

AFRICAN INTEGRATION REPORT 2025

**Strengthening the
Implementation of
Regional Frameworks
to fully Leverage
Continental
Achievements.**

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June 2025

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FOREWORD

African regional integration remains one of the continent's major strategic priorities, driven by the Pan-African vision of a united, prosperous, and influential Africa on the global stage. In a context marked by multiple shocks-pandemics, insecurity, climate change, and geopolitical tensions-the urgency of accelerating the implementation of continental frameworks such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), Agenda 2063, and the Abuja Treaty has become ever more pressing.

This 2025 report on African regional integration, developed under the coordination of the African Union Commission with the support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), responds to the need for a scientific, harmonised, and politically relevant tool to assess the actual progress of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Member States in terms of integration. Based on the African Synthesized Regional Integration Index (ASRII), it highlights the dynamics, achievements, shortcomings, and areas for improvement in achieving continental objectives.

More specifically, the assessment reveals a moderate but still incomplete progression of African integration. The results show significant progress in institutional, infrastructure, and trade-related areas, driven in particular by the AfCFTA, PIDA, and the existence of relatively solid legal frameworks in some RECs. Conversely, greater efforts are needed in the human, social, environmental, and scientific spheres. Delays in these areas are mainly due to fragmented policies, lack of coordination, and limited ownership of continental instruments. In this context, it is crucial to accelerate the ratification and operationalisation of key legal protocols of the African Union-particularly in areas such as free movement, governance, education, and justice-and to position human capital as the central driver of integration by investing in regional education, health, research, and social inclusion systems aligned with the ambitions of Agenda 2063.

This report is not intended as a tool for comparing RECs, but as a framework for evaluation and dialogue, grounded in a rigorous analysis of 11 key dimensions grouped into four major pillars of African integration: political, economic, infrastructure-related, and human. It is designed to assist policymakers, technical and financial partners, researchers, private sector actors, and civil society stakeholders in crafting more coherent and better-targeted public policies, focused on the fundamental needs of African citizens and the achievement of the Africa We Want.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The 2025 African Integration Report is grounded in the African Synthesized Regional Integration Index (ASRII), developed collaboratively by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), with significant contributions from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), African Development Bank (AfDB), the Association of African Central Banks, and national statistical agencies.

The preparation of this Report was a collective effort, involving a diverse group of experts to whom the AUC extends deep gratitude. The RECs played a crucial role, providing substantial input that shaped the document. The overall drafting process was overseen by AU Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade, Industry, and Mining, Albert M. Muchanga. Day-to-day leadership was provided by M. Djamel Ghrib, Director of Economic Development, Trade, Transport, Industry and Mining (AUC); Dr. Stephen Karingi, Director of the Macroeconomics, Finance, and Governance Division (UNECA); Dr. Jean-Denis Gabikini, Head of Trade and Integration Division (AUC); and Dr. Francis Ikome, Chief of the Regional Integration Section (UNECA).

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Lastly, special thanks go to the technical team responsible for drafting the Report, led by Moubarack Lo (Senegal) as Chief of the consulting team, with Dr. Yannick Levodo (Cameroon) serving as Senior Consultant.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACDEG	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
ADB	African Development Bank
AIDA	Action Plan for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa
AMRII	African Multidimensional Regional Integration Index
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
BMICE	Maghreb Bank for Investment and Foreign Trade
CEDEAO	Economic Community of West African States (in French: Communauté Économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest)
CEEAC	Economic Community of Central African States (in French: Communauté Économique des États de l'Afrique Centrale)
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
PIDA	Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa
REC	Regional Economic Community
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
UEMOA	West African Economic and Monetary Union (in French: Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine)
UMA	Arab Maghreb Union (in French: Union du Maghreb Arabe)
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

After sixty years of pursuing the vision of African integration initiated by the founders of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), numerous achievements now make it possible to affirm that Africa is firmly engaged in a process of integration aimed at the continent's harmonious development. Nevertheless, the path toward the realisation of an African Economic Community still faces considerable challenges, and requires continuous monitoring of the actual progress of regional integration.

Burning issues for Africa in 2025

Between 2023 and 2025, the African integration process has encountered new and complex challenges in a rapidly evolving international context. The resurgence of protectionism—particularly in the United States—has had indirect effects on global trade flows and supply chains. At the same time, persistent inflation, driven by geopolitical tensions and restrictive monetary policies, has strained African economies, exacerbating public debt burdens and reducing fiscal space for transformative investment.

Simultaneously, the accelerating digitalisation of trade, spurred by technological innovation, has opened up new opportunities for intra-African commerce. By 2025, around 40% of Africans are shopping online, compared to just 13% in 2017. The

African e-commerce market is estimated to be worth USD 180 billion by 2025, with projections reaching USD 712 billion by 2050. However, this growth is constrained by deficient infrastructure, unequal digital coverage, underdeveloped regional regulatory frameworks, and limited digital skills.

Meanwhile, declining subsidies from major global economies are expected to affect mechanisms for official development assistance. In May 2025, the U.S. administration announced a 22% reduction in non-military public spending, amounting to USD 163 billion. This decision led to significant cuts in contributions to the African Development Fund (managed by the African Development Bank), as well as other aid programmes supported by USAID.

In this context, the 2025 African Integration Report sheds light on key achievements, areas of stagnation, and emerging issues related to continental integration. It is based on an updated methodology and structure within the framework of the African Regional Integration Index (ASRII). The report aims to provide decision-makers, regional institutions, and development partners with a valuable decision-support tool to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2063 and flagship initiatives such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The 2025 African Integration Report “**Strengthening the Implementation of Regional Frameworks to Fully Leverage Continental Achievements**” examines the effective implementation of commitments undertaken by the Member States of the African Union and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), as well as the impact of delays in fulfilling these commitments on the ability of African countries to fully benefit from the progress achieved thus far in regional integration. This edition is structured around seven chapters:

- The theoretical and strategic foundations of ASRII
- The index methodology
- The status of integration at the continental level
- The status of integration at the regional level
- A comparative study on trade flows in Africa
- Lessons learned and recommendations

Chapter I: Theoretical Frameworks for Regional Integration

It reviews the main classical and contemporary theories of regional integration, such as functionalism, neo-functionalism, intergovernmentalism, customs union theory, optimal currency area theory, and highlights the contributions of African political thought, notably through the visions of the Casablanca and Monrovia groups. The chapter also anchors the integration process within the continent's key institutional frameworks: the Abuja Treaty, which outlines the stages for building an African Economic Community; Agenda 2063, which articulates the long-term vision of "The Africa We Want"; and the NEPAD programme, which operationalises key development priorities. This conceptual grounding justifies the adoption of a multidimensional, indicator-based approach to measure integration progress, paving the way for the construction and deployment of the ASRII in the following chapter.

