continent. It identified 6 main stages, i.e., creating and strengthening the regional economic communities, eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers, creating the free trade area, creating continental customs union, creating an African common market, and creating an African economic and monetary union. The Abuja Treaty sees the RECs as pillars in the African integration process. It opts for consolidating integration at regional level with a view to then spreading all over the continent.

The Sirte Declaration

In 1999, the Fourth Extraordinary Session of the OAU meeting in Sirte, Libya adopted a declaration laying down the principle of transforming the OAU into the African Union, anew giant organization that would contribute to consolidating peace and stability in the world.

Its objective was to accelerate the implementation of the Abuja Treaty through shortened periods for implementation of the treaty and speedy establishment of all the institutions provided for in the treaty, namely:

- The African Central Bank.
- The African Monetary Union.
- The African Court of Justice.
- The Pan-African Parliament, to be established by 2000.
- Strengthening and consolidating all the regional economic communities.

Constitutive Act of the African Union and creation of NEPAD

The Constitutive Act of the African Union was adopted in 2000 at the Lomé (Togo) Summit and entered into force in 2001. It lays down the African Union's establishment provisions, mentioning its objectives, structure, operation and mission.

Agenda 2063

The African Union in reaffirming their desire to pursue integration, took stock of all their plans and projects over the 50 years since establishment of the OAU. The appraisal led to development of a new strategy while maintaining the same vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa. This initiative saw the birth of Agenda 2063.

Agenda 2063 comprises 7 aspirations and 14flagship projects, structured around the logic of self-financing. It offers a broader and more elaborate integration process with a coherent, pragmatic and achievable approach for the construction of a socially cohesive African society where all the active forces, including women and youth are major players and beneficiaries. Divided into 10-year programmes, this integration plan takes into account the vision expressed in the Abuja Treaty by integrating emerging areas as well as new global dynamics.

Box 2: The aspirations of Agenda 2063

1. A prosperous Africa, based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.
2. An integrated continent, politically united, based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa's renaissance.
3. An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law.
4. A peaceful and secure Africa.
5. Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics.
6. An Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential offered by people, especially its women and youth and caring for children.
7. An Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner.

Box 3: The 12 flagship projects of Agenda 2063

1. Integrated high-speed train networks connecting all African capitals and commercial centres.
2. An African virtual and e-university: increase access to tertiary and continuing education in Africa.
3. Formulation of an African commodities strategy
4. Establishment of an annual African Economic Forum that brings together the African political leadership, the private sector, academia and civil society.
5. Establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).
6. The African Passport and Free Movement of People.
7. Implementation of the Grand Inga Dam project
8. The Pan-African e-network.
9. Silencing the Guns by 2020.
10. End violent conflicts and prevent genocide
11. Africa Outer Space Strategy:
12. Establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM).

Source: African Union

Table: Status of integration in Africa as per the Abuja treaty

RECs	1994–99	2000–20	2008–17		2018–19	2020–23	2024–28
	RECs establishment and consolidation	Tariff and non-tariff barriers	Regional FTA	Regional CU	Continental CU	Continental Common Market	Pan-African Economic and Monetary Union
EAC	✔	✔	✔	✔			
ECOWAS	✔	✔	✔	✔			
COMESA	✔	✔	✔				
SADC	✔	✔					
ECCAS	✔	✔					
IGAD	✔	✔					
CEN-SAD	✔						
AMU	✔	✔					

Source: AUC (2019), 2019 African Regional Integration Report: Towards an integrated and prosperous and peaceful Africa, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).

In conclusion, the integration efforts in Africa have their genesis from the Abuja treaty, where regional integration is seen as the basis of continental wide integration. The successes and failures of RECs can therefore hold back or advance continental wide integration efforts. Therefore, the REC can be seen as a model for the successful implementation of the AfCFTA.

