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ushirikiano Newsletter

Tanzania and EAC | July 2024



WELCOME

Mrs. Anne Hahn

Country Director
GIZ Tanzania & EAC

Dear Partners and Colleagues,

I recently arrived in Tanzania and received a warm welcome. The people here are very friendly, and I feel comfortable joining a team that is motivated and excited to have a new member. Tanzania is a beautiful country, and I am eager to explore it fully. Since GIZ is implementing projects across the country, I look forward to discovering more of Tanzania.

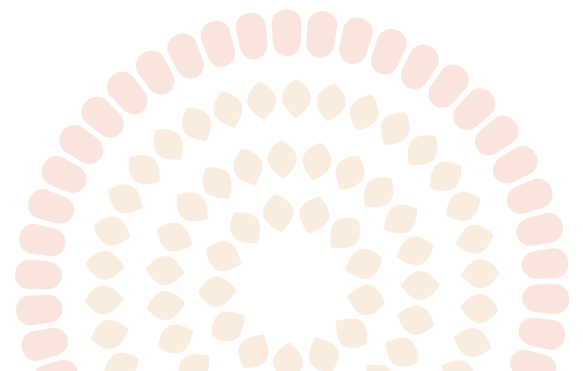
Before coming to Tanzania, I was the country director in Benin, managing a diverse portfolio covering Natural Resources Management, Water & Energy, Good financial Governance, Private Sector Support and Agriculture, while also fostering strong regional interlinkages across these sectors, and cross-cutting issues like Climate Change, Gender, and Digitalization.

I have finished the process of the official handover from the outgoing country director. The positive spirit I have encountered from the current leadership and our professional staff is very encouraging, and I believe it bodes well for a smooth transition. GIZ is already carrying out numerous projects in Tanzania and with the East African Community (EAC). It is crucial for us to demonstrate our professionalism and excellence in project management and technical advice. We also need to ensure that the impact of our projects on the ground is visible and tangible.



Finally, I can say I am looking forward to meeting our partners in Tanzania. My initial impression is that we are viewed as a reliable and honest partner, and I am committed to continuing in the same spirit with sincerity and warmth towards the people we are working for.

Asanteni sana!



Exciting progress as Agreement is reached to improve water security in Zanzibar



On 25th June, we marked a significant step in bilateral cooperation with Zanzibar. We signed an implementation agreement to establish a three-year project called ZanziWas, aimed at Strengthening Water Security in Zanzibar. This collaborative project with the Ministry of Water, Energy, and Minerals is valued at three million Euros. Together, our goals include improving the political and administrative environment for water and wastewater management, enhancing capacities for water and wastewater management, and increasing the climate resilience of the water sector. Both GIZ and MoWEM are confident this project goes to address real challenges facing the water sector in Zanzibar.



The signing event was honored by the presence of Dr. Juma Malik, Principal Secretary of the President's Office Finance and Planning Zanzibar, and Joseph John Kilangi, Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Water, Energy, and Minerals. Both expressed great commitment to the project, stating that it was highly needed and would enhance water security on the island. This enthusiasm and excellent cooperation were also appreciated by Dr. Tobias Godal, GIZ Water Programme Manager. Dr. Godal stated that GIZ is ready to start activities immediately, emphasizing the German government's support for climate-resilient measures to improve water supply and wastewater management in Zanzibar.





Celebrating Women. Tanga

On March 8th, Bombo Regional Referral Hospital in Tanga and GIZ Health Programme commemorated International Women's Day in a memorable celebration. Female staff from various roles in the hospital, including administrators, nurses, cleaners, and doctors, convened for a lively event. Over 120 women engaged in dynamic discussions focused on enhancing care for female patients, fostering solidarity among colleagues, and prioritizing self-care. The participants emphasized the transformative power of unity, concluding the importance of mutual support and collaboration. In a collective declaration, the participants voiced their conviction:

“ We can achieve a lot when we come together to support each other. ”

This event not only celebrated the invaluable contributions of women in healthcare but also underscored the importance of collective action in advancing gender equality and promoting well-being within the professional sphere.