Chapter II: African Synthesized Regional Integration Index (ASRII) Methodology

Chapter II details the conceptual architecture and methodological construction of the African Regional Integration Index (ASRII), which serves as the analytical backbone of the 2025 report. This index is designed to track the progress of African integration in a multidimensional and harmonised manner, aligned with the guiding frameworks of the Abuja

Treaty, Agenda 2063, and the NEPAD programme. ASRII is structured around four major pillars that capture the key dimensions of continental integration: political, economic, infrastructure, and human and social integration. These pillars are operationalised through 11 dimensions divided in sub-dimensions, supported by a mix of quantitative indicators and qualitative responses from the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

The **political integration** pillar includes three dimensions:

- **Institutional integration**, which evaluates the legal and institutional frameworks, the effectiveness of financing mechanisms, and alignment with continental positions.
- **Governance and democracy**, which examines rule of law, governance quality, and adherence to democratic norms.
- **Peace and security**, which assesses the existence and effectiveness of mechanisms for conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and collective security.

The **economic integration** pillar, the central pillar of the index, comprises four dimensions:

- **Business and enterprise development**, which assesses investment climate harmonisation and the promotion of intra-regional investments.
- **Market integration**, which evaluates the regulatory environment for cross-border trade, the volume and quality of intra-regional exchanges, and progress in digital trade.
- **Productive and sustainable integration**, which looks at value chain development, productivity complementarity, digital economy promotion, and environmental sustainability.
- **Macroeconomic integration**, which assesses harmonisation in statistics, fiscal, economic and monetary policies, and efforts toward financial autonomy of RECs and Member States.

The **infrastructure integration** pillar includes a single but critical dimension:

- **Infrastructure integration**, which measures the regional deployment of transport, energy, water and sanitation, and digital infrastructure in alignment with PIDA priorities.



Finally, the human and social integration pillar includes three dimensions:

- **Free movement of persons**, which assesses openness to mobility and the implementation of rights of residence and establishment as enshrined in the Kigali Protocol.
- **Cultural and social integration**, which examines regional cooperation in health, education, youth empowerment, and cultural promotion, including diploma recognition and disease control systems.
- **Science, technology and innovation**, the 11th dimension added in 2025, which reflects the growing importance of scientific cooperation and innovation systems in accelerating integration.

This upgraded structure reflects the growing complexity of African integration and enables more accurate and actionable measurement.

In terms of calculation, ASRII includes a hybrid methodology inherited from AMRII and the ARII, which uses quantitative standardization tools to combine the calculation of qualitative indicators using the simple arithmetic mean standardized on a scale of 0 to 1 with the calculation of quantitative indicators using the principal components analysis method. This complex methodology takes into account the experts' demands for robustness

Chapter III: Continental Assessment

The continental assessment based on the ASRII reveals a moderately positive trajectory for African regional integration in 2025, with notable progress in institutional, trade-related and infrastructure areas. However, persistent disparities between dimensions suggest that integration remains uneven and fragile in certain pillars. The results are presented below according to the four major integration pillars:

Political Integration Pillar

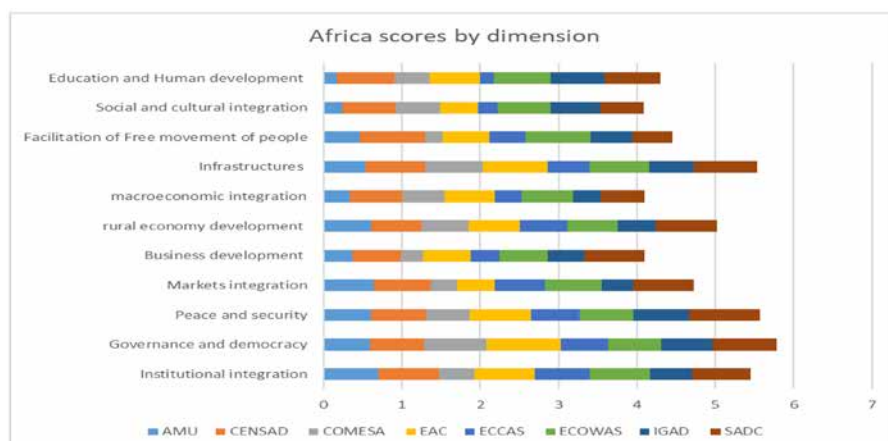
Political integration emerges as the strongest pillar continent-wide, with three high-performing dimensions: governance and democracy (0.722), peace and security (0.696), and institutional integration (0.681). These results reflect the progress made in aligning Member States with AU political frameworks. For instance,

the widespread ratification of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), and the functioning of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in over 40 countries, have contributed to enhanced governance scores. Several RECs, such as ECOWAS and EAC, maintain active judicial and parliamentary institutions, and regularly monitor compliance with regional treaties. The deployment of African Standby Forces, mediation initiatives in the Sahel, and the implementation of the AU's "Silencing the Guns" initiative have supported positive results in peace and security. Despite encouraging scores, key constraints persist.

Many AU protocols remain non-ratified or non-implemented, limiting their legal effect. Supranational institutions lack autonomy or enforcement power in most RECs. Peace and security remain fragile in regions affected by conflict (e.g. Sahel, Sudan, Great Lakes), and some electoral processes continue to face credibility issues. Financing of regional institutions and the slow domestication of legal texts are recurring barriers.