3.3. What an African Continental Free Trade Area can offer

A continent-wide African FTA such as the AfCFTA would expand trade flows among African countries by addressing most of the constraints. At the onset, the AfCFTA's will create a single continental market for goods and services, covering 1.2 billion people, with a combined GDP of US$2.2 trillion, with free movement of business persons and investments, and thus pave the way for accelerating the establishment of the Continental Customs Union and the African customs union.

Status of AfCFTA negotiations

The AfCFTA agreement consists of six protocols, namely, Protocol on Goods, Protocol on Trade in Services, Protocol on rules and procedures on Dispute Settlement, Protocol on Competition Policy, Protocol on Investment, and Protocol on Intellectual Property Rights.

The negotiations are happening under two phases.

- Phase I: negotiations to be concluded in 2020
    - o Protocol on Goods (Outstanding: Schedule of tariff concessions, Rules of Origin, technical regulations and trade remedies)
    - o Protocol on Trade in Services (Outstanding: schedule of commitments in 5 priority sectors, namely, business, communications, financial, tourism and transport)
    - o Protocol on rules and procedures on Dispute Settlement,

- Phase II: negotiations to be concluded in 2021
    - o Protocol on Trade in Services (Outstanding: services schedules for sectors beyond the 5 priority sectors).
    - o Protocol on Competition Policy,
    - o Protocol on Investment
    - o Protocol on Intellectual Property Rights

Also, in March 2018, the Protocol to the treaty establishing the Africa Economic Area relating to Free Movement of Persons, Rights of Establishment and Residency was presented for signature, to date, 27 member states have signed of whom 12 have ratified, falling below the required 15 member states to ratify and deposit instruments for it to enter into force. This protocol is Key to facilitating the movement of persons involved in, inter alia, trade in goods and services (mode 4) under the AfCFTA Agreement.

Potential impact on Trade in Africa

In 2017, intra-African trade accounted for only around 15% of continental trade. The UN's Economic Commission on Africa (UNECA) forecasts that intra-African trade would grow 50% in the following five years if the AfCFTA becomes operational. Reducing trade barriers on the continent will make it easier for African countries to develop regional supply chains and export more finished goods rather than raw materials, as is the case at present. This could be a significant spur to development in African nations. The UNECA empirical study estimates that it would have the following main impacts.

- Add up to USD 34.6 billion (52.3 per cent) to the current trade value by 2022.
- Imports of African countries from the rest of the world would come down by USD 10.2 billion, as it is replaced by increased intra-African trade flows.
- Africa's exports of agricultural and food products—particularly wheat, cereals, raw sugar (sugar cane and sugar beet) and processed food (meat, sugar and other food products)—would benefit most from the AfCFTA. These are estimated to increase by an extra 7.2 per cent (or USD 3.8 billion) in 2022 above the current values. These are products in which African economies have comparative advantages and that are sometimes highly protected by some countries in the region.

- Africa's export volumes of industrial products—particularly textiles, wearing apparel, leather products, petroleum, coal products, mineral and metal products and other manufactured products would increase over current trade flows by 4.7 per cent (or USD21.1 billion). These increases in trade are anticipated to translate into income gains.
- Africa's export volumes to the world would be 6.2 percentage points higher under the AfCFTA. Intra-African trade also increases by an extra 6.4 percentage points under the AfCFTA relative to the scenarios under the separate RECs. Due to anticipated, complementary harmonization of trade facilitation measures.

In addition, income would improve by an additional percentage point annually whatever the trade policy considered, when coupled with faster customs procedures and port handling. Therefore, despite a general assumption that FTAs in developing countries have the tendency to divert trade and produce limited gains, the results of UNECA's empirical analysis conclude that AfCFTA has the potential to produce net economic gains for Africa as a whole.

In summary, the elimination of high tariff barriers prevalent across Africa would enhance intra-African trade and generate growth in real income. These economic gains are expected to be significantly higher if complemented by additional trade facilitation measures aimed at reducing the cost of administrative and customs procedures, improving port handling and developing infrastructure.

