

Common Market for
Eastern and Southern Africa



MEDIUM TERM STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025



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FOREWORD BY THE CHAIR OF THE AUTHORITY

I am pleased to present to you the 2021-2025 Medium Term Strategic Plan, which outlines our strategic vision in pursuit of achieving and accelerating our regional integration goals. The beneficiaries of this strategy are the citizens of our region as this will seek to improve their socio-economic conditions through economic growth.

Regional integration has remained a key priority for African leaders since the beginning of the 1960's Pan African movement. From the onset of its foundation, COMESA has built its reputation as a prominent front-runner in the promotion of Africa's Regional Integration Agenda. What this means is that it has remained relevant and continues to cater and recognise the needs of the region through its effective programme implementation. Globally and continentally, COMESA has earned its reputable name and emerged as a leader through its collaboration with various stakeholders.

The 2021-2025 MTSP contributes to the priorities of the AU Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in achieving its objectives. Setting our strategic direction requires that we work together at all levels and support one another as this is the true essence of regional integration.

We are facing challenging times with the crucial task of guaranteeing our citizen's health, the main drivers of Africa's Regional Integration. On the other hand, our regional efforts have now shifted towards

mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic and this has meant developing innovative initiatives and upgrading the existing programmes to address the negative economic effects of this crisis on health and trade, and this is what this current strategy is about. Economic diversification has been one of the areas that COMESA continues to focus on and this crisis has demonstrated the importance of sectors such as the manufacturing sector in which COMESA has greatly contributed to. With international institutions projecting this detrimental impact of the pandemic, trade remains the most powerful and indispensable tool.

COMESA is actively negotiating trading opportunities with emerging markets. To this end, it has contributed immensely towards the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which came into force on 30th May 2019, premised on the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area. The achievements made thus far provide an impetus for COMESA to expand and deepen its regional integration agenda, which is critical to gaining the right momentum in recovering from the unprecedented crisis caused by the COVID 19 pandemic.

The end result of this strategy is, enhanced regional integration among the COMESA Member States. Moreover, the strategy presents opportunities for repositioning and renewal of commitments and efforts towards economic prosperity, peace and unity.

His Excellency, Abdel Fattah El Sisi

President of the Arab Republic of Egypt

Chairperson of the Authority of the COMESA Heads of State and Government

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY COMESA SECRETARY GENERAL



COMESA is guided by plans that have 3 time horizons; the long-term vision expressed in the founding COMESA Treaty, a medium-term horizon, usually a five (5) year MTSP and an annual planning cycle. Medium term strategic plans provide a framework within which detailed annual work programmes and budgets are developed to ensure clarity and smartness. The 2021-2025 Medium Term Strategic Plan is COMESA's roadmap to achieving its vision, mission and objectives for the next 5 years.

This strategic plan answers the questions:

- (i) Where are we now as a Regional Economic Community?
- (ii) Where are we headed, and finally;
- (iii) How are we going to achieve our goals collectively?

This strategy presents our strengths, critical areas to be addressed and the global events we are facing.

In Africa and specifically the COMESA region, regional integration has been a catalyst for economic growth and ultimately prosperity. Over the years, COMESA has played an important role in delivering Africa's regional integration agenda with many successes and navigating through its challenges. Throughout, the region has remained resilient and optimistic about the future of regional integration

by taking advantage of its natural and human resources, coupled with the support from development partners in raising financial and non-financial resources.

The 2021-2025 MTSP builds on COMESA's commitment to regional integration and is supported by 4 interdependent pillars; Market Integration, Physical Integration/Connectivity, Productive Integration and Gender and Social Integration. This strategy ensures that we implement the appropriate programmes with regards to the realities faced by our citizens and meeting the demands of our changing environment. It will also ensure that we make the right decisions that will seek to positively influence decision-making and policy in our Member States.

An undeniable challenge for African nations that is set to derail the progress and achievements of regional integration has been the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic which has not spared any African country. The region is facing its health and economic crisis that is set to reverse its achievements particularly with economic growth. Regressing commodity prices are projected to threaten foreign exchange earnings and exert foreign exchange and inflationary pressures while, lockdowns and containment measures have affected trade across borders. This calls for robust and concerted efforts in regional coordination and cooperation as this will require the region to recalibrate and mitigate the risks created by this and to prepare the region in the post-pandemic recovery through the revision of its disaster management policies. As you begin to comprehend this strategic plan, you will realize that it is a guide towards responding to inevitable shocks and emerging issues as well as raising awareness towards operating at a more efficient level through the development of new programmes and focus areas.

This valuable process could not have been a success without the energy and time put in by the Strategy Formulation Taskforce, planning officials from Member States, the Strategic Planning, Research and Policy Harmonisation Unit, which is the strategy coordination office and the staff at the COMESA Secretariat. These teams, displayed a diverse set of multi-sectorial expertise and their knowledge in strategy management and strategic thinking is commendable. I would like to express my gratitude to our development partners as they have made this regional integration journey possible; we aim to continuously build on these good relations. This strategic plan is a product of open and free consultations and strongly reflects COMESA's value proposition. I am more than confident of the success of this strategy, our region and the entire African continent.

Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe
Secretary General
COMESA

ACRONYMS

ACTESA	Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern COMESA
AEC	African Economic Community
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AGA	African Governance Architecture
ALLPI	Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute
ATI	African Trade Insurance Agency
AUC	African Union Commission
CA	Conservation Agriculture
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CAF	COMESA Adjustment Facility
CCC	COMESA Competition Commission
CCH	COMESA Clearing House
CCIA	COMESA Common Investment Area
CCU	Continental Customs Union
CET	Common External Tariff
CFTA	Continental Free Trade Area
CIF	COMESA Infrastructure Fund
CMI	COMESA Monetary Institute
CMR	Customs Management Regulations
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMFWB	COMESA Federation of Women in Business

COMSTAT	COMESA Statistics
CTN	Common Tariff Nomenclature
CVTFS	COMESA Virtual Trade Facilitation System
EA-SA-IO	Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and Indian Ocean
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zones
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FEMCOM	Federation of National Associations of Women in Business in Eastern and Southern Africa
FTA	Free Trade Area
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IPAs	Investment Promotion Agencies
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSMEs	Micro Small and Medium Enterprises
MTSP	Medium Term Strategic Plan
NSC	North-South Corridor
NTBs	Non-Tariff Barriers
NTMs	Non-Tariff Measures
OAU	Organization of the African Unity
OSBP	One Stop Border Post
PESTEL	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environment, Legal
PIDA	Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa
PPPs	Public Private Partnerships
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RIA	COMESA Regional Investment Agency
RISM	Regional Integration Support Mechanism
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States

SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Resources, and Time
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards
STR	Simplified Trade Regime
SQAM	Standards, Quality Assurance and Metrology
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TDB	Trade Development Bank
TFTA	Tripartite Free Trade Area
UN	United Nations
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
WTO	World Trade Organisation
ZEP-Re	COMESA Re-Insurance Company

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2021-2025 Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP), outlines COMESA's strategic vision in pursuit of achieving and accelerating our regional integration goals. The beneficiaries of this strategy are the citizens of our region as this will seek to improve socio-economic conditions through economic growth. Economic integration has remained a key priority for the region since the beginning of the 1960's Pan African movement. From the onset of its foundation, COMESA has built its status as a prominent front runner in the promotion of Africa's regional integration agenda. COMESA has remained relevant and continues to deliver and recognise the needs of the region through its effective programme implementation. The 2021-2025 MTSP is aligned to the global and continental development agenda and contributes to the priorities of the AU Agenda 2063 and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in achieving its objectives.

The key objective of COMESA's integration agenda is the establishment of an environment in which there is seamless flow of goods, services, capital and people. Hence, the focus is on trade facilitation through trade and transport facilitation and simplification and harmonization of documents and procedures. In addition, the objective entails lowering the cost of conducting business through removal of trade barriers and establishing trade liberalisation, facilitation of policy coordination and cooperation in the productive sectors as well as addressing gender and social impediments to enable effective participation of women and youth in the regional development processes.

In implementing the concluded 2016-2020 MTSP, COMESA made considerable progress towards beneficial economic integration in its Member States. Notable progress was achieved in trade liberalization

and facilitation, and customs management, through digitization of key tools and instruments namely the Online NTB Reporting and Monitoring System, and the Electronic Certificate of Origin (eCo) amongst others. Further, COMESA played an instrumental role towards the realization of the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which expand the market and provide more opportunities for trade.

In the area of transport facilitation, work was undertaken to support the adoption and implementation of COMESA transport facilitation instruments by Member States, establishment of regional corridors and One Stop Border Post (OSBPs) implementation. Under energy, key activities included enhancing the capacity of Member States on issues regarding electricity and renewable energy. In the area of agriculture and industry, progress was made in supporting the development of SMEs/SMIs across regional value chains, support to the CAADP process in Member States, implementation of the fisheries and livestock programmes and capacity building in food safety quality management systems, and regional Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) testing requirements amongst others.

In fostering gender equality, women and youth empowerment and social development, COMESA made notable progress in operationalizing the 50 Million African Women Speak Project which enhances access to financial and non-financial services for women entrepreneurs via a digital information and networking platform and implementation of the Project on Youth Engagement in Governance, Democracy and Socio-Economic Processes amongst others. Overall COMESA and its established institutions have contributed towards progress in trade and project finance, institutional development, technical co-operation, capacity development in all sectors including statistics and policy development and coordination in the productive sectors. At the Secretariat level, efforts were made to strengthen capacity in core areas required to enhance efficiency.

The following were the major challenges encountered during the implementation of the 2016-2020 MTSP; slow rate in the signature, ratification and domestication of legal instruments, delayed implementation of Authority/Council Decisions, inadequate domestic resources to sufficiently fund programmes and low levels of awareness and sensitisation on COMESA regional integration programmes amongst others.

The process to develop an inclusive and sustainable successor strategy for the period 2021-2025 focused on positioning COMESA as a strategy driven organisation, which is fit for purpose and builds on its successes while overriding its challenges to continue to lead in regional economic integration.. This was undertaken in due consideration of the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic which triggered unprecedented socio-economic disruption at all levels.

With this background, the 2021-2025 MTSP puts forward 4 strategic pillars namely:

1. **Market Integration** - To eliminate barriers to factor mobility by facilitating the flow of goods, services, capital and people.
2. **Physical Integration/Connectivity** - To effectively address supply side constraints related to the improvement of infrastructure in the region to reduce the cost of doing business and enhance competitiveness.
3. **Productive Integration** - To enhance competitiveness and build regional productive capacity.
4. **Gender and Social Integration** - To foster gender equality and women empowerment, facilitate social and cultural development, and support youth empowerment and innovations.

The pillars support COMESA's mission to facilitate the achievement of sustainable economic and social progress in Member States through increased co-operation and integration in areas of development as outlined by the Treaty. The identified pillars are supported by a strategic focus aimed at establishing an *Effective Secretariat*, by building institutional capacity through adequate human resources and financial resources creating synergy to feed into the pillars. Additionally, an M&E Framework has been developed as a tool to guide performance monitoring and evaluation of the strategy.

The 2021-2025 MTSP serves to provide clear communication of COMESA's priorities to all stakeholders, support more effective management control of strategic initiatives and aims to improve cooperation among those pursuing respective strategic objectives. Further, the strategic plan will serve as a useful tool in resource mobilisation as it will be used to engage COMESA's strategic partners in the pursuit of regional integration. The strategy recognises the following critical success factors on which successful implementation is largely dependent on; clear institutional structures guided by the subsidiarity principle, accountability, communication, human resource management, monitoring and evaluation and risk management.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 COMESA's Vision

The vision of COMESA is, “To have a fully integrated internationally competitive regional economic community with high standards of living for its entire people, ready to merge into the African Economic Community”.

1.2 COMESA's Mission

The mission of COMESA is, “To endeavor to achieve sustainable economic and social progress in all Member States through increased co-operation and integration in all fields of development particularly in trade, customs and monetary affairs, transport, communication and information, technology, industry and energy, gender, agriculture, environment and natural resources”.

1.3 Who We Are - Article 3 of the Treaty

COMESA is one of the eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) recognized by the African Union, formed to promote regional integration (co-ordination and harmonization) among the groupings for the gradual establishment of an African Economic Community.

The aims and objectives of COMESA have been designed so as to remove the structural and institutional weaknesses in the Member States by pooling their resources together in order to sustain their

development efforts either individually or collectively. These are as follows:

- a) To attain sustainable growth and development of the Member States by promoting a more balanced and harmonious development of its production and marketing structures;
- b) To promote joint development in all fields of economic activity and the joint adoption of macro-economic policies and programmes; to raise the standard of living of its peoples, and to foster closer relations among its Member States;
- c) To co-operate in the creation of an enabling environment for foreign, cross-border and domestic investment, including the joint promotion of research and adaptation of science and technology for development;
- d) To co-operate in the promotion of peace, security and stability among the Member States in order to enhance economic development in the region;
- e) To co-operate in strengthening the relations between the Common Market and the rest of the world and the adoption of common positions in international fora; and
- f) To contribute towards the establishment, progress and the realization of the objectives of the African Economic Community.

The Treaty establishing COMESA was signed on 5th November 1993 in Kampala, Uganda and was ratified a year later in Lilongwe, Malawi on 8th December 1994. COMESA Member States are Burundi, Comoros, DR Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Eswatini, Somalia, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Established as “an organization of free independent sovereign states which have agreed to co-operate in developing their natural and human resources for the good of all their people”, COMESA's main focus is on the formation of a large economic and trading unit that is capable of overcoming some of the barriers that are faced by individual states. It is expected that in this next planning period COMESA will continue to follow-up on the common external tariff structure dealing with third party trade and will have considerably simplified procedures. COMESA has a wide-ranging series of other objectives, which necessarily include in its priorities the promotion of peace and security in the region, environmental sustainability, climate change, and smart agriculture, among others.

1.4 Fundamental Principles According to Article 6 of the Treaty

The Treaty establishing COMESA binds together free independent sovereign States which have agreed to co-operate in exploiting their natural and human resources for the common good of all their people. In attaining that goal, COMESA Member States agreed to adhere to the following fundamental principles enshrined in Article 6 of the Treaty:

- a) Equality and inter-independence of the Member States;
- b) Solidarity and collective self-reliance among the Member States;
- c) Inter-State co-operation, harmonization of policies and integration of programmes among the Member States;
- d) Non-aggression between the Member States;
- e) Recognition, promotion and protection of human and people's rights in accordance with the provisions of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights;
- f) Accountability, economic justice and popular participation in development;
- g) The recognition and observance of the rule of law;
- h) The promotion and sustenance of a democratic system of governance in each Member State;
- i) The maintenance of regional peace and stability through the promotion and strengthening of good neighborliness; and
- j) The peaceful settlement of disputes among the Member States, the active co-operation between neighboring countries and the promotion of a peaceful environment as a pre-requisite for their economic development.

Due to resource constraints, the implementation of the Treaty is broken down into five-year strategies that contain activities and programmes to be prioritized in areas where the greatest impact can be made.

1.5 Organs of COMESA

There are four organs of COMESA which have the power to take decisions. These are: the Authority of Heads of State and Government; the Council of Ministers; the Court of Justice; and the Committee

of Governors of Central Banks. The Intergovernmental Committee, the Technical Committees, the Secretariat and the Consultative Committee make recommendations to the Council of Ministers, which in turn make recommendations to the Authority.

- **The Authority** is made up of Heads of State and Government is the supreme Policy Organ of the Common Market and is responsible for the general policy, direction and control of the performance of the executive functions of the Common Market and the achievement of its aims and objectives. The decisions and directives of the Authority are by consensus and are binding on all subordinate institutions, other than the Court of Justice, on matters within its jurisdiction, as well as on the Member States.
- **The Council of Ministers (Council)** is the second highest Policy Organ of COMESA. It is composed of Ministers designated by the Member States. The Council is responsible for ensuring the proper functioning of COMESA in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty. The Council takes policy decisions on the programmes and activities of the COMESA, including the monitoring and reviewing of its financial and administrative management. As provided for in the Treaty, Council decisions are made by consensus, failing which, by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Council.
- **The COMESA Court of Justice** is the judicial organ of COMESA, having jurisdiction to adjudicate upon all matters which may be referred to it pursuant to the COMESA Treaty. Specifically, it ensures the proper interpretation and application of the provisions of the Treaty; and it adjudicates any disputes that may arise among the Member States regarding the interpretation and application of the provisions of the Treaty. The decisions of the Court are binding and final. Decisions of the Court on the interpretation of the provisions of the COMESA Treaty have precedence over decisions of national courts. The Court, when acting within its jurisdiction, is independent of the Authority and the Council. It is headed by a President and consists of 11 additional Judges appointed by the Authority.
- **The Committee of Governors of Central Banks** is empowered under the Treaty to determine the maximum debt and credit limits to the COMESA Clearing House, the daily interest rate for outstanding debt balances and the Staff Rules for Clearing House staff. It also monitors and ensures the proper implementation of the monetary and financial co-operation programmes.

- **The Inter-Governmental Committee** is a multi-disciplinary body composed of permanent secretaries from the Member States in the fields of trade and customs, agriculture, industry, transport and communications, administrative and budgetary matters and legal affairs. Decisions of the Committee are made by a simple majority. Its main functions include:
 - a) The development of programmes and action plans in all the sectors of co-operation, except in the finance and monetary sector;
 - b) The monitoring and keeping under constant review and ensuring proper functioning and development of the Common Market; and
 - c) Overseeing the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty and, for that purpose, requesting a technical committee to investigate any particular matter.
- **Technical Committees** are responsible for the preparation of comprehensive implementation programmes and monitoring their implementation and then making recommendations to the Council.
- **The Secretariat** is headed by a Secretary General who is appointed by the Authority. The basic function of the Secretariat is to provide technical support and advisory services to the Member States in the implementation of the Treaty. To this end, it undertakes research and studies as a basis for implementing the decisions adopted by the Policy Organs.
- **The Consultative Committee of the Business Community and other Interest Groups** are responsible for providing a link and facilitating dialogue between the business community and other interest groups and other organs of COMESA.
- **COMESA Institutions and Specialised Agencies** have been created to promote regional co-operation and development. Collaboration between COMESA and its institutions is essential pursuant to Article 175 of the COMESA Treaty. Resolutions made at a Retreat between COMESA Secretariat, Institutions and Specialized Agencies held on 24 November 2019 in Lusaka, Zambia, stated that there is need to strengthen synergies and complementarity of programmes implemented by the COMESA Secretariat on one hand and COMESA Institutions and Specialized Agencies on the other hand in order to

enhance the attainment of the aims and objectives of COMESA as enshrined in Article 3 of the Treaty.

COMESA Institutions, Specialised Agencies and their objectives are aligned in the table below;

Institution	Objective	Location
African Trade Insurance Agency (ATI)	To provide political risk cover to companies, investors, and lenders interested in doing business in Africa	Nairobi, Kenya
COMESA Clearing House	To facilitate the settlement of trade and services payments amongst Member States	Harare, Zimbabwe
COMESA Competition Commission	To promote and encourage competition in the region by preventing restrictive business practices and other restrictions that deter the efficient operations of markets, thereby enhancing the welfare of the consumers and protecting consumers against offensive conduct by market actors	Lilongwe, Malawi
COMESA Federation of Women in Business (COMFWB)	To support women in business in the region	Lilongwe, Malawi
COMESA Regional Investment Agency (RIA)	To make COMESA one of the major destinations for regional and international investors while simultaneously enhancing national investment	Cairo, Egypt
Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute (ALLPI)	To facilitate the development of the leather sector in Africa in general and in the COMESA Region in particular	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Trade Development Bank (TDB)	To advance socio-economic development and regional integration across its Member States by financing and fostering trade	Bujumbura, Burundi
The COMESA Re-Insurance Company (ZEP-Re)	To promote and develop the insurance industry of the region by fostering the development of the insurance and reinsurance industry in the COMESA Sub-Region; promoting the growth of national, sub-regional and regional underwriting and retention capacity; and supporting sub-regional economic development	Nairobi, Kenya

Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA)	To integrate small-scale farmers into national, regional and international markets through enhanced policy environment, expanded market services and improved commercial integration.	Lusaka, Zambia
COMESA Monetary Institute	To undertake all technical and preparatory activities required to enhance the COMESA Monetary Cooperation Program.	Nairobi, Kenya
COMESA Council of Bureaux on the Yellow Card Scheme	To facilitate the movement of vehicles, goods, people and services within the COMESA region	Lusaka, Zambia
Regional Customs Transit Guarantee Scheme	To provide to customs administrations with security to recover duties and taxes from importers and exporters should the goods in transit be illegally disposed of for home consumption in the country of transit	Lusaka, Zambia
COMESA Business Council (CBC)	To enforce strategic advocacy platforms for the private sector in priority sectors within COMESA region and ensure effective representation of private sector interests in COMESA decision making processes.	Lusaka, Zambia
COMESA Court of Justice	To uphold the rule of law in the enforcement of the COMESA Treaty	Khartoum, Sudan

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND

2.1 Regional Integration

Regional integration refers to the process of states coming together to sign agreements where they agree to cooperate in areas of common interest. This process is overseen by the governments of the specific states. Regional cooperation can take different forms, depending on the objectives of the states that are involved. States may want to come together for economic reasons or even further to form a political alliance or union¹. Integrating African countries is therefore indispensable to the continent's transformation for socio-economic growth and industrialisation. Regional integration is about connecting people, communities, businesses and governments across regions, working together through collaboration and cooperation in order to achieve common interests. It is the collaboration and cooperation in integrating markets, physical connectivity, production, finance, social and cultural development and allowing the free movement of people while mainstreaming gender and youth.

Regional integration remains an economic and political priority for African leaders and policy makers, as evidenced in their adoption and implementation of many regional integration programmes both at continental and regional levels.² Regional integration has been the ultimate goal for African leaders since the 1960's, when most of the African countries were beginning to gain their independence while others were just beginning their journey to emancipation. To revive Africa's potential, the First and Second

1 African Development Bank. (2017). Trade and Economic Integration in Africa: Trend, Pattern and Future Outlook

2 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, African Union, African Development Bank and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2019)

Conferences of Independent African States were held in Accra, Ghana, in April 1958 and in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in June 1960, respectively, where economic problems to be faced by independent Africa were discussed such as the diversification of African economies.

Two options were advocated for towards the implementation of the integration strategy in Africa. The first was the Pan-African, all embracing continental approach, which envisaged the immediate creation of a continental economic arrangement. The second was the geographically narrower approach that would have its roots at regional levels and build on regional cooperation arrangements, to achieve geographically wider forms of cooperation.

The majority of the countries favoured the narrower regional approach. Based on this, the United Nations Commission for Africa (UNECA) proposed the division of the continent into four regions.



Eastern and Southern, Central, West, and North Africa. The Commission's proposals were adopted by the OAU Conference of Heads of State and Government. All independent African States were enjoined to take, during the 1980's all necessary steps to strengthen existing regional economic cooperative groupings and, as necessary establish new ones so as to cover the whole continent, region and promote coordination and harmonization among the groupings for the gradual establishment of an African Economic Community by the end of the century.

The Abuja Treaty signed on 3rd June 1991 in Nigeria, places RECs at the centre of driving regional integration as they are the building blocs and the main implementers of establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) by 2028. Among the objectives of the AEC is to promote economic, social and cultural development and the integration of African economies in order to increase economic self-reliance and promote an endogenous and self-sustained development.³ The AEC is to be achieved through 6 harmonized and simultaneous stages each with their own individual timeframes. Over the years, the regional integration process has proved to be a divergent process with RECs crafting their own integration trajectories to fit their unique existing preconditions.

A key objective of regional integration is the establishment of an environment in which there is seamless flow of goods, services, capital and people. Hence, the focus is on trade facilitation through trade and transport facilitation and simplification and harmonization of documents and procedures. In addition, the objective entails lowering the cost of conducting business through removal of trade barriers and establishing trade liberalisation, as well as addressing gender and social impediments to enable effective participation of women and youth in the regional development processes.

2.2 Role of Regional Integration

Experts agree that regional integration expands markets and trade, enhances cooperation, business development/growth, mitigates risk, and fosters socio-cultural cooperation and regional stability. Regional integration has also been known to maximise the benefits of globalisation, while countering its negative effects and to stimulate development in least-developed countries by improving productive capacity and encouraging investments in those pieces of infrastructure that hold the most economic potential.⁴

Beyond market integration, the objective of regional integration is to improve the living standards of

3 Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community

4 The 2019 Africa Regional Integration Index (ARII) Report. 2019.

its citizens. This calls for people-centered and gender and youth sensitive regional development interventions that take into consideration values of social justice including inclusiveness, participation and sustainability. Regional integration aims to promote peace, security, stability and enhanced democratic governance through effective national and regional institutional mechanisms and structures. It has been recognised that regional peace and security, democratic and inclusive governance are pre-requisites to social and economic development and vital to the achievement of regional economic integration.

Over time, regional integration has been practised due to the expected benefits that it yields for its various stakeholders. Benefits include improved efficiency of the interconnectivity among countries to facilitate trade and movement of factors of production and the development of productive capacity. In addition, it attracts increased investment, enhances business development and partnerships, creates employment, improves standards of living, enhances internal technical capacity and skills transfer. Furthermore, it provides increased access to resources, information and markets, and lower transaction and finance costs. It also increases use of uniform standards and practices, and collective ownership of decisions and obligations.

Notwithstanding the immense benefits of regional programmes to the development efforts of the African regional integration agenda, more work is required to ensure that programmes and initiatives that are developed add value and directly address challenges facing the continent and the COMESA region. Among the long-standing challenges that have been observed include the low domestication of regional commitments by Member States which has affected the advancement of the regional integration process. Going forward, there is need to ensure that priorities as stipulated in national development plans and strategies for economic development, are aligned to regional social and economic development strategies. The alignment is critical to ensure that RECs are fit for purpose and their programmes have a direct impact on socio-economic transformation in the region.

2.3 Challenges to Regional Integration

Dwindling financial resources of RECs has resulted in high dependence on development partners financing which at times results in unsustainability of programmes particularly in the event that donor funding is withdrawn. In efforts to promote sustainability of programmes, principles of the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2011) namely; ownership, focus on results, partnerships and transparency and shared responsibility should be encouraged to make aid more effective and sustainable. Further, the Busan Framework recognises that advancing gender equality

and women's empowerment is critical to achieving development results, and sustainable and inclusive growth. In addition, accountability mechanisms should incorporate regional and global commitments on gender equality and women empowerment and ensure availability of gender disaggregated data to inform policy decisions and guide investments.

Membership to RECs is made on the consideration of a state's political, economic and social realities. Therefore, states may choose to be part of many RECs so long as they envision their anticipated benefits. This may have a negative impact on regional integration through duplicated efforts, stretched commitments and the harmonisation of different policies.