Economic integration pillar

Economic integration reveals a more fragmented performance. The market integration dimension records a relatively strong score (0.590), underpinned by the implementation of AfCFTA instruments, the reduction of tariffs in several RECs (e.g., EAC, COMESA), and the emergence of one-stop border posts. However, intra-African trade remains below 16% of total African trade, and progress is uneven across RECs. The business development dimension (0.513) reflects the limited uptake of regional competition laws and the weak promotion of cross-border investments—only a few RECs (like COMESA) have dedicated regional investment frameworks. The macroeconomic integration score (0.513) points to the persistence of fragmented fiscal and monetary policies. Encouragingly, rural economy development (0.628) performs better, as most RECs are scaling up agro-industrial initiatives and value chain



strategies aligned with CAADP (Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme). For market integration, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), launched in 2019, has been a major turning point. Its implementation has fostered a renewed momentum for trade liberalization, customs cooperation, and alignment of national policies with regional trade frameworks. Several RECs had already established free trade zones or customs unions, facilitating the consolidation of the AfCFTA. The 2025 assessment reveals differentiated progress among countries and regions. Some RECs, such as SADC and COMESA, have made significant advances in eliminating tariffs, harmonizing rules of origin, and establishing trade observatories. Others are still in the early stages of liberalization or face political or technical blockages. Regarding the dimension of Business development, industry and mining, several initiatives support this objective.

The Action Plan for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa (AIDA), the African Mining Vision (AMV), and the various strategies promoting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are all aligned with Agenda 2063's aspirations to develop inclusive, sustainable, and resilient industrial ecosystems. The 2025 assessment highlights growing awareness of the need to integrate industrial policies into regional agendas. In some RECs, industrial strategies have been adopted, mining codes harmonized, and business environment reforms implemented. Several regions are also experimenting with regional special economic zones and investment promotion instruments. However, the overall results remain modest. Industrial value chains remain fragmented, and productive integration across countries is limited. Intra-African investment flows remain weak, and regional complementarities are not sufficiently exploited. The private sector, especially SMEs, often faces constraints in accessing regional markets and financing, limiting its ability to contribute to regional economic dynamics.

As of 2023 in rural economy development dimension, only four RECs had formally adopted a regional agricultural policy (ECOWAS, EAC, COMESA, and SADC). ECOWAS stands out with its agricultural policy (ECOWAP), adopted in 2005 and supported by a regional investment programme (PRIA), while COMESA has implemented a Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) development framework that incorporates land issues and early warning systems. These achievements fall within the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), launched in 2003 under NEPAD. The programme has enabled several RECs to develop Regional Agricultural Investment Plans (RAIPs), monitoring frameworks to evaluate agricultural spending, and

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)

Established in 2002 by the African Union (AU), the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is the continent's primary framework for preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts. It was conceived to provide African-led solutions to the continent's peace and security challenges, grounded in the principles of non-indifference and African ownership.

APSA is built on five core pillars:

- **Peace and Security Council (PSC):** A standing decision-making body for conflict prevention and resolution.
- **Continental Early Warning System (CEWS):** For monitoring and anticipating potential crises.
- **Panel of the Wise:** A body of eminent African personalities supporting mediation and preventive diplomacy.
- **African Standby Force (ASF):** A multidisciplinary and rapid-deployment force composed of regional brigades.
- **Peace Fund:** To finance AU-led peace operations and mediation efforts.

At the regional level, **RECs and regional mechanisms (RMs)** play a critical role in operationalizing APSA, with structures such as ECOWAS's Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN), SADC's Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, and IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN). However, coordination between the AU and RECs/RMs remains uneven and sometimes fragmented, affecting rapid and coherent responses.

APSA has contributed to major conflict interventions in countries like Mali, the Central African Republic, Somalia, and Sudan. Yet it faces persistent challenges, including financial constraints, dependence on external funding, and the need for better harmonization between continental and regional mechanisms.

Strengthening APSA is vital for advancing political integration and stability across Africa, ensuring that peace and security underpin the continent's development and integration goals.

multi-stakeholder platforms for policy dialogue. By 2022, more than 40 African countries had validated a National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP) aligned with CAADP principles. Annual review meetings, known as “Biennial Reviews,” measure progress through harmonized indicators.

Regarding the blue economy, only three RECs (SADC, IGAD, COMESA) have adopted guidelines or strategies related to marine resource management, maritime governance, and the development of coastal zones. Initiatives have emerged to integrate sustainable fisheries, coastal management, and offshore energy exploitation. Moreover, several RECs are participating in regional climate adaptation projects (ACPC/ECA Programme, Agenda 2063, GCF-RECs Programme). In terms of environmental management, fewer than 50% of RECs have a regional action plan for biodiversity or desertification control. The coordination of forestry policies or access to drinking water remains marginal in most regional strategic frameworks. Nevertheless, some progress has been made, such as SADC’s programme on integrated natural resource management and the joint COMESA-EAC-SADC climate strategy adopted in 2021.

Infrastructures pillar

In 2023, the continental average score for this dimension was 0.69, reflecting encouraging progress in several sectors. The transport sector shows the highest level of integration, particularly in road and air transport. Over 80% of RECs have adopted regional road network master plans, and a majority have implemented road corridors facilitating intra-African trade. The creation of One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs), coordinated by COMESA, EAC, and SADC, has considerably improved the efficiency of cross-border transport in Eastern and Southern Africa. In the energy sector, all RECs now have regional strategies for energy integration, and five of them have set up regional power pools (SAPP, EAPP, PEAC, WAPP, COMELEC). These power pools are at various stages of operationalisation, with SAPP and WAPP leading in terms of interconnection and regional electricity trade. However, major disparities remain in energy access, production capacity, and grid infrastructure among African regions. In the water and sanitation sector, regional integration remains limited. Only three RECs (ECCAS, ECOWAS, and SADC) have adopted specific water policies or action plans, and cooperation frameworks for transboundary water management remain weak or poorly implemented. Regarding digital infrastructure, initiatives remain largely national in scope, with insufficient coordination at the regional level. Although several RECs have adopted digital transformation strategies, their implementation is fragmented and lacks a

common vision for the digital integration of the continent.

Despite policy frameworks, implementation is lagging. Many projects remain at feasibility stage due to financing gaps, limited public-private partnerships, and weak project preparation capacity. Infrastructure disparities between regions and within RECs remain significant, and maintenance of existing infrastructure is often neglected. There is a need for greater regional coordination to avoid duplication and ensure integration across corridors.