3.4. Main challenges in the African integration process

Slow decision-making and lack of implementation

One main challenge is the reluctance of member states to cede their sovereignty. Key institutions of the AU Commission, the African Court of Justice and Human Rights and the Pan-African Parliament have been established to accelerate Africa's integration process. However, none has been given the appropriate powers to enforce decisions, decision-making is through consensus rather than legal imperatives making it easy to renege by member states. Furthermore, the powers of making, monitoring and enforcing decisions are still attributed to the Assembly, at its political Summit. The African Union Commission serves only as a secretariat and has limited agenda-setting powers. All strategic issues are referred to the Council of Ministers, through the Permanent Representatives Council (PRC).

Low awareness and citizen involvement in the African Integration process

Citizens of African countries are removed from the integration process. It is often the political elite who espouse the integration vision with little to no involvement of their citizens. This leads to misunderstandings and ultimately citizens missing out on the benefits that come with participation in the opportunities that integration brings with it.

Harmonization of tariffs and customs procedures

The pursuit by African partner states within their RECs of harmonized standards and laws is often drawn out, slow and cumbersome. Getting negotiators to reach consensus on these issues is quite difficult as each tries to act in the best interest of their respective nation. This is a major hindrance to achieving regional integration.

Financial challenges

African countries have got competing priorities with a limited resource envelop and insufficient resources. Pursuit of African integration is a low priority need rendering the integration agenda to be mostly financed by development partners through donor funding. This further weakens regional institutions in their pursuit of political autonomy. The African Union Commission budget is 75% funded by development partners presenting additional risk of dilution of development priorities by the external interests of funding agencies.

The decision for member states to contribute 0.2% of their imports was adopted but progress has been extremely slow owing to diverse partner states' interests. In order to overcome this, partner states have to pool resources by according a high priority to regional integration agenda.

Operational and coordination challenges

African integration requires the coordination of multiplicity of institutions at national, regional and continental levels, with extensive processes and procedures for successful implementation on diverse stakeholders. This poses a major challenge to the success of African Integration.

Infrastructure Challenges

Efficient infrastructure links across the different economic sectors play a crucial role in the development of an economy and is often seen as the anchor to economic growth in an economy, by giving coherence to the various stages of the integration process. Infrastructure is seen as an integral part in enhancing intra-African trade and is a key element of support to the AfCFTA. The existing infrastructure gap in Africa has to be closed for the economies to benefit from regional integration.

New and Emerging Challenges

These are mostly originating from the new global dynamics such as terrorism and novel pandemics that present economic shocks and dampen a country's efforts to implement the integration agenda amongst other economic development priorities.

Security challenges such as terrorism weakens many African regions generating concerns and fear, instilling anxiety and pushing citizens into a state of perpetual movement through economic displacement making it difficult to establish any integration plans. Pandemics such as Ebola, Covid-19, and others continue to create barriers to movement in addition to other devastating economic effects in many regions.

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4.0 East African Community (EAC), an Integration Model for the AfCFTA

The EAC is comprised of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and South Sudan. It has its origins from 1917, where Kenya and Uganda formed a customs union with Tanganyika joined in 1927. The customs union provided a common external tariff and currency. This was succeeded by the East African High Commission from 1948 to 1961 and the East African Common Services Organization (EACSO) from 1961 to 1967. In 1967 the Treaty for East African Cooperation came into force succeeding EACSO. Unfortunately, the EAC collapsed in 1977 mainly due to concerns on the inequitable share of costs and benefits of regional integration and the lack of a policy to redress the situation.

The three countries, decided to revive their cooperation once again and in 1999 signed the Treaty to establish the EAC which came into force in 2002. Subsequently, the EAC has since admitted Burundi and Rwanda in 2007, and South Sudan in 2016 bringing its total membership to six countries.

The regional cooperation and integration that is envisaged in the EAC is broad based, Article 5 (1) of the EAC treaty states that:

> "The objectives of the Community shall be to develop policies and programmes aimed at widening and deepening cooperation among the partner states (EAC member states are partner states for each other) in political, economic, social and cultural fields, research and technology, defence, security and legal and judicial affairs for their mutual benefit."