Critical to the success of regional efforts is the need for continuous capacity building at Member State level. It has been observed that capacity gaps in terms of specialised and technical knowledge at national level adversely affects implementation and uptake of regional programmes and initiatives. To support implementation efforts and ownership at national level, there is need to build on capacity building efforts employed by RECs and their specialised institutions. The continuous capacity building should leverage on existing capacities and support determined priorities, policies and desired results.

Enhanced visibility, public awareness and continuous engagement with key stakeholders particularly Member States, private sector, research and academic institutions who are key implementers, are critical components of achieving the aspirations of a collective regional integration agenda. This entails the dissemination of information and raising awareness and level of knowledge of the public which is a prerequisite in rallying participation in regional efforts.

2.4 COMESA in Context

Since its establishment, COMESA has recognised market integration as a practical way of addressing the small size of markets of individual countries in the region. To this end, COMESA has made significant strides in the regional integration process through the operationalisation and consolidation of the Free Trade Area (FTA) launched on 31st October 2000 with the key aim being to facilitate regional integration through zero customs tariffs on goods traded among the Member States. This is in line with a key objective of COMESA to achieve joint development in all fields of economic activity and promote a more balanced and harmonious development of production and marketing structures.

As COMESA re-energizes its regional integration agenda for the planning period for 2021-2025, focus will

be placed on further expanding participation in the FTA from the sixteen of the twenty-one Member States. Within the context of rapid advancements in the area of ICTs, COMESA has taken the initiative to harness ICTs as a tool to further assist the process of trade facilitation through e-commerce and e-logistics and creation of digital information and networking platforms. ICTs are premised on empowering traders to participate in cross-border trade and investments.

The Tripartite

To further build on gains made in regional integration efforts, COMESA in partnership with the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on the 10th June 2015 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt made a joint commitment to accelerate the integration of African economies within the continent by setting up a Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA). The developmental integration model of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Integration Initiative has been elaborated in the three pillars of industrial development, market integration, and infrastructure development. A sizable regional market is essential to nurture industry and build competitiveness through improved economies of scale. The Tripartite Arrangement therefore aims at promoting economies of scale, enabling competitiveness, diversification, addressing supply-side constraints, knowledge sharing, fostering regional value-chains, intraregional trade and investment, cross-border infrastructure and overcoming the challenges of small markets.

The AfCFTA

A significant boost to continental integration efforts was the coming into force of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) on 30th May 2019 following rigorous negotiations. It has been observed that African economies face noteworthy trade constraints, among them, tariff and non-tariff barriers to exchange of goods as well as regulatory requirements on trade in services which hinder economic and social development. Notably, the relatively continued weak trade performances of Africa, particularly the low intra-trade as compared to other regions of the world, may partly be explained by such obstacles limiting spill overs associated to exchanges within the continent. In this context, opening African economies within themselves is expected to generate great benefits for the continent. Consequently, within the framework of the Abuja Treaty, the establishment of the AfCFTA is seen as a step towards addressing observed weaknesses and providing an environment to spur intra-Africa trade. In this regard, African Heads of State and Government launched the operational phase of the AfCFTA on July 7th, 2019 in Niamey, Niger. While much of the work on Phase I of the AfCFTA negotiations had been concluded, discussions are on-going on tariff liberalization, rules of origin, trade in services and trade remedies. With 54/55 AU Member States signing on to and having received the required ratifications, the COVID-19

pandemic has decelerated the pace at which the schedule of activities towards coming into force.

COMESA is well positioned to spark Africa's integration, as it is the second largest REC in the continent with membership covering the North and Horn of Africa. The region is well-endowed with natural resources and a sizable population which are all requirements for successful regional integration to take place. With an estimated current population of over 571 million and a combined GDP of over USD 749 billion, the COMESA region is potentially one of the largest markets in the world. Countries are beginning to explore the benefits of belonging to COMESA as they cannot take full advantage of opportunities as single actors.

Market Integration

A key aspiration for the COMESA region has been the free movement of goods, services and people across nations since its establishment. In reality COMESA has taken several measures in order to promote regional integration and this has resulted in noteworthy achievements in the sector of market integration. Customs tariffs are not the only trade barriers that restrict the import and export of goods between countries. The COMESA NTB Programme entails COMESA Regulations on Non-Tariff Barriers, NTBs Online Reporting, Monitoring and Eliminating Mechanism and the COMESA SMS Reporting and Monitoring Tool.

The boosting of informal cross border trade has been made possible through the Simplified Trade Regime (STR) launched in 2010 in recognition of the fact that cross-border trade constitutes a significant component of trade in the region. The STR is a cross-border trade regime for small-scale traders importing and/or exporting goods worth US\$2,000 or less, which are on the Common list of eligible products negotiated and agreed by the two neighbouring countries.

Statistics Strategy

The availability of data remains crucial to the implementation of COMESA's regional integration programmes, measuring progress of programmes and to inform decision making. The COMESA Statistics Strategy identifies capacity building as one of its strategic objectives and it has been the flagship of COMESA's interventions in Member States. In addition, efforts to collect, disseminate, harmonise and make full use of data disaggregated by sex to inform policy decisions and guide investments are being strengthened.

Infrastructure Development

The region has invested in regional infrastructural projects to provide accessible clean energy, road transport and ICTs for the citizens of the region. In the energy sector, COMESA has undertaken activities towards infrastructure development (interconnectors), capacity building, harmonized policies, standards and regulations (Power Pool) and resource mobilization.

Industrialization Strategy

Efforts are underway by COMESA to support the establishment of regional corridors and the North-South Corridor (NSC) is the main traffic artery linking the Tripartite (COMESA, SADC and EAC) and the conduit for deepening economic integration of Eastern and Southern Africa.

COMESA's industrialisation drive still remains a priority with nine intervention sub-sectors namely agro-processing, energy, textile and garments, leather and leather products, mineral beneficiation, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and agro-chemicals, light engineering and the blue economy as stipulated in the Industrialization Strategy 2017-2026. In the agricultural sector, COMESA has continued supporting the implementation of the CAADP Malabo Declaration for accelerated agricultural growth and transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods. Commitment #4 of the CAADP on Halving Poverty, by 2025, through Inclusive Agricultural Growth and Transformation calls on Member States to support and facilitate preferential entry and participation for women and youth in gainful and attractive agri-business opportunities. In an effort to diversify the agriculture sector, COMESA has stepped up its support for the Livestock and Fisheries Programme to improve production and productivity.

Gender Empowerment

To ensure that regional integration translates into positive opportunities for all citizens, promoting gender equality, women and youth empowerment, and social and cultural development continue to be key priorities. For instance, women in the COMESA region have benefited from initiatives such as the 50 Million African Women Speak Project that provides African women in business with a digital platform to help them overcome some of the challenges including access to information on financial and non-financial services, sharing of experiences, mentorship, and access to markets among others.

The COMESA Health Framework and HIV and AIDS Policy provide for strengthened cooperation of Member States on health and prevention and mitigation of disease outbreaks and epidemics. The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic calls for strengthened coordination, sharing of best practices and monitoring the implementation of regional, continental and global strategies on health to protect lives

of the citizens and advance socio-economic development in the region by establishing a structure to coordinate regional efforts on health.

Peace and Security

The nexus between peace, security and regional integration cannot be overemphasized, particularly for the African continent which has witnessed numerous intra and inter conflicts. COMESA aims to promote peace, security, stability and enhanced democratic governance through effective national and regional institutional mechanisms and structures including strengthening the capacity of youth for meaningful engagement and participation in democratic governance and socio-economic development processes through partnership with the African Union-AGA Secretariat.

Climate Change

Climate Change has emerged as a cross cutting issue that adversely impacts socio-economic development efforts in the region. Observable effects of climate change mostly include, flooding, drought, change in distribution of rainfall, drying-up of rivers, and the receding of bodies of water. Owing to the need to mitigate the devastating effects of climate change in the region which affect economic activity and livelihoods, COMESA is implementing different programmes to respond to the effects of climate change.

CHAPTER THREE

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT HIGHLIGHTS OF 2016-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

The Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2016-2020 was COMESA's roadmap for pursuing and achieving its regional economic integration goals. The highlights for the 2016-2020 period focus on the strategic objectives.

This chapter presents observations focusing on the successes, challenges and lessons learnt as they relate to the implementation of the MTSP. Highlights for each of the strategic objectives of the MTSP are presented as follows:

- (i) Strengthen Market Integration;
- (ii) Attract Increased Investments;
- (iii) Strengthen the Blue Economy;
- (iv) Harness the Benefits of Strategic Partnerships;
- (v) Strengthen Development of Economic Infrastructure;
- (vi) Industrialisation;
- (vii) Foster Gender Equality and Social Development;
- (viii) Ensure Regional and Secretariat Readiness; and
- (ix) Strengthen Regional Knowledge and Skills.

3.1 Strategic Objectives

3.1.1 Strengthening Market Integration

The focus of the market integration objective was to establish a seamless flow of goods, services,

capital, and people, including the right to establish businesses and reside within the COMESA region. It was also to ensure trade facilitation and lower the cost of cross-border trade towards a vibrant trading bloc with shared prosperity.

Exports continued to be dominated by primary commodities, which, on average, made up 67% of the total in the period 2016-2019. Most of the region's total exports (91.5% of the total exports or US\$65.7 billion) were traded outside the region, leaving only 8.5% of the total intra-COMESA exports. Trade in services in COMESA was relatively smaller than trade in goods during the review period, accounting for 21-24% of total (goods plus services) trade. Trade in both goods and services in the region was generally in deficit during the MTSP period.

Various initiatives on trade facilitation, trade cost reduction and market consolidation were pursued over the MTSP period. Among the notable successful works were those in the areas of Standards, Quality Assurance and Metrology (SQAM) and Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary (SPS), although activities were highly dependent on financial support from cooperating partners.

Barriers to trade remained prevalent in the COMESA region, including restrictive trade practices in clearing imports and exports, low use of the more business-friendly COMESA Rules of Origin, some restrictiveness in the application of SQAM and SPS measures. In addition, trade information asymmetries and gaps, persistent transit traffic issues, restrictions on free movement of people and other factor inputs, and weak capturing and utilization of selected harmonized statistics (e.g., trade-in-services and infrastructure) were also prevalent.

Notable efforts to deepen COMESA regional integration including the COMESA Customs Union, launched in June 2009, continued to be pursued during 2016-2020. However, the shifting regional and continental integration spaces through the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), respectively, slowed momentum for the adoption of COMESA Customs Union instruments at the national level. In particular, the Common External Tariff (CET) saw only 34% alignment of Member State tariffs as countries opted to focus on the TFTA and AfCFTA levels of regional integration, which gained considerable momentum.

The main aspects arising as key observations from the assessment of the MTSP's market integration initiatives include the following:

- (i) A Trade Facilitation Portal⁵ was established. However, the Portal was reportedly not

5 <https://tradefacilitation.comesa.int/st.php>

well-designed to capture all relevant trade information. It was also not user friendly, not always accessible (was sometimes offline), was low in completeness and up to datedness, and had low visibility at Member State level.

- (ii) The COMESA Protocol on Rules of Origin and the Electronic Certificate of Origin were most relevant and business-friendly instruments for the private sector, but were the least in use in the TFTA. COMESA missed important opportunities to gain visibility, recognition and strategic value proposition from such superior technical work.
- (iii) In facilitating and fostering the Tripartite FTA process, and related to this, facilitating the AfCFTA process, the implications for effectiveness and sustainability of having to navigate between COMESA regional, tripartite and continental market integration were yet to be well established, particularly in terms of their influence on implementation of key COMESA Customs Union instruments like the CET.
- (iv) The CET remained as a critical bottleneck in operationalizing the Custom Union through implementing the Customs Management Regulations (CMR), Common Tariff Nomenclature (CTN) and CET given the allowable disparities in Member State tariff (liberalization) positions under an overarching principle of variable geometry. Political solutions may be worthwhile to consider for the Customs Union.
- (v) Implementation of key COMESA Common Market instruments, particularly those related to the free movement of goods, services, capital and labour faced challenges. Additionally, the influence of new alternative instruments being crafted, proposed and agreed under the AfCFTA process also posed challenges.
- (vi) Adopting and implementing modalities (rules and mechanisms) for free circulation and revenue sharing (Monetary Union elements), the issue of supporting the Convergence Council and regaining momentum in the work of the COMESA Macroeconomic Convergence Framework were noted as an important consideration that would determine the feasibility and progress of the modalities.

3.1.2 Attracting Increased Investments

COMESA aimed at a sustained increase in investments, an improved revenue base and increased revenue, improved infrastructure (roads, ICTs, transport etc.), and increased employment in the region.

Based on available data and reports, the COMESA region fared quite well in accumulating investment over 2016-2018, with annual average size of total investment stock at 22% of GDP. COMESA's inward stock of FDI stood at US\$293.9 billion in 2017, up from US\$44.3 billion in 2000, reflecting a sustained

increase during the MTSP period.

Generally, the investment climate in COMESA, as viewed from the World Bank Ease of Doing Business Framework and the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Reports (GCRs), sustained an upward trajectory in terms of increasing attractiveness to investment. This was underpinned by investment climate reforms and other efforts in the Member States.

Two main observations in relation to attracting investment in COMESA during the MTSP period were:

- (i) The efficiency of producing and disseminating harmonized, quality, timely and policy-relevant investment statistics was hampered, particularly by inertia to implement the harmonized investment statistics framework at the Member State level and accordingly routinely share investment statistics with the Secretariat.
- (ii) In relation to the COMESA Common Investment Area (CCIA), there was general consensus that, in principle, a common investment area is useful for agglomerating Member States, who individually may be too small and fragmented to attract sufficient investment. It was also observed that the CCIA could be a building block for the forthcoming African Continental Common Investment Area (AfCCIA). However, the low appetite for the CCIA Agreement in COMESA (with none of the Member States having signed or ratified it) brings into question the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of fostering investment policy harmonization through the CCIA.

3.1.3 Strengthening the Blue/Ocean Economy

The Blue/Ocean Economy covers economic activities in aquatic and marine areas, including oceans, seas, coastlines, lakes, rivers and underground water. The Blue/Ocean Economy Programme was designed to emphasize the importance of balancing between sustainable economic development and environmental protection, anchoring this to SDG 14 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The implementation of initiatives under the Blue Economy Programme during the plan period was relatively weak. The following observations were made:

- (i) Limited effectiveness and low sustainability in putting in place legal, fiscal and other

- institutional frameworks for exploration and exploitation of hydro-carbon and mineral resources in the Blue Economy, and preparing bankable project studies;
- (ii) Low effectiveness and sustainability in establishing fishing fleets to expand on current processes, of coming up with a seafood hub, and of strengthening reciprocal fishing agreements;
 - (iii) Sustainability concerns with exploring deep ocean water applications, establishing and strengthening marine services such as vessel registration, marine finance, ICTs and marine tourism, and acquiring oceanographic data for the sustainable development of the ocean economy and for marine spatial planning; and
 - (iv) Low effectiveness and sustainability in generating ocean knowledge, developing and integrating Blue Economy Strategies into National Plans and related policy frameworks, developing regional disaster risk reduction policy for the blue economy, and in developing a regional monitoring protocol for the coastal and ocean areas.
 - (v) Inadequate of coordination among RECs regarding implementation of COMESA Blue Economy initiatives.

These issues are largely a result of the lack of organizational arrangements for the Blue Economy. The programme lacks a designated Blue Economy regional arrangement with other RECs or organizational arrangement at the Secretariat to assume responsibility of the coordination and implementation of COMESA's Blue Economy initiatives in the MTSP.

3.1.4 Harnessing the Benefits of Strategic Partnerships

Harnessing the benefits of strategic partnerships focuses on the active engagement of national, regional and international strategic collaborators in regional integration. This is towards tapping into and leveraging the resource mobilization, technical support and knowledge brokerage capabilities variously vested with Member States, the private sector, academia as well as cooperating partners and other stakeholders, to the mutual benefit of these entities.

COMESA has used its Aid for Trade Strategy to actively engage with national, regional and international strategic partners to improve the implementation and expand the benefits of regional integration. The interventions extend to private sector and civil society in the Member States. This has been facilitated under the COMESA Adjustment Facility (CAF), through the support of the Regional Integration Support Mechanism (RISM). The RISM programme, funded by the European Union, made available Euro 111 million to Member States in the form of adjustment support for the implementation of regional integration

programmes at the national level. Notably, the CAF contributed to the achievement of a consistent and coherent policy environment for regional integration through improved domestication efforts across participating countries. It also increased the inclusion of private sector through direct support for regional negotiations as well as for productive and export capacities. The support was gender sensitive and as such largely inclusive of women. The results achieved are reflected in an average performance of 89%.

The main challenges faced during the past MTSP was ensuring the sustainability of the CAF beyond the current funding. In addition, future designs of support, need to go beyond domestication of legal instruments to cover compliance and implementation of agreed programmes with similar sequencing and timeframes. Further, the delays in operationalising the COMESA Infrastructure Fund (CIF) affected the efforts for mobilizing infrastructure funding to implement regional corridors. It will be important to also ensure that all COMESA countries complete their membership to the COMESA Fund.

In the period under review, COMESA was using the Aid for Trade Strategy (2012-2015) as the strategy has not yet been reviewed. There is need for the review and update of the strategy to align it with the MTSP (2021-2025).

The MTSP provided a (non-exhaustive) list of 52 cooperating partners and other partners who are envisaged to support and collaborate with COMESA for mutual benefits. During the review period, COMESA made headway by forging or refreshing about 17 strategic partnerships through MOUs and other arrangements.

The main observations in relation to strategic partnerships during the past MTSP period were mainly at an operational level at the Secretariat:

- (i) The establishment of strategic partnership information system or database was lagging.
- (ii) While the establishment of strategic partnership MOUs was high, the extent and quality of follow-up of these MOU was relatively weak.
- (iii) The evolution and possible changes in support preferences of strategic partners as continental integration continued to gain momentum was not well-known in COMESA, leaving the region without a strategic position on how to sustain and extend its strategic partnerships going forward.

3.1.5 Strengthening the Development of Economic Infrastructure

Economic infrastructure development is critical for building productive capacities, lowering production

costs and ultimately, fostering sustained economic inclusive growth and human development in any country or region. The MTSP sought to ensure that COMESA addresses the main constraints to infrastructure and services in the region, particularly in relation to energy, transport and ICTs.

In the period under review, COMESA markedly increased its aggregate infrastructure investment or Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)⁶ from US\$40 billion in 2000 to US\$151 billion in 2017 so that GFCF was equivalent to 21% of GDP per annum on average; an impressive record of infrastructure investment spending.

The MTSP articulated 19 initiatives which were variously related to energy, transport and ICT infrastructure. The following main observations were made:

- (i) Effectiveness of assisting Member States in packaging regional infrastructure projects for funding was relatively low, partially hampered by the lack of regional infrastructure financing mechanisms. Related to this, the COMESA Infrastructure Fund remained non-operational and in need of a regional position on its operationalization;
- (ii) The sustainability of encouraging Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the development of basic infrastructure (energy and water supply, transport facilitation) was significantly constrained by financial resources, prevailing low (technical) capacities in the local private sector and low preference for relatively low return public or merit goods natured projects infrastructure;
- (iii) Limited human resources in the Statistics Unit at the Secretariat and in the statistical offices or bureaux in the Member States hampered the region's ability to ensure harmonized, comprehensive, regular, high quality/accurate and timely capturing of national economic infrastructure and services output statistics.

3.1.6 Fostering Industrialisation

Industrial development and industrialization are at the heart of COMESA developmental agenda, with important linkages to technological enhancement, value-addition, diversification and job creation. During the MTSP period, COMESA aimed to improve the performance of manufacturing value added and increase agricultural productivity and agro-processing manufacturing, based on the COMESA Industrial Policy (2015) and Industrial Strategy (2017).

6 Net increase in public and private physical assets (investment minus disposals)

Despite the importance of agriculture and manufacturing, their contribution to regional GDP remained subdued. The share of aggregate agricultural value-added (AVA) increased marginally from 18% of regional GDP in 2000 to 21% in 2017 while that of manufacturing value-added (MVA) fell from 13% in 2000 to 12% in 2017. Towards addressing the continuing industrial development performance deficiencies, in the MTSP, the region articulated 11 initiatives for fostering industrialization. The following key observations were made:

- (i) Concerns about the sustainability of encouraging PPPs to develop basic infrastructure for industrial development were noted, given the combination of low financial and technical capacities in the local private sector and high selectivity or preference for non-public or merit goods, high economic return infrastructure installations.
- (ii) The low sustainability of strengthening standardization and quality assurance (SPS/SQAM) in the region was raised as a risk, given the high dependence of related programmes on Cooperating Partner financing.
- (iii) The continued promotion of environmental sustainability in industrial development came into question, considering the lack of a statistical system for informing policy, regulation and programmatic design as well as the low levels of Research and Development (R&D) and innovation in the region.
- (iv) The effectiveness of supporting R&D for innovation and industrial development was found to be relatively low, given low Science Technology and Innovation (STI) outcomes in the region.
- (v) The COMESA Adjustment Facility (CAF) operationalized as the Regional Integration Support Mechanism (RISM) was noted as an important contributor to the coordination and extension of resources and technical support to industrial development, particularly in terms of the strengthening of SME clusters and value chains in a number Member States.

3.1.7 Fostering Gender Equality and Social Development

The MTSP envisaged the realization of the values of social justice, inclusivity, equitable participation and sustainability through gender equality, empowerment of women and youth, and the protection and promotion of the rights of vulnerable groups.

COMESA developed the Social Charter which was endorsed by Heads of State and Government in

Kinshasa in February 2014. During the period 2016 – 2020, four Member States signed the Charter – Mauritius, Malawi, Madagascar and Seychelles and none have ratified it. The other 17 Member States are yet to show commitment to signing up to and ratifying the Social Charter.

On fostering gender equality and women empowerment, COMESA adopted the COMESA Gender Policy and the Addis Ababa Declaration on Gender in 2002. The Policy was revised in 2016 to incorporate emerging issues. This is earmarked as the main avenue through which advocacy for equal and the full participation of women in all aspects of COMESA activities and other operations are advanced.

Furthermore, initiatives undertaken during the period 2016 – 2020 include development of policy frameworks on gender and health, and training materials, conducting gender on-line training, establishment of digital information and networking platform for women in business, establishment of initiatives to support youth empowerment, advocacy, and networking with sister organizations.

Three observations were noted regarding the strategic objective on fostering gender equality and social development namely:

- (i) The delivery of gender sensitive services including security and support for relevant infrastructure and technology to support women's economic activities was somewhat low. Strengthening gender mainstreaming and support for women empowerment across sectors, programmes and projects remains a priority.
- (ii) The effectiveness and sustainability of promoting youth empowerment through skills development, job creation opportunities, internships and mentorships, access to information, technology, recreation and well-being need strengthening to address challenges and gaps in various youth empowerment actions at the Member State and regional level.
- (iii) A stalled popularization of the COMESA Women Economic Empowerment Fund (WEEF) across the region was noted. The Secretariat undertook groundwork of preparing background assessment reports and regional database of women in business; and in line with a Council Decision, the Secretariat had handed this initiative over to the Trade and Development Bank (TDB) for operationalization. The TDB has established and is piloting an SME fund to operationalize the women economic empowerment fund, with a plan to scale it up to all the Member States. Financial inclusion for women remains a priority.

3.1.8 Ensuring Regional and Secretariat Readiness

The MTSP envisaged the utilization of appropriate systems and mechanisms to put in place timely mitigation measures that minimize and mitigate natural and man-made disasters, which disrupt business; and thus, support regional and secretariat readiness to attain its objectives.

The MTSP emphasized key readiness elements, namely:

- (i) Establishment of appropriate systems, structures and procedures for undisrupted governance, management, operations and business;
- (ii) Application of timely mitigation measures and mechanisms for minimizing natural and man-made disaster effects such as climate risks and vulnerabilities, epidemics/pandemics, terrorism and crime;
- (iii) Use of robust early-warning measures and systems for supporting macroeconomic and political stability and minimizing adverse effects of global and regional economic crises;
- (iv) Develop mechanisms and tools to address conflict, insecurity and instability in the COMESA region;
- (v) Utilize the COMESA Committee of Elders to support the prevention, mitigation and resolution of conflict;
- (vi) Support Member States to consolidate democracy and good governance.

Consideration was given to the establishment of governance and management systems, structures and procedures; and the use of measures and systems for supporting macroeconomic stability to illustrate the progress of the region in relation to business continuity at a broad level.

The following observations are noteworthy (mainly at the operational level of the COMESA Secretariat):

- (i) The organisational structure of the COMESA Secretariat was yet to be consolidated, resulting in various operational challenges, gaps and uncertainties.
- (ii) Some human resource management aspects for improvement remained outstanding; for instance, the modernization of HR systems through digitization and the application of performance and change management measures and strategies were lagging.
- (iii) The undertaking of regular monitoring and evaluation activities at the regional and national levels were based on M&E sub-systems that were yet to be well-structured. Maximizing on the gains from these sub-systems could be strengthened through the

- establishment of an M&E Unit at the Secretariat, and the full operationalization of the online M&E system.
- (iv) The sustainability risks of heavy reliance on cooperating partners in financing regional programmes was noted as a growing concern for COMESA, which could be mitigated by strengthening and harnessing alternative financing mechanisms.
 - (v) The feasibility, appropriateness and reliability of setting time-bound targets in the MTSP's logical framework in COMESA was not well established given the principle of Variable Geometry.

3.1.9 Strengthening Regional Knowledge and Skills

The implementation of COMESA regional integration agenda requires markedly high levels of institutional capability. It is therefore anticipated that experts in the public and private sectors in the region should be supported and encouraged to continuously improve their capacity. Similarly, institutions should be strengthened in structured, systematic, effective and sustained ways. Research and training institutions should become innovative and embrace the continuously evolving issues and technologies informed by the Triple Helix.

The following recommendations were made for consideration by COMESA:

- (i) While a number of COMESA institutions recorded declining donor dependency for funding during the review period, knowledge and skills programmes and projects in some institutions as well as at the Secretariat remained highly dependent on the cooperating partners (CPs), with implications for sustainability.
- (ii) A growing interest to evaluations and understanding of COMESA's performance along various dimensions was observed, with at least 6 independent external assessments and evaluations initiated by COMESA's partners since 2014 as well as a number of internal Annual and periodic reports. While commendable, risks of overbearing coordination and information uptake burdens, and possible contradictions or mixed signals from the various efforts from the multiple concurrent assessments and evaluations could not be ignored.