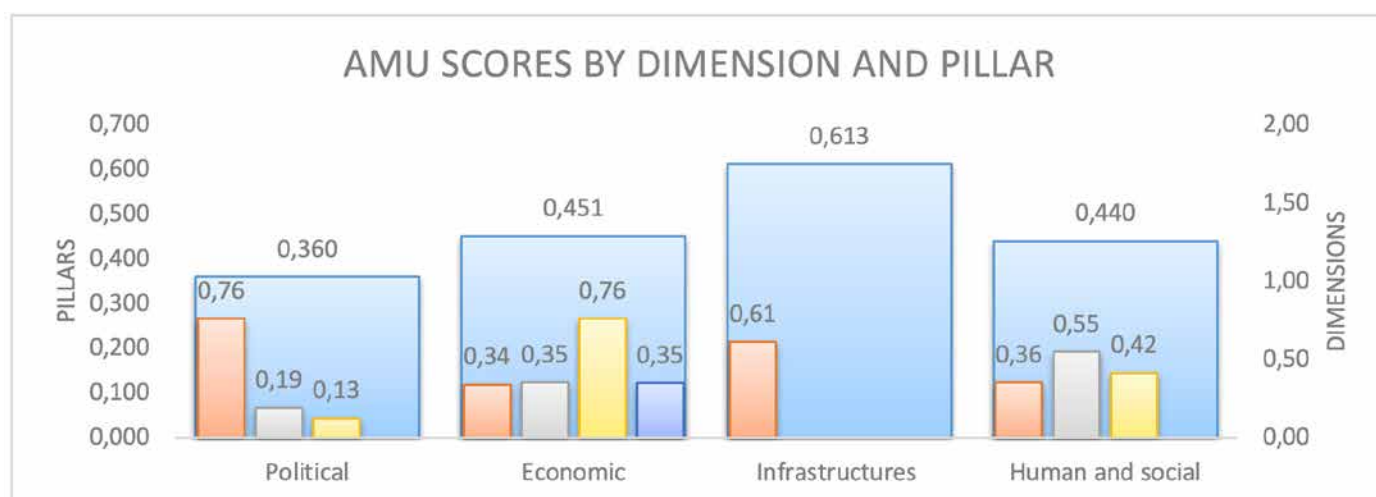
Human and social pillar

With all three dimensions scoring below the continental average, the human and social integration pillar remains the least advanced area in the continental integration agenda. While the African Union’s vision in Agenda 2063 places human capital at the heart of the continent’s transformation, operational progress remains slow and fragmented across regions.

The facilitation of free movement of people, with a continental score of 0.557, shows some progress but remains partial. ECOWAS and the EAC stand out as the most advanced in terms of regional mobility frameworks, offering visa exemptions and rights of residence and establishment. However, most other RECs have not yet fully implemented the provisions of the Kigali Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, adopted in 2018. At continental level, only four Member States had ratified the protocol by 2025—well below the threshold required for its entry into force. Persistent security concerns, limited administrative harmonisation, and weak political commitment continue to slow its adoption.

The social and cultural integration dimension displays the lowest score across all dimensions (0.510), revealing the absence of strong continental or regional frameworks in areas such as cultural cooperation, gender mainstreaming, youth empowerment, and social inclusion. While initiatives such as the African Union Year of Youth (2024) and the African Cultural Renaissance Charter aim to promote shared identity and intergenerational dialogue, their impact remains limited by the lack of dedicated regional programmes, underfunding, and institutional fragmentation. Most RECs do not have standalone commissions or agencies for culture, youth or gender, and social policy remains a marginal component in regional strategies.

The education and human development dimension scores only 0.538, reflecting the limited progress in harmonising education systems, mutual recognition of diplomas, and the development of regional centres



of excellence. Although some advances have been made—such as the CAMES system in Francophone Africa, the East African Qualifications Framework, and initiatives to develop continental research networks (e.g., under the STISA 2024 strategy)—they are still isolated. Cross-border student mobility remains low, and very few RECs have implemented joint curricula, regional scholarship schemes, or regional accreditation mechanisms. In health, pandemic preparedness and cooperation on disease control have improved since COVID-19, but regional coordination of health systems remains embryonic and uneven.

The main obstacles to human and social integration are structural, institutional, and political. First, free movement policies often clash with national security concerns, creating hesitation among Member States to open their borders. Second, the lack of financial and institutional capacity within RECs prevents the rollout of regional programmes in education, health, youth, and culture. Third, the absence of binding continental or regional frameworks in these areas leads to low accountability and fragmented implementation. Lastly, limited citizen awareness and weak civil society involvement hinder bottom-up demand for integration.

Yet, this pillar remains essential to building an inclusive, people-centred integration process. Without it, the long-term legitimacy and sustainability of regional integration in Africa could be undermined. Strengthening this pillar will require renewed political will, greater investment in human capital, and the operationalisation of key instruments such as the Kigali Protocol, the African Education Strategy, and the Health Strategy for Africa.

Chapter IV: Regional Assessment

The sixth chapter of the 2025 African Integration Report presents a detailed assessment of each of the eight recognised Regional Economic Communities (RECs), using ASRII as the principal analytical tool. This chapter provides an in-depth look at the integration performance of each REC based on the eleven dimensions of the index, without engaging in comparative ranking or benchmarking. The analysis highlights the strengths, weaknesses, and structural characteristics of each regional bloc, taking into account their specific contexts, institutional maturity, and alignment with continental objectives as defined by the Abuja Treaty and Agenda 2063.

AMU

With an average score of 0.36, the political pillar of the AMU is based on an institutional architecture designed from the outset to support an ambitious vision of regional integration, based on stability, shared governance and solidarity. The existence of bodies such as the Presidential Council, the Council of Foreign Ministers, BMICE and the Consultative Council testifies to an initial strong political commitment. However, to respond to the renewed aspirations of the Maghreb peoples, this architecture would benefit from being reactivated and consolidated. The functioning of the institutions could be improved by structural factors, such as the regularity of summits, strengthening the resources of the General Secretariat, or adapting the decision-making mechanism. Similarly, advances in democratic governance, judicial cooperation and the protection of rights remain unevenly applied and would benefit from being translated into operational regional mechanisms. Finally, although the Member

States have shown a willingness to coordinate their actions in the face of cross-cutting threats (terrorism, trafficking, instability), the implementation of common peace and security strategies remains fragmented. With this in mind, strengthening political dialogue, reactivating institutional mechanisms and deepening the instruments of collective governance appear to be priority levers for reaffirming AMU's vocation as an area of stability, cooperation and shared prosperity.