The EAC has gone on to establish a customs union (2005) with a common external tariff, common market (2010), and is working to achieve a monetary union (2023) and political federation as the ultimate goal.

The EAC also has a Tripartite FTA, comprising of SADC, EAC and COMESA given the multiplicity of membership by its partner states, aiming to liberalize trade among the 27 members of SADC, the EAC and COMESA. These efforts at regional integration are regarded as the building blocks of a future African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

4.1. Objectives and Achievements of the EAC integration milestones

The following is the implementation status of EAC regional integration efforts in relation to the four pillars, namely the Customs Union, the Common Market, the Monetary Union and the Political Federation.

Customs Union

Status	Objectives	Elements	Achievements
In force since 2005 Operational since 2010	• Liberalization of intra-regional trade in goods • Promoting production efficiency in the Community • Enhancing domestic, cross-border and foreign investment • Promoting economic development and industrial diversification	• Establish free trade on goods and services amongst member states • Have a common external tariff (CET), whereby imports from countries outside the EAC zone are subjected to the same tariff when sold to any EAC Partner State. • Compliance with the EAC Rules of Origin • Remove all existing non-tariff barriers to trade and not to impose any new ones	• By July 2020, implementation of the Single Customs Territory centralized platform is expected to be completed. • Establishment of the EAC Single Customs Territory (SCT) operations facilitating faster clearance and improvement in cargo movement along the Northern and Central corridors and the now Standard Gauge Railway line. • It embarked on resource mobilisation and implementation of Phase II of one-stop border posts. • It has also planned to construct the following roads: o Malindi–Bagamoyo (Kenya/Tanzania), Lusahunga– o Rusumo/Kayonza–Kigali (Tanzania/Rwanda) and o Nyakanazi–Manyovu/Rumonge–Bujumbura. • Time and cost of transporting goods from the respective ports of Dar es Salaam and Mombasa has reduced from 21 and 18 days to 7 and 4 days respectively. • The cost has reduced from USD 3,100 to USD 1,025. • Partner States Customs systems have been interconnected and information sharing has improved. • Multiple entries and documents have been replaced by use of a single declaration. • Customs processes for customs regimes were developed and deployed. • All intra trade and imports to the region are all cleared under SCT. • Customs systems in the region have been upgraded to facilitate clearance of cargo under SCT for intra-trade, imports and exports regimes . • Negotiation of trade and development agreements between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific partners to cover goods, fisheries and development cooperation.

Common Market

Launched	Objectives	Operational Principles	Achievements
In force since 2010	• To accelerate economic growth and development through free movement of goods, free movement of persons, free movement of labor, right of establishment, right of residence, free movement of Services and free movement of capital	• Non-discrimination of nationals of other Partner States on grounds of nationality • Equal treatment to nationals of other Partner States • Ensure transparency in matters concerning the other Partner States • Share information for the smooth implementation of the Protocol	According to the East African Common Market Scorecard (CMS 2016), the following has been achieved under the EAC Common Market Protocol • In the case of free movement of goods, Non-tariff Barriers (NTBs) which often emerge when tariffs have been eliminated – have been addressed more quickly during the 2016 reference period than during the 2014 period falling from an average of 34 to eight (8) months per NTB. • With respect to the free movement of capital, three Partner States – Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda – have undertaken a total of 11 reforms including measures that enhance the region's securities capacities by adding a framework for trading in derivatives in Kenya and Uganda. • In terms of credit operations, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda continue to be open to both borrowing and lending abroad by residents. • On the Free Movement of Goods, the report points out that as was the case in 2014, all Partner States have eliminated tariffs on goods originating from within the EAC. All Partner States therefore score full marks in CMS 2016 for compliance with the Rules of Origin • EAC is expected to establish the regional infrastructure agency and harmonise design guidelines and standards, vehicle guidelines and standards, and environmental guidelines and standards by 2020. • By February 2019, all partner states except South Sudan will have commenced issuance of the international e-passport. • Burundi and Kenya were directed to expedite the issuance of machine-readable identity cards by December 2020. • Partner states are expected to support the establishment of regulatory bodies and associations for professional services to facilitate movement of professionals. • EAC partner states are expected to harmonise the export levy on wet-blue and crust leather to non-EAC countries to 10% from the FY 2019/2020 and to increase it by 10% every financial year for the next 10 years