3.2 Challenges

The following were the major challenges encountered during the implementation of the MTSP 2016-

2020:

- (i) **Signature, Ratification and Domestication:** The ratification of legal instruments by Member States was still not completed leading to some COMESA instruments not coming into force like the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Labour and Services; the COMESA Common Investment Area (CCIA) Agreement is yet to be signed by any Member State while the COMESA Social Charter has only been signed by three Member States.
- (ii) **Implementation of Authority/Council Decisions:** The implementation of a number of Council decisions was delayed and the implementation was often not accompanied by results oriented action plans.
- (iii) **Implementation of Programmes:** Regional programmes such as CAADP were not incorporated into the national development plans of a number of Member States. This challenge mainly owed to the fact that National Development Plans (NDPs) and budgets of Member States often did not reflect their commitments or obligations made at COMESA Policy Organs meetings.
- (iv) **Results Based Management (RBM) Approach:** In the period under review, there was a challenge with evaluation of performance based on results attained in the programmes implemented. This affected the efficient implementation of the RBM approach which was a key element in the planning and implementation strategy of the 2016-2020 MTSP.
- (v) **Inadequate Domestic Resources:** During the period under review, domestic resources were inadequate accounting for less than 20 percent of the programmes budget indicating an overreliance on external sources. This raised the level of unsustainability in the execution of programmes.
- (vi) **Awareness and Sensitisation on Benefits of Regional Integration:** Low levels of awareness and sensitisation on COMESA regional integration programmes by stakeholders particularly Member States resulted in less than adequate levels of ownership among citizenry of the region. Furthermore, low levels of awareness and sensitisation on benefits of regional integration limited the involvement of the private

sector and grass root communities in the Member States, the diaspora and among the legislators.

3.3 Conclusions

In various ways and to different degrees the initiatives of the MTSP made significant differences to the implementation of COMESA's regional integration agenda. A number of limitations and challenges were observed in relation to the effectiveness with which MTSP initiatives were implemented:

- COMESA played a pivotal role in market integration extending its support to the consolidation of the COMESA–EAC–SADC Tripartite and Continental Free Trade Area.
- Towards making COMESA an attractive investment area, rules and regulations that support a conducive investment climate have been put in place with the help of National Investment Promotion Agencies.
- The support to market integration has led COMESA to intensify its focus on industrialization and agricultural transformation, putting into consideration inclusivity and gender sensitivity.
- COMESA has supported development of infrastructure, harmonization of policies and standards in addition to capacity building to resolve supply side constraints.
- The catalytic role played by the Secretariat has helped in the facilitation and coordination of activities in the Common Market. In this regard, it is important for the Secretariat to be adequately resourced.

The assessment shows that regional integration remains relevant and answers issues raised by COMESA founding fathers. The achievements will be upheld while efforts will be made to address the challenges in a manner that makes COMESA a learning bloc. The successor 2021 to 2025 MTSP should aim to capitalize on successes achieved and draw lessons from the challenges encountered during the implementation of the previous plan.

CHAPTER FOUR

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

4.1 Stakeholder Analysis

The success of regional integration efforts is dependent on the full participation and involvement of key stakeholders if the set objectives are to be achieved. Thus, it is necessary to reinforce the participation of a broader set of state and non-state actors such as the private sector, micro, small and medium entrepreneurs, academia, industrialists, venture financiers, legislators and judiciary officials.

As promulgated by the development path of Agenda 2063 that seeks to realize **“the Africa we want”** and in support of the agenda 2030 on SDGs to **“leave no one behind,”** inclusivity prioritizes the creation of a shared vision and prosperity. Specifically, COMESA recognises that the attainment of a common market must be all-encompassing if it is to improve the living standards of women and men, young and old alike; regional integration efforts attain sustainability and higher levels of achievement when owned and driven by all.

Since its establishment, COMESA has made considerable progress towards formulation of model laws, frameworks and protocols in the areas of trade liberalization and facilitation, transport, energy, ICTs, industry and investments and gender and social affairs amongst others. The implementation/ domestication of these is however slow partly because of low levels of commitment and ownership of the regional integration agenda. The analysis of COMESA's stakeholders helps to identify areas for intervention to speed up implementation of legal instruments such as protocols, the decisions that have been adopted by Policy Organs, and domestication of rules and regulations, among others. In

addition, stakeholder involvement results into regular feedback through broader consultations to allow for sustained dialogue on matters of regional integration.

Apart from identifying stakeholder needs, it is imperative that they also have roles to play in order to achieve the desired objectives of the strategy. Timely payments of contributions are some of the roles stakeholders should fulfill for the regional integration agenda to progress at the desired speed and attainment of set objectives.

Specifically, the 2021-2025 Medium Term Strategic Plan will be implemented based on the principle of subsidiarity by key stakeholders as follows:

- (i) **COMESA Secretariat:** To continue to provide technical assistance and capacity building to Member States and serve as an interface between COMESA and external stakeholders as well as to provide Member States with a platform relevant to achieve mutually acceptable formal cooperation; such policy dialogue is key to shaping interventions. Further, the Secretariat will continue its role in resource mobilization, facilitating, coordinating and monitoring regional operations, with its capacity strengthened.
- (ii) **COMESA Institutions:** These are part of the implementing agencies with delegated mandate from Policy Organs through the Secretariat in line with specific provisions of the Treaty. Given their technical focus, institutions will continue to provide guidance, technical support and implement decisions of the Policy Organs. The COMESA institutions will also play a key role in implementing the MTSP.
- (iii) **Co-operating Partners:** To continue to provide financial and technical support for achievement of strategic objectives, support aid effectiveness by promoting harmonization, coherence, rationalization, alignment and ownership of development partner assistance. They require mutual accountability in relation to the commitment, provision, utilization and reporting on all adjustment support and regional integration resources.
- (iv) **Member States:** The implementation of this strategy calls for close collaboration and participation between state and non-state actors. State actors provide the political leadership necessary for the formulation and implementation of sound regional

policies and programmes. Non-state actors including the private sector bring with them increased financial discipline, capital injection, new management styles and a stronger commercial orientation. During implementation, there will be need to align national, regional and global agendas, policies and plans to the Medium Term Strategic Plan, model policies, laws and protocols.

- (v) **Regional Economic Communities and AUC:** Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Union Commission (AUC) are key stakeholders in the implementation of this strategy. For effectiveness, it is necessary for all stakeholders to leverage on the benefits associated with joint programming through cooperation and coordination that result in harmonization of policies, regulations and standards. Furthermore, coordinated development of infrastructure would prevent duplication of effort and investments. The COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite makes it imperative for the RECs to collaborate and cooperate. Similarly, at the continental level, the strategy will support joint planning, monitoring and reporting and resource mobilization.

4.2 COMESA and the International Development Agenda

Regional programmes implemented by COMESA are fully associated with global and continental development agendas notably the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 and the African Union Agenda 2063. In continued joint institutional efforts, the COMESA Secretariat and AUC have collaborated amongst others on the development of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework of the Agenda 2063 First Ten Year Implementation Plan (FTYP) which is critical for the implementation of the continental development agenda and will be implemented in the period of this strategy.

At the global level, COMESA is also fully aligned with the United Nations seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that cover a broad range of development issues aimed at achieving a better and more sustainable future for all.





AGENDA 2063 GOALS



credit: Agenda 2063 Academy facebook

4.3 SWOT/PESTEL Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Political	<p>A clear policy path and regulatory and institutional framework as stipulated in the Treaty establishing COMESA, various protocols and annexes.</p> <p>Existence of Charters, Model Policy Frameworks, Planning tools (such as in Energy and Gender)</p> <p>Political will from COMESA Member States to support various regional integration programmes</p> <p>Existence of reporting mechanisms using sectoral Ministries and Policy Organs</p> <p>Existence of Coordinating Ministries</p> <p>COMESA is aligned to Africa's Agenda 2063, UN SDG Agenda 2030. Also aligned to Continental Strategies and Plans such as CAADP, AIDA, PIDA, SHaSA</p> <p>Robust COMESA Institutions with footprints in several Member States; A strong brand</p> <p>Inclusion of Peace and Security dimension to address economic dimensions to conflict.</p>	<p>Inadequate awareness creation about the COMESA policies, programmes and products</p> <p>Low domestication of COMESA policies, strategies and programmes</p>	<p>Strengthened Multilateralism Agenda</p> <p>Mainstreaming of visibility initiatives in the implementation of COMESA Programmes</p> <p>Increased levels of cooperation and coordination with AU and other RECs within frameworks</p> <p>Greater awareness and willingness on the need to strengthen political governance.</p>	<p>Political instability, conflicts and civil wars and terrorism</p> <p>Inadequate coordination of National COMESA Programmes</p> <p>Unilateralism / Protectionism (Subordination of Regional to National priorities)</p>

4.3 SWOT/PESTEL Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Economic	<p>Existence of global and continental agendas, Policies, Regulations and Agreements</p> <p>Strong trade facilitation Instruments Flexible COMESA Rules of Origin</p> <p>Supportive cooperating partners Existence of memoranda of understanding (MoU) with technical partners in agriculture, infrastructure, Gender and other productive sectors.</p> <p>Mechanism to track and address NTBs</p> <p>Existence of digital platforms to enhance access to business information and networking opportunities. Existence of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS).</p> <p>Expertise in various statistics areas.</p>	<p>Low productivity, quality and competitiveness of products.</p> <p>Delays at borders and markets Inadequate Private Sector engagement</p> <p>Inadequate sensitization for existing trade and investment opportunities.</p> <p>Delays in transmitting data from Member States to COMESA Secretariat.</p> <p>Limited value addition and diversification of products and export markets.</p> <p>Limited skills and access to affordable internet for citizens to enable the effective use of digital platforms.</p> <p>Persistence and proliferation of Non-Tariff Barriers to trade.</p> <p>Lack of regional comprehensive and consolidated economic data</p> <p>Inadequate internal financial capacity</p>	<p>Trade and investment potential</p> <p>Strengthening Payment Systems, Competition Practices and financial services</p> <p>Partnerships with other RECs, AU, development partners and institutions</p> <p>Potential increase in intra-Africa trade following coming into force of AfCFTA Agreements.</p> <p>Potential of strengthening regional value chains.</p> <p>Growing demand</p> <p>Growing appetite for investment promotion</p> <p>Access to business information</p>	<p>Duplication of programmes and activities.</p> <p>Financial constraints in Member States to enable effective implementation and sustainability of programmes.</p> <p>Low growth rates.</p> <p>Growing global protectionism</p> <p>Competition from extra-COMESA imports.</p> <p>Influx of products from third party countries.</p> <p>The global economic slowdown.</p> <p>Barriers to market access and trade distorting domestic policies.</p> <p>Non-Tariff Barriers making market access uncertain therefore negatively impacting production and investment</p>

4.3 SWOT/PESTEL Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
		<p>Increased appetite for bilateral arrangements</p> <p>Unfair and illicit trading practices across borders</p> <p>The majority of participants in informal economy are women and youth with limited access to credit, education and land</p> <p>Illicit Financial Flows (IFF)</p> <p>Affinity for extra-COMESA imported products</p> <p>High cost of doing business within Member States</p> <p>Low level of infrastructure development in the region</p> <p>Limited bankable projects to sell to investors and inadequate access to equity finance and other financial instruments</p> <p>Inadequate information on cross border investment among COMESA countries</p>		<p>NTMs; taxes; surtaxes affecting smooth flow of commodities across borders.</p> <p>Insufficient mainstreaming of COMESA programmes in communication and publicity activities in Member States.</p> <p>Epidemics/ Pandemics like COVID-19 lead to closing of borders, restricting of travel a</p>

4.3 SWOT/PESTEL Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Social	<p>Availability of planning tools and reporting mechanism in the region for mainstreaming of gender</p> <p>Social Charter, Health Framework, HIV and AIDS Policy all in place to guide programmes on areas of focus to strengthen cooperation on social development</p> <p>Strong cross-border relations</p>	<p>Language barriers hindering communication</p> <p>Limited funding for some programmes</p>	<p>Growing Youth Population. Demographic Dividend</p> <p>Increasing demand for regional output due to rising incomes and urbanization in the region</p>	<p>Regional fragmentation</p> <p>Rising youth bulge and unemployment</p> <p>Increasing urban – rural disparities.</p> <p>Safety, security and livelihoods of citizens</p> <p>Disease outbreaks such as COVID-19</p>

4.3 SWOT/PESTEL Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
	<p>Existence of National Statistical Systems that are a source of COMESA statistics driven by COMSTATs</p> <p>General acceptance of ICTs as enablers of business (Narrowing of Digital Divide)</p>	<p>Aging technology</p> <p>Inadequate research and information management capacity</p> <p>Low investment in digital tools and initiatives</p> <p>Existing regional technological infrastructure and policy gaps</p> <p>Inadequate technology to support a comprehensive multi-hazard early warning and response system</p> <p>Infrastructure resilience (Infrastructure not climate proofed leading to destruction by floods)</p> <p>Limited investment in the development of technology and capacity to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change</p> <p>Low internet coverage and inconsistent uptimes in some Member States</p>	<p>Growing technology and innovation</p> <p>Close the gender and, generational digital divide</p> <p>Increased cross border trade and investments following digitalization. Existence of trade facilitation instruments</p> <p>Advances in ICTs that bring about possibilities to improve data collection, management and dissemination</p> <p>Management Information Systems (MIS), communication and other technologies</p> <p>Scientific developments and innovations to address agriculture and environment problems</p> <p>Extensive networks for knowledge sharing and transfer of best practices in the region</p>	<p>Inadequate regional analyses based on COMESA data</p> <p>Cyber security issues and potential for fraud</p>

4.3 SWOT/PESTEL Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
		<p>Limited resources for outreach and to build ICT skills capacity to enable wider reach for trade and investment</p> <p>Inadequate /unstable/ expensive supply of Electricity</p>	<p>Technologies and financing for green and low emission development strategies are now more available, ready to tap</p> <p>Acquire clean and green technologies – low emission growth and development (triple bottom-line)</p>	
	<p>Region endowed with natural resources</p> <p>Existence of institutional framework to manage environmental issues in the Member States</p> <p>Existence of Ministries and Agencies responsible for the environment</p>	<p>Climate change considerations are weakly incorporated into the programmes of COMESA</p> <p>Heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture which is vulnerable to climate change</p> <p>Low access to clean water especially in rural areas</p> <p>Reliance on hydro power which is vulnerable to climate change</p> <p>Inadequate mainstreaming of gender perspective into environment, climate change and disaster risk reduction programmes and policies</p>	<p>Global attention</p> <p>Funding opportunities</p> <p>Body of knowledge on environmental issues</p> <p>Customary knowledge</p>	<p>Environmental hazards and climate change</p> <p>Population growth</p> <p>Urbanization</p> <p>Industrial waste management</p> <p>Increased vulnerability of citizens to disease outbreaks and environmental disasters</p>

4.3 SWOT/PESTEL Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Legal/ Regulatory	<p>Strong institutional and regulatory frameworks</p> <p>Existence of sector Ministries responsible for providing strategic guidance</p> <p>Existence of Protocols, Rules and Regulations</p> <p>Existence of Regional Regulatory bodies</p>	<p>Low levels of Signing, Domestication and Ratifying of COMESA Instruments</p> <p>Enforcement mechanism</p>	<p>Existence of development frameworks (AU Agenda, CAADP and Sustainable Development Goals) that prioritize COMESA Programmes</p> <p>Existence of insurance and financial multilateral institutions to mitigate investment risks and to ease access to finance</p> <p>AfCFTA Framework</p> <p>The WTO trade facilitation agreement whose ratification would facilitate mainstreaming of COMESA trade facilitation instruments to enhance intra-COMESA trade and investment</p>	<p>Non domestication of Legal instruments</p> <p>Limited capacity in Member States to implement sound agricultural policies</p> <p>Unclear division of labour between RECs and AU institutions sometimes leading to competition for accountability and resources from the same sources</p> <p>Unharmonized policies and inconsistency in implementation</p>



Source: Adobe stock

4.4 COVID-19 Pandemic

The year 2020 witnessed an unprecedented socio-economic disruption induced by the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the pandemic on the global economy, social development and lives of people is like no other, devastating and still highly uncertain. On the economic front, there has been disruption to both the productive and services sectors. The decline in business levels has had a negative impact on economic activity for firms and countries alike. This also affected remittances and has so far led to sustained decline in foreign direct investment (FDI) into the region.

The health sector is one of the worst affected given that it directly bears the burden of COVID-19. This is against a background of inadequate resources and compromised capacity for routine services such as vaccination and reproductive health services for women and girls. There has also been a rise in malnutrition due to logistical challenges in the production and distribution of food.

Indications suggest that the GDP will be reduced but the extent of the reduction will be dependent on mitigation measures adopted and the timing thereof. Within the services sector, catastrophic disruption is evident in the aviation and hospitality sectors, among others. This has resulted in job losses, loss of income to companies hence low tax revenue for governments. While essential services continued to operate, the restricted movement and social distancing requirements inhibited economic activity owing to lockdowns, closure of borders and airports. Cross-border trade suffered as a result of restricted movement internally and across borders.

Trading through surface transport was equally affected, prompting the COMESA-EAC -SADC Tripartite to develop guidelines for cross-border transport operations to mitigate the adverse effects of restrictions imposed due to COVID-19. That notwithstanding, trucks continue to be delayed at border stations due to controls imposed.

On the human resource side, the COVID-19 pandemic has seriously affected the frontline staff handling the virus challenge every day in the line of duty, leading to deaths and incapacitation. This loss of skilled labour transcends various professional sectors creating a severe skills gap, which will take time and resources to close. There will therefore be a need for retooling and training of the employee of the future.

Working modalities were equally affected resulting in people working from their homes and meetings and workshops conducted virtually. Businesses and organizations have been obliged to embrace and invest in ICTs as a means to ensure business continuity and survival. Going forward, these working modalities will have far reaching implications on business delivery modes, especially in as far as office space requirements are concerned.

There have also been disruptions on the social front with education, religious and recreational institutions closed. This has negatively impacted on learning and social interactions. The lockdowns have led to unintended consequences that caused psycho-social challenges especially affecting women and youth.

The real challenge for policy is to properly assess the trade-offs between short, medium, and long-term priorities. Different policy interventions will be required as economies enter the successive phases of crisis-response as suggested below:

- (i) Surviving the pandemic: Ensure adequate resources allocated to basic needs such as medicine and food, and ensure people's physical and mental health, as well as safety;

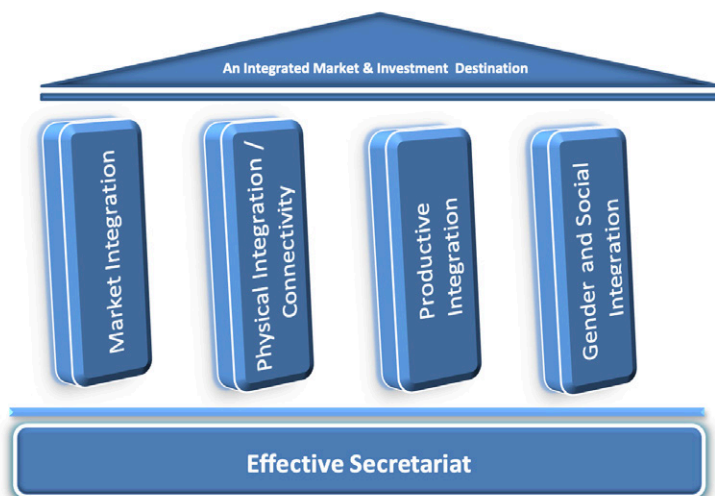
- (ii) Getting back to normal: Support individuals and firms to resume their activities and repair the damage sustained during the pandemic; and
- (iii) Re-focusing on the long term: Shift resources and attention to long-term development. Failure to get the policy right in any of these phases would pose serious risks to economies of COMESA Member States

Going forward, the immediate concern for the region is containing the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as opening up the economies of the region. How to strike a balance between the two almost conflicting objectives will determine the speed and extent of economic recovery and return to normalcy. The key towards getting the balance right depends on how effective and efficient governments in the region will be as they implement public health measures and the extent to which the public will adapt to the measures. In so doing, COMESA Secretariat is envisaging to expand its forthcoming programmes within the context of the MTSP 2021-2025 to collaborate with Member States in addressing the socio-economic impact of Covid-19. Statistical data collection has already been launched and the process of conceptualizing and finalizing the terms of assistance with Member States is underway.

CHAPTER FIVE

COMESA STRATEGIC PILLARS

The 2021-2025 MTSP is based on 4 strategic pillars namely; Market Integration, Physical Integration/ Connectivity, Productive Integration and Gender and Social Integration. The pillars fulfil COMESA's mission, "To endeavor to achieve sustainable economic and social progress in all Member States through increased co-operation and integration in all fields of development particularly in trade, customs and monetary affairs, transport, communication and information, technology, industry and energy, gender, agriculture, environment and natural resources". The pillars are further broken down in detail how to reach the specific goals. They are therefore the conditions that are to be fully addressed if COMESA's vision is to be realized.



The pillars are interdependent, strongly linked and provide a logical path to follow in order to achieve long term results. These pillars stand on the existence of an Effective Secretariat, by building institutional capacity through adequate human resources and financial resources creating synergy to feed into the pillars. This ensures effective implementation of programmes by skilled people and finally addresses the continental development agenda, specifically achieving the AfCFTA by having an An Integrated Market & Investment Destination. Crosscutting issues such as peace and security, statistics and climate change are integrated in all the pillars as they are necessary preconditions and provide an enabling integration environment.

5.1 STRATEGIC FOCUS FOR 2021-2025

Africa grew by an average of 4% in 2019, higher than the global average growth of 3.1% and more than double that of the European Union. At this growth rate, Africa remained the second fastest growing economy in the world (after emerging Asia), and several African countries were among the world's fastest growing economies. Some of these countries are in the COMESA region.

The region has many growth opportunities and has become a magnet for investment, driven by improved governance, better macroeconomic policies, abundant human and natural resources, urbanization and the rise of the middle class, steady population growth, good economic performance, rising FDI, and huge market potential. This resurgence has led to growing recognition of COMESA as an emerging market and a potential global growth pole, ready for economic take-off.

Despite the growth potential, inequality, unemployment, low investment levels, and depressed aggregate demand among others, are prevalent in the COMESA region. The main reason to this economic scenario in the COMESA region rests on depressed industrialization and low level of infrastructure (connectivity and productive capacity). The average Manufacturing Value Added (MVA) as a percentage of GDP stood at an average of 10% for the COMESA region according to the 2019 World Bank figures. This is compared with the recommended 25% and also South-East Asia at an average of 20%. This indicates that, the COMESA region and the African continent as a whole need structural economic transformation through industrialization.

To address these issues, COMESA has selected four pillars that will be focused on to transform the region into an economic entity and these are market integration, productive integration, physical integration/connectivity, gender and social integration supported by an effective Secretariat.



5.1.1 Market Integration

The market integration pillar seeks to deepen trade liberalization, increase intra-regional trade, consolidate the FTA and implement the Customs Union. The COMESA trade and market integration agenda started with trade liberalisation which commenced with a programme of tariff reduction in 1984 under the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) for Eastern and Southern Africa. A new programme of tariff reduction under COMESA started in 1994 with the objective of attaining the Free Trade Area (FTA) by the year 2000. Indeed, the FTA was established in October 2000 with nine founding Members⁷. Over the years, other Member States joined the FTA with Burundi and Rwanda joining in 2004, Libya and Comoros in 2006, Seychelles in 2009, Uganda in 2014 and Tunisia in 2019. DR Congo published an Official Gazette in December 2015 indicating that it would join the COMESA FTA in phases; reducing tariffs by 40% in the first year; 30% in the second year and 30% in the third year. The non-FTA Member States, namely DR Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Eswatini and Somalia have been preparing to join the FTA and a number of activities have been undertaken to that effect. Eswatini is under a derogation which is linked to the realisation of the Tripartite Free Trade Area.

⁷

Djibouti, Egypt, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe

To realize the desired direction and to safeguard against increasing protectionism, COMESA strives to apply technology in e-commerce including payment systems and e-logistics to strengthen regional and domestic supply chains with the aim of reducing transaction costs and NTBs and minimize restrictions due to COVID-19. Furthermore, this strategic plan aims to boost COMESA's role within the TFTA and AfCFTA as a building bloc.

COMESA recognizes that the role towards attaining market integration will be a partnership between public and private sector (PPP) while recognizing the centrality of preserving the environment. For the market to effectively operate, there is need to enhance capacity building, awareness creation and sensitization about existing market opportunities including application of trade instruments.

Strategic Focus

To consolidate market integration, COMESA plans to pursue the following initiatives:

a) **Deepening Trade Liberalization**

This would involve consolidation and strengthening the FTA as well as implementation of the Customs Union. The key issues include reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers, trade facilitation and promotion, increasing efficiency in customs management and clearance, simplification of Rules of Origin, Customs Management Regulations and Common External Tariff (CET) and alignment of the Common Tariff Nomenclature (CTN) to the latest World Customs Organization Harmonized Systems (WCO HS) version and services liberalization. The initiatives to be undertaken include:

- (i) Organisation of additional regular trade fairs;
- (ii) Initiation of export promotion activities in the region;
- (iii) Promulgation of the Trade Facilitation Portal and making it more user-friendly and visible to Member States;
- (iv) Operationalisation of the COMESA COVID Online Portal in the short and long term; and
- (v) Encouragement of sourcing of raw materials from within the region through regional linkages

b) **Digitalization of Trade Instruments**

This intervention supports effective implementation of the COMESA trade facilitation programmes and

activities in order to reduce transaction and trade costs and stimulate cross-border trade. Key is the operationalization of the COMESA Digital FTA. The DFTA has three thrusts, namely: E-Trade, E-Logistics and E-Legislation.



Source: Adobe stock

c) Development of Regional Value Chains

This will strengthen regional trade in locally produced goods and services. This will require continuous improvement of rules of origin that support cumulation or utilization of raw materials and input from within the region.

d) Development of Small-Scale Cross Border Traders into Formal Economy

Small Scale Cross Border Traders (SSCBTs) contribute significantly to job creation and poverty alleviation in the COMESA region. They also contribute towards food security. The focus area includes simplification of trade regulations and procedures (STR), improving infrastructure and formalization of small-scale cross-border trade associations and Trade Information Desks (TIDs).

e) Capacity Building and Research

Capacity building and research are critical components of regional integration. Therefore, there is need

for development of a robust data bank for trade and trade-related transactions. This would facilitate credible analysis of economic trends, strategic decision making, supply chains and market conditions, among others.

f) Cooperation and Collaboration with Private Sector Stakeholders

Market integration necessitates putting in place efforts to improve the environment for private sector growth and development. This will involve enhancing cooperation and collaboration with the private sector such as the East African Business Council, COMESA Business Council, and Associations of Chambers of Commerce, Clearing and Forwarding Agents, and Cross-Border Traders and other national associations to support implementation of the regional market integration programmes.

g) Strengthening Cooperation with other RECs and AUC

This entails enhancing partnerships, cooperation, collaboration and networking with other RECs and AUC to support the implementation of regional programmes on trade and customs matters towards widening market integration. It will involve harmonization and rationalization of policies to facilitate overcoming the problem of small and fragmented markets constraining regional trade.

h) Cooperation with international organizations and development partners

- (i) This will involve enhancing cooperation, collaboration and partnership with international organizations and development partners to support the implementation of regional programmes on trade and customs matters; “New partnerships and engagement with multilateral partners such as G20 Countries can be envisaged. Assistance from UN Agencies can play a catalytic role in implementation of the sectoral plan within the 4 Strategic Pillars of MTSP 2021-2025.”
- (ii) Support the implementation of the AfCFTA in boosting intra- trade in the region.

i) Improving Market Access

- (i) Creating an open trade, investment and production space.
- (ii) Addressing the costs of implementing regional integration policies.
- (iii) Addressing challenges, concerns and obstacles preventing some members from participating in the FTA.