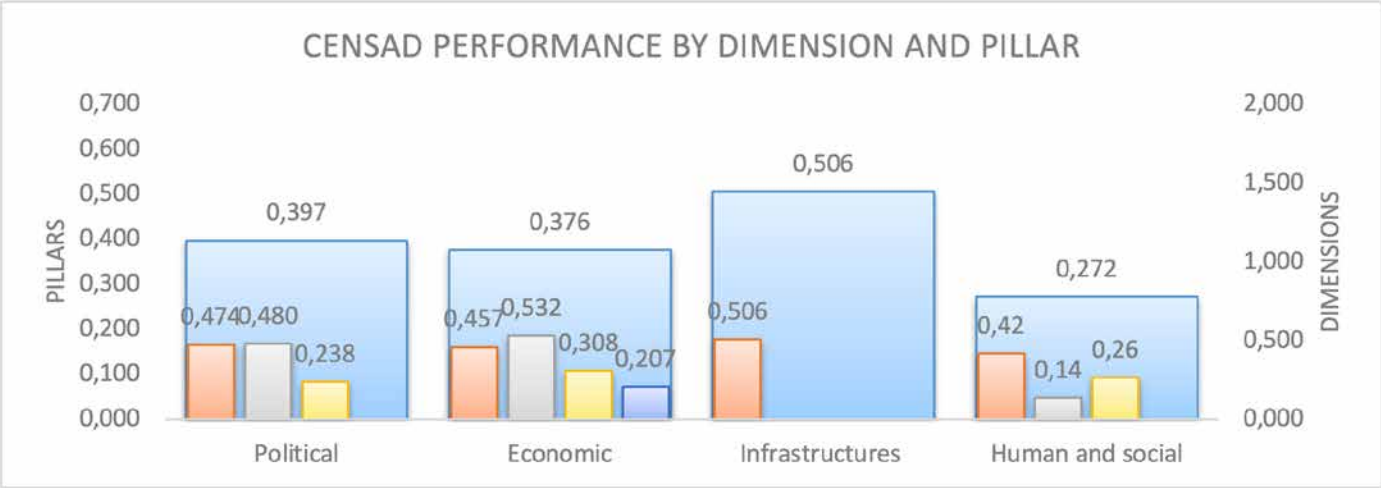
In the economic and human development pillars, AMU's performance is intermediate, with averages of 0.45 and 0.44 respectively. The economic pillar of the AMU shows average performance, reflecting contrasting institutional progress. The Maghreb Bank for Investment and Foreign Trade (BMICE), operational since 2015 with an initial capital of 150 million dollars, plays a structuring role in financing regional projects and supporting productive investment. It has helped to relaunch several cross-border initiatives and is now a credible lever for strengthening Maghreb value chains. Efforts have also been made to harmonise customs systems and economic indicators, facilitating regional comparisons and policy coordination. The Maghreb Business Council plays an essential role in promoting dialogue between economic players, helping to strengthen regional cooperation. However, despite these initiatives, intra-Maghreb trade remains low, representing around 3% of the region's total trade in 2023, underlining the need for deeper economic integration. Human development is one of the Achilles heels of the Maghreb region. The AMU's human development pillar is performing at an average level, supported by promising initiatives that are still limited in their regional scope. Several bilateral agreements, such as the visa waiver between Morocco and Tunisia and the labour mobility agreement signed in 2018, have facilitated human and professional exchanges in certain key sectors. The AMU has also demonstrated

its ability to cooperate in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, through the sharing of information and health resources. Efforts have also been made to boost the employability of young people through vocational training, particularly in the digital sector, supported in part by BMICE.

CENSAD

The 2025 ASRII assessment shows that the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) is making steady strides in its integration journey, particularly in institutional revival and infrastructure development. Under the political integration pillar, the average score of around 0.40 reflects both progress and remaining challenges. Institutional integration (0.47) has benefited from the revision of the Treaty and the reactivation of key community bodies since 2019, including the establishment of the Executive Secretariat. The existence of shared protocols—such as the 2000 Security Charter—and the ratification of the revised Treaty by 13 Member States demonstrate a renewed commitment to political cooperation. While the governance and democracy dimension (0.48) reflects the adoption of regional norms, their full application remains uneven across countries. The peace and security score (0.24) highlights the need to operationalise existing frameworks more effectively, such as the CEN-SAD Peace and Security Council and the Conflict Prevention Mechanism.

The economic integration pillar (average score ~0.38) reveals encouraging signs of engagement, despite the absence of a dedicated customs or monetary union. Market integration (0.46) benefits from broad AfCFTA membership and concrete efforts to facilitate trans-Saharan trade, including initiatives such as the Lagos-Algiers corridor. The business and industry dimension (0.53) stands out as a promising area, reflecting the dynamism of the Sahel-Saharan Bank for Investment and Trade (BSIC) and joint programmes



to develop value chains in agro-industry and mining. However, macroeconomic integration (0.21) and rural development (0.31) remain at an early stage, mainly due to the lack of harmonised policies and funding mechanisms. Building on sub-regional experiences (e.g., WAEMU and CEMAC), CEN-SAD has the opportunity to progressively strengthen coordination in these areas.