Monetary Union

Launched	Objectives	Achievements	Challenges
In force since 2013	• To promote and maintain monetary and financial stability aimed at facilitating economic integration to attain sustainable growth and development of the community	• The integration of payment systems in the EAC region • Harmonization of payment system standards for clearing and settlement systems • Promotion of interconnectivity of payment cards switches • Harmonization of payment systems legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks as well as cross border mobile money initiatives	I• Absence of any agreed rules and enforcement mechanism poses challenges to the implementation of decisions by the monetary affairs committee of EAC central banks' governors as well as decisions by other EAC committees • The other challenge is the lack of firm commitment to implement decisions taken by different regional committees to fast-track the implementation of East African Monitory Union protocol due to more focus on relative national gains and sovereignty

Political Federation

Launched	Objectives	Achievements
On 20th May, 2017, the EAC Heads of State adopted the Political Confederation as a transitional model of the East African Political Federation.	• International Relations: Establishing common foreign and security policies to safeguard the common values, fundamental interests and independence of the Community through strengthening the security of the Community and its Partner States. • Peace and Security: Fostering and maintaining a conducive atmosphere that is a pre-requisite to social and economic development through co-operation and consultations on issues pertaining to peace and security of the Partner States.	• EAC has set the stage for developing a constitution for the Political Confederation, as a transitional model for the East African political federation. • A meeting of partner states and constitutional experts was held in September 2018 to review and harmonise the experts' terms of reference and roadmap for the constitution. Experts were tasked to develop an enabling institutional support structure to support the Council of Ministers on peace and security matters. EAC standing operational procedures are being developed in line with the existing military procedures: peace support operations, police, civilian, counter terrorism, counter piracy and disaster risk management. The EAC Security Council is expected to be in place and operational by 2021 • A framework for mutual provision of consular and diplomatic assistance is expected to be concluded by 2020. • Regional policy framework and protocols on preventing and combating corruption and on good governance is expected to be completed by 2020.

4.2. Challenges

The approach taken by the EAC in implementing its various integration goals, i.e. not fully implementing a customs union or the common market before beginning to implement a monetary union and political federation has worked to its benefit. This pragmatism, in the prioritization and partial implementation of its integration goals has resulted in the REC benefiting its members early, before full implementation is advantageous, although may seem as a disadvantage as citizens do not fully benefit as desired from the onset. This and many more challenges stand in the way of the EAC, briefly, they are:

- Delays and declining and inconsistent disbursements from partner states and development partners reduce the effectiveness of EAC organs and institutions.
- Long, costly and tedious decision-making processes, both regional and national, impede the implementation of policy decisions, programmes and projects.
- Awareness of EAC integration process among EAC citizenry remains limited.
- Overlapping REC memberships continue to pose harmonization and coordination challenges.
- Donor procurement processes and procedures have often been unduly complex and time consuming.
- EAC institutions have limited mandates to enforce and implement agreements.
- Recurring non-tariff barriers affect the movement of goods across borders.
- Slow implementation of the common market is mainly due to delays in amending national policies, laws and regulations to conform to the protocol.
- Political mobilization is inadequate for full implementation of the signed EAC protocols.
- The ratification and accession of legal instruments have been delayed.
- The EAC lacks organs like a Peace and Security Council to facilitate implementation of the peace and security pact.