- (iv) Support growth of SMEs and formalization of small-scale cross-border trade associations.
- (v) Support diversification of products as well as regional markets.
- (vi) Collaboration with other COMESA Institutions (CMI, CCH, Competition Authority, RIA, ATI, TDB) in ensuring macroeconomic and financial stability, fair trading and increased investments. Revamping the COMESA data/statistical base.
- (vii) Enhance communication and information sharing among the Member States on trade and customs regulatory measures, procedures and best practices.
- (viii) Enhancing regional, continental and international partnership, cooperation, collaboration and networking to support the implementation of regional programmes on trade and customs matters.
- (ix) Enhance cooperation and collaboration with the private sector such as Chamber of Commerce Associations and Clearing and Forwarding Agents Associations in the region to support implementation of the programmes on trade and customs matters.
- (x) Build capacity of the Member States and the COMESA Secretariat for implementation of regional market integration agenda.



j) Strengthening Collaboration in Ensuring Macroeconomic and Financial Stability, Fair Trading and Increased Investments

- **Movement of Capital and Payment Systems**

COMESA is implementing a range of programmes aimed at achieving macroeconomic stability and integration of the financial and monetary sector. The Monetary Cooperation Programme aims at creating the necessary macroeconomic conditions to promote the free movement of capital within the region. This has contributed to the adoption of a macro- economic convergence criteria. This is to overcome restrictive domestic laws and regulations, limited currency convertibility and volatile exchange rates that hinder cross-border business transactions.

In order to facilitate and reduce payment transaction costs, COMESA, through the COMESA Clearing House, launched the Regional Payment and Settlement System which will be networked with Central Banks of the region to enable the clearing of hard currency transactions.

COMESA through the Clearing House will undertake more sensitization campaigns in Member States to use the settlement system.

- **Promotion of Competition and Consumer Protection**

An efficient and integrated common market cannot thrive in an environment of restrictive, unequal and discriminatory competition policies and laws. In order to ensure fair trading practices, prohibition of abuse of dominance and cartel-like practices, control and regulation of mergers and acquisitions and consumer protection is necessary. It is in recognition of this, that COMESA has prioritized the entrenchment of a Regional Competition Policy and Law. The COMESA Competition Commission has been set up with the mandate to develop a regional competition strategy that balances the need for market efficiency with fairness, given the different levels of development and economic structures of Member States.

- **Trade Finance**

Financial instruments are necessary for the facilitation of regional and international trade and commerce. These will ensure smooth flow of trade among Member States. A major initiative will be to undertake an assessment of the implications of implementing identified financial instruments in Member States, taking into consideration the ongoing economic situation impaired by COVID-19.

k) **Movement of People**

As part of the longer-term objective to establish a strong market, COMESA has adopted a Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Labor, the Right of Establishment and Residence. COMESA is working with Member States to develop the necessary policies required under the protocol so as to remove all the barriers to factor movement in the region. These include policies on labor mobility, social welfare, immigration and rights of migrants.

The COMESA Programme on Migration is regulated by the provisions of Article 164 of the COMESA Treaty. In accordance with the Treaty COMESA Member States agreed to establish a mechanism to enable their citizens to move freely, enabling them to take up offers of employment in any Member State under similar conditions as national workers. The move was to be achieved gradually through the removal of all restrictions to free movement within an agreed timeframe.

Under Article 164 (1) of the Treaty, Member States agreed to conclude two Protocols namely:

- a) The Protocol on the Gradual Relaxation and Eventual Elimination of Visas, adopted in 1984; and
- b) The Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, Right of Establishment and Residence was adopted by the Sixth Summit of the COMESA Authority held in Cairo, Egypt in 2001.

Strategic Focus

The COMESA Migration Programme will have the following focus areas:

- (i) The establishment of a database and information sharing system on the movement of persons with a focus on labour migration within the COMESA region;
- (ii) Development and implementation of the COMESA Business Visa;
- (iii) Establishment of the National Monitoring Committee to champion the COMESA Free Movement Protocol;
- (iv) Capacity building programme on migration issues amongst all stakeholders;
- (v) Mainstreaming of migration issues in national development plans;
- (vi) Coordination of the COMESA Migration Programme with other regional economic organisations with shared membership such as EAC, IGAD and SADC and also coordination with continental programmes being implemented by the African Union

- Commission; and
- (vii) Explore the possibility of coordination of the COMESA Migration Programme jointly with Indian Ocean Commission (IOC).

l) Intellectual Property Rights

Intellectual property rights are the rights given to persons over the creations of their minds. They usually give the creator an exclusive right over the use of his/her creation for a certain period of time.⁸ There are two broad types of intellectual property rights namely:

- (i) Copyright and rights related to copyright.
- (ii) Industrial property.

COMESA Member States' economies historically have been agrarian based. However, for Member States to extract increased value from their trade, they have decided to extend their trade from tangibles to intangibles; and venture into trading in intellectual property rights.

Strategic Focus

- The Secretariat engages with Africa Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) on collaborative efforts of undertaking IP audits as WIPO had already undertaken the same;
- Capacity building be mainstreamed into already existing IP Programmes.

m) Governance, Peace and Security

Regional peace, security and governance are important in providing the enabling environment for social and economic development and prosperity. COMESA continues to work with Member States to develop effective mechanisms and strategies for conflict prevention, conflict management and peace building as well as post-conflict reconstruction. In addition, COMESA addresses cross-cutting issues including democratic governance and organized transnational crimes such as terrorism, maritime piracy, money laundering, and the financing of terrorism in the region in order to develop and implement effective mechanisms to promote peace, security and stability.

To consolidate and strengthen this programme a number of initiatives that will, as far as possible be implemented in close collaboration with the AU, other RECs, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and other international mechanisms, have been proposed:

- (i) Support the structural prevention of conflicts as well as build the resilience in Member States;
- (ii) Provide coherent, integrated policy and technical support to Member States in conflict structural vulnerability mitigation strategies;
- (iii) Strengthen collaboration in all aspects of conflict prevention and peace building at the national and regional level;
- (iv) Develop, harmonize and support the implementation of policies on conflict prevention and peace building which include democratic governance and post conflict reconstruction;
- (v) Ensure the sustainability of key institutions and mechanisms in the prevention and resolution of conflicts such as the COMESA Committee of Elders, accredited CSOs and other such mechanisms for peacebuilding; and
- (vi) Develop and implement strategies to address security issues such as terrorism, maritime piracy, money laundering and other organized transnational crimes in the region.



5.1.2 Productive Integration

Agriculture and Animal Resources

In the COMESA region, agriculture (crops, livestock and fisheries) plays a crucial role in trade and regional integration and remains an important sector in sustaining most economies of its Member States. The sector accounts for more than 32% of COMESA's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), provides a livelihood to about 80% of the region's labor force, accounts for about 65% of foreign exchange earnings and contributes more than 50% of raw materials to the industrial sector.

COMESA is endowed with opportunities for increased agricultural production and intra-Africa trade in food and agricultural commodities, contributing to improved food security, nutrition and economic development of the region and the African continent. There are initiatives designed to boost agricultural productivity, market access and intra-African trade in agricultural commodities. The continental Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and Malabo Declaration on Accelerated African Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods as well as African Union Agenda 2063 represent strong commitment for agricultural transformation in the continent. This commitment also feeds into the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

However, agricultural potential in the COMESA region continues to be immensely underexploited, limiting the enormous socio-economic benefits that could be realized from the sector such as jobs for youth in agriculture, and participation of women in agri-business. Food insecurity continues to be a key challenge, due to a rapid increase in human population without a corresponding increase in food production. The growth of agricultural output in the region over the last three decades has been low at 3% per annum. The region has relied heavily on food imports including food aid which has increased at about 13% per annum. (ReSAKSS-ECA⁹).

The (**Chapter 18, Articles 129-137**) mandates Member States to enhance cooperation in the agriculture sector, to develop a common regional agriculture policy, and to achieve food self-sufficiency in the common market. COMESA has been effectively implementing CAADP since 2005, supporting its Member States in developing and implementing national agriculture policy frameworks, strategies, programmes, and tools that promote and support investments in agriculture for increased production, improved regional food security and access to competitive regional and global markets.



Strategic Focus

a) Catalyse Inclusive Agricultural Growth and Sustainable Transformation

COMESA will strive to enhance contribution towards realising the goals of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods.

To overcome the above-mentioned challenges and exploit the existing opportunities, COMESA will collaborate with public and private sector to attract increased investment as well as harness application of technology and innovation in agriculture for improved productivity and competitiveness of the sector. To this end, COMESA will promote investment policies, strategies and plans that are sufficiently anchored on the private sector. More youth and women engagement in the sector will be promoted to enhance their integration in the value chains and economic benefits from the agricultural investment initiatives.

Increased investment will generate growth in the sector to increase and stabilize the supply of affordable, safe and nutritious food, generate jobs for youth, strengthen women's participation in agri-business, facilitate sustainable use of natural resources and stimulate growth of secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy and drive regional integration.

Cognizant of the threat of climate change, COMESA will support Member States in global climate change negotiations, domestication of the global level agreements, institutional, technological, and gender responsive human capacity building, access to climate finance, private sector engagement and resilience building.

COMESA will support Member States in their efforts to improve production and productivity of livestock and fisheries. Further, facilitation of regional trade in livestock and fisheries ensuring that the products meet the required standards will be done.

Proposed Initiatives

- (i) Promoting sustainable production and productivity including post-harvest management, and agro-processing of strategic regional agricultural (crops, livestock and forestry) value chains;
- (ii) Promoting development and implementation of enabling policy and regulatory



Source: Adobe stock

environment for investments in agriculture and access to markets (e.g. Regional Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy to govern the ownership, protection, and use of intellectual property in technology development);

- (iii) Promoting competitiveness and markets access/linkages for agricultural goods and services for large firms and Micro-Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) including youth and women owned MSMEs and smallholder farmers;
- (iv) Strengthening food safety and technical standards, phytosanitary and zoo sanitary norms;
- (v) Strengthening regional and national human and institutional capacities for evidence-based and gender sensitive programming of inclusive agricultural transformation;
- (vi) Promoting and supporting regional agricultural research and innovation for development;
- (vii) Developing a comprehensive regional database that leverages digital technologies

and innovations to provide information on agricultural markets, and food security for evidence-based programming and e-opportunities for investment in agriculture and agribusiness;

- (viii) Promoting resilience, food and nutrition security through strengthening regional coordination and linkages to information and tools for managing climate risks and mitigating transboundary plant and animal diseases, hazards and risks, awareness creation on food quality, and nutrition promotion;
- (ix) Improving the participation of enterprises involved in live animal (beef cattle and small ruminant) and meat trade in the regional and international markets;
- (x) Improve COMESA Member States capacity and competitive advantage for livestock and their product trade within the region and internationally;
- (xi) Improve capacity of COMESA Member States veterinary services to undertake sanitary improvement and comply with international standards; and
- (xii) Strengthening partnerships to leverage resources for sustainable agricultural transformation.

b) Industry

Industrialization generates employment and educational opportunities, encourages advancement and innovation, and better utilization of resources. All of these benefits and more make industrial development valuable to a population and the national and regional economy. In this respect, industrial development has been placed at the core of the developmental integration agenda of COMESA under Article 99 of the Treaty, with the Member States acknowledging that it is central to diversifying their economies.

Member States have adopted the COMESA Industrial Strategy and Action Plan which focuses on nine key priority areas: Agro-processing, Energy, Textile and Garments, Leather and Leather Products, Mineral Beneficiation, Pharmaceuticals, Chemicals and Agro-Chemicals, Light Engineering and the Blue Economy. These focus areas have been identified as those that will have the greatest impact on the sustainable and inclusive economic growth to attain a structural transformation of the economies of COMESA Member States.

The COMESA Industrialization Strategy and Action Plan is also underpinned by national industrialization policies and strategies and draws lessons from best regional and international practices for developing a vibrant and sustainable industrial sector that will ensure equitable benefits to all the people of COMESA Member States. The strategy is also informed by two models of industrialization, the natural resources-led and the human resources-led model or a combination of the two, depending on the country's particularity.

Broad targets of the COMESA Industrial Strategy are:

- Diversifying the manufacturing base to reduce imports of value added agricultural and resource-based commodities by at least 15% by 2025 from the current estimate of 7%;
- Increase in value addition activities as a percentage of GDP by at least 20% by 2025 from the current estimate of 9%; and
- Increase intra-regional manufactured exports relative to total manufactured imports to the region to at least 25% by 2026 from the current 7%.

The broad strategic policy interventions include:

- (i) Promoting investment in green technologies to ensure environmental preservation;
- (ii) Increasing the manufacturing base and product diversification by promoting key priority sectors;
- (iii) Strengthening value addition and value chains at both national and regional levels as a way of economic transformation and employment creation;
- (iv) Strengthening national and regional human and institutional capacities to enhance competitiveness of the industrial sector;
- (v) Promoting and enhancing MSMEs/MSMIs industrial competitiveness in the Member States;
- (vi) Creating and strengthening the region's capacity for innovation and effective application of science and technology in industrialization;
- (vii) Promoting labor intensive industries that generate employment opportunities;
- (viii) Empowering women and youth through activities that increase their income and contribution to national and regional industrialization efforts;
- (ix) Expanding trade and market access for manufactured products in the region; and
- (x) Encouraging cooperation between Member States to combat illicit trade and counterfeiting.

Strategic Focus

COMESA will strive to enhance contribution towards realising the goals of the COMESA Industrial Strategy and Action Plan which is in line with the strategy and the Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA) among others. To overcome the above-mentioned challenges and exploit the existing opportunities, COMESA will collaborate with the public and private sector, Member States, development



partners to pursue the following:

- (i) Facilitating private sector investment in manufacturing and agribusiness including agro-processing;
- (ii) Promoting competitiveness and market access/linkages for agricultural goods and services for large firms and MSMEs including youth and women owned MSMEs;
- (iii) Continue facilitation of technical standards on produced goods and services;
- (iv) Strengthening regional and national human and institutional capacities;
- (v) Promoting and supporting regional Science Technology and Innovation (STI);
- (vi) Developing COMESA Framework on private sector led Circular Economy /Clean industrialization
- (vii) Facilitation of domestication of adopted COMESA Policies and Frameworks related to industrialization
- (viii) Promoting and supporting business development, incubation and growth for youth and women.

c) Investment Promotion

The investment landscape in Africa, and especially within the COMESA region during these past years shows a declining trend in terms of private investment attraction. This is despite a positive economic growth at the same period that has been in the average of around 3.4% for the years 2018 and 2019 according to the AfDB African Economic Outlook 2020 Report.

The COMESA Treaty provisions, that deal with the development of the private sector, investment promotion and protection covered in Chapters Twenty-three and Twenty-six respectively concern creating an enabling environment. The chapters also cater for development of policies and strategies aimed at making the COMESA region a single investment destination. The region is endowed with abundant resources on which private sector initiatives can build on to create vibrant industrialization and value addition. In that regard the Authority has put in place relevant instruments of support including the establishment of the COMESA Regional Investment Agency (RIA) in 2006 so as to attract and facilitate investments in the region in collaboration with National Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs). COMESA also put in place the COMESA Business Council (CBC) as a voice of the private sector for advocacy and private-public sector collaboration. In 1998, during the COMESA Summit held in Kinshasa DR Congo, the Head of States decided to make COMESA a Common Investment Area which was adopted in Nairobi, Kenya in May 2007.



COMESA also organizes important investment promotion events which aim at leveraging COMESA Member States' capacities and expertise to realize tangible development results, achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth and boost shared prosperity with the ultimate objective of meeting the aspirations of the African people which opens a distinctive opportunity to unify and foster development partners' and private sector's efforts towards achieving Africa's development objectives through designed interactive dialogues and sessions drawn from Africa's 2063 vision.

Through organizing such events, business transactions are forged through promoting and showcasing potential investment opportunities across the COMESA region that aim at boosting shared prosperity and inclusive growth. In addition, success stories of young entrepreneurs and start-ups are presented, especially that of youth and women, to attract global investors and contribute to wide-ranging and sustainable development of our African continent."

Strategic Focus

COMESA will focus on attracting increased investments and position the region as a single investment destination. This will be undertaken through engaging all the stakeholders to achieve the following:

- (i) Strive for the ratification and domestication/implementation of the CCIA Framework;
- (ii) Provide continued technical support to the national initiatives on the ease of doing business and related reform processes;
- (iii) Support Member States in capacity building/enhancement in the areas of investment promotion, negotiations, preparation of bankable projects and provision of follow-up/aftercare services skills;
- (iv) Digitalization of investment services and procedures, proactive investment promotion strategy, especially the review of targeted sectors in light of the COVID-19 effect on the evolution of the next wave on the sector;
- (v) Support the promotion of joint projects by Member States;
- (vi) Prioritize the investor targeting approach;
- (vii) Facilitate privilege impact investment by orienting investment promotion activities to specific regional sectors of focus such as agriculture, industrialization, infrastructure and tourism; and services;
- (viii) Encourage and support peer to peer and benchmarking approaches building on best practices achieved by other COMESA Member States in the investment promotion and ease of doing business areas;
- (ix) Develop and disseminate guidelines for a regional mechanism for joint investment promotion activities;
- (x) Promote Public Private Partnerships;
- (xi) Promote investments for creation of jobs for youth and women;
- (xii) Development of an interactive portal for African IPAs to serve as a platform to share FDI best practices and investment-related events and capacity building workshops and training materials and reports on FDI policies and trends;
- (xiii) COMESA to sponsor the implementation of joint investment promotion missions between African countries;
- (xiv) Collaborate with international organizations facilitating investments to include FDI positive news and success stories of African countries in their publications, newsletters, and news section on their websites;
- (xv) Design and implement regional social media campaigns highlighting competitive

- advantages of African countries; and
- (xvi) Host investment promotion missions by different African countries based on a concrete investment targeting approach.

d) Private Sector

The private sector supports economic growth - creating jobs, increasing trade, providing goods and services and generating tax revenue to fund public services such as health and education.

Economic activities recognize the role of the private sector. The private sector plays a key role in income generation through employment and engaging communities via inclusive business models. If goods and services were to be produced locally or regionally, more jobs would be created, distributing incomes and enhancing the well-being of the citizens.

COMESA recognizes the role of the private sector in inclusive and sustainable economic transformation under Articles 151, 152, 153 of the Treaty, which encourage Member States to create an enabling environment for the private sector, and co-operation among chambers of commerce and other business organizations. It is in this respect that the COMESA Business Council (CBC) was created for implementing regional adopted instruments.

Strategic Focus

The private sector is a key stakeholder in the realization of the COMESA mandate, notably to facilitate investment, production and trade.

To overcome the regional growth challenges and exploit the existing opportunities, the public and private sectors within COMESA supported by development partners will aim to attract increased industrial investment as well as harness application of technology and innovation in industry for improved productivity and competitiveness. The strategic focus will include:

- (i) Promoting competitiveness and market access/linkages for the private sector including for women and youth owned businesses.
- (ii) Facilitation in developing the COMESA Framework on Private Sector led Circular Economy/Clean Industrialization.
- (iii) Continued facilitation of business policy advocacy, business support services, membership development and institutional development.
- (iv) Continued facilitation of the ease of doing business in the region and improvement of the business climate.



Source: Adobe stock

e) Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary Measures (SPS)

Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures are required to ensure agricultural trade does not increase risks to food safety, animal health and plant health. SPS Measures must be designed and implemented with the aim of facilitating safe trade, as laid out in COMESA's SPS Regulations as well as in the WTO's SPS Agreement.

Article 132 of the Treaty concerns co-operation in the export of agricultural commodities, and Member States agree to "harmonise their policies and regulations relating to Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures without impeding the export of crops, plants, seeds, livestock, livestock products, fish and fish-products". In 2007 the 23rd Council of Ministers established the SPS Subcommittee under the Technical Committee on Agriculture, for effective coordination of SPS matters at regional level, and the 29th Council of Ministers requested the Secretariat to set up and make functional an SPS unit at the Secretariat. Subsequently the Council of Ministers directed the Secretariat to enhance programmes aimed at mutual recognition of standards and SPS measures, as well as to expedite the harmonization process as stipulated in the COMESA SPS Regulations.

Strategic Focus

Risk Based, Harmonised SPS Measures

COMESA will strive to implement initiatives aimed at achieving safe regional and international trade through efficient implementation of effective, risk based, harmonised SPS Measures with the following proposed interventions:

- (i) Support improved border management.
- (ii) Facilitate implementation of SPS/TBT e-certificates and Single Window System (SWS).
- (iii) Coordinate simplified and harmonized SPS/TBT verification/ conformity assessment procedures.
- (iv) Re-engineering of the COMESA Reference and Satellite Laboratories Model
- (v) Upgrading the regional measurements (metrology) infrastructure.
- (vi) Strengthening of the regional conformity assessment system.
- (vii) Establishing regional PT providers in key parameters/scopes to support national laboratories requirements for accreditation assessment.
- (viii) Strengthen National Plant Protection Organisations (NPPOs) and designing early warning and emergency response system for plant health and food safety including creation of a regional networking platform for sharing information on risks to human health, plant health arising from trans-boundary pests and diseases.
- (ix) Establish an early warning and emergency response system to facilitate collective actions in mitigating priority risks development and implementation of applications at critical points such as production level, and border controls, where pests and diseases could be intercepted and reported for timely and/or early regulatory decisions.
- (x) Establish an accreditation Mutual Recognition Arrangement in COMESA leveraging on existing capabilities in different geographical regions.
- (xi) Capacity building for an extensive pool of accreditation lead assessors/auditors and technical assessors/auditors in Member States.
- (xii) Capacity building of women and youth farmers on SPS and technical matters to enable them access markets;

f) Blue Economy Development

COMESA's Blue Economy spans a vast domain. The region recognizes the Blue/Ocean Economy as covering aquatic and marine areas, including oceans, seas, coastlines, lakes, rivers and groundwater. Furthermore, it includes many productive sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, transport, shipbuilding, energy, bio-prospecting and underwater mining to accelerate structural transformation. The regions 21 Member States comprise of nine coastal countries, eight landlocked countries and four Ocean States. This represents one of the largest pools of marine bio-resources, ecological resources and marine mineral resource endowment.

The potential of the inland fisheries resources from Lake Victoria, Lake Tanganyika and other vast freshwater systems of the Nile, Congo and Zambezi Basins and the small to medium size rift valley lakes are enormous but underutilized. Though the development of aquaculture is still nascent in COMESA, Egypt which is leading the industry in Africa and other members such as Uganda, Zambia, DR Congo and Zimbabwe are experiencing high growth.

Source: Adobe stock



The concept of the Blue Economy has been embraced by the governments of island states and coastal Member States as a mechanism to realize sustainable ocean-based economic development. The critical gap, however, is the mechanism for its implementation. Limited, if any, practical information is currently available to countries, notably island states and Member States with commendable coastal access to the ocean, wishing to implement these concepts. This is predominately so, as information that does exist focuses primarily on land-based economic development or has a strong focus on conservation rather than on the sustainable use of the investment in an ocean-based economy, for national benefit.

As highlighted in the Africa Agenda 2063 and associated policy instruments, the contribution of natural resource-based primary sectors such as wild fisheries can hardly be overstated in achieving accelerated sustainable economic growth and shared prosperity. From the political economy perspectives, it implicates the operationalization of appropriate policy and institutional mechanisms and business enabling-environment to drive the sustainable management and modernization of the fisheries sector. An integrated approach to inland water and ocean-based sustainable development is crucial which brings together economy, environment and society, consistent with the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 (SDG's), Aichi Target 11 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2015).

In the COMESA region, fisheries and ocean services play an important role in trade and regional integration towards sustaining blue economies of coastal Member States. COMESA supports Member States to implement their Blue Economy Strategy in transition to a more integrated inland water and ocean-based economy.

The promotion of tourism in the COMESA region is provided under Article 138, in which the Member States undertake to develop a collective and coordinated approach to the promotion of tourism in the Common Market. The Treaty further provides that Member States shall endeavour to establish a common code of ethics for private and public tour and travel operators, to standardise hotel classification and harmonise the professional standards of agents in the tourism and travel industry within the Common Market.

Tourism's potential to contribute to economic growth, job creation and foreign exchange earnings is enormous. It is the world's largest and fastest-growing service industry. In COMESA island countries (Seychelles, Madagascar, Mauritius, Comoros) tourism contributes between 14% -25% GDP and more than half of their export earnings.

Strategic Focus

Catalyze Inclusive Sustainable Transformation of the Blue Economy

COMESA will work to catalyse sustainable fisheries production and markets access through enhanced involvement of the private sector within the COMESA region. This will entail supporting the Member States to build their capacities for planning and implementation of their Blue Economy Strategy and to create enabling policy environment to spur blue economy transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods.

Regional data and information systems/platforms on fisheries, tourism, ocean transport, and port will be strengthened to inform evidence-based Blue Economy Strategy development for improved economy and income, and enhanced food security and nutrition.

COMESA will also collaborate with public and private sector to attract increased investment as well as harness application of technology and innovation in the Blue Economy for improved productivity and competitiveness of the sector. To this end COMESA will develop strategies and investment policies in fisheries, tourism, ocean transport and port services. Furthermore, support private sector to enhance transformation of the Blue Economy which is expected to improve employment, economic growth and regional integration.

Fisheries

- (i) Improve production of fisheries through exploration and feasibility of new and emerging maritime sectors for example inland and marine-based aquaculture, and marine biotechnology;
- (ii) Improve regional enterprise competitiveness and markets access for fisheries and its products, through value addition and transformation of small-scale processors including women and youth owned businesses to industry;
- (iii) Improve intra-regional trade and improved competitive markets access for fish and fish products;
- (iv) Improving fisheries management and governance and realize effective protection of ocean space and resources through better coordination across different sectors, inclusive participation, and application of protective measures and greater use of surveillance and enforcement tools;

- (v) Improve prevention of ocean/blue economy risks including illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, marine pollution and climate change through integrated approaches to effective regional cooperation on maritime security.

Other initiatives that will be undertaken include;

- (i) Improve production of fisheries through sustainable exploitation, exploration and feasibility of new and emerging maritime sectors for example inland and marine-based aquaculture, and marine biotechnology for increased economic growth and ensuring food security;
- (ii) Improving fisheries infrastructure and facilities so as to avoid post-harvest losses.
- (iii) Empowering and enhancing capacity of fishers for better catch and improved livelihoods;
- (iv) Encourage investment in fisheries so as to increase its contribution to economic growth, food security and job creation;
- (v) Prevent fisheries related crimes regarding inter-continental flow of illegal fish products, illicit money and human trafficking victims in transnational organized crime cases in the fishing industry;
- (vi) Sea port development, bunkering, ocean knowledge;
- (vii) Develop a policy for maritime security and safety;
- (viii) Establishment of fishing fleets.