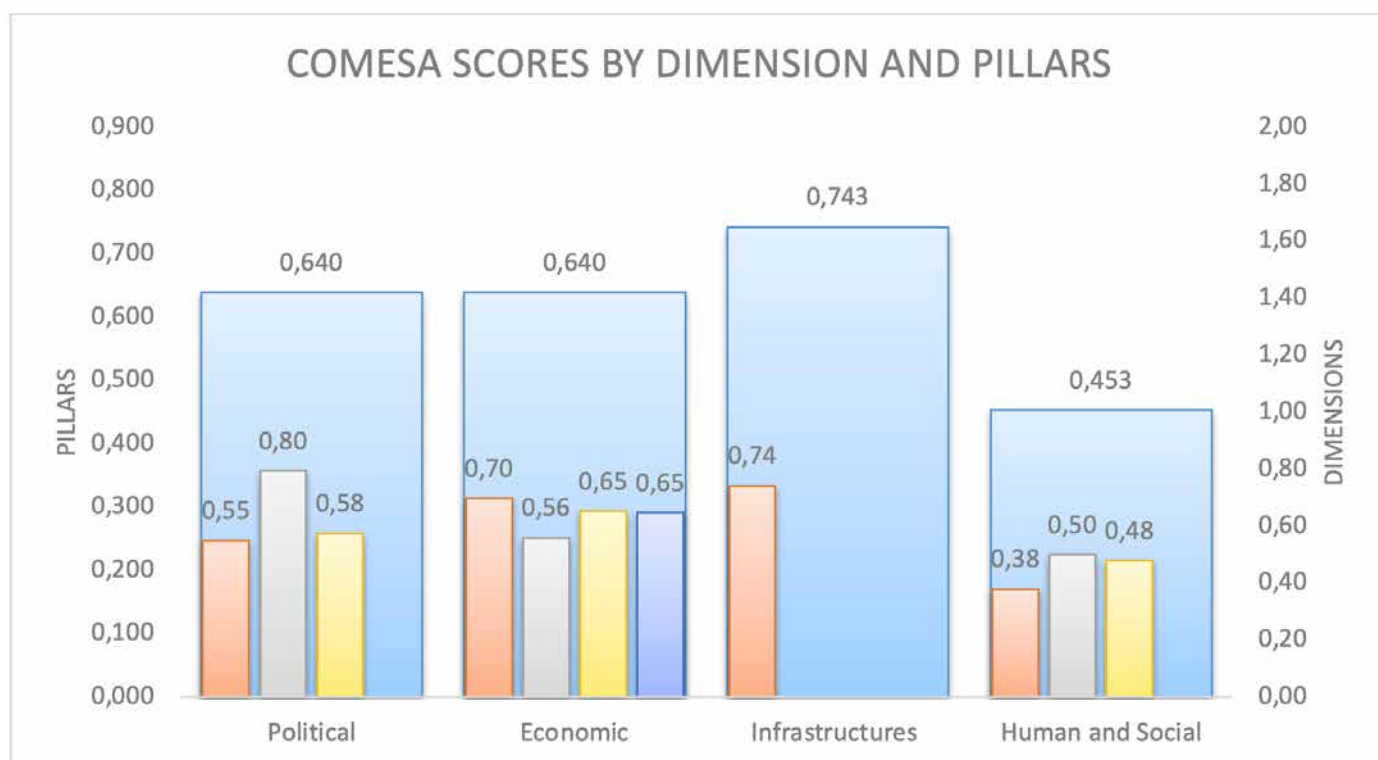
Infrastructure represents a key area of progress for CEN-SAD, with a consolidated score of around 0.51. Member States are showing increasing political will to address the infrastructure gap and foster connectivity in the Sahel-Saharan region. Strategic transport projects—including the Algiers-Lagos Trans-Saharan highway, the Tripoli-Windhoek corridor, and expanded airline links—are helping to open up isolated areas and boost trade. Notable advancements have also been made in rail connectivity, supported by new cross-border initiatives. While energy integration (0.20) and ICT development remain limited, current efforts to mobilise funding for solar and transport infrastructure through partners such as the AfDB and the EU are promising and should be further encouraged.

The human and social integration pillar, with an average score of 0.27, remains the area with the greatest potential for progress. In terms of free movement (0.42), several Member States apply visa-free regimes through other organisations, but a fully operational CEN-SAD protocol is still pending. Nevertheless, the existence of draft agreements and initiatives such as “Sahel-Saharan Citizenship”

offer a solid foundation for future cooperation. Social development (0.14) and education and human development (0.26) call for renewed attention. Although regional policies in these areas are still at an embryonic stage, opportunities exist to promote the mutual recognition of diplomas, develop centres of excellence, and launch health and social protection initiatives adapted to the region’s needs. Enhanced involvement of civil society and greater ownership of existing commitments could transform this pillar into a vector for unity and resilience. Overall, CEN-SAD shows promising signs of reinvigoration.

COMESA

Results achieved by COMESA highlight a regional dynamic that is strongly focused on institutional integration and infrastructure development, where the organization demonstrates particularly high performance. The analysis of COMESA’s integration performance across the four pillars highlights both progress and structural imbalances. The institutional pillar is marked by good but contrasting results: while one dimension reaches 0.80, reflecting strong institutional development or legal frameworks, other dimensions remain below 0.6, showing challenges in governance and policy implementation. The infrastructure pillar continues to stand out with the highest scores, as dimensions relating to institutional framework and Governance and democracy both reach 0.743, underscoring significant advancement in regional connectivity, a core driver of integration... The economic pillar demonstrates an average and stable performance, with scores ranging from