4.3 Lessons learnt

4.3.1. Attainment of the AfCFTA objectives will depend to a large extent on the success of the RECs.

From the KII, majority of stakeholders agree that success of the AfCFTA will depend largely on implementation of the RECs, because of the shared goals of trade liberalization via tariff reduction, open borders, and enforcement of customs union or common market protocols, which demand similar or equivalent institutional infrastructure at the continental level just as it does at the regional level. For this reason, if implementation of regional integration fails, then it is difficult to imagine that it will succeed at the continental level. For example, if members do not address tariff and non-tariff barriers, poor trade infrastructure, and cumbersome border customs procedures within RECs, it will be very difficult for the AfCFTA to address these at the continental level given that these policies are implemented nationally.

4.3.2. RECs can be useful in fasts tracking implementation of AfCFTA

The KII's observed that the AfCFTA builds on the eight regional economic blocks in Africa including the EAC and will borrow heavily from their internal processes such as handling of NTBs, customs, rules and procedures for movement of labour and capital, etc. RECs will also be instrumental in coordinating negotiation positions and support their member states in implementation of the AfCFTA. Furthermore, they will play a vital role in handling and mediating disputes that may arise among their member states with respect to trading under AfCFTA. This will result in shortened negotiation timelines, and faster adoption and implementation of protocols leading to enhanced implementation of the continental agreement.

For example, in order to realize its objectives, the AfCFTA seeks to progressively eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade in goods; progressively liberalize trade in services; cooperate on investment measures, intellectual property rights (IPRs) and competition policies; cooperate on customs matters and the implementation of trade facilitation measures; establish and promote cooperation in all trade-related areas; and ensure and maintain an institutional framework for the implementation and administration of the Continental Free Trade Area. In pursuing these measures, the AfCFTA will not seek to replace the existing RECs. It explicitly recognises the REC's under Article 5 (b) as the building blocks for the AfCFTA. and envisages that RECs that have already made substantial progress and attained deeper integration will continue to apply their regional trade regimes for intra-regional trade. Such is the case in the EAC where integration among the Partner States has progressed from a customs union to a monetary union, albeit with some challenges. It is therefore conceivable that, being the centre-piece of intra-African trade through reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers, facilitation of free movement of persons and labour, free movement of capital, free movement of services, the right to establishment (cooperation on investment measures) and residence, IPRs, competition policies, cooperation on customs and trade facilitation measures and trade-related areas, the REC's will continue to play a central role in the achievement of the AfCFTA.

4.3.3. Funding constraints within RECs might hinder key Infrastructural priorities for successful implementation of the AfCFTA

KII's emphasized that the RECs need more funding from their national Governments to operate optimally as building blocks to the AfCFTA since their success will determine implementation of the AfCFTA. Existing budgetary constraints to implement planned intra- and inter-regional infrastructures programmes in order to facilitate trade across the Continent by opening important trade corridors need to be addressed as a matter of priority. In the EAC, for example, the Central and Northern Corridors play an important role in linking the region to hinterland countries in Central Africa. The Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Corridor development will link East Africa with Central Africa up to the Atlantic seaboard and providing the much need link to facilitate trans-Africa trade.

In addition, inadequate financial resources to implement cooperation and economic integration activities within the REC. The East African Community, in recent years, has been facing the challenge of sustainably financing its budget. The Community's Secretariat in 2019, for example, had to draw funds from its staff gratuity fund account to pay salaries for one month according media reports then, implying the poor state of funding of the bloc. There has been concern about low budget support by Partner States, which has been blamed for the stalling of several programmes. Late disbursements of Partner States contributions and reliance of development partners support have been blamed for this state of affairs.

4.3.4. Increased awareness and sensitization in member states

KIIs noted that there was a lack of awareness and sensitization on the benefits of the AfCFTA and the RECs to the citizens of partner states. Recommending that there is need for sensitisation and mobilisation of key stakeholders in partner countries to enhance inclusiveness and participation in the negotiations to ensure buy in from all stakeholders, as well as promote the adoption and exploitation of the increased trade opportunities for economic development. For example, poor understanding or lack of sensitization of the private sector on how to take advantage of the AfCFTA due to inadequate awareness creation and access to information on the potential benefits of the AfCFTA. There might be a disconnect between traders and the national government hence leaving out potential beneficiaries who might miss out on trade under AfCFTA.