Tourism

- (i) Promote a conducive regulatory and policy environment for the tourism industry; including tax policy, visa regime, business incubation, and decent jobs for youth;
- (ii) Coalition in the tourism industry: regional cooperation amongst players in the tourism Sector. This includes the creation of Trans-boundary Tourism Circuits to improve product attractiveness.
- (iii) Tourism and Climate Change: Conserving biodiversity for tourism development; promoting policies, resources and awareness for resource management, and conservation.
- (iv) Tourism and Infrastructure Development: Transport, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Air Transport and Financial Services are all complementary to tourism development.

- (v) Develop a Regional Tourism Strategy in view of the prevailing pandemic.

5.1.3 Physical Integration/Connectivity

Economic infrastructure is a precondition and a catalyst for regional integration and economic development. Economic infrastructure development is critical for building productive capacities, lowering production costs and ultimately, fostering sustained economic inclusive growth and human development in any country or region. The high cost of doing business in Africa has negatively affected its competitive edge on the global market. Therefore, bridging the economic infrastructure gaps is an imperative towards accelerated economic growth and development of the COMESA region.

COMESA seeks to address the main constraints to improved infrastructure and services in the region, particularly in relation to energy, transport and ICT infrastructure. COMESA has among others effectively assisted its Member States in packaging regional infrastructure projects for funding and encouraging Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the development of basic infrastructure. The three focus areas of economic infrastructure development pillar are energy, transport and ICTs. For each of these, COMESA has established policies, programmes and/or instruments, which are worth noting.

a) Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

· Promotion of Digital Transformation

To support the future development of the digital economy in the region and the continent as a whole there is a need to have a clear strategic framework on which future decisions can be taken. An innovative framework based on harmonization, cooperation and co-ordination is required to advance the region's digital economy beyond individual national policies.

There is need for a regulatory environment to ensure that operators can make returns on their investments while satisfying expectations of users and governments. Though infrastructure development is a priority, there is a challenge of creating the right environment and appropriate institutional reforms that will promote increased access to and use of secure ICT services in order to improve livelihoods.

In the COMESA region like the rest of Africa, many countries have opened up the telecom sector to competition in many segments though more efforts are required to further open up business segments. The fragmentation of regional policies and non-implementation of harmonized policies and regulations have led to high cost of services and limited access to Internet. Currently the regional costs

on telecommunications are high even when there has been a high number of citizens that have been connected. These high economies of scale should be translated to the citizens and businesspeople in form of lower costs.



The strategic focus will be based on the following functional pillars:

- (i) Enabling Environment, Policy and Regulation
- (ii) Digital Infrastructure
- (iii) Digital Skills, Human Capital and Innovation
- (iv) Cybersecurity
- (v) Emerging Technologies: As much as setting policies and regulations to foster the development of emerging technologies in Member States, a specified action plan to be designed to boost the advancement of these technologies to be a catalyst for socio-economic development. The COMESA Secretariat to explore the possibility of establishment of working groups to come up with a common strategy regarding the 4IR technologies giving a priority focus to Artificial Intelligence (AI).

• **Enabling Environment, Policy and Regulation**

In many countries in the region, access to mobile phones has grown rapidly and prices are falling. Market policy reforms based on competition, private investments participation and enabling regulations have been the key catalyst to the rapid growth witnessed in the past two decades. However, while sector reforms have worked in terms of improving universal access and affordability for basic phone services, most of the population is not yet connected to the internet and where access is available the prices are still quite high.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the rapid technological and innovations in the ICT sector has brought about challenges to policy makers and regulators. As internet usage permeates society there is a need to develop policies focusing on emerging issues of digital literacy, privacy, cybersecurity, Internet governance, Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial intelligence (AI) and 5G.

Thus, in order to lead the markets policy makers and regulators are required to formulate and implement enabling and sound policy and regulatory decisions taking into consideration the emerging technology and market trends.

The programme on Enhancement of Governance and Enabling Environment in the ICT sector (EGEE-ICT) in the East and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean of which COMESA is the lead REC, is expected to be the major vehicle on which the gaps in the regional harmonization and creation of an enabling environment will be achieved.

• **Digital Infrastructure**

The ICT digital revolution is transforming the world at a rapid rate never seen before. ICT has changed the way businesses operate, how people connect and exchange information, and how they interact with the public and private sectors. The digital infrastructure typically consists of an ecosystem of connected devices exchanging information with each other. The transformative digital infrastructure is expected to have an impact on almost all industries enabling application areas of smart cities, smart car, mobility, smart home and associated smart industries, smart energy and grids, smart health care, smart education and training, smart access to markets, smart financial transactions, smart access to information, and many others.

In terms of hybrid digital infrastructure; the region is far behind in harnessing the power of ICTs in transforming cities into smart ones and enhancing critical services such of health and education and

access to information. Successfully building digital infrastructure (hybrid and purely digital) across all types of infrastructure in both urban and rural areas will unlock new economic opportunities.

Therefore, there is a need to promote the digital infrastructure in all aspects of infrastructure development in the region.

- **Digital Skills, Human Capital and Innovation**

Many countries in the region face challenges to harness the potential of the digital economy which needs skills to solve them. Many countries need assistance to develop the skills that are required, training and capacity building initiatives. As we move into the future digital era the future jobs will require digital skills therefore there is a need to identify the core skills that will be sought after across different economic sectors.

Capacity building, skill development and innovation in schools, colleges and universities should be promoted.

- **Cybersecurity**

COMESA has developed a model policy and bill on cybersecurity whose objectives are:

- To harmonize the legal and regulatory frameworks for COMESA member countries and align them with international best practices;
- To facilitate the establishment of relevant policy, legislative and law enforcement structures in support of cyber security;
- To ensure reduction of cyber security threats and vulnerabilities;
- To foster co-operation and co-ordination between government and the private sector;
- To promote and strengthen international co-operation on cyber security;
- To build capacity and promote a culture of cyber security; and
- To promote compliance with appropriate technical and operational cyber security standards

Strategic Focus

COMESA shall continue to promote cybersecurity capacity building initiatives, awareness and the

creation of the regional cybersecurity center.

The following programmes and projects are expected to be carried out during the next five years:

- **Enhancement of ICT Governance and Enabling Environment in EA-SA-IO Region**
The programme will support the effective development and review of various regional policies and regulatory frameworks in a harmonized manner that will contribute to enhancing competition and improved access to cost effective and secure ICT services. Areas to be addressed include, Universal Access, Likening, E-commerce, Open access, Investment promotion and Roaming and interconnection.
- **Establishment of a Regional Cybersecurity:** COMESA is in a process of establishing a regional cybersecurity centre to provide capacity building and exchange of information. The centre will be hosted by Rwanda.
- **Establishment of Association of Regulators of Information and Communications for Eastern and Southern Africa (ARICEA) Secretariat:** Rwanda has offered to host the secretariat jointly with the Regional Cybersecurity Centre. The main activities will be to support the establishment of a secretariat and recruitment of staff.
- **Promotion of Digital Infrastructure:** The transformative digital infrastructure is expected to have an impact on almost all industries enabling application areas of smart cities, smart car, mobility, smart home and associated smart industries, smart energy and grids, and smart health care. The activities entail the creation of enabling environment for digital infrastructure.
- **Capacity Building and Awareness:** all-encompassing capacity building and awareness be carried out continuously.

b) Transport

Transport promotes connectivity and integration with opportunities to reduce the cost of doing business if sound infrastructure is in place complemented by appropriate policies and operational efficiency improvement strategies. Infrastructure missing links, policy gaps and operational bottlenecks need to be eliminated to improve the flow of trade and mobility. In this regard, there is need for setting up corridor management institutions; policy coordination and harmonization, and capacity building.

- **Corridor Performance Improvement**

The corridor approach remains the main framework for mainstreaming infrastructure development, policy coordination and harmonizing transport efficiency enhancement. Corridors provide opportunities for focused coordination of infrastructure development and maintenance, traffic flows, application of trade and transport facilitation instruments, capacity building for corridor states and benchmarking against best practices.

COMESA will establish corridor management institutions to provide focused coordination of activities of specific corridors. This will be guided by existent Ministerial, Council and Authority Decisions and Directives. The corridor management institutions will be established for Djibouti and Port Sudan Corridors with the support of collaborating partners during the plan period.



- **Aviation**

Aviation has potential to contribute significantly to economic growth through improved connectivity and passenger convenience, factor productivity, employment and improved benefits to other sectors of the economy like tourism and aviation sector support industries. For this potential to be realized, there is need to harmonize policies and regulations, reform the civil aviation authorities, build capacity and mainstream gender.

Integration of the air transport market will be a priority targeted at improving connectivity, increasing competition and efficiency resulting in reduced cost of travel. COMESA will support operationalization of the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) through enhancing seamless operations, aviation

safety, policy coordination and harmonization, supporting reforms in the aviation sector and capacity building at all levels. The SAATM is one of the flagship projects under the African Union's Agenda 2063.

In view of the importance accorded to aviation safety, especially in a liberalized and integrated air transport market, COMESA will mobilize resources to establish an aviation safety oversight organization to cover those Member States not belonging to any regional safety oversight organization.

• **Roads**

The road from Cape to Cairo is in place, however, its sections vary in terms of condition and the provisions for road maintenance are still at nascent stage. Road development authorities and road funds have played an important role in mitigating challenges of road infrastructure funding. Not all COMESA Member States have these institutions in place. In view of the huge investments made in road infrastructure, initiatives should be put in place to maintain and protect these roads to ensure their durability. The focus for 2021-2025 will be on establishing road development agencies and road funds in those Member States where they do not exist and strengthen existing ones benchmarking on global best practices.

In recognition of huge investments made into roads, protection of these roads will be assured through implementation of Multilateral Cross-Border Road Transport Agreement and Vehicle Load Management Strategy as agreed at Tripartite level.

Road safety will be strengthened through establishment of road safety management agencies. Development and strengthening of road safety management legal and institutional frameworks, and capacity building will be at the centre of this initiative.

• **Regional Maritime Connectivity**

Maritime transport is the cheapest transport mode supporting over 80% of global trade. However, international maritime services are controlled by few maritime companies who decide on the routing and transportation charges. For COMESA Member States to be able to influence routing and transportation charges, there is need for the Member States to have their own shipping line.

Island States have a special position in the development of infrastructure in the COMESA region, given that they are not land linked to mainland Africa. In order to promote trade and integration between the Island States and the mainland bloc, COMESA will undertake a feasibility study for the establishment of a shipping line for the Indian Ocean Islands and support signing of agreements and registration of the shipping line. The shipping line will provide services for the Island States among themselves and between the continent and the Island States.

• **Inland Water Transport**

Inland water bodies (lakes and rivers) endowment in the COMESA region provides opportunities of using inland water transport. COMESA will support the development and management of inland water transport infrastructure by mobilizing resources for feasibility studies, detailed design and construction; development of inland water transport standards and regulations and capacity building. Increased utilization of this transport mode will lead to a reduction in transportation costs and environmental pollution, improved economic opportunities and deepening regional integration.

• **Railway**

Railway transport is an important surface transport mode with desirable characteristics of being a cheaper, fuel efficient and environmentally friendly bulky carrier. The region has not fully benefited from the potential of railway transport because regional rail infrastructure capacity has significantly declined over the years due to age, lack of investment and maintenance. Rail has consequently lost market share to road, a relatively more expensive surface transport mode which negatively impacts on regional competitiveness.

COMESA will develop an in-depth strategy to revitalize regional railway capacity and induce modal shift of traffic from road to rail. Central to this revitalization strategy is the establishment of dedicated rail funds at national level to support rail infrastructure development and maintenance as is the case with road funds. To ensure a coordinated approach to the development of physical rail infrastructure, a regional railway infrastructure master plan will be developed at Tripartite level due to overlapping membership and interconnectivity of the rail infrastructure. Establishment of a Tripartite Railways Association will positively contribute to the advancement of the railway agenda through provision of a focused platform to discuss and coordinate rail issues. These will include development of railway standards, policies, operations improvement strategies and capacity building.

The AUC's Agenda 2063 flagship Continental High Speed Train Railway Network Project which seeks to link all capital cities of the African continent requires involvement of RECs. COMESA will coordinate activities of its Member States and provide technical and policy advice to the AUC as the project evolves. As the largest REC on the continent, COMESA is better placed to effectively play this role.

Strategic Focus

In view of the status of the various transport sub-sectors, COMESA will pursue initiatives as outlined below:

Corridor Performance Improvement

- (i) Facilitate signing of Corridor Agreements for Djibouti and Port Sudan Corridors by the Corridor States
- (ii) Development and adoption of Corridor Strategic Plans
- (iii) Setting up of Corridor Management Institutions (CMIs) and mobilizing resources to support the CMIs during the first three to five formative years
- (iv) Facilitate establishment of One Stop Border Posts
- (v) Support implementation of transport and trade facilitation instruments to improve corridor efficiency and reduce transportation costs
- (vi) Undertake capacity building to improve the skills and productivity levels of corridor staff within the new working environment.

Aviation

- (i) Support the establishment of a Single African Air Transport Market
 - Advocating for and facilitating signing of the Solemn Commitment by Member States through sensitization workshops and awareness campaigns;
 - Develop regional institutional frameworks and instruments to further the implementation of Yamoussoukro Declaration (YD);
 - Policy advocacy for competition and operationalization of joint competition rules and regulations of the African Union Commission;
 - Facilitating development and adoption of the remaining economic regulations to support operations in the integrated air transport market;
 - Establishment of a Regional Safety Oversight Organization (RSOO) for the 7 COMESA Member States who do not belong to any RSOO.
- (ii) Facilitating Seamless Operations
 - Support implementation of ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs)
 - Facilitate Civil-Military coordination to promote flexible use of airspace;
 - Support establishment of regional databases;

- Support establishment of a regional institutional framework for the development and deployment of regional inter-operable Communications, Navigation and Surveillance (CNS)/Air Traffic Management (ATM) systems.

(iii) Facilitate Reform of Civil Aviation Authorities

- Undertaking a baseline study to assess the current status of all the national air transport systems in the region including policies, regulations, technology, infrastructure, and users;
- Support national level reforms to implement existing regionally harmonized model policy and regulatory frameworks;
- Support the separation of regulatory and operational functions of Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs) to promote operational efficiency;
- Support Member States in developing appropriate cost-based models to sustain revenues for regulatory bodies;
- Identifying and bridging the training needs of key stakeholders including gender aspects;
- Facilitate development of gender sensitive policies and action plans in the aviation sector by Member States;
- Support Member States in developing regulations for airport operations that promote environmental sustainability.

Road

- (i) Facilitate development of physical road infrastructure through undertaking feasibility studies and supporting resource mobilization;
- (ii) Develop model policy on funding road infrastructure development and maintenance;
- (iii) Facilitate establishment of road development agencies and road funds to support infrastructure development and maintenance;
- (iv) Facilitate signing of the Multilateral Cross-Border Road Transport Agreement and implementation of the Vehicle Load Management Strategy;
- (v) Strengthening of road safety management, legal and institutional frameworks;
- (vi) Support establishment of road safety management agencies and strengthen existing ones; and

- (vii) Capacity building in road safety management.

Regional Maritime Connectivity

- (i) Maritime Connectivity – Conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of a shipping line for the Indian Ocean Islands; and
- (ii) Facilitate signing of agreements and registration of the shipping line.

Inland Water Transport

- (i) Mobilize resources for feasibility studies and project development;
- (ii) Conduct feasibility study on the establishment of a navigational route between the Mediterranean Sea and Lake Victoria;
- (iii) Conduct feasibility study on the establishment of Ro-Ro facilities at Lake Tanganyika;
- (iv) Facilitate development of Inland Water Transport Standards and Regulations; and
- (v) Coordinate capacity building.

Railway Transport

- (i) Facilitate development of new railway infrastructure projects;
 - Undertaking feasibility studies;
 - Concept development
 - Resource mobilization
 - Development of a regional railway masterplan;
- (ii) Support the development of the Continental High-Speed Railway Network Project; and
- (iii) Facilitate establishment of a Tripartite Railways Association and setting up of a secretariat for the association.

c) Energy

As of 2019, the installed power generation in the COMESA region was estimated at 91,969 MW, a figure which is still low given the population, compared to industrialised countries such as France, Germany and Spain, that have far less population but higher generation capacity. Furthermore, apart from a few countries who have almost 100 percent electricity access, the access rate of most countries in the

region is still low, with average access estimated at just over 50%. The energy sector is plagued by other challenges which include the following as highlighted in the Energy Issues Monitor Survey of 2019 conducted by the World Energy Council (WEC) in collaboration with COMESA:

- **Market Design:** The energy sector market design continues to pose challenges to the development and efficient running of the sector. Some of the issues surrounding market design include non-cost reflective tariffs, static regulatory frameworks enacted a long time ago and in need of upgrade to respond to current issues and vertically integrated utilities which in some cases hinder private sector participation in the power sector due to lack of access to the transmission network.
- **Energy-Water Nexus:** Climate change has had a negative impact on the power sector in some of the Member States of COMESA depending on hydro power. Considering the untapped hydro power potential and the ongoing hydro power generation projects, it is reasonable to assume that climate change will continue to be a threat to the power sector in the region due to the adverse effects of droughts.
- **Capital Markets:** According to the African Development Bank, the African continent is said to face an infrastructure deficit of approximately USD108 billion per year. Despite the huge deficit, the capital markets in Africa still play a relatively small role in financing infrastructure projects. For most large projects, the financing is sourced from outside the continent. In its 2019 report, titled *"African Capital Markets Challenges and Opportunities"*, the CFA Institute Research Foundation states that African exchanges are still characterized as being illiquid and highly fragmented and as operating under weak regulatory environments. Some factors contributing to this picture include:
 - ❑ Investors often require sovereign guarantees before financing projects
 - ❑ Dependence on foreign investors and investors investing with a dollar-based currency. This can be seen in the power sector where Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) are denominated in foreign currency.
 - ❑ High foreign exchange risk due to weak local currencies in some countries, discouraging foreign investors because of high foreign exchange risk.
 - ❑ Drastic policy changes such as interest caps which may sometimes have a detrimental effect on economic growth and could also lead to reduction of profit margins for investors.

Strategic Focus

In order to promote the development of the energy sector in the region, COMESA will focus on the following initiatives:

Economic Infrastructure Connectivity

There are a number of power interconnection projects under implementation in the region. The Eastern Africa Power Pool (EAPP) is also in the process of developing various market instruments for the operation of the regional power pool in the Eastern part of Africa. Considering that most of the ongoing interconnection projects expected to be completed in 2021, there is strong expectation that by 2022 the regional market will be operational.

The need for a functional regional power market is motivated by the possibility of having an enhanced energy security that comes with being interconnected. The regional power market may also result in lower prices that come with economies of scale and scope in cases where large projects are developed at regional level. Regional integration also provides an opportunity for substitution of expensive thermal electricity with cheaper imports from the region and improve renewable resources utilization.

COMESA will continue supporting:

- (i) Developing and implementation of both power generation and transmission infrastructure projects at regional level.
- (ii) The EAPP and other regional bodies charged with the responsibility of planning and implementing infrastructure at regional level.
- (iii) The activities of the Zambia-Tanzania-Kenya (ZTK) interconnector to ensure that it is fully operational even after construction is completed.

Institutional Connectivity

With the anticipated completion of several power interconnectors and the launch of the EAPP trading platform in 2021, the region is expected to experience increased power trading. Therefore, it will be imperative that the region has policies and regulatory mechanisms that will help facilitate smooth power trading through the following:

- (i) COMESA will facilitate review of the COMESA Model Energy Policy (2008) and promote the domestication of the revised policy to Member States.

- (ii) COMESA will also, through the Regional Association of Energy Regulators for Eastern and Southern Africa (RAERESA), work to ensure that regional regulatory frameworks for operationalisation of interconnectors and regulation of regional energy market are put in place.
- (iii) RAERESA will continue working with national regulatory bodies to facilitate capacity building, peer reviews, exchange of information and
- (iv) Promotion of gender mainstreaming, universal access and participation of women in the energy sector.

Promotion of Renewable Energy Development

The COMESA region is endowed with abundant renewable energy resources ranging from hydro, geothermal, wind and solar. Renewable Energy accounts for a low component in the power generation mix of the region, which is still predominantly thermal (about 70% of the power mix, with solar, wind, geothermal and small hydro accounting for less than 5%). The cost of renewables has drastically come down over the last decade with the resulting outcome being that most countries in the region now view renewable energy as a viable alternative source of electricity.

In this regard, many African countries have embarked on programmes to increase their share of renewables in the energy mix. In addition, the region has also experienced a large increase in the deployment of renewable energy standalone/off grid systems, thereby reaching hitherto unreached areas not connected to the grid. Technological developments have also played a pivotal role in facilitating off-grid renewable deployment e.g. mobile money payment platforms. Development of renewable energy will therefore help the region to cope with the effects of climate change while increasing access to electricity at the same time.

COMESA will therefore promote the following activities aimed at spurring development in the renewable energy subsector in order to increase its share in the power generation mix:

- (i) Development of regulations, policies and strategies that promote renewable energy.
- (ii) Development, adoption and harmonisation of standards to encourage quality products in the region.
- (iii) Promotion of Off-grid electrification solutions to increase energy access in the region.
- (iv) Promotion of large-scale renewable energy to increase the share of renewable component in the power generation mix.
- (v) Capacity building on renewable energy technologies, policies, regulations, finance and

business models

- (vi) Promotion of local industrialization of RE equipment and associated transmission and distribution equipment.



Source: Adobe stock

Oil and Gas

Oil and gas remain among the most critical sources of energy for the COMESA region. Some Member States have discovered oil and gas resources and are in the process of developing them. Therefore, the focus will be on facilitating trade and sharing of experiences within the region.

5.1.4 Gender and Social Integration

Gender equality, empowerment of women and youth, and social justice are key elements to achieve progress in all areas of development. Some progress has been made through policy and programme development, establishment of institutional structures, development of gender capacity building materials, and implementation of some targeted initiatives for women and youth. A lot, however, still needs to be done by COMESA Member States, The Secretariat, COMESA institutions and other stakeholders as the region still experiences gender inequalities, limited participation of women and youth in various development processes and inadequate access to social development services for all. These result in reduced productivity and slows-down the achievement of development goals and the vision of economic prosperity evidenced by political and social stability and high standards of living for its people – women, men, girls and boys.

Addressing gender inequalities, challenges affecting the effective and meaningful participation of women and youth, and social and cultural challenges is critical to the realization of the vision of COMESA. The COMESA Treaty in Articles 110, 143, 154 and 155 highlight the significance of the cooperation of Member States on: health and prevention of public health pandemics, social and cultural matters including education and skills training; addressing gender inequalities; and promoting the empowerment of women and youth. The aspirations of the Treaty demonstrate that COMESA aims to propel and accelerate its socio-economic development by drawing on the potential of its women and youth, ensuring inclusivity of all in participation and benefiting from economic development, safeguarding lives, and promoting access to social development services by all.

COMESA's work in promoting gender equality, social development, and the participation of women and the youth in the regional development agenda is aligned to the international development agenda including the AU Agenda 2063, Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004), UN Global Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (SDGs), Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the 2020 Political Declaration, and Resolution 1325, AU frameworks on youth, health, education and other thematic areas.

It is against this background that COMESA positions itself to strengthen efforts to foster gender equality

and women empowerment, facilitate social and cultural development, and support youth empowerment and innovations to ensure that the regional integration agenda is holistic, sustainable, inclusive and driven and owned by and benefits all citizens of the region, women, men, youth and children.

Strategic Focus

The strategic focus areas for the period 2021 – 2025 will be on the promotion of gender and accelerating actions towards Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

a) Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Achieving gender equality and women empowerment is one of the goals outlined in global, continental and regional development frameworks. COMESA will continue to endeavor to contribute to the achievement of this development goal using a twin approach of mainstreaming gender in all its programmes, projects and policies, and systems; and implementing initiatives targeted at women to address specific challenges.

In the period 2021 to 2025, focus will be on enhancing institutionalization of gender by strengthening leadership and accountability, availability of gender disaggregated data, support to women in business through digital information and networking platforms, coordination and linkages with national, regional, continental and global partners and networks to deliver strong outcomes for gender equality and women empowerment. The programme will undertake the following strategic interventions:

- (i) Continue to promote and strengthen gender mainstreaming, capacity building, advocacy, research, accountability, networking and documentation of good practices across trade, industry, investment, agriculture, energy, transport, communications and technology, and other sectors;
- (ii) Promote collection, analysis and dissemination of gender statistics across sectors to strengthen availability of gender statistics for informed decisions, programming, advocacy and monitoring of progress towards the achievement of gender equality and women empowerment;
- (iii) Explore how digital technologies can be used to promote gender equality and identify gender-related risks of digitalization for young women and men;
- (iv) Promote gender in the private sector to formulate and implement policies and programmes and respect the different rights of women and men workers including harmonizing policies that endorse the rights of women at the workplace to protect them from gender-based violence;

- (v) Promote and monitor implementation of the COMESA Gender Policy and women empowerment frameworks, as well as continental and global frameworks on gender equality and women empowerment;
- (vi) Promote and facilitate establishment of an oversight and accountability system for gender mainstreaming at programme management level within the Secretariat and in the Member States across all sectors;
- (vii) Continue to support the small-scale cross border trade initiatives, capacity building of border officials, and implementation of STR, and Traders Charter;
- (viii) Promote and support information exchange and business linkages for women and youth in business through information and networking platforms and business forums;
- (ix) Engage public and private sector organizations to support women in supply chains including government procurement;
- (x) Advocate for the provision of capacity building programme on the basics of IT for women's equitable participation in the digitalized economy of the region;
- (xi) Promote documentation, reporting and sharing of good practices on gender equality and women empowerment; create and strengthen partnerships with government institutions, COMESA Institutions, civil society organizations, and other interest groups to advance initiatives on gender mainstreaming and women empowerment;
- (xii) Promote the participation of women at different levels of the political arena and in decision making instances.

b) Social and Cultural Affairs

Article 143 of the COMESA Treaty calls on Member States to promote close co-operation in social and cultural affairs through the adoption and implementation of a Social Charter. To this effect, COMESA Social Charter was developed and approved by the Council in 2014. The charter covers various social development sectors and provides measures for the promotion of human and people's rights as well as guidance on social development. In addition, the charter promotes closer cooperation among COMESA Member States in the social and cultural fields particularly with respect to employment conditions, labour laws, vocational training, cultural and sporting exchanges, amongst others. There has been slow progress in the signing and ratification of the Social Charter by Member States to enable its implementation.