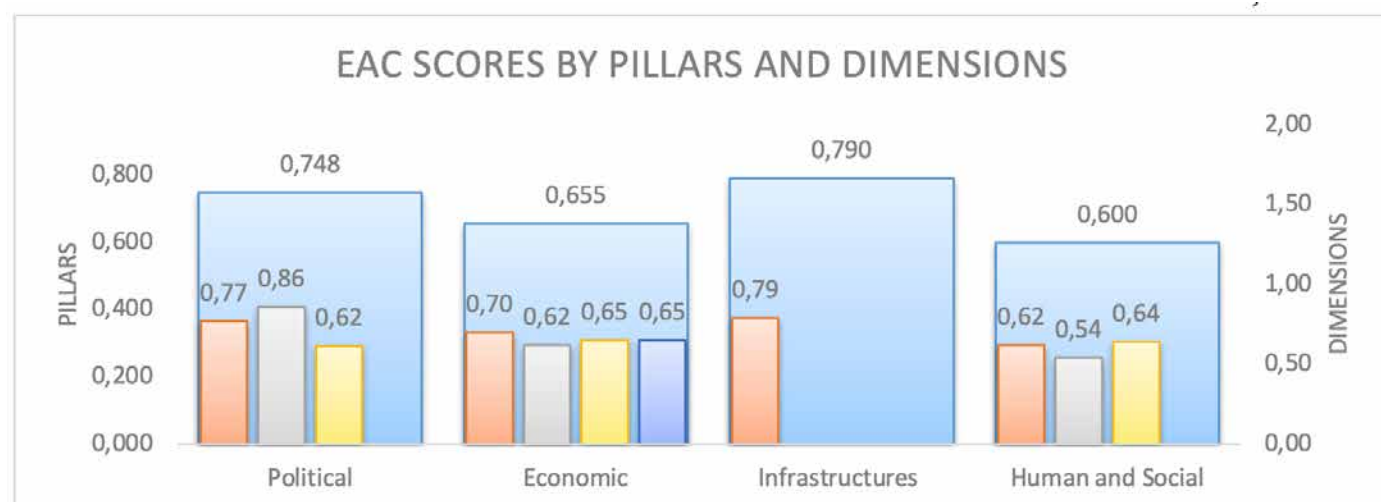
0.56 to 0.70, indicating some progress in trade and business-related dimensions, while macroeconomic and sectoral integration remain limited. The human and social pillar remains the weakest, with the lowest score of 0.38 in one dimension and an average performance of 0.453 and 0.50 in others, highlighting continued weaknesses in regional social policy alignment, knowledge exchange, and mobility. Overall, COMESA exhibits an institutional and infrastructure driven integration model, with notable efforts in institutional structuring, but persistent gaps in macroeconomic coherence and human capital integration that must be addressed to achieve more balanced and inclusive regional development. Sub-dimensions such as post-conflict reconstruction and development (score: 1.00), nominal convergence programs (1.00), financial systems integration (0.97), and road infrastructure (0.95) reflect a strategic commitment to macroeconomic

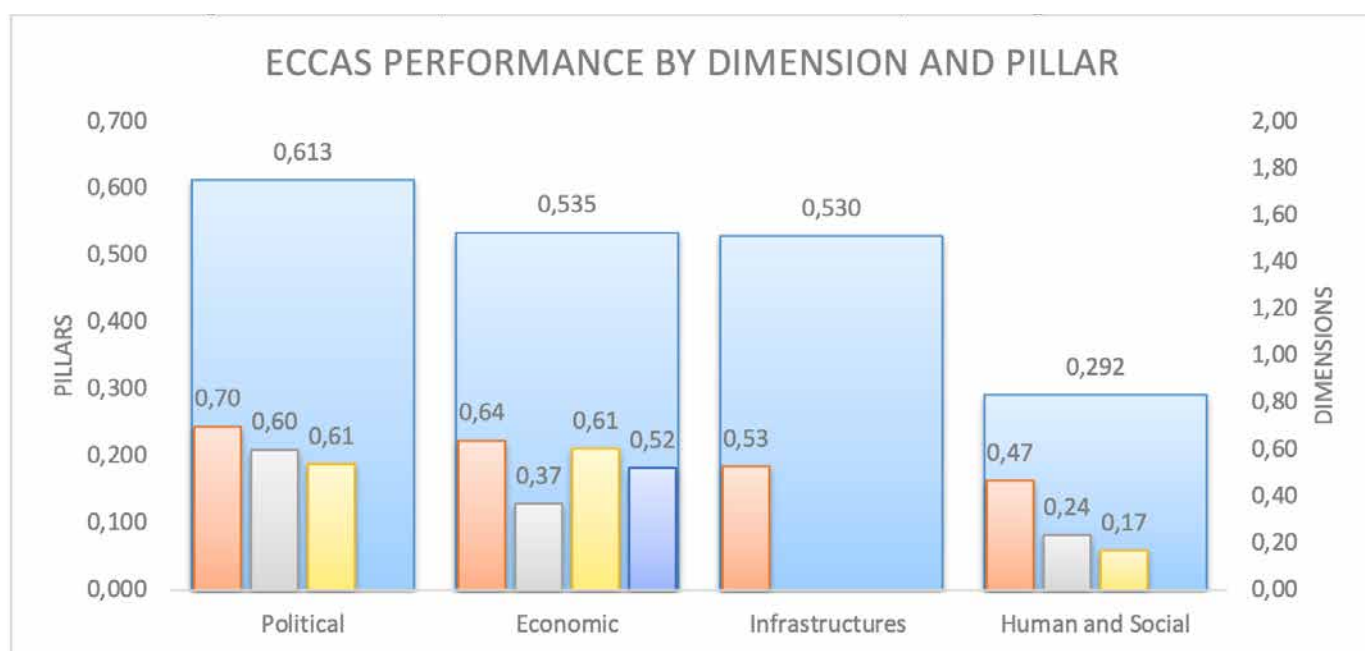
stability and regional connectivity. These achievements are aligned with COMESA's priorities outlined in its Sixth Medium-Term Strategic Plan (2021-2025), which emphasizes infrastructure expansion, policy harmonization, and trade facilitation. High scores are also noted in gender policies (0.88) and industrial policy (0.80), indicating attention to inclusive development and economic diversification. However, critical weaknesses are apparent in several key areas. The African Standby Force and fiscal policy integration both register a score of 0, underscoring the lack of operational regional security mechanisms. Similarly, low scores are observed in migration (0.33), education (0.21), funding mechanisms (0.45), and health (0.35), revealing serious gaps in the social and human integration agenda. These disparities suggest a fragmented regional integration model, where economic progress has far outpaced social cohesion and security cooperation.

EAC

EAC demonstrates a relatively advanced level of regional integration, particularly in its institutional and governance dimensions, while notable gaps remain in economic and social integration. From an institutional standpoint, EAC performs strongly. It scores 0.77 on institutional framework, 0.86 on governance and democracy, and 0.62 on peace and security. These figures reflect a well-established legal foundation, the existence of operational regional organs (such as EAC J and EALA), and clear political commitment to democratic principles and regional stability. In this regard, EAC stands out as one of the most institutionally developed regional economic communities in Africa. On the economic front, however, the picture is more mixed. Market integration receives a score of 0.70, highlighting ongoing realisations in eliminating non-tariff barriers, harmonizing customs regimes, and ensuring the smooth movement of goods. Business and industrial development shows better progress (0.62), though it still falls short of its full potential despite promising initiatives in regional value chains.