Together for Gender Equality: A multisectoral approach to address Gender-Based Violence

Sports4Gender Equality Training for Sports Officers and Gender District Focal Persons in Pemba

From 19-22nd February, Sports for Development (S4D) in close collaboration with the Ministry of Information, Youth, Culture and Sports and Ministry of Gender in Zanzibar conducted a S4D training for 16 Sports Officers, Gender District Focal Persons and Physical Education teachers in Pemba. The training was facilitated following a participatory approach where participants had an opportunity to discuss various S4D concepts in the classroom, especially taking into consideration the diverse cultural context of the islands as well as applying practical sessions whereby sports exercises focus on aspects of gender equality, positive masculinity and prevention of GBV. Participants were enabled to initiate gender sensitive and inclusive sport programs benefiting children and youth and the whole community on Shehia level. Networks amongst the different departments and amongst local authorities were created to jointly promote gender equality through sports in Pemba.



Awareness raising and providing legal aid on GBV to communities and in Dodoma

From 20-21 March, the GIZ project Access to Justice for Women and Children (SAFE) and the regional project Promotion of the rule of law and the judiciary in Africa (PRoLA) raised awareness about the prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV) together with students of the University of Dodoma (UDOM). Visiting local markets in Dodoma City and a village in Chamwino district, the students engaged with more than 189 community members and supported the provision of legal aid by Tanganyika Law Society, UDOM legal aid clinic, and local paralegal units.

On March 24, the projects organized a discussion chamber with almost 100 UDOM students, debating the gaps in existing law and policy framework addressing GBV and which role the communities, academia, and the media can play in advocating against GBV. Among others, the students recommended that specific media outlets should publish on GBV issues with a do-no-harm approach. In addition, students, teachers, and other academic personnel must come together to provide (legal) education on GBV, especially in rural areas.



Support of a One Stop Center for survivors of GBV in Tanga

The GIZ Health Programme is supporting Bombo Regional Referral Hospital in Tanga to establish a One Stop Center (OSC) catering to survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). On March 20th, Bombo staff embarked on a valuable learning visit to the well-established OSC at Mwananyamala Referral Hospital in Dar Es Salaam. This visit provided medical personnel, social welfare officers, police officers, and legal advisors with firsthand insights into establishing and effectively managing multidisciplinary services for GBV survivors.

Subsequently, from April 2nd to 6th, prospective service providers for the OSC in Tanga underwent intensive training. The 30 participants delved into topics such as trauma-sensitive communication, psychosocial support, medical examinations, and forensic evidence management. The medical officer in charge of Bombo Hospital contributed to the training, emphasizing the OSC's pivotal role in Tanga community. Given the high incidence of GBV in Tanga, the OSC holds significant importance in delivering high quality, multidisciplinary care to survivors.





Wildlife Experts trained to strengthen principles of safeguards and Gender Sensitivity in addressing Human-Wildlife Conflicts

Human-wildlife conflicts (HWC) represent a pressing global concern, impacting communities, biodiversity, and ecosystems alike. From crop raiding to livestock depredation, these conflicts often result in detrimental consequences for both humans and wildlife. In recognition of the multifaceted nature of these challenges and conflict sensitivity, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) Wildlife Division in collaboration with the GIZ implemented a Training of Trainers (ToT) on Social Safeguards and Gender in the HWC context.

The overarching objective of this training is to equip Training of Trainers (ToTs) from diverse educational institutions, conservation institutions, and Districts working on HWC with knowledge and skills adhering to principles of social-environmental safeguards, conflict mediation, and gender sensitivity.

The training was held between March 03rd to 11th March 2024 in Pasiansi Wildlife Training Institute- Mwanza and counted with the participation of more than 50 trainers from Ranger training institutions including Pasiansi Wildlife Training Institute, College of African Wildlife Management Mweka and Community-based Conservation Training Centre (CBCTC), as well as conservation institutions such as Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA), Tanzania National Park (TANAPA), Tanzania Forest Service (TFS) and District Game Officers/Game Wardens from Liwale, Namtumbo and Tunduru.

Participants were able to engage in interactive sessions to deepen their understanding of the complexities surrounding socio-environmental and escalation of conflict dynamics influencing human-wildlife conflicts, strategies for conflict mediation and de-escalation, application of social safeguards, duty of care for rangers, ranger's code of conduct, and the importance of gender sensitivity for ranger's day-to-day operations.



By equipping trainers with enhanced skills and knowledge of these techniques, they will be able to escalate this expertise to others, both education institution instructors, and rangers, and be positively reflected on the community operations, fostering a culture of respect, accountability, and collaboration in addressing grievances from human-wildlife conflicts fairly and equitably.