Further, COMESA has not developed regional programmes on cultural affairs, education, and sports to strengthen these components of the social affairs programme. Furthermore, COMESA has no health

desk to coordinate initiatives related to communicable and non-communicable diseases and prevention and response to pandemics such as COVID-19, Ebola, and others that threaten regional cross border trade, lives of citizens, and access to social services, and education and jobs for youth. Additionally, social integration through paying attention to community health and education is a major enabling factor to economic development. It is healthy, literate and skilled people that will boost economic activity and development.

In the period 2021 – 2025 the following strategic activities will be undertaken:

- (i) Promote signature, ratification and implementation of the COMESA Social Charter among Member States;
- (ii) Develop and promote implementation of gender responsive national culture policies, cultural and creative arts initiatives;
- (iii) Undertake a study on establishment of a regional COMESA Sports Tournament and draft the framework;
- (iv) Operationalize the COMESA Health Desk, and develop a health programme to coordinate health initiatives and response to disease epidemics, support advocacy, develop and manage cross-border and cross-country initiatives and projects, monitoring and evaluation, dissemination of good practices and harmonization of policies and strategies;
- (v) Undertake studies on child marriage and other harmful practices and disseminate the findings to various stakeholders to campaign and advocate on the elimination of the practices;
- (vi) Coordinate the implementation of the HIV and AIDS Policy and reporting on progress towards the achievement of HIV and AIDS targets with support of UNAIDS; and promote maternal, child and adolescent health;
- (vii) Coordinate and network with other stakeholders such as FAWE, AU-CIEFA on the promotion of girls' education;
- (viii) Engage the offices of the COMESA First Ladies on the promotion of social development and elimination of harmful practices;
- (ix) Create and strengthen partnerships with government institutions, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to support social, cultural and sports initiatives;

c) Youth Empowerment

Young people comprise the majority of the population in the region. COMESA Member States recognize the importance of youth empowerment and development and the positive contribution they can make to socio-economic development. Youth can play a key role in fostering innovations and use of ICTs to address social, economic and political challenges, Gender Equality and Women Empowerment issues and their own development. In 2015, the Council of Ministers adopted the COMESA Youth Programme to strengthen youth engagement, participation and empowerment. The programme focuses on the following priority areas:

- (i) Research to deepen the knowledge base on youth empowerment and development;
- (ii) Youth policy development to accelerate implementation of continental and global frameworks on youth such as the African Youth Charter and the UN World Programme of Action for Youth;
- (iii) Enhancing youth participation in governance and socio-economic development and regional integration;
- (iv) Stimulating the expansion of decent and productive work opportunities for youth in the private sector;
- (v) Developing and supporting youth entrepreneurship; and
- (vi) Enhancing education and training for greater youth employability.

COMESA will continue to focus on youth empowerment to ensure full and effective participation of youth in social, economic and in decision-making. Strategic interventions will include:

- (i) Promote development and implementation of comprehensive, integrated, and cross-sectoral regional youth policies and programmes;
- (ii) Facilitate the establishment of the COMESA Youth Council, and participation of youth in regional decision-making platforms;
- (iii) Promote the implementation of the COMESA Youth Programme and other initiatives on youth by Member States and other stakeholders;
- (iv) Promote, facilitate and support youth development and engagement through capacity building, meaningful participation and representation in democratic governance, civic engagement, peace and conflict prevention and resolution, and socio-economic processes;
- (v) Promote investments and private sector initiatives, innovations, incubation, agribusiness, capacity building, market access targeting economic empowerment,

- skills development, jobs and entrepreneurship enhancement for youth;
- (vi) Promote mainstreaming youth perspectives in COMESA programmes and projects;
 - (vii) Promote and provide platforms and avenues for youth to get their insights, champion and integrate their voices to resolve social, economic, political and ecological challenges in the Member States and the region;
 - (viii) Promote and support education, training, internship, mentorship and volunteerism for greater youth employability;
 - (ix) Promote access to basic services including youth friendly health services particularly sexual and reproductive health services, mental health, prevention and rehabilitation of drug users and advocate for the elimination of harmful practices which predispose mostly girls and boys to vulnerable situations;
 - (x) Promote and undertake research, knowledge sharing, and documentation of good practices on youth empowerment and development to deepen the knowledge base.



Source: Adobe stock

Create and strengthen partnerships with government institutions, civil society organizations, private sector and other interest groups to enhance and support youth innovations, engagement, participation, and initiatives on youth empowerment.

5.1.5 Effective Secretariat

The COMESA Secretariat acts as the facilitator, coordinator, catalyst, and often as a proactive initiator of integration programmes. Its mission statement is ***“To provide excellent technical services to COMESA in order to facilitate the region’s sustained development through economic integration”***. It is guided, in the performance of this function, by the following set of core principles:

- (i) **Customer satisfaction:** meeting or exceeding customer expectations.
- (ii) **Quality leadership,** teamwork and respect for each other in an enabling environment.
- (iii) **Caring for the environment** and being socially responsible.
- (iv) **Transparency** or openness.
- (v) **Professionalism** in the management of activities, funds, and resources of the organization.
- (vi) **Accountability** or taking responsibility for one’s actions.

COMESA acknowledges that sustainability of an organisation is dependent on human capital, information capital (systems), and working environment or organizational capital that support the value creation process. Additionally, COMESA recognises that rapid technological change, and the necessity for knowledge workers to be in a continuous learning mode as well as the need for dynamic organisational ICTs are critical components for organisational sustainability.

COMESA Secretariat faces a number of organisational challenges and constraints that have affected its overall effectiveness and efficiency. Some of the challenges and constraints include misaligned organizational structure, increased demand for Secretariat services against a static resource envelope and restrictive fund utilization procedures from development partners. The requirements for regional integration over the years have increased owing to continental and global advancement, and changes to demographics against a static resource envelop. In its efforts to address the identified challenges and constraints, COMESA in collaboration with development partners in 2019 undertook organisational assessments to identify areas that require improvement specifically in terms of structures, staffing, systems and processes that will support the Secretariat to undertake its mandate as a key facilitator of regional integration efforts.

Strategic Focus

The areas outlined below have been identified as focus areas for institutional strengthening and capacity building;

a) Information Systems

- (i) Develop a new IT Strategy.
- (ii) Formulate, approve and enforce an ICT Governance Policy and Framework that directs the principles, processes, roles and responsibilities for IT governance as well as information security policies, procedures and standards.
- (iii) Implement new workflows and develop an Integrated Management Information System (MIS).
- (iv) Design, procure and deploy a robust disaster recovery platform that speaks to an efficient, effective IT governance framework and robust IT infrastructure.
- (v) Develop and operationalize ICT specific capacity building initiatives for role specific and organization-wide ICT literacy programmes including those targeted at women and girls to improve productivity and fully utilize ICT tools and technologies.
- (vi) Initiate alternative work structures such as the Work from Home Scheme to ensure minimal business disruption in crisis situations.

b) Human Resource Management

Strengthen COMESA's Organizational Structure

COMESA recognises that a sound organisational structure composed of adequate staff with a diverse set of skills is a pre-requisite for efficiency and effectiveness as the organisation strives to achieve its mandate. Having undertaken an assessment of the COMESA Secretariat organisational structure during 2020 to establish a structure that is aligned to the 2021-2025 MTSP, the focus for the planning period is implementation of the new organisational structure that optimizes the performance of the institution through improved coordination, planning and decision-making processes.

The development of job descriptions for all positions in the new structure will ensure that there are no overlaps/conflicts in the new roles. This is very important as it will address the issue of relevance and correctness of the jobs undertaken within the structure and ensure the delivery of the Secretariat's mandate. It will also enhance the recruitment process. A job evaluation exercise will be undertaken to develop a salary structure and grading system which is in tandem with benchmarked jobs and market

rates. A skills audit will be carried out to determine the adequacy and gaps in terms of staff qualifications, experience, competencies and skills. The Recruitment and Selection Manual that contains the process will be reviewed to align with new technologies and the business process re-engineering for efficiency and ensuring that the right profile of candidates is selected.

Human Resource (HR) procedures and processes specifically in relation to recruitment and selection, planning, and performance management, payroll, motivational and wellness, ensuring friendly workplace, protecting staff from discrimination and any form of harassment including gender-based violence are critical to building up an organisational resource base, that has the capacity to support implementation of medium-term plans. There is need therefore to develop procedures and processes which are effective and provide clarity on which jobs are critically needed and provide guidelines for recruitment practices. Having recognised weaknesses in this area, the focus for the Secretariat in the new planning period is to review its recruitment and selection manual and tools to streamline the process for better efficiency and effectiveness. A comprehensive review and standardization of COMESA's HR processes, tools, templates, and policies will be undertaken.

Strategic Focus

- (i) Develop a new organisation structure.
- (ii) Carry out job analysis and develop job descriptions for all the jobs in the new structure.
- (iii) Conduct a job evaluation.
- (iv) Carry out a skills audit.
- (v) Review and update the current Recruitment and Selection Manual.
- (vi) Develop an HR Strategy.
- (vii) Standardization of HR processes, tools, templates, and policies, and strengthen application of gender equity and equality principles in HR processes.
- (viii) Come up with crisis management frameworks to provide for minimum staff requirements and logistics planning especially under COVID 19 situation.

c) Institutionalize Continuous Business Process Management (BPM)

Business Process Management (BPM) is a way of analyzing and managing processes that are present in an organization to make certain that the processes are efficient and effective resulting in a better and more efficient organization. As a discipline BPM considers business processes to be strategic assets of

an organization that must be understood, managed, and improved to deliver value added products and services to clients, users and stakeholders.

Having recognised weaknesses in this area which include the fact that business functions at the Secretariat are largely manual (specifically the HR and Procurement functions, and some of the Finance procedures) resulting in processes that are slow, inefficient, costly and prone to data inaccuracy, duplication and operational risks, the focus for the Secretariat in the new planning period is to adopt an institutionalized culture that promotes a continuous BPM and an improved strategic planning and implementation process.

Strategic Focus

- (i) Undertake a Business Process Reengineering (BPR) exercise at COMESA that assesses the existing business processes in the areas of Procurement, Financial Management, Strategic Planning, M&E and HR and propose a redesign of critical workflows for improved efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.
- (ii) Identify and automate core business processes to meet requirements in critical areas of Financial Management, HR, Procurement, M&E, Strategic and Operational Planning.

d) Conference Services

The Conference Services Unit continues to provide support services to the Secretariat and Member States in terms of organisation and management of meetings, workshops and conferences. It ensures that all meetings, workshops and conferences conducted by the Secretariat are organized in a standardized manner, which focuses on the achievement of the planned outputs and outcomes.

Strategic focus

- (i) To enhance the quality of conference services through systematic collaboration with the IT Division
- (ii) To reengineer document archiving and sharing using electronic document management platforms.
- (iii) To improve efficiency and effectiveness of language management systems through the incorporation of Computer Aided Translation (CAT) systems.

- (iv) To control the quality of documents, including facilitation of translation and interpretation.
- (v) To collaborate with the Procurement Unit to minimize travel costs by establishing databases of translators, interpreters and other support service providers, in each Member States.
- (vi) Recommend investment in IT and conferencing facilities for effective collaboration with Member States while investing in cost saving tools.

e) Procurement Management

COMESA recognises that procurement management plays a critical role in the operations of the Secretariat as effective procurement strategies and well managed supply chains enable the organization to focus on developing and delivering products and services that exceed customer expectations. Benefits of procurement and supply chain service are reduced operating cost, increased procurement capability, improved service quality, simplified processes and effective supplier management.

Strategic Focus

To improve COMESA's procurement system the focus will be as follows:

- (i) Review and update the Procurement Manual and Procurement Rules and Regulations.
- (ii) Develop and update appropriate tools that support procurement procedures and provide training to relevant staff and user departments.
- (iii) Develop a gender responsive Procurement Strategy.
- (iv) Develop the procurement planning process and integrate it in the budget preparation process including accountability mechanism at multiple levels.
- (v) Evaluate the functionalities and improve workflows of the procurement process in the management system (order processing, supplier database, contract management, and supplier audit) and ensure integration and accountability with other business processes.
- (vi) Develop contract management guidelines with detailed procedures for contract management.

f) Financial Systems

Improve COMESA Financial Systems and Processes in line with International Standards

Strategic Focus Areas

- (i) Develop an action plan to integrate planning, budget formulation and preparation; budget execution and reporting (incorporating expenditure commitment processes such as procurement, travel) into an Integrated Management Information Systems.
- (ii) Implement new workflows and develop an Integrated Management Information System (MIS) in line with the gap analysis; including IT development, hardware, software and training.
- (iii) Support enhanced internal procedures for multi-year planning; programming and costing; resourcing and budgeting, budget commitment; control; contracting; monitoring and reporting.
- (iv) Support monitoring compliance and enforcing operational financial requirements on grants and projects.
- (v) Support implementation of activities to improve the general ledger accounting control.
- (vi) Support the review and updating of the finance accounting procedures and production of financial statements, financial and narrative reporting in conformity with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).
- (vii) Develop and document an organisational Business Continuity Plan (BCP).
- (viii) Develop an effective and accountable asset management policy and implement a fixed asset register tracking system.
- (ix) Support training and coaching activities and learning platforms (e-learning) in areas such as: IT systems, financial management, accounting, procurement, grant management, gender responsive budgeting, audit, internal controls, EDF procedures and reporting.
- (x) Undertake training on results-based strategic budget allocation, including providing funding scenarios to accompany plans.

g) Audits and Internal Control Systems

Internal audit contributes to secretariat effectiveness through the provision of independent and objective assurance services on the adequacy of COMESA's risk management, governance practices and internal

controls in meeting organizational objectives.

Strategic Focus

- (i) Support the implementation of the COMESA Risk Management Framework and Policy
- (ii) Strengthen the governance framework of the Audit Committees to facilitate enforcement of audit recommendations.
- (iii) Evaluate the requirements for internal audit capacity process automation and integration with the Management Information System including acquisition and installation of auditing software and training of internal auditors on its usage.
- (iv) Develop policies and procedures with regards to filing and archiving.

h) Communication and Visibility

COMESA uses contemporary communication channels to disseminate information and knowledge about regional integration programmes. The strategic focus will be:

- (i) Strengthen the inter and intra COMESA communication systems to improve information flows within the organization and its Member States;
- (ii) Develop/update and roll out communication strategy(ies) for key categories of external stakeholders, including the public at large;
- (iii) Enhance access to information and public awareness on the COMESA regional integration agenda, its opportunities and benefits through content generation and production of communication tools (publications, audios and visuals);
- (iv) Promote strategic partnerships with key stakeholders such as media practitioners and publishers for dissemination of content on COMESA regional integration programmes to reach wider publics across the region and beyond;
- (v) Strengthen public relations to promote the organization's image, corporate brand and identify;
- (vi) Develop and coordinate implementation of communication and visibility plans for key categories of external stakeholders, including the public at large;
- (vii) Document (through audios and visuals) and publish success stories to demonstrate the value of regional integration; and
- (viii) Enhance visibility of COMESA in Member States through outreach activities and direct stakeholders engagement, including trade fairs and expos.

i) **Partnership and Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue**

COMESA aims to promote/strengthen international cooperation and strategic partnerships with various international, continental and regional organizations. COMESA has over the years, benefited from technical and financial assistance provided by cooperating/development partners. COMESA continues to work on building mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships.

Strategic Focus

- (i) Organise consultative meetings between COMESA and key public and private stakeholders.
- (ii) Promote partnerships with selected international, regional and national organisations that can provide opportunities to accelerate progress on various areas of regional trade, socio-economic integration, gender equality, women and youth empowerment, and prevention and management of disasters and epidemics.



- (iii) To develop a Strategy to accommodate for the specificities of SIDS/Oceanic States to benefit from a separate envelope to leverage on the use of funds for specific bankable projects with the main aim of facilitating regional integration with mainland states.

j) **Statistics**

COMESA's Statistical Programme works to provide harmonized policy responsive statistics on the COMESA region. Statistics are recognized as an integral part of the development process and need to be mainstreamed into regional and national development plans as an enabler to decision and policy formulation. The MTSP 2021-2025 yet again represents a new (and renewed) opportunity for deeper statistical development whose focus, in addition to continuing previous statistical interventions, includes developing new and emerging statistics. This will involve supporting the 2021-2025 MTSP strategic objectives through capacity development and provision of the following regional statistics;

- ☒ Market Integration – International merchandise trade statistics, small scale cross border trade statistics, statistics of international trade in services, labour migration statistics, price statistics, foreign direct investment statistics and other balance of payments statistics, monetary and financial statistics and statistics on emerging issues related to trade integration.
- ☒ Productive Integration – Business and industrial statistics, agriculture statistics, national accounts, blue economy statistics and climate change statistics, innovation surveys and statistics on emerging issues related to the productive pillar.
- ☒ Physical Integration/ Connectivity – infrastructure statistics i.e. transport, energy and ICT statistics and statistics on emerging issues related to this pillar.
- ☒ Gender and Social Integration – Gender statistics and engendered statistics related to each of the pillars above.

Strategic Focus

The strategic objectives, and the expected outputs of the Statistics Strategy will be as follows;

- (i) Strengthen statistics to support MTSP 2021-2025 Strategic objectives. Specifically related to strengthening the MTSP relevant statistics, the following goals will be relevant;
 - ☒ Statistical capacity in the COMESA region strengthened. This will include;

- ☒ Capacity building for Member States on statistics that support the MTSP.
 - ☒ Provision of technical assistance to Member States on statistics supporting the MTSP.
 - ☒ Enhancement of statistical skills and competencies for Secretariat in order to continually respond to the changing needs of the statistical landscape.
 - ☒ Harmonization of MTSP relevant statistics in the COMESA region consolidated through development of national implementation roadmaps and statistical regulations and guidelines following international standards.
 - ☒ Technological adoption as an enabler of the COMESA region statistical system strengthened.
 - ☒ Statistical user engagement strengthened in order to render regional statistics more responsive to policy making.
 - ☒ National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) and COMESA Statistics Strategy aligned.
 - ☒ South-South Cooperation in statistical development enhanced.
- (ii) Strengthen strategic partnerships in statistical development.

Partnerships help to enhance the process of regional statistical development by providing much needed technical and financial resources. The increased demand for MTSP responsive statistics implies that COMESA needs to continue to seek and cement partnerships to be able to deliver results within the tenure of the MTSP. This strategic objective will be achieved through the following goals:

- ☒ Implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHASA II) strengthened at regional and national levels.
- ☒ Strategic partnerships in statistical development identified and where already existing, strengthened and expanded.
- ☒ National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) and COMESA Statistics Strategy aligned.
- ☒ South-South Cooperation in statistical development enhanced.

k) Strategy Implementation (M&E)

COMESA will focus on the capacity to track performance and generate periodic reports as data and results are received from stakeholders. COMESA will strengthen the reporting function through coordinating data management and reposition its programming to focus on outcomes and impact providing evidenced-based information to planners, implementers, policy makers, and donors. Additionally, there is need to institute an Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and learning culture through M&E learning forums that reward participation and the championing of M&E and learning activities at the Secretariat. Further, the M&E culture shall be entrenched with relevant tools, templates and functionalities. Relevant users shall be trained on the application of M&E and the necessary data management, analysis, and reporting to successfully monitor and evaluate programmes.

The successful implementation of the COMESA MTSP will involve an emphasis on improving the reporting implementation process of programmes through improved Results-Based Management (RBM). Components of RBM are as follows:

- a) The identification of clear and measurable objectives.
- b) The identification of indicators including gender indicators to measure progress towards objectives.
- c) The setting of targets associated with objectives and indicators.
- d) The establishment of a monitoring system for regular data collection and the comparison of targets with actual results.
- e) The integration of evaluations to provide complementary performance information that is not available from monitoring systems.
- f) The use of performance information for internal management accountability, learning and decision-making, as well as for external performance reporting to stakeholders and partners.

Strategic Focus

M&E Mainstreaming

- (i) Standardizing and updating all M&E tools and templates
- (ii) Developing costed M&E plans and indicators for programmes
- (iii) Training of all COMESA programme staff and system users in system uses, data management, analysis and reporting.
- (iv) Conduct an outcome/impact evaluation of COMESA projects/programmes

Improve Monitoring and Evaluation Capacities

- (i) Operationalise the COMESA On-line Monitoring and Evaluation System and support integration within COMESA's Management Information System.
- (ii) Assist in the development of a 5-year operational plan to ensure adequacy of inputs (human; financial; and technical) with the objectives of the Medium-Term Strategic Plan.
- (iii) Support COMESA Member States to implement mechanisms for reporting on the domestication of regional policies.
- (iv) Develop, implement and train users in collaborative IT platforms for information sharing and monitoring of performance indicators
- (v) Conduct on-the-job-training through short-term technical assistance.

CHAPTER SIX

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

6.1 Introduction

Successful implementation of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan will depend significantly on a practical framework which is easy to coordinate. Given the wide nature of decision-making processes by REC organs, the Strategy's implementation framework will have a wide spectrum of players in order to allow for maximum participation of all relevant stakeholders. Existing institutional structures including the oversight bodies that undertake regulatory responsibilities will be charged with carrying out their appropriate roles. Specified responsible bodies or committees will be spearheading these issues. Implementation of the strategy will need coherent approaches within and outside COMESA to fully exploit its comparative advantages while leveraging the resources and expertise of other stakeholders. COMESA understands that regional integration will not just happen; it therefore offers support through a number of institutions and instruments.

6.2 Institutional Arrangements

The strategy demands coordinated implementation throughout COMESA and with external partners. Internal implementation will be undertaken through a collaborative approach with the Policy Organs providing strategic leadership and direction.

The implementation of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan will be the responsibility of the following institutional structures guided by the subsidiarity principle:

The Secretariat will continue to provide technical assistance and capacity building to Member States. It will also provide interface between COMESA and external stakeholders as well as to provide Member States with a platform relevant to achieve mutually acceptable formal cooperation. Such policy dialogue is key to shaping interventions. Further, the Secretariat will continue its role in resource mobilization, facilitating, coordinating and monitoring regional operations, with its capacity strengthened.

COMESA Institutions are implementation agencies with delegated mandate from policy organs through the Secretariat in line with specific provisions of the Treaty. Given their technical focus, institutions provide guidance, technical support and implement decisions of the Policy Organs. The COMESA Institutions will also play a key role in implementing the MTSP.

Member States have state and non-state actors with specific roles and responsibilities. The implementation of this plan calls for close collaboration and participation between these actors. State actors provide the political leadership necessary for the formulation and implementation of sound regional policies and programmes. Non-state actors bring with them increased financial discipline, capital injection, new management styles and a stronger commercial orientation.



Co-operating Partners provide financial and technical support for achievement of the strategic objectives, support aid effectiveness by promoting harmonization, coherence, rationalization, alignment and ownership of development partner assistance; and require mutual accountability in relation to the commitment, provision, utilization and reporting on all adjustment support and regional integration resources.

During implementation there will be need to align national, regional and global agendas, policies and plans to the Medium Term Strategic Plan, model policies, laws and protocols.

6.3 Resource Mobilization

The resource requirements both human and financial should be undertaken by the Administration and Finance Committee to support implementation of the 2021-2025 MTSP, without any new or additional budgetary implications on Member States.

6.4 Accountability

Accountability for the implementation of this plan and the use of resources will be critical since it will require proper probity in utilization of financial, human and material resources. This demands that all stakeholders in the regional integration agenda take responsibility and be accountable for the use of resources and implementation of commitments. All institutions including COMESA Secretariat will account for all resources in accordance to the laid down regulations and procedures.

Part of accountability requires optimum utilization of resources which additionally is in line with the financial stewardship perspective of the balanced scorecard approach. Optimisation of resources covers all aspects of financial management of COMESA including improving the budgeting process, avoiding wastage and ensuring value for money in all operations, programmes and projects.

To achieve this, the following initiatives will be undertaken:

- (i) Providing financial oversight through Board of Auditors.
- (ii) Designing, harmonizing and implementing work programmes covering all priority areas.
- (iii) Ensuring the efficient execution of work plans and budgets.
- (iv) Improving continuously the internal system and administrative controls to gain efficiency in all business processes.

- (v) Strengthening financial and programme reporting.
- (vi) Enhancing COMESA procurement and audit systems and processes, in line with international standards.

6.5 Communication

COMESA recognizes that public awareness is a critical component of achieving the aspirations of the Treaty and the full realization of the regional integration agenda. This entails the dissemination of information and raising awareness and level of knowledge of the public which is a prerequisite in mobilizing their participation. COMESA will use multiple communication channels to disseminate knowledge of regional integration, popularize the MTSP 2021-2025 and advise stakeholders including COMESA staff and the public of key activities and their benefits. In addition, the Strategy will continue to strengthen communication and synergies with the communication coordinators in the Member States with the aim of increasing communication with Coordinating Ministries and other departments and agencies.

6.6 Human Resource Management

Human Resource is central towards the implementation of the strategy and as such it calls for adequate, knowledgeable and skilled capacity both at Member State and Secretariat level. Human Resource Management is therefore a strategic component that requires support with adequate financial resources and human resource development initiatives. Consequences of not addressing this strategic issue include COMESA not being able to deliver on its mandate as well as loss of confidence among stakeholders in the regional integration agenda. COMESA will endeavor to improve its organizational capacities by establishing the human capital requirements. This will include deployment of a talent management system to recruit, develop and retain competent staff at all levels, improving knowledge and skills through training and capacity building initiatives and institutionalization of the balanced scorecard performance management system.

6.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

M&E is an approach to how the organization should effectively learn from the lessons of the past, build on the progress now underway and strategically exploit all possible opportunities available in the immediate and medium term, so as to ensure positive socio-economic transformation. The successful

implementation of this plan will depend largely on how the activities and outputs are effectively monitored and evaluated. The plan's monitoring will be through the institutional arrangements both at Member State and Secretariat levels. Monitoring may be supported by the use of the COMESA M&E Online System and the development of other monitoring and evaluation tools. With respect to evaluation, the plan will be subjected to two evaluations, Mid-Term Evaluation and Review; and Final Evaluation to ensure that the undesired experiences of the previous plan's implementation are not repeated. As per good practice, the two evaluations will be undertaken by an independent team of consultants with experience, who will be competitively sourced within the region. The evaluations should be undertaken in collaboration with Member States. Reporting on progress of implementation will be critical in adjusting strategic directions and measuring performance. Progress reports will be prepared on a quarterly and annual basis. The reports will outline projected targets, achievements, facilitating factors and challenges.

6.8 Risk Management

There are several risks to the implementation of this strategic plan, including the timely availability of resources and human resource capacity. This requires that possible risks are analyzed to take precautionary measures in good time and prevent failure of the plan's implementation.

All entities face uncertainty in the course of implementing their strategies and the challenge for management is to determine how much uncertainty the entity is prepared to accept as it strives to grow stakeholder value. Commitment to robust enterprise risk management during the implementation of this plan is needed to ensure that COMESA is proactive in identifying and managing the risks to which it is exposed. This gives the executive management an opportunity to design a 'mitigation strategy' to assist COMESA to direct resources and effort effectively and ensure that possible crises are averted.