4.3.5. Coherent regional approaches to development are important for sustainable development to result from regional integration

Development of harmonized and coherent national, regional and continental strategies to guide the implementation of the AfCFTA, industrial development strategies, governance reforms and additional follow-up actions are other important elements for consideration by partner states. This coherent approach will ensure that sector strategies and investments will build on existing synergies with economic multipliers resulting in more sustainable development.

Moreover, regional organisations like EAC can provide many of the key structures and institutions to support intra-African trade while retaining relevance in their roles beyond trade and economic integration, including on mobility, health, environment, agriculture and other thematic areas of integration/cooperation.

4.3.6. Foster cooperation and trust among State Parties (sustaining political will) to implement and to enhance policy coordination and harmonisation.

KIs agreed that despite the shared objectives, sometimes persistent mistrust among members of a REC hampers achievement of full benefits of regional integration. Weak policy coordination and harmonisation are often a result of fragile political commitment arising from such mistrust embedded in national political interests. For example, in the East African Community, while the region stands to gain from increased trade and other benefits, mutual suspicion remains a major hindrance to achieving the ultimate political unity of the expanded EAC, even though these are never publicly discussed except for what have been recently observed in Tanzania during the recent tiff when Kenya closed its border with the country to movement of persons in order to stem the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. President Magufuli and some of his Ministers expressed their disdain over this move by Kenya with subsequent retaliatory measures which significantly affected cross border trade between the two countries.

In addition, trade related conflicts have also been seen to pose a threat to regional integration. A good example is the Rwanda Uganda conflict as well as the Tanzania Kenya conflicts which led to closure of borders.

4.3.7. Incoherent TBT Challenges associated with quality and standards requirements are a major determinant of trade in a Free Trade Area.

KII's observed that TBTs are a major challenge to regional integration, as currently, food producing companies in Kenya can export to developed markets in Japan, Europe, and Singapore, which have strict regulations, yet are unable to export to countries on the continent because of regulations.

Different standards regimes implemented at national levels are a major hindrance to access to markets, for example, the allowable moisture content for imports of maize is set at 13 percent in Tanzania, 13.5 percent in Kenya, and 14 percent in Uganda. The tolerance for insect damage is one percent in Uganda, two percent in Kenya, and three percent in Tanzania. Malawi requires that maize should meet the following requirements: maximum of 14 percent moisture content, maximum of 2.6 percent of foreign matter, maximum of 11.5 percent of broken grains, and aflatoxin of 3μg per kilogram.

The opportunity to harmonize these differing regimes under the AfCFTA will result in increased intra-Africa market access.

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5.0 Policy Recommendations, Areas for Further Research and Conclusions

5.1. Policy recommendations for AfCFTA

Establish mutual recognition of laws and standards rather than harmonization.

In order to fast track African integration, negotiators should shift approach to advancement of mutual recognition of laws and standards rather than their harmonization. This will in effect fast track the integration process.

Pragmatic approach to realizing integration goals.

Rather than seek ultimate perfection of integration goals, African policy makers can adopt a pragmatic approach that ensures progress towards deeper cooperation and integration. This approach has seemed to work with the EAC perfecting its customs union and common market objectives even as it draws nearer to its monetary union and political federation objectives.

Awareness creation and Citizen centred integration

Encouraging the involvement of citizens and their direct participation in integration affairs will greatly enhance its effectiveness as they take advantage of the opportunities that integration presents. The EU achieved this through providing for direct election of representatives of the member states to the EU parliament by citizens allowing for greater awareness and appreciation of the importance of the regional institutions and its functions.

Delegated/decentralized decision making to regional institutions.