This training was organized as part of the Tanzanian-German project Mitigation of Human-Wildlife Conflicts implemented by MNRT and GIZ on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). After the Government to Government Negotiations on Development Cooperation in March 2024, the German Head of Delegation, Mr. Marcus von Essen, visited Pasiansi Wildlife Training Institute and learned that the training was positively received by the participants from Pasiansi Wildlife Training Institute, College of African Wildlife Management Mweka and Community-based Conservation Training Centre, Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA), Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA), Tanzania Forest Service (TFS) and the districts of Liwale, Namtumbo and Tunduru. The trainers were committed to further developing the curricula of their training institutions to include safeguards and gender aspects and all participants understood the importance of addressing risk management.

What is good about bad smell? It **repels elephants** from the community farms!



To mitigate incidents of human-wildlife conflicts in Tanzania, several organizations are exploring strategies to empower communities to manage the impact caused by wildlife on their livelihood.

The Ministry of Natural Resource and Tourism (MNRT) implements the Mitigation of Human-Wildlife Conflicts Project in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH who took the lead in training of trainers and lead farmers on the use of the 'smelly repellent' method. This is an efficient locally adapted and affordable solution for the Ruvuma landscape farming communities. The 'smelly repellent' method is a solution made from a blend of natural ingredients including garlic, chili, ginger, and neem leaves, mixed with vegetable oil, cow dung, and eggs. After cooking and fermenting, the solution is contained in used bottles and fixed on fences surrounding the farms. The strong smell protects community farmlands from elephant incursions.

The Training was conducted by experts from the Southern Tanzania Elephant Project (STEP) in the Districts of Liwale, Tunduru and Namtumbo. More than 60 participants, including farmers, agriculture extension officers, and representatives from key conservation institutions such as the Tanzanian Wildlife Authority (TAWA), Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA), Tanzanian Forestry Service (TFS) and the Community Based Conservation Training Center were trained as multipliers to implement the smelly repellent as mitigation method together with the villagers.

Through the training and use of smelly repellent method, the project aims to empower communities to reduce the negative impacts caused by elephants on their livelihoods and security. Shortly after the smelly repellent fences were installed, farmers reported that they observed a significant reduction of elephants encroaching on the fenced farms.





Turning Mirongo River from a Threat to a Friend

The Mirongo river flows through the central part of Mwanza City and discharges into Lake Victoria. It is a heavily urbanized river catchment and is at the same time an important water source supporting livelihoods of more than 225,105 people both upstream and downstream. On the 22nd of March 2024, the delegation from the German Federal Ministry of International Cooperation (BMZ) visited Mwanza during the Government-to-Government negotiations between Tanzania and Germany. The delegation from BMZ, the German Embassy and KfW visited Mirongo river at the Mabatini bridge to learn about its threats and challenges. The GIZ project on Water Security and Climate Resilience in urban areas in Tanzania co-funded by the Team Europe Initiative – Green and Smart Cities (ProWaS-SASA) guided the delegation and introduced them to their implementing partners from Mwanza and Lake Victoria basin.

Rapid urbanization of Mwanza city and the increasing impact of climate change on the Lake region have worsened the damaging effects of the Mirongo river floods as presented by severe flooding of residential and commercial areas as well as of the road infrastructure during heavy rainfall events. Additionally, the uncontrolled discharge of untreated wastewater and solid waste dumping has deteriorated Mirongo river's water quality thus negatively affecting Lake Victoria's ecology. Tackling these challenges requires the sustainable management of the Mirongo river catchment through collaboration of all major stakeholders from public and private sector.

ProWaS SASA will support this multi-stakeholder collaboration by providing assessments on the climate change risks within the Mirongo river catchment and bring together communities, LGAs, NGOs, the Water Utility, the Basin Water Board (BWB), Private Sector and Development Partners to support joint initiatives to turn Mirongo river from an environmental threat to an environmental friend.



The EAC Visits the ECOWAS Commission for a Benchmarking Mission on Institutional Reform




From 5 to 6 February, a delegation of the EAC, led by Hon. Andrea Aguer Arik Malueth, Deputy Secretary General (Infrastructure, Productive, Social, and Political Sectors), paid a visit to the ECOWAS Commission in Abuja, Nigeria, for a benchmarking mission on an institutional review process to strengthen efficient and effective steering of the growing integration agenda. The EAC delegation was welcomed by H.E. Dr. Omar Aliou Touray, the President of the ECOWAS Commission. In his address, Dr. Touray highlighted the importance of collaboration among the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

Hon. Andrea Aguer Arik Malueth equally stressed the importance for EAC to learn from the experiences of ECOWAS in their journey to effectively promote trade and integration. The EAC delegation held discussions with the Office of the Vice President on institutional reforms implemented at the ECOWAS Commission in the last decade.