Identifying strategic risks is only the first step in the process. The priorities following the identification of the key strategic risks are to ensure that improvement plans are continuously developed for those control structures that are considered inadequate. Ultimately successful enterprise risk management shall increase the probability of achieving the objectives outlined in the Strategy.

The inherent nature of the risk is the assessment of the risk without specific, focused controls/interventions in place. The residual nature of the risk is the assessment of the risk taking into account the existing controls/interventions and their perceived effectiveness. The larger the difference between the inherent and residual risk factors, the more effective the controls/interventions in place are perceived

to be, and therefore reliance placed on the controls/interventions. The smaller the difference between the inherent and residual risk factors, the more management action and improved control/intervention effectiveness is needed to ensure that the risk is properly managed.

COMESA should recognize that the higher the inherent risk factor, the greater the need for effective controls/interventions. Based on the relative score of the residual risk/exposure, management will need to decide whether or not they are willing to accept the identified level of residual risk exposure. If the residual risk is considered to be too high, then an action plan will then need to be developed outlining the identified actions to reduce the risk to a level that is more acceptable to management and other stakeholders. The action plans must clearly identify:

- (i) the required action,
- (ii) the person responsible for implementing the action, and
- (iii) the expected date of implementation.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION TO THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) FRAMEWORK

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework articulates the short term and long-term results that COMESA intends to achieve under the 2021-2025 Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP). It enunciates the key outcomes that COMESA must achieve in order to realize the strategic objectives under the respective pillars. The framework depicts COMESA's commitments to Results Based Management (RBM) and is intended to guide performance monitoring and evaluation under this strategy. It has comprehensively taken into consideration the aspirations of COMESA over the next five years. It has also taken cognizance of the global and continental development frameworks, as well as the priorities of the Member States. Where there was convergence with other regional, continental and global development frameworks, the M&E Framework was to the best extent possible aligned to these frameworks. This is in view of COMESA's commitment to work jointly with other regional and continental entities in pursuing and tracking the progress towards attainment of the African aspirations and global goals. Objectives of the M&E Framework are as outlined below:

- (i) To provide evidence for informed decision making for the Secretariat, Member States, and to provide information for accountability;
- (ii) To provide evidence for learning and performance improvement;
- (iii) To enable the Secretariat provide Member States and other stakeholders with regular updates on the results achieved and evidence on the emerging needs; and
- (iv) Provide a mechanism for understanding and monitoring the progress made by stakeholders implementing specific actions of the strategy.

COMESA M&E Framework

Goal/ Objective	Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Data Source (Means Of Verification)
Goal: Improve regional integration, economic growth and quality of life for the people of COMESA	An integrated, resilient, internationally competitive regional economic community with sustainable high standards of living for all its people	Average GDP growth rate for COMESA			¹ WDI; National Sources
Pillar I: Market Integration					
Objective 1.1: Strengthen market integration	1.1.1 Sustainable increase in intra-COMESA trade	1.1.1.1: Value of intra-COMESA exports in goods	US\$ 10,874.39 million (2019)	30 % increase	² COMSTAT; National Sources
		1.1.1.2: Share of export of goods as in GDP	14%	Increase by 20 %	COMSTAT; National Sources
		1.1.1.3: Share of export of services in GDP	6.3% (2019)	Increase by 20 %	COMSTAT; National Sources

1 World Development Indicators
2 COMESA Statistics- on Key Indicators

		1.1.1.4: COMESA FTA preference utilization as a share of total COMESA trade	23%	Increase by 20%	COMSTAT; National Sources
	1.1.2 Enhanced regional trade environment through implementation of customs union and trade facilitation instruments in line with the international standards and best practices	1.1.2.1: Number of priority customs union and trade facilitation instruments implemented by Member States (MS) in the region	3	At least 100% alignment	COMSTAT; National Sources; Indicator Tracker
		1.1.2.2: Average time for clearing of import goods across borders in COMESA	126hrs	Reduce the time to at least 40%	COMESA Time Release Study, COMSTAT; National Sources; International Indicators such Trading Across Borders, Indicator Tracker

		1.1.2.3: Average clearance time to export along major trade corridors within COMESA	97hrs	At least 30 % reduction	COMESA Time Release Study. COMSTAT; National Sources; International Indicators such as Trading Across Borders, Indicator Tracker
		1.1.2.4: Average cross border trade costs in the region	\$647	At least 30 % reduction	COMESA Time Release Study, International Indicators, COMSTAT; National Sources
		1.1.2.5: % of reported Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) among the Member States that are eliminated	65% (As at Dec 2021, 30/46 NTBs resolved)	100%	Council Reports, Online NTB Reporting System; Indicator Tracker; National Sources
		1.1.2.6: Number of official border points that have support desks to ease movement of COMESA citizens across MS.	20	At least 20 % increase	National sources; Indicator tracker

		1.1.2.7: Number of Member States issuing Visas at the point of entry for citizens from all the 21 Member States of COMESA	11 MS	At least 15 MS	National sources; Indicator tracker
		1.1.2.8: Number of Member States implementing at least one aspect of the protocol on free movement of persons, goods and services	3 MS	At least 15 MS	National sources; Indicator tracker
		1.1.2.9: Number of signatures and ratifications received for the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Labour, Services, Right of Establishment and Residence	4 MS	At least 15 signatures and 15 ratifications	National sources; Indicator tracker

		1.12.10: Number of COMESA Member States that have promulgated and are applying specific Anti Counterfeit legislation to combat trading in counterfeit commodities	1 MS	Increase by 30%	Indicator tracker
		1.1.3.11: Value of exports and imports transacted through online market platform (e-commerce)	0	% increase in value of exports and imports	COMSTAT; Indicator tracker; Digital platform
	1.1.3 Improved Digital economic integration through implementation of digital FTA instruments supported by modern ICT infrastructure	1.1.3.1: Number of Member States connected to COMESA Trade Information Portal (TIP)	0	Increase by at least 30%	Council Reports, National Sources/ Customs Authorities
		1.1.3.2: Number of Member States implementing the electronic certificate of origin (eCO)	0	Increase by at least 30%	National Sources; Indicator tracker; Council reports; Customs Authorities

		1.1.3.3: Number of Member States implementing the electronic Single Window System (eSWS)	0	At least 30% increase in number of Member States	Council Reports; National Sources; Customs Authorities
		1.1.3.4: Number of Member States Connected to the Customs Automation Regional Support Center (CARSC) and harmonized their customs documents	0	Increase by at least 30%	Council Reports, National Sources/ Customs Authorities
		1.1.3.5: Number of Member States Implementing the electronic Cargo Tracking and Monitoring System (ECTS)	6 MS	Increase by at least 30%	Council Reports, National Sources; Customs Authorities
		1.1.3.6: Number of Member States utilizing the REPSS as their transaction platform	9 MS	Increase by at least 30%	Council Reports, National Sources/ Customs Authorities
		1.1.3.7: % of Border Posts supported by modern ICT infrastructure	0	At least 30 % of border posts	Council Reports; National Sources; Customs Authorities

		1.1.3.8: Number of women led business enterprises transacting through the COMESA digital platform	0	Increase by at least 30%	Indicator tracker; COMESA digital platform
	1.1.4 Strengthened regional, continental and international partnership, cooperation, collaboration and networking on issues of trade and customs	1.1.4.1: Number of market integration events/forums held jointly between COMESA and other regional and international partners	0	At least 20 forums/events	Indicator tracker
		1.1.4.2: Number of regional fora for COMESA National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFC)	0	At least 5 forums/ events	Indicator tracker
		1.1.4.3: Concluded Negotiations on Phases I and II of the Tripartite FTA Agreement (TFTA)	Negotiations ongoing	TFTA negotiations concluded	Council Reports, REC Websites

		1.1.4.4: Number of Member States that have ratified the TFTA Agreement and deposited their instruments of ratification with the Tripartite Task Force Chair.	8 MS	All	Council Reports, Instruments of ratification, National Sources, REC websites
		1.1.4.5: Concluded Negotiations on Phases I and II of the African Continental FTA Agreement (AfCFTA)	Negotiations ongoing	AfCFTA negotiations concluded	Council Reports, AU website, REC websites
		1.1.4.6: Number of Member States that have ratified the AfCFTA Agreement and deposited their instruments of ratification with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission	13 MS	At least 70% of Member States	Council Reports, AU website, National Sources

	1.1.5 Enhanced Capacity for implementation of regional market integration agenda, by Member States and COMESA Secretariat	1.1.5.1: Number of priority capacity building training programmes on customs and trade related matters that are facilitated by COMESA	10	At least 10 Additional capacity building programmes	Training event reports/ attendance sheets; Indicator tracker
		1.1.5.2: Number of students graduated from the COMESA Virtual University in regional integration	0	At least 400 Students	Collaborating Universities; Council Reports
		1.1.5.3: Number of men and women trained on trade and customs	414	At least 1500 men and 2000 women	Training event reports/ attendance sheets; Indicator tracker
		1.1.5.4: Number of Member States receiving capacity building support to implement regional market integration agenda	All MS	Additional capacity building done to all 21 Member States building support	Training event reports/ attendance sheets; Other capacity building reports; Indicator tracker

		1.1.5.5 Number of regional integration implementation programmes (RIIP)/ aid for trade programmes adopted and implemented by the MS	0	At least 15 RIIP/ aid for trade adopted; At least 10 are implemented	Indicator tracker; National sources
	1.1.6 Enhanced development of SSCBTs into formal economy	1.1.6.1 Number of Member States implementing the STR and Regulations on Minimum Standards for treatment of SSCBTs	8 MS	At least 15 MS	MS Report Council Report
		1.1.6.2: Number of border posts with border facilities and information desks to ease cross border trade for women small scale cross border traders	20	Increase by 30%	National sources; Council Reports; Indicator Tracker

		1.1.6.3 Increased number of MS established CBTAs	9 MS	At least 15 MS	MS Report Council Report
		1.1.6.4 Percent increase in number of SSCBTs joining CBTAs/cooperatives and transitioning into formal economy	10%	At least 20% increase	Survey
		1.1.6.5 Increased number of Women SSCBTs joining CBTAs/cooperatives in the region	70	At least 10% increase	Survey
		1.1.6.6. Reduction of time to cross the border by SSCBTs	0	At least 80 % reduction	Survey

	1.1.7 Improved capacity of Member States and COMESA Secretariat to compile statistics on trade and market integration	1.1.7.1: Number of Member States compiling international merchandise trade statistics according to major recommendations of Manual of International Statistics	17 MS	Increase by 30%	National Sources; Indicator tracker
		1.1.7.2: ³ Number of Member States compiling Statistics of International Trade in Services according to the Manual on SITS' core recommendations	18 MS (2020)	Increase by 30%	National Sources (National Statistics/ Central Banks); Indicator tracker
		1.1.7.3: Number of Member States compiling Small Scale Cross Border Trade gender disaggregated statistics according to the COMESA Manual on SSCBT	4 MS	Increase by 30%	National Sources (National Statistics/ Central Banks); Indicator tracker

3 All MS compile international merchandise trade statistics; focus is on MS that do so according to the Manual of International Statistics

		1.1.7.4: Number of Member States compiling the COMESA HCPI	17 MS (2020)	Increase by 30%	National Sources (National Statistics/ Central Banks); Indicator tracker
	1.1.8 Increase in generation and use of research evidence to inform program and policy decisions on market integration	1.1.8.1: 4Number of policy research papers focusing on market integration that are developed	50 (2020)	At least 25 additional policy papers	Indicator tracker; COMESA Secretariat reports;
		1.1.8.2: Number of policy briefs produced on market integration	30 (2020)	At least 25 additional number of Policy Briefs	Indicator tracker; COMESA Secretariat reports;
		1.1.8.3: Number of publications on key issues in regional integration	7 (2020)	At least 6 additional publications	Indicator tracker; COMESA Secretariat reports; COMESA Secretariat Website

		1.1.8.4: Number of market integration policy decisions that are made based on evidence from research	40 (2020)	At least 25 additional decisions	Indicator tracker; COMESA Secretariat reports;
Objective 1.2: Strengthen mechanisms that guarantee peace and security for better integration	1.2.1 Improved peace and security	1.2.1.1: Regional Peace index (Average of COMESA Member States)	2.48	Achieve an average peace index of 3	COMWARN data – Conflict Barometer
		1.2.1.2: Four year average number of persons affected by disasters	516,810 (four year average)	40% reduction (below 310,122)	COMWARN data – Center for Research on epidemiology on Disaster (CRED)
		1.2.1.3: Total battle-related deaths in the region	4884 (2017)	40% reduction	COMWARN data: World Bank/ Uppsala Data Conflict Programme/ SDG/https://sdg-tracker.org/peace-justice;www.unodc.org

		1.2.1.4: Number of persons displaced by conflict (refugees)	3.7 M (2018)	Reduce by 30 %	COMWARN Data: Fund for Peace
		1.2.1.5: Global Terrorism Index-COMESA	3.62	3.0	Institute of Economics and Peace
		1.2.1.6: Number of bomb related deaths	466 (4 year average in 2018)	Reduce to < 100	COMWARN Data: Center For Systemic Peace – High Casualty Terrorist Bombings
		1.2.1.7: Four year average internal security index for COMESA Member States	70.15 (four year average at end 2018)	Improve to >= 75	
		1.2.1.8: Number of bomb related deaths reduced	466 (4 year average in 2018)	Below 100	COMWARN data: Center For Systemic Peace – High Casualty Terrorist Bombings
	1.2.3 Increased capacity for prevention and resolution of conflicts (Member States; Institutions; Secretariat etc.)	1.2.3.1: Number of Member States customizing COMESA COMWARN tools	0	At least 6	COMESA Annual Peace and Security Status Report

		1.2.3.2: Number of conflicts resolved with support from COMESA Mediators or through key institutions and mechanisms in the prevention and resolution of conflicts	1 (last five years)	3	Report of the COMESA Ministers of Foreign Affairs
		1.2.3.3: Percentage of peace and security decisions of the COMESA Ministers of Foreign Affairs implemented by COMESA	63.1%	75%	Report of the COMESA Ministers of Foreign Affairs
	1.2.4 Improved measures to curb money laundering and terrorist financing	1.2.4.1: Number of Member States that join a FATF-Styled Regional bodies (FSRB) as required by the Financial Action Task Force	19 MS	21	Website of the Financial Action Task Force
		1.2.4.2: Number of FIUs attaining Egmont membership	8	11	Egmont Group Website
	1.2.5 Improved democracy in electoral processes within the COMESA region	1.2.5.1: Average score on democratic electoral processes	4.05	4.60	COMWARN data: Freedom House FIW electoral processes

		1.2.5.2: Average score on political pluralism and participation in Member States	5.81	6.5	COMWARN data: Freedom House – political pluralism and participation
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Pillar II: Physical Integration/Connectivity

Objective 2.1: Improve regional physical and communications infrastructure	2.1.1 Policy and regulatory environment for competitive markets and gender sensitive ICT markets enhanced	2.1.1.1: Number of regional model policies and regulations developed that are gender sensitive, rights based and aligned to international best practices.	1 (2003 Model ICT Policy)	At Least 6 Frameworks	Annual COMESA reports
		2.1.1.2: Number of countries that have initiated measures to adopt harmonized ICT frameworks.	0	At Least 15 Countries	Annual COMESA reports; National Sources (National Statistics/ Sector Ministries)

		2.1.1.3: Number of countries that have domesticated the harmonized ICT frameworks	0	At Least 15 Countries	Annual COMESA reports
		2.1.1.4: Internet Users/ Penetration	25%	50%	National/ Regional ICT Statistics collected by ITU
		2.1.1.5: Cellular Subscriptions/ Penetration	80%	100%	National/ Regional ICT Statistics collected by ITU
	2.1.2 Improved cybersecurity in the COMESA region	2.1.2.1: Number of Member States that have initiated measures to adopt model cybersecurity frameworks.	10 Countries	21 Countries	Annual COMESA reports; Sector Ministries
		2.1.2.2: Number of countries that have domesticated the Model Cybersecurity Framework	6 Countries	11 Countries	Annual COMESA reports; Sector Ministries
	2.1.3 Enhanced Road Transport efficiency	2.1.3.1: Number of transit instruments applied along the transit corridors	20%	80% increase	Members States Reports, Truck Operators Reports; Sector Ministries

		2.1.3.2: Delays at border stations (defined in terms of days spent at the border post)	5 days	Reduce delays by 80%	Members States Reports, Truck Operators Reports; Sector Ministries
		2.1.3.3: Number of road accidents	24.1/100 000	Reduce road accidents by 80%	Members States Reports, Truck Operators Reports; Sector Ministries
	2.1.4 Improved air transport services facilitated through liberalization	2.1.4.1: Number of Member States granting Fifth Freedom Rights for all airlines of COMESA region	1 MS	100% MS granting Fifth Freedom Rights to all airlines	DCAA, AUC & ICAO Reports; Sector Ministries
		2.1.4.2: Regional Safety Oversight Organization (RSOOs) established	4 RSOOs	5 RSOOs	DCAA, AUC & ICAO Reports; Sector Ministries
		2.1.4.3: Number of Civil Aviation Authorities with separated regulatory and operational functions	3	50% of Civil Aviation Authorities have their regulatory and operations separated	DCAA, AUC & ICAO Reports; Sector Ministries

		2.1.4.4: Regional aeronautical data centers established	0	At least 1 regional data center	DCAA & Ministers of Infrastructure Reports
	2.1.5 Standardized management and operations of water transport	2.1.5.1: Amount of resources (in USD) mobilized for feasibility studies on operations and management of water resources	0	\$20M	Steering Committee Reports, Ministers of Infrastructure Reports, AUC (PIDA) Reports
		2.1.5.2: Feasibility Study for VICMED Project	Pre-feasibility study report available	Feasibility study completed	Approved feasibility study report
		2.1.5.3: Feasibility Study for Lake Tanganyika RO-RO Project	None	Feasibility study completed	Approved Feasibility study report
		2.1.5.4: Feasibility study undertaken on the establishment of a shipping line for Island Member States	None	Approved Feasibility Study Report	Approved feasibility study report
		2.1.5.5: Standards and regulations on management and operations of inland water transport developed and approved	None	Approved Standards and regulations	Steering Committee Reports, Ministers of Infrastructure Reports

	2.1.6 Enhanced performance of railway transport systems	2.1.6.1: Feasibility studies undertaken on new railway projects	None	2 studies	Approved Feasibility study report
		2.1.6.2: Railway stakeholder platform established	None	Tripartite Railway Association established	Approved Constitution and Strategic Plan
		2.1.6.3: Railway Infrastructure Masterplan developed	None	Approved Masterplan	Consultant Report and approved Masterplan
	2.1.7 Improved environment for renewable energy investments	2.1.7.1: Number of Member States and private investors provided with Technical Assistance (TA) in domesticating energy policy and regulatory instruments	0	At least 5 countries and 10 private investors provided with Technical Assistance (TA)	COMESA Reports
		2.1.7.2: Number of Energy Policy, Strategies and Regulatory instruments revised or developed.	2 Model Energy Policy 2008, COMESA Model Renewable Guidelines	⁵ At least 5 instruments reviewed/developed	COMESA Reports

5 Those lined up for revision/ development include: (Model Energy Policy, Model Electrification strategies, Solar Standards etc.)

	2.1.8 Increased production and access to clean energy	2.1.8.1: No. of Mega Watts of clean energy added into the national grid;	Circa 5000 ⁶ MW	At least 100 % increase	COMESA Reports compiled from MS
		2.1.8.2: Share of renewable energy (wind, solar, hydro, bio and geothermal) in total energy production	≤ 5%	At least 15 %	COMESA Reports compiled from Member State reports
		2.1.8.3: Access to electricity (% of population.	50%	At least 65 % access	COMESA Reports compiled from Member State reports
		2.1.8.4: Commencement of regional electricity trading in the EAPP region	Electricity trading done on bilateral basis	Commencement of trading by 2025	National Sources (National Statistics; Sector Ministry) EAPP and Member State Reports

	2.1.9 Improved capacity for implementation of energy projects, particularly renewable energy in the region	2.1.9.1: Number of capacity building interventions implemented	12	12	COMESA Reports Capacity building reports; Indicator tracker
		2.1.9.2: Number of people whose capacity is built in renewable energy	100	100	COMESA Reports Capacity building reports; Indicator tracker
	2.1.10 Climate change mitigation in transport, ICT and energy sectors improved	2.1.10.1: Volume of e-waste recycled	0	At least 10 % increase	National sources; Indicator tracker
		2.1.10.2: ⁷ GHG emission reduction in the transport sector	0	At least 10 % reduction	National sources; Indicator tracker
		2.1.10.3: GHG emission in the energy sector	0	At least 10 % reduction	National sources (National Statistics; Sector Ministry); Indicator tracker

		2.1.10.4: Number of jobs created for women and youth through e-waste recycling, and bio energy production	0	At least 2000 jobs	National sources (National Statistics; Sector Ministry); Indicator tracker
	2.1.11 Capacity of Member States to compile infrastructure statistics strengthened	2.1.11.1: Number of Member States compiling transport statistics based on international recommendations	13 MS (Under AIP, 2020)	Increase by at least 30%	National sources (National Statistics; Sector Ministry); Indicator tracker
	2.1.12 Improved domestication of policies and programs on physical and communications infrastructure	2.1.12.1: Number of Member States domesticating COMESA transport facilitation instruments	12 MS	At least 15 MS	Indicator tracker
Pillar III: Productive Integration					
Objective 3.1: Catalyze Inclusive Agricultural/ livestock Growth and Sustainable Transformation	3.1.1 Inclusive and sustainable increase in agricultural production and productivity	3.1.1.1: Number of Member States achieving at least 6% annual agric GDP growth	2 MS	21 All member states	WDI, National Sources (National Statistics; Sector Ministry) AUC CAADP Biennial Review

		3.1.1.2: Agriculture (crops), gross per capita production index	0-85 (2017)	At least an index of 95-105 for each MS	⁸ FAOStat (statistical pocketbook) and WDI
		3.1.1.3: Agriculture value added per agricultural worker (constant 2010 USD)	(US\$ 1488.07 (Average for SSA) (2019)	All MS realise at least 2000 USD for each MS	FAOStat, (WDI, The World Bank 2021, and OECD)
		3.1.1.4: Number of Member States allocating at least 10% of annual total public expenditure to agriculture	1 MS (2019)	All COMESA MS achieve 10% of total public expenditure in agriculture	AUC CAADP Biennial Review National Sources (National Statistics; Ministry of Agriculture; National Treasury)
		3.1.1.5: % of agricultural land placed under climate smart and ecosystem-based sustainable practices	0	At least 30 % of agricultural land	National Sources (National Statistics; Ministry of Agriculture)

		3.1.1.6: GHG emissions from agriculture, forestry, land use, and bio-diversity loss	0	10 % reduction	National sources (National Statistics; Sector Ministry); Indicator tracker
	3.1.2 Agro-industry and value chain development that is inclusive of women and youth	3.1.2.1: Annual growth rates of Agriculture value added (absolute values)	3.4% (2019) Constant 2010 US \$)	At least 10% increase	WDI, The World Bank 2021; FAOSTAT
		3.1.2.2 Number of priority agricultural commodity value chains for which public-private partnerships (PPP) is established with strong linkage to smallholder agriculture	5	MS with PPPs for at least five (5) priority agricultural commodity value chains	AUC CAADP Biennial Review National sources (Sector Ministry); Indicator tracker
		3.2.2.3: Number of Member States reducing post-harvest losses for at least 5 priority food commodities	0 (2019)	At least 50% reduction	National sources (Sector Ministry); Indicator tracker; AUC CAADP Biennial Review Reports

		3.2.2.4: Proportion of men and women engaged in agriculture with access to financial services to be able to transact agriculture business	0 (2019)	All MS with 100% of women and men engaged in agricultural business with access to financial services	AUC CAADP Biennial Review; National sources (Sector Ministry)
	3.1.3 Improved access to competitive markets for agricultural commodities in COMESA region	3.1.3.1: Value of intra-COMESA imports in agricultural commodities.	US\$ 2,947 million ⁹	At least 5% increase	COMSTAT; ¹⁰ National Statistics
		3.1.3.2: Value of intra-regional total export of agricultural commodities	US\$ 3,505 million ¹¹	At least 10% increase in absolute value	COMSTAT; National Sources (National Statistics)
	3.1.4 Increased resilience of livelihoods and improved management of risks in the agriculture sector	3.1.4.1: Number of Member States with food reserve programmes for priority food commodities	6 MS	21 All MS	National Sources (Sector Ministry);

9 Ref Year 2020

10 Nearly all MS provide information on this indicator. The main challenge is timeliness- most do not provide the information in time.