For regional integration to work, sovereignty and decision making has to be delegated to regional supra-institutions allowing for easier decision-making for a common purpose and specific goals. This is particularly crucial in deeper integration processes such as a common market, monetary union and political federation.

Adopt binding legal imperatives rather than consensus in decision making

Key decisions in Africa's integration processes are agreed by consensus rather than via legal imperatives making them non-binding and subject to reneging by member states. Most protocols, directives, regulations and decisions passed by the African Union Assembly, as well as other key organs, are either not ratified, ratified slowly, or not implemented at all.

Specific policy recommendations are as follows:

5.2.1. Member states

- Must be fully involved in the mobilization of domestic resources and accelerate the implementation of the Kigali decision on the 0.2% for AUC funding, to be able to finance the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the African Integration Fund.
- Align their national development plans with regional and continental programmes to maximize effectiveness.

5.2.2. The regional economic communities

- Align their programmes and action plans with the continental agenda for Integration, which includes the Abuja Treaty, Agenda 2063 and its ten-year implementation plan.
- Strengthen their cooperation to share experiences and best practices.
- Develop their local capital markets to raise funds for the efficient funding of infrastructure

5.2.3. The African Union Commission

- Continue to coordinate the implementation of the African Integration Agenda while conducting, in collaboration with RECs.
- Set up an awareness mechanism to sensitize African citizens to integration issues.
- Accelerate the implementation of the Kigali decision on the 0.2% for AUC funding to create financial autonomy for the RECs, AUC and other continental and regional institutions.
- Strengthen collaboration between the AU and members' states by nominating a specific focal point (ministry, department or other structure).
- Align policies according to priorities, financing capacities and the emerging issues.

5.2 Areas for further Research

This study has been able to identify the fundamental lessons for successful implementation of the AfCFTA by reviewing the experiences of the EAC as a REC within the continent. An additional empirical study on factors that determine successful implementation of the AfCFTA would provide a quantitative approach and different perspective while presenting additional evidence for factors or determinants of success in the implementation of continental level integration. This would be of interest to policy makers and researchers interested in this area.

5.3 Conclusion

The implementation of the AfCFTA is important for economic development of the continent, the RECs do offer meaningful learnings that might further enhance its success. One key ingredient that is missing in both processes is the main beneficiary, who is the citizens of the partner states. It is important to make the process more participatory and to raise awareness on the benefits that the new opportunities presents, after all it is they that trade amongst themselves.

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Annex: Interview Guide

African Continental Free Trade Area: Lessons from a Case Study of the East African Community (short title version)

Introduction.

This interview guide provides questions that should be completed by the Key Informant. The questions are mostly open ended and will take about 15 minutes to complete.

The IEA-Kenya appreciates you for agreeing to be part of this study. The information provided by the respondents will be treated confidentially and will be used in accordance to the IEA-Kenya's Ethical Standards Review Panel as well as IEA-Kenya's Data Protection Policy and as such will not be shared with any other third parties especially where personal information is shared.

Questions

Q1. In your view, are there objectives of the AfCFTA that can be enhanced or hindered by the performance of regional economic communities (RECs)?

Yes No

Q2.A. what are your reasons for the above answer (500 characters)

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Q3. In what ways can regional economic communities (RECs) such as the EAC enhance successful implementation of the AfCFTA? (1000 characters)

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Q4. What are the key challenges in the regional economic communities (RECs) that might hinder successful implementation of the AfCFTA

Q4.A. National

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Q4.B. Regional
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Q5. Of the challenges mentioned above, what are the three top priorities for resolving that would ensure successful implementation of the AfCFTA

Q5.A. National

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Q5.B. Regional

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Institute of
Economic Affairs

Institute of Economic Affairs
5th Floor, ACK Garden House | P.O. Box 53989 - 00200 Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: +254-20-2721262, +254-20-2717402 | Fax: +254-20-2716231
Email: admin@ieakenya.or.ke | Website: www.ieakenya.or.ke