The mission was supported by GIZ as part of the cooperation between the German Government and the EAC on Organisational Development. GIZ, via the Support to East African Integration (SEAMPEC II) project, works to strengthen the capacities of the EAC Secretariat to implement the 6th EAC Development Strategy, which focuses on increasing value-addition, industrial development, innovation and investment. Find more information [here](#).



A portrait of Dr. James Wakhungu, a man with short dark hair and a light beard, wearing a white button-down shirt and a dark belt. He is standing outdoors with green foliage in the background. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent grey box containing text and a decorative vertical bar on the right side. The decorative bar features a colorful pattern of red, white, and blue geometric shapes, including circles and lines, resembling a traditional African textile design. There are also several faint white circles overlaid on the right side of the image.

Handling Major Transboundary Disease Outbreaks at Border Control Points – Insights from Kenya's OSBP Official

Currently posted to the Namanga One-Stop Border Post (OSBP), Kenya, Dr. James Wakhungu is the Assistant Director of Veterinary Services and Border Veterinary Inspector in the Directorate of Veterinary Services, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development. Dr. Wakhungu participated in the EAC Field Simulation Exercise (FSX) at the Namanga OSBP.

Through a partnership facilitated by GIZ, Germany is collaborating with the EAC to address pandemics and infectious diseases using a comprehensive One Health approach. Activities such as FSX and broader support to pandemic preparedness have enhanced the EAC's ability to handle outbreaks like Ebola and Cholera.

Dr. Wakhungu acknowledges the effectiveness of the EAC-German cooperation, stating that they are now better equipped to manage major transboundary disease outbreaks at border control points with in-house professionals trained to handle such challenges. Find more information [here](#)



EAC Secretariat Accelerates Efforts Towards Comprehensive Regional Digital Transformation Strategy

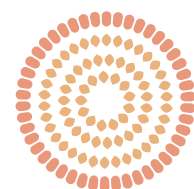
The East African Community is in the final stages of consultation for the EAC Regional Digital Transformation Strategy 2024–2030, aimed at driving economic growth, regional integration, and sustainable development through digital technologies across the region.

The EAC has been proactive in its digital transformation journey, with initial consultation with Partner States in 2022 and further increasing the momentum at the EAC Regional Digital Transformation Conference, held in October 2023, in collaboration with the European Union, through a Team Europe Initiative. The strategy aims at leveraging the endorsement of the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol and the AU Digital Transformation Strategy to enhance connectivity, foster a digital economy, and promote sustainable development.

Key areas forming the EAC Digital Transformation strategy include digital connectivity and infrastructure, digital skills and innovation, the digital economy, a harmonised legal and policy environment, emerging technologies, and digital public infrastructure.

In June and July 2024, the EAC, in partnership with GIZ, will conduct national consultations across all eight EAC Partner States, followed by regional validation workshops. The final strategy will be presented at the ICT Ministerial Conference on the sidelines of the Transform Africa Summit on August 28, 2024. The EAC's commitment to digital innovation aims to position the region as a leader in digital transformation, foster inclusive growth, and advance towards a unified EAC Single Digital Market.

Find more information on the EAC-Germany website [here](#).



EAC Tests Activation of Regional Rapid Response Mechanism to Infectious Disease Outbreaks



On June 20, 2024, the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat concluded a table-top simulation exercise (TTX) in collaboration with EAC Partner States and technical partners to test the activation of its regional rapidly deployable expert pool. Established since 2020 with the support of the GIZ, commissioned by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation among other technical partners, after lessons learned from past disease outbreaks, including Ebola, the expert pool aims to ensure swift regional responses to health emergencies.

The TTX involved over 50 experts from the health, environment, and livestock sectors across EAC states, along with partners like, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa (WHO AFRO), GIZ, and the German Epidemic Preparedness Team (SEEG). They simulated a response to a cross-border Ebola outbreak to enhance coordination and identify areas for improvement. The exercise aimed to identify strengths and areas of improvement for collaboration and coordination at the national, regional, and continental levels in an outbreak scenario and to develop a roadmap for integrating the expert pool with initiatives like the African Health Volunteers Corps & Strengthening and Utilizing Response Groups for Emergencies (AVoHC-SURGE) to allow for joint planning, deployments, and capacity development to enhance regional and continental readiness for future outbreaks.