11 Ref Year 2020

		3.1.4.2: Number of threats to food security identified and averted through harmonized, multi-hazard early warning and response systems	0	N/A	Indicator tracker
		3.1.4.3: Weather-indexed insurance	0	At least 30% increase	National Sources (Sector Ministry); Indicator tracker
		3.1.4.4: Number of Member States implementing priority measures to de-risk agriculture	0	At least 50% of MS	National Sources (Sector Ministry)
		3.1.4.5: % Farm, pastoral, and fishery households are resilient to climate and weather-related risks	0	At least 30% of the households are resilient	National Sources (Sector Ministry)
		3.1.4.6: Number of Member States using early warning and response systems	0	At least 30% of MS	National Sources (Sector Ministry)

	3.1.5 Strengthened capacity of Member States to compile agriculture statistics including data on Regional Food Balance Sheet (FBS)	3.1.5.1: Number of Member States compiling National Food Balance Sheet (FBSs)	13 MS	Increase by at least 30%	FBS; National Sources; COMSTAT
Objective 3.2: Efficient implementation of ¹²SPS measures and reduction in TBTs	3.2.1 Improved implementation of SPS measures and technical measures for trade in agricultural commodities	3.2.1.1: Number of Food safety regulations for key commodities harmonized	0	At least 3 regulations harmonized at regional level.	National sources; FAO reports; COMESA SPS reports; indicator tracker
		3.2.1.2: Number of additional reference and satellite laboratories designated and capacitated	3	At least 30% increase in designated and capacitated laboratories	National sources; COMESA SPS/ TBT reports; indicator tracker
		3.2.1.3: Number of Member States implementing E-phyto certification system	0	At least 5 Member States	National sources; Indicator tracker; FAO/ IPPC reports

		3.2.1.4 % of regional policies and programmes on SPS and ¹³ TBT that are domesticated by Member States	0	At least 30 % of policies and programmes domesticated; At least 10 MS domesticating regional programmes and policies	Indicator tracker; FAO reports; COMESA SPS Sub Committee Reports
	3.2.2 Compliance capacities of SMEs improved through implementation of the Sustainable Supplier Development Program (SSDP) as a pathway to achieving international certification on ¹⁴GFSI recognized certification scheme	3.2.2.1: Number of SMEs meeting SPS/ TBT compliance requirements for cross border trade (Green Pass certification)	0	At least 30 % increase	National sources; Indicator tracker

¹³ Technical Barriers to Trade

¹⁴ Global Food Safety Index

		3.2.2.2: Number of SMEs implementing and sustaining GMaP of the GFSI	0	GMaP implemented and sustained in by at least 10 SMEs	National sources; Indicator tracker
		3.2.2.3: Number of SMEs achieving international certification on GFSI recognized certification scheme	0	Increase by 30%, SMEs achieving certification	National sources; Indicator tracker
		3.2.2.4: Number of women and youth SMEs meeting SPS/ TBT compliance requirements for cross border trade. *(Green Pass certification)	0	At least 30 % increase	National Sources; Indicator tracker
	3.2.3 Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA) for conformity assessment for key traded commodities designed, operationalized and signed	3.2.3.1: Number of key traded commodities for which the MRA is signed	0	At least 30% increase	National statistics; COMSTAT

		3.2.3.2: Number of Member States that have signed MRA and designed roadmap for its implementation and sustainability	0	At least 4 Member States sign MRA and design roadmap for implementation and sustainability	National Sources
Objective 3.3: Attract more investment into the COMESA region	3.3.1 Improved business environment leading to increase in direct investment	3.3.1.1: Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)	\$17 Billion	30 % increase in FDI.	UNCTAD Annual WIR, COMESA Annual Investment Report; National Sources (Central Banks)
		3.3.1.2: Value of designed and availed bankable projects	0	At least USD 10,000,000	COME-SA&COMESA RIA annual reports
		3.3.1.3: Number of Member States domesticating and implementing the COMESA Common Investment Area (CCIA)	0	At least 5 MS	COMESA Annual reports

		3.3.1.4: Number of COMESA Member States that have implemented the COMESA Intellectual Property (IP) Policy and using the Regional Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Database System for electronic registering and exchange of intelligence and information on IPRs	0	Increase by at least 30%	COMESA Annual reports
	3.3.2 Strengthened institutional and human resource capacity for investment promotion and for coordination of joint investment promotion strategies	3.3.2.1: Number of Member States relevant institutions that are equipped with trained staff on specific skills	5 MS	At least 10	COMESA Annual report; Country reports
		3.3.2.2: Number of projects initiated/ jointly promoted by two or more Member States	0	At least 2 MS	COMESA & COMESA ¹⁵ RIA Annual Reports Country Reports

		3.3.2.3: Number of Member States coming up with a harmonized strategy for investment promotion	2 MS	At least 5 MS harmonize their investment promotion strategies by 2025	COMESA & COMESA RIA Annual Reports Country Reports
	3.3.3 Capacity of Member states to compile¹⁶ FDI Statistics strengthened	3.3.3.1: Number of Member States compiling FDI statistics according to international recommendations	18 MS (2020)	At least 100% MS	National sources (National Statistics; Central Banks); Indicator tracker
Objective 3.4: Attract increased industrial investment, and harness application of technology and innovation in industry for improved productivity and competitiveness across priority sectors of development	3.4.1 Inclusive and sustainable industrial development	3.4.1.1: Manufacturing value added as % of GDP	9% (2019)	At least two percentage points increase	WDI; National Statistics

		3.4.1.2: Value (\$) of imports of value added agricultural and resource-based commodities	US\$ 28,147 million	10 % reduction	National Statistics; Indicator tracker
		3.4.1.3: % Contribution of manufacturing value addition to GDP	12% (2019)	5 % increase	WDI; National Statistics
		3.4.1.4: Intra-regional manufactured exports relative to total manufactured imports to the region	4% (2019)	Increase by 30%	WDI; National Statistics
	3.4.2 Sustainable Improvement in environment for private sector investment in manufacturing	3.4.2.1: Number of Member States domesticating aspects of the COMESA Industrialisation Policy e.g., Local Content Policy.	0	At least 15 MS domesticating regional programs and policies	Indicator tracker

	3.4.3 Increased competitiveness and market access/linkages for goods and services for large firms and MSMEs including youth and women owned MSMEs in line with¹⁷ RECAMP	3.4.3.1: Number of regional initiatives implemented to support women and youth transition from informal to formal cross border trade	1 COMESA Cross Border Trade Initiative Programme (11 EDF) – Result 2	At least 5 initiatives	National Sources (Sector Ministry)
	3.4.4 Strengthened capacity of Member States to compile industrial and business statistics, and to undertake innovation surveys	3.4.4.1: Number of Member States compiling industrial and business statistics according to international recommendations	11 MS (2020)	At least 30% increase	National Sources (National Statistics); Indicator tracker
		3.4.4.2: Number of Member States undertaking innovation surveys	0	At least 15MS	National Sources (National Statistics; Sector Ministry); Indicator tracker

Objective 3.5: Catalyze inclusive sustainable transformation of the blue economy	3.5.1 Improved production and trade in fish and fish products	3.5.1.1: Annual value of fish production (absolute values)	777,765,215	At least 5% increase	National Sources (Sector Ministry); Indicator tracker
		3.5.1.2: Value of private sector investment in fisheries and processing	0	At least 5% increase	National sources; Indicator tracker
		3.5.1.3: Value of intra-COMESA trade (constant US\$) in fish and fish products	115,608,408	At least 5% increase	National Sources (Sector Ministry)
		3.5.1.4: Employment in industries related to fisheries value chains	1 million (45% women)	At least 10% increase	WDI; National Sources
		3.5.1.5: Value addition in the fishery sector in real term	0	At least 10% increase	WDI; National Sources
	3.5.2 Increased contribution of tourism to the economic growth of COMESA region	3.5.2.1: Number of tourists in the region	36 million (2019 estimate)	Increase by 30%	National Sources (Ministry of Tourism)

		3.5.2.2: Share of tourism to GDP in real terms	3.7% (2019)	Increase by 10%	WDI/ World Bank; National Statistics
	3.5.4 Capacity of Member states to compile blue economy statistics strengthened	3.5.4.1: Number of Member States compiling ocean/ fisheries satellite accounts	2 MS	5	National Bureau of Statistics, Line Ministry/ Departments of Fisheries
		3.5.4.2: Number of Member States compiling blue economy basic set of statistics	5 MS	10	National Bureau of Statistics, Line Ministry/ Departments of Fisheries
3.6 Improve climate change mitigation and adaptation within the COMESA Region	3.6.1 Capacity of COMESA Secretariat, COMESA Institutions and Member States to tackle climate change enhanced	3.6.1.1: Percentage of COMESA programmes mainstreaming climate change	0 ¹⁸	70%	Indicator tracker; Review of program documents
		3.6.1.2: Number of Member States supported to implement and monitor their revised Nationally Determined Contributions and National Climate Strategies	0	At least 17	Indicator tracker; Support programs and reports

		3.6.1.3: Number of Member States implementing elements of the COMESA Regional Resilience Framework	0	At least 17	Indicator tracker; National sources
		3.6.1.4: Number of Member States whose capacity is built in various climate change areas including but not limited to climate negotiations, climate finance, clean energy, indicator tracking)	0	At least 17%	Indicator tracker; Position papers
		3.6.1.5: Reduced Carbon footprint of the Secretariat	0 ¹⁹	Reduce by 30%	Indicator tracker
		3.6.1.6: Value of climate finance received by COMESA Secretariat and Member States	0	Increase by 30%	National Statistics; Climate finance tracker

19 Baseline value to be established in the 1 year of the MTSP

Pillar IV: Gender and Social Integration					
Objective 4.1: Foster Gender equality and Social development to reduce gender inequalities and strengthen inclusion of women and youth in social, political and economic development	4.1.1 Inclusive social, health and economic development that is sensitive of gender, women and youth	4.1.1.1: Number of research studies conducted on Gender, Youth and social affairs	One Gender Statistics Report conducted in 2018	At least 3 Gender Statistics Reports produced	Indicator tracker
		4.1.1.2: Number of initiatives on empowerment of women, and youth	5 initiatives at Secretariat and CONFWIB (50MAWSP, Small Scale Cross Border Trade Initiative, Great lakes Trade Facilitation Project, BIAWE Project, Youth Engagement Project	Existing initiatives continue to be implemented	Secretariat and CONFWIB Reports

		4.1.1.3: Number of Member States reporting on progress towards attainment of gender equality, women and youth empowerment	6 MS	At least 12 Member States	Member States Reports
		4.1.1.4: COMESA Health Programme and Strategy in place	Health and HIV and AIDS Policy in place	Health Programme and Strategy in place	Secretariat Reports
		4.1.1.5: Number of Member States implementing the COMESA Youth Programme	11 MS	At least 15MS	Reports of Gender and Women Affairs, Member States Reports, Council Reports, Youth Meetings Reports
	4.1.2 Increased access to opportunities for inclusive social and economic growth among women and youth	4.1.2.1: Number of youth benefitting from internship programmes	*Baseline Data available for specific countries ²⁰	At least 30 % increase	National sources; Indicator tracker

20 Baseline data available for specific countries Rwanda & Kenya

		4.1.2.2: % youth graduating from the internship programme who get into employment within the first six months of exit.	0	At least 20 %	National sources; Indicator tracker
		4.1.2.3: Number of jobs created by women entrepreneurs using the 50MAWSP platform established by COMESA	0	At least 3000 jobs	Indicator tracker;
		4.1.2.4: % of women entrepreneurs engaged in the 50MAWSP Platform who access loans from financial institutions	0	At least 20%	Indicator tracker; Survey of women "50MAWSP" platform users
		4.1.2.5: Number of women entrepreneurs participating in business networks established through the 50MAWSP platform	27,761 ²¹	At least 40 % increase	Indicator tracker; Survey of women "50MAWSP" platform users

		4.1.2.6: Number of women benefitting from business exposure opportunities facilitated by COMESA (COMFWB)	0	At least 3,000 women	Indicator tracker; Business exposure event reports
	4.1.3 Improved economic and social legal frameworks and policy environment that is supportive of women and youth participation in sustainable development	4.1.3.1: Number of institutions adopting the COMESA Workplace GBV Policy	0	At least 5 institutions	Indicator tracker
		4.1.3.2: Number of Member States consistently reporting on the implementation of the COMESA Gender Policy	6 MS	At least 12 Member States	Reports of Gender and Women Affairs, Member States Reports, Council Reports

		4.1.3.3: Number of youth engaging in regional governance/policy processes through the youth platforms/ forums established by COMESA	0	At least 300	Indicator tracker; Policy engagement reports
		4.1.3.4: Number of regional policies initiated by youth/ youth led organizations	0	At least 2 regional policies on youth related matters	Indicator tracker; Policy engagement reports; Council Reports
		4.1.3.5: Number of Member States signing and ratifying the COMESA Social Charter	5 MS ²² (5 Member States have signed, 0 ratifications)	At least 10 Member States sign the Charter. 5 MS - ratifications	Indicator tracker; Reports of Gender and Women Affairs, Member States Reports, Council Reports
	4.1.4 Improved capacity for gender mainstreaming and youth integration in programs implemented by Member States, COMESA Secretariat and COMESA Institutions.	4.1.4.1: Number of Member States receiving capacity building interventions or technical assistance on gender mainstreaming- disaggregated by type of technical assistance/sector	18 MS	21	Indicator tracker

		4.1.4.2: % of programmes implemented by COMESA Secretariat and COMESA Institutions that mainstream gender.	Trade and Customs, Infrastructure & Logistics, Governance Peace & Security, Climate Change, COMAID, Industry, ALLPI, TDB, & RAERESA	At least 60%	Indicator tracker
	4.1.5 Strengthened capacity of Member States to compile gender sensitive statistics related to COMESA's regional integration agenda	4.1.5.1: Number of Member States compiling gender sensitive statistics in each of interventions on trade, productive and physical integration/ connectivity pillars	4 MS	6	National Statistics;
		4.1.5.2: Number of Member States whose staff have been trained on implementation of gender focused data collection tools and analysis.	0	21	Indicator tracker

Pillar V: Effective Secretariat					
Objective 5.1: Strengthen the capacity of COMESA and improve performance of COMESA Secretariat	5.1.1 Improved institutional performance of COMESA Secretariat	5.1.1.1: Organizational Performance Index (OPI)	2.9 ²³	OPI score >= 3.8	OPI
	5.1.2: Improved ICT governance, infrastructure and adoption in facilitating efficiency of the Secretariat	5.1.2.1: % of recommendations from the gap analysis that are addressed in the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS)	0	100%	IMIS implementation report
		5.1.2.2: % of users that are satisfied with the progress in implementation of the ICT Governance Policy and Framework	0	>= 80% of users	User survey

	5.1.3: Effective and efficient human resources aligned to the organizational structure of COMESA	5.1.3.1: % of staff positions that have been filled in line with the new organizational structure and according to the newly developed HR policies and procedures	0	100%	HR reports
		5.1.3.2: % of gaps identified in the review of HR policies and procedures that are adequately addressed	0	At least 80%	HR reports; Indicator tracker
		5.1.3.3: Level of implementation of the approved new COMESA Structure (scale 0-10)	0	10	Implementation plan/ report
		5.1.3.4: % of COMESA staff reporting they are satisfied with their current work	56% ²⁴	At least 80%	Staff satisfaction survey reports

24 2019 Staff Survey

	5.1.4: Increased efficiency in business processes and accountability for resources	5.1.4.1: % of business processes prioritized for automation in critical areas of Financial Management, HR, Procurement, M&E, Strategic and Operational Planning- that have actually been automated	0	100%	Indicator tracker
		5.1.4.2: Average turnaround time in the procurement cycle.	0	Reduce by at least 30%	Indicator tracker; Procurement records
		5.1.4.3: Number of risk based/ strategic audits undertaken	3 Risk based Audits	At least 4	Indicator tracker; Audit reports, Reports of the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs
		5.1.4.4: Number of staff receiving capacity building interventions to identify, assess and manage risks	3 ²⁵	At least 25 staff	Indicator tracker; Capacity building reports; Reports of the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs

		5.1.4.5: % of audit issues closed	10%	At least 50 % of issues closed	Audit reports; Audit implementation reports; Reports of the Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Affairs; Teammate Status of Implementation Reports
	5.1.5 Enhanced Financial Performance	5.1.5.1: Programme Efficiency Ratio	6%	At least 80%	Budget tracker
		5.1.5.2: Budget Variance	40%	A budget variance of 30% or less	Budget tracker
	5.1.6 Strengthened internal and external communications and stakeholder engagement through continued dialogue	5.1.6.1: % of annual monitoring and evaluation reports which outline programme implementation and priority statistical information on regional integration that are published and disseminated on schedule	*COMESA Annual Report produced annually	100%	Dissemination plan and records.

		5.1.6.2: Number of Member States and COMESA institutions using the regional collaborative information-sharing platform.	0	21 Member States and 10 Institutions	Platform usage tracker
		5.1.6.3: Number of new strategic partnerships formed with key stakeholders such as media practitioners and publishers for dissemination of content on COMESA regional integration programmes	8 ²⁶	At least 10 strategic partnerships	Indicator tracker; Partnership MOUs
		5.1.6.4: Number of success stories documented and published to demonstrate the value of regional integration	10	At least ²⁷ 5 success stories documented and published	Indicator tracker

²⁶ Partnerships with the EastAfrican Newspaper, Rwanda TV, Eswatini TV, Uganda Broadcasting, ZNBC, Malawi, Zimbabwe TV and

²⁷ At least 1 per year

		5.1.6.5: Number of outreach events and direct stakeholders' engagement activities, including trade fairs and expos that are organized, coordinated or implemented by COMESA in the Member States	8	At least ²⁸ 20 ²⁹ outreach events/ stakeholder engagement activities	Indicator tracker
	5.1.7 Strengthened adoption of technologies and knowledge management practices to expand information access and utilization for collaboration, learning and adaptation	5.1.7.1: Number of new strategic partnerships formed with key stakeholders that generate data and reports required to inform COMESA regional integration programmes	0	At least 4 new strategic partnerships	Indicator tracker; Partnership MOUs

28 At least 2 per year
29 Holding of outreach events maybe affected by COVID-19 restrictions

		5.1.7.2: Number of reports, data sets, or knowledge products developed or generated by external partners/ stakeholders that are made available on the COMESA knowledge management platform	0	At least 200 reports, data sets, or knowledge products	Indicator tracker; Knowledge management platform
		5.1.7.3: % of priority items for strengthening information management, access and retrieval at the Secretariat that are successfully implemented	0	At least 80 %	Indicator tracker; implementation plan and implementation reports.
		5.1.7.4: Online traffic on COMESA and MS' AIH portals	2,431(monthly average for 2020)	Increase traffic by 30%	AIH traffic records; Indicator tracker
		5.1.7.5: Number of experts trained in relevant software tools for statistical compilation, analysis and dissemination	200 ³⁰	Increase number of trained experts by 30%	Training event reports; Indicator tracker

		5.1.7.6: Number of Member States adopting Statistical Data and Meta Data Exchange (SDMX) technologies	0	At least 3 MS using SDMX for data transmission	National Sources; SDMX usage tracker
	5.1.8: Improved resource mobilization capacity of COMESA secretariat	5.1.8.1: The COMESA Common Market Levy operationalized	Not operational	At least 60 % of COMESA budget is generated as income earned from activities undertaken by the Common Market	Common markets levy implementation plan and reports; financial reports; resource mobilization plans and reports
		5.1.8.2: The COMESA Resource Mobilization Strategy operationalized	Not operational	At least 70 % of strategic focus areas under active implementation	Strategy implementation plan and reports
		5.1.8.3: % of resource requirements mobilized from cooperating partners	90% ³¹	At least 70% of resource requirements mobilized	Indicator; resource mobilization reports; financial records

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Baseline calculation based on estimated budgeted amount against received amount – 2020 Baseline

		5.1.8.4: Number of partnerships and collaborations that provide either financial, technical assistance or capacity building resources to support implementation of COMESA regional integration agenda	90	At least 70% of partnerships at baseline retained and at least 3 additional partnerships established	Indicator tracker; Partnership/ collaboration records including ³² MOUs
		5.1.8.5: Amount of resources mobilized and utilized through the COMESA Fund and other aid for trade instruments for supporting implementation of regional integration programmes at the national level	€ 111,400,000 ³³	At least USD 50 Million	Indicator tracker; Resource mobilization reports/ Financial reports

32 Memorandum of Understanding
33 Total Funds mobilized under CAF

INDICATOR PARKING LOT

NOTE: This section of the COMESA M&E Framework outlines indicators for which baseline and target information to be populated during implementation of the MTSP.

Goal/ Objective	Result	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Data Source (Means Of Verification)
Goal: Improve regional integration, economic growth and quality of life for the people of COMESA	An integrated, resilient, internationally competitive regional economic community with sustainable high standards of living for all its people	Regional integration index for COMESA			UNECA
		Average GDP growth rate for COMESA			¹ WDI; National Sources
		Poverty index			WDI; ² ILO; National Sources
Pillar I: Market Integration					
Objective 1.1: Strengthen market integration	1.1.1 Sustainable increase in intra-COMESA trade	Number of Member States with programmes promoting the effective participation of women and youth in regional trade.			National Sources

1 World Development Indicators
2 International Labor Organization

	1.1.2 Enhanced regional trade environment through implementation of customs union and trade facilitation instruments in line with the international standards and best practices	COMESA Market Integration Policy Domestication Index			National Sources; COMSTAT; Indicator Tracker
		Number of cases concerning compliance with the COMESA treaty that are referred to the courts			National sources; Indicator tracker
	1.1.3 Improved Digital economic integration through implementation of digital FTA instruments supported by modern ICT infrastructure	Number of Member States with programmes to raise awareness and enhance ICT skills among small scale cross border traders to enable them use COMESA digital platforms and services			National Sources/ Sector Ministries Indicator Tracker

	1.1.7 Improved capacity of Member States and COMESA Secretariat to compile statistics on trade and market integration	Number of Member States that are submitting labour migration data in accordance with ILO indicators for the purpose of continental and regional reports			National Sources (National Statistics/ Central Banks); Indicator tracker Upcoming data collection by ILO for the 4th Ed. Of the Labor Migration Statistics Report in Africa in 2022
Objective 1.2: Strengthen mechanisms that guarantee peace and security for better integration	1.2.2: Improved participation and representation of women and youth in peace and security initiatives and mechanisms	Number of countries with action plan on the implementation of UN Resolution 1325			National Sources; Indicator tracker
		Percent of mechanisms on peace and security that involve women and youth			Indicator tracker; Reports from mechanisms on peace and security
	1.2.4 Improved measures to curb money laundering and terrorist financing	Total volume of inward and outward illicit financial flows			UNCTAD/World Bank
	1.2.5 Improved democracy in electoral processes within the COMESA region	Percent increase in youth and women parliamentarians			National Sources

Pillar II: Physical Integration/Connectivity

Objective 2.1: Improve regional physical and communications infrastructure	2.1.4 Improved air transport services facilitated through liberalization	Number of Member States achieving the Abuja Safety Targets (ASTs)			DCAA, AUC & ICAO Reports; Sector Ministries, African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) Reports
	2.1.10 Climate change mitigation in transport, ICT and energy sectors improved	Volume of e-waste generation			National sources (National Statistics; Sector Ministry); Indicator tracker

Pillar III: Productive Integration

Objective 3.1: Catalyze Inclusive Agricultural/livestock Growth and Sustainable Transformation	3.1.1 Inclusive and sustainable increase in agricultural production and productivity	Increase in production for at least five regional priority commodity value chains			FAOStat, National sources (National Statistics; Sector Ministry)
		Agriculture value added per hectare of arable land (constant price USD)			FAOStat and WDI; (National Statistics; Sector Ministry)
		Percent irrigated agriculture			WDI; National sources
		Share of agricultural sector contribution in "Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)			National sources (National Statistics; Sector Ministry); Indicator tracker

		Agricultural total factor productivity			WDI; FAOSTAT
	3.1.2 Agro-industry and value chain development that is inclusive of women and youth	Employment in industries related to agricultural value chains			WDI; FAOSTAT
		Private sector investment in agricultural value chains.			National sources (Sector Ministry); Indicator tracker
	3.1.3 Improved access to competitive markets for agricultural commodities in COMESA region	Number of women and youth led enterprises in agricultural value chains, accessing regional markets			National Sources (Sector Ministry); Indicator tracker
	3.1.4 Increased resilience of livelihoods and improved management of risks in the agriculture sector	Percent of metrology infrastructure upgrade specifications achieved			National Sources (Sector Ministry);
		Percent of Member States with social assistance and protection programmes			³ ASPIRE Database (World Bank)
	3.1.5 Strengthened capacity of Member States to compile agriculture statistics including data on Regional Food Balance Sheet (FBS)	Number of Member States compiling the minimum set of core data (MSCD) in COMESA			National Sources; COMSTAT

Objective 3.3: Attract more investment into the COMESA region	3.3.1 Improved business environment leading to increase in direct investment	Value of Cross border intra COMESA Foreign Direct investment (FDI)			COMESA Annual Investment Report; National Sources (Central Banks)
		Scores in ease of doing business/ business competitive index			WB Ease of Doing Business Annual report; World Competitiveness Report
Objective 3.4: Attract increased industrial investment, and harness application of technology and innovation in industry for improved productivity and competitiveness across priority sectors of development	3.4.1 Inclusive and sustainable industrial development	Number of women and youth owned industrial projects supported and incubated in selected value chains			National Sources (Sector Ministry); Indicator tracker
	3.4.2 Sustainable Improvement in environment for private sector investment in manufacturing	Number of Member States adopting framework on private sector led low emission, resilient Circular Economy industrialization			National sources; Indicator tracker
		GHG emissions from the industrial sector			National Sources (Nationally Designated Authority (NDA)); Indicator tracker

		Value of private sector investment in manufacturing			National Sources (Sector Ministry/ Investment Promotion Agencies; Indicator tracker
		Percent of regional policies and programmes on industrialization that are domesticated by Member States			Indicator tracker
		Number of patent filings in ⁴ ARIPO and ⁵ WIPO from the COMESA region			Indicator tracker; ARIPO and WIPO databases
	3.4.3 Increased competitiveness and market access/ linkages for goods and services for large firms and MSMEs including youth and women owned MSMEs in line with⁶ RECAMP	Policy Domestication Index (focus on industrialization and MSME related policies)			National Sources; Indicator tracker
		Value of goods produced by youth and women owned MSMEs			National Sources (Sector Ministry); Indicator tracker

4 African Regional Intellectual Property

5 World Intellectual Property Organization

6 Regional Enterprise Competitive Access to Markets Programme

		Percent of informal sector ventures growing into small formal enterprise category a year, that are owned by women and youth			National Sources; (Sector Ministry)
	3.5.2 Increased contribution of tourism to the economic growth of COMESA region *Indus to advise	Ease of doing business in the tourism industry relaxed.			World Bank ⁷ EODB report
		Number of tourists in eco-tourism			National Sources (Ministry of Tourism)
		Value of revenue generated from tourism			National Sources (Ministry of Tourism)
	3.5.3 Improved management of natural resources *Indus to advise	Proportion of important cross-border biodiversity (land/ seascapes) that are protected			WDI; National Sources
		Percent of terrestrial and inland water preserved			Sector Ministry
		Percent of coastal and marine areas preserved			Sector Ministry

		Percent of Member States that include BE in their “Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)”			National Statistics; Nationally Designated Authority
		Percent of regional policies and programmes on natural resource management that are domesticated by Member States			Indicator tracker; National Sources
3.6 Improve climate change mitigation and adaptation within the COMESA Region	3.6.1 Capacity of COMESA Secretariat, COMESA Institutions and Member States to tackle climate change enhanced	Reduced Carbon footprint of the Secretariat			Indicator tracker
3.7. Strengthen domestication of policies and programs on productive integration	3.7.1 Improved domestication of policies and programs on productive integration.	Percent of policies and programmes on physical and communications infrastructure that are domesticated by at least 15 Member States			Indicator tracker

Pillar IV: Gender and Social Integration					
Objective 4.1: Foster Gender equality and Social development to reduce gender inequalities and strengthen inclusion of women and youth in social, political and economic development	4.1.2 Increased access to opportunities for inclusive social and economic growth among women and youth	Income among women users of the “50MAWSP” platform			Survey of women “50MAWSP” platform users
	4.1.3 Improved economic and social legal frameworks and policy environment that is supportive of women and youth participation in sustainable development	Number of women/ youth led organizations receiving regional/ continental/ global climate finance through the Nationally Designated Authorities (NDA)			National Statistics; Indicator Tracker
		% women and youth participants in the regional, continental and global forums on the implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change.			National Sources; Indicator tracker

Pillar V: Effective Secretariat

Objective 5.1: Strengthen the capacity of COMESA and improve performance of COMESA Secretariat	5.1.3: Effective and efficient human resources aligned to the organizational structure of COMESA	Percent of female and male professional employees			Indicator tracker; HR Reports
		Number of persons hours of training in technical skills			Indicator tracker



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