Macroeconomic integration remains partial (0.65), suggesting the need for stronger alignment in fiscal, monetary, and financial policies among member states. Facilitation of free movement, Social, cultural, and human development dimensions score 0.62, 0.54, and 0.64, respectively-indicating positive momentum in education, gender, and innovation, though further consolidation is required to ensure inclusive and equitable outcomes. The free movement of persons and migration, a cornerstone of continental integration, remains incomplete with a score of 0.62. Despite formal commitments to protocols on the right of residence and establishment, implementation remains uneven across member states.





When we have a deep look by sub dimensions, we can admit that EAC exhibits a strong level of regional integration, particularly in institutional, legal, and infrastructure-related dimensions. High scores in areas such as energy (0.975), legislation (0.93), and governance (0.85) reflect a solid legal framework, well-functioning institutions, and effective regional coordination. Mid-performing dimensions-including fiscal integration, competition policy, education, and movement of people-indicate tangible progress, though implementation gaps remain across member states. In contrast, weaker scores in social protection (0.32), post-conflict reconstruction (0.32), monetary integration (0.38), and migration (0.49) highlight structural vulnerabilities and limited harmonization in key socio-economic areas. While EAC has laid a robust foundation for deeper integration, addressing disparities in execution, enhancing financial autonomy, and reinforcing capacities in health, digital governance, and social inclusion are essential to achieving a more balanced and sustainable regional integration process.

ECCAS

The political pillar remains one of ECCAS's strong points, with an average score of 0.638, reflecting relative institutional stability, improved governance and notable progress in regional security. The 'institutional integration' dimension, with a score of 0.703, reflects the consolidation of the structures put in place following the 2020 reform, with active bodies, a revised treaty and a functional Commission. Governance and democracy, although marked by tensions in several countries, achieved a respectable score of 0.601, reflecting a desire to improve the normative framework, even if democratic practices

remain heterogeneous. Finally, peace and security recorded a performance of **0.61**, driven by the efforts of COPAX, MARAC and joint initiatives with the African Union to resolve conflicts in sensitive areas such as the DRC and CAR. Despite the challenges, this pillar illustrates a relatively coherent basis for regional governance.

With an average score of 0.535, the economic pillar shows an intermediate performance, revealing visible but still fragile progress in structuring an integrated economic area. Market integration stands out positively, with a score of 0.638, showing efforts to strengthen trade liberalisation and harmonise trade rules, particularly in connection with the implementation of the FTAA. The development of the rural economy, with a score of 0.607, is also a strong area, supported by regional agricultural initiatives and sustainable development policies. On the other hand, results remain average for macroeconomic integration (0.528) and industry and mining (0.369), due to the low level of coordination of budgetary and fiscal policies, the absence of common convergence mechanisms, and the still marginal importance of regional industrial value chains. The ECCAS economy is making progress, but without a fully-fledged common market dynamic.

Infrastructure is a well-identified priority for ECCAS, with a consolidated score of 0.536. This result can be explained by the implementation of several interconnection projects in the road, energy and digital sectors, often in partnership with donors such as the ADB, the European Union and NEPAD under the PIDA programme. Strategic corridors are being rehabilitated, and regional hydroelectric projects have been supported. However, the challenges of

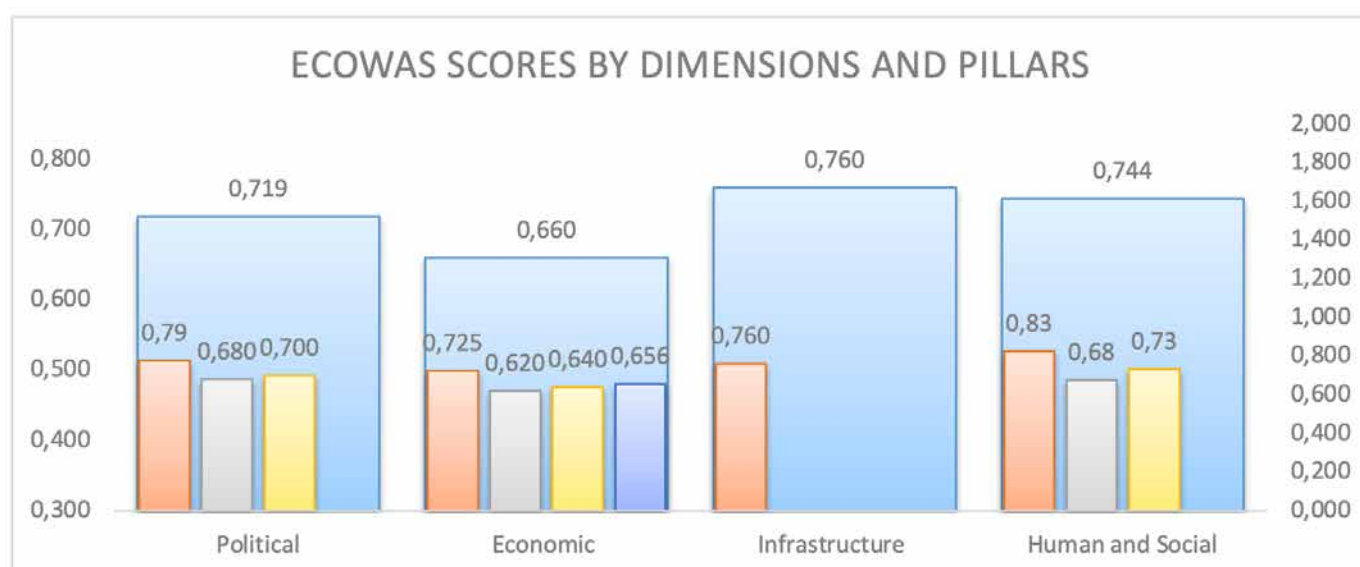
maintenance, local financing and project governance are still holding back large-scale impact. This pillar confirms the central place given to infrastructure in the vision of the region's physical integration.