Dr Eric Nzeyimana, Principal Health Officer at the EAC Secretariat, reiterated,

“By completing the ongoing EAC simulation exercise, using the lessons learned and recommendations, and working with our partners, we make sure that the EAC region is better prepared for outbreaks of epidemics and pandemics in the future.”

Find more information on the EAC-Germany website [here.](#)

Photo Credits: GIZ One Health Insights



Exploring Digital Solutions for Mutual Recognition of Professionals in East Africa – The Case of Engineers



In embracing digital innovation, the EAC reaffirms its commitment to progress. As the region embarks on this transformative journey, the fusion of digitalization and collaboration emerges as a promising avenue for improving professional recognition across borders.

The past signing of Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) by Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania represents a practical step forward in addressing the challenges of professional recognition within East Africa. With South Sudan on track to join and efforts underway to establish Competent Authorities in other EAC Partner States like Burundi, there's a clear momentum towards streamlining processes and enhancing regional integration.

From 23 to 26 April, a technical scoping workshop held at the EAC headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania, examined the registration and digitalization processes of Competent Authorities for Engineers. This platform provided experts with a space for fostering peer-to-peer learning, exchanging ideas, and defining practical solutions.

An envisioned digital platform seeks to simplify and expedite mutual recognition procedures by digitising documentation and communication channels. This streamlined approach is expected to significantly enhance the efficiency of cross-border transactions and the overall quality of engineering services within the region. Find more information [here](#).



IUCEA and GIZ Jointly Launch Training Programmes to Boost Digital Skills and Academia-Private Sector Collaboration Across the EAC Region



On June 14, 2024, the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) and the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) launched two key initiatives under the dSkills@EA programme aimed at fostering innovation and bridging the digital skills gap in East Africa.

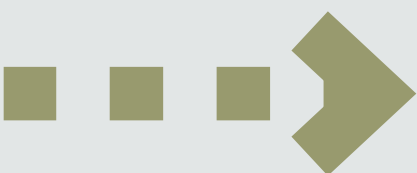
Through the Innovators Sprint Up Programme initiative, over 210 young innovators and entrepreneurs from universities across EAC Partner States will receive mentorship, training, and support to develop sustainable business models, facilitating the transition from ideation to commercialization. The programme includes an eight-week capacity building and a regional study tour, aiming to build a network of mentors and entrepreneurs.

Further, the Digital Skills Training Programme initiative aims to train over 500 university staff, unemployed graduates, and business community employees in digital skills. It seeks to enhance employability, improve digital skills delivery, and boost business competitiveness in the evolving digital landscape.

David Roos, dSkills@EA Programme Manager, highlighted these initiatives as part of a broader effort to promote youth entrepreneurship and digital skills development in the region. The programmes build on successful efforts from 2022, where over 1000 youths were mentored in innovation best practices and 500 university staff and business employees received digital skills training tailored to their fields and businesses across the EAC Partner States, reflecting a joint commitment between the German government and the EAC to foster innovation and digital transformation.

Prof. Idris Rai of IUCEA emphasised the importance of universities promoting innovation and supporting graduates in venture building to address job market challenges.

Find more information on the EAC-Germany website [here](#).



The President of Somalia Convenes EAC Partner States to Jointly Deliberate on Strengthening Integration and Cooperation at Regional and Continental Levels



The East African Community Conference (EACON2024) took place in Mogadishu, Somalia, from 24 to 25 June 2024. The conference, attended and officiated by Somalia's President, H.E. Dr Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, called upon all Somalis to embrace the opportunity that the EAC brings, underscoring the nation's position in strengthening regional cooperation in the community. The conference themes—economic development, peace and security, agriculture, and education—are rightly aligned with the EAC's agenda of deepening integration and widening cooperation in the region, with an additional focus on leveraging opportunities under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The event also highlighted recent milestones, i.e., the signing of Somalia's accession to the EAC Treaty on December 15, 2023, and a recently convened meeting with Partner States and the EAC Secretariat on the development of a roadmap for Somalia's swift integration into the community.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, and Higher Education of the Federal Republic of Somalia consented to support Somalia's education community to prioritise education and skills development and foster collaboration among universities, technical institutions, and vocational training centres within the EAC, ensuring access to quality education for all, especially women and youth.

The conference also called for further coordination with the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA), envisaging 1000 scholarships for Somali youth to study in East African universities. Additionally, Somalia's Ministry of Education committed to engaging in the establishment of the East African Digital Skills and Research Alliance, championed by the EAC Secretariat.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Bjorn Richter, Cluster Coordinator of the EAC-GIZ Cooperation, emphasised the role of development cooperation in fostering regional integration and highlighted GIZ's initiatives in supporting sustainable economic development in the region. He underscored the importance of collaborative efforts between international organisations and local stakeholders to drive meaningful progress towards creating impacts for East Africans.

Highlighting the opening of the event was a photo exhibition showcasing tangible impacts created for EAC citizens through the EAC-Germany partnership. It featured beneficiaries from across EAC Partner States and all sectors of cooperation, such as trade in goods and services, harmonisation of standards, pandemic preparedness and One Health, integrated water management, and digital skills development. Additionally, the presence of high-level policymakers, business leaders, and scholars underscored the collective commitment to address challenges and seize opportunities in the region and under the AfCFTA framework.

Find more information on the EAC-Germany website [here](#).





EAC Launches Free Online Professional Tourism Courses to Enhance Regional Capacity

Tourism practitioners in the region can now enhance their skills and expertise through a comprehensive suite of professional courses, following the launch of the EAC Online Tourism Capacity Development Programme. These courses, developed in collaboration with the European Union and the German Development Cooperation, aim to elevate professional standards and skill sets across the region's tourism industry.

The programme was officially launched during a virtual session led by Hon. Andrea Ariik Malueth, EAC Deputy Secretary General, Infrastructure, Productive, Social and Political Sectors, on 30 May 2024. The event was attended by various tourism stakeholders from both public and private sectors, including Tourism Boards, Tour Operators, Tour Guides, SMEs, and the East African Tourism Platform, among other tourism associations across the region.

The programme stands out for its accessibility, offering learners the opportunity to engage with high-quality training materials completely free of charge. Participants can expect a dynamic learning experience that combines self-paced modules, live webinars, expert talks, and moderated forums.

Covering a wide array of topics essential to the tourism sector, each course within the programme spans four months, allowing ample time for deep engagement and understanding. Upon completion, learners will receive a downloadable EAC certificate, digitally signed by the EAC leadership. The courses are also available in English and French language versions.

Speaking during the session, EAC Deputy Secretary General, Hon. Andrea Ariik Malueth reaffirmed EAC's commitment to upscale the skills across the tourism sector in the region, targeting MSMEs, youth, women, and local communities. He highlighted that

“ This initiative builds on our efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic to support the resumption of tourism services. Together, we can redefine tourism for the benefit of all EAC citizens and future generations. ”

The launch further provided an overview of the programme as well as the first course on offer “Tourism Marketing”.

Find more information on the EAC-Germany website [here](#).

To enroll in the programme, click [here](#).

Photo Credit: EAC

Women and Youth Convene to Discuss the Implementation of the EAC Simplified Trade Regime to Facilitate Cross-Border Trade

From June 12 to 16, 2024, a regional stakeholder meeting in Nairobi focused on the EAC Simplified Trade Regime (STR) and its implementation review. Among others, women and youth organisations from EAC Partner States participated, highlighting challenges hindering cross-border trade, such as unharmonized customs policies and limited awareness of the STR among informal traders.



During the discussions, key recommendations were presented to enhance STR implementation:

- 1** Harmonisation of Customs Policies: Urging EAC Partner States, including new members like South Sudan, the DRC, and Somalia, to align customs policies to facilitate smoother trade.
- 2** Awareness and Education: Advocating for comprehensive awareness campaigns among traders, border officials, and customs authorities to promote understanding of STR benefits and procedures, aiming to reduce corruption.
- 3** Capacity Building: Emphasising the need for continuous training of stakeholders to improve the application of STR provisions.
- 4** Gender-Responsive Approach: Calling for gender-sensitive implementation, including addressing specific challenges faced by women traders and enhancing their representation in decision-making processes.

Further, the EAC trade experts and private sector, inclusive of women and youth, proposed to conduct a detailed study in 2025 to inform the review of the STR, i.e., the trading thresholds, whereby women and youth representatives proposed for an upward increment of the current threshold from USD 2000 to USD 5000 to be considered, to accommodate rising business costs, increased trade volumes among MSMEs at borders, and to align with the AfCFTA trading threshold. Additionally, the review is to consider initiating a stakeholder sensitization programme on the STR and enhancing trade help desks at borders to support women and youth engaged in cross-border trade.

The meeting concluded with the distribution of a Simplified Guide developed by the EAC Secretariat with the support of GIZ, providing comprehensive information on STR policies, procedures, and rules of origin, among other details, to facilitate cross-border trade.

Find more information on the EAC-Germany website [here](#).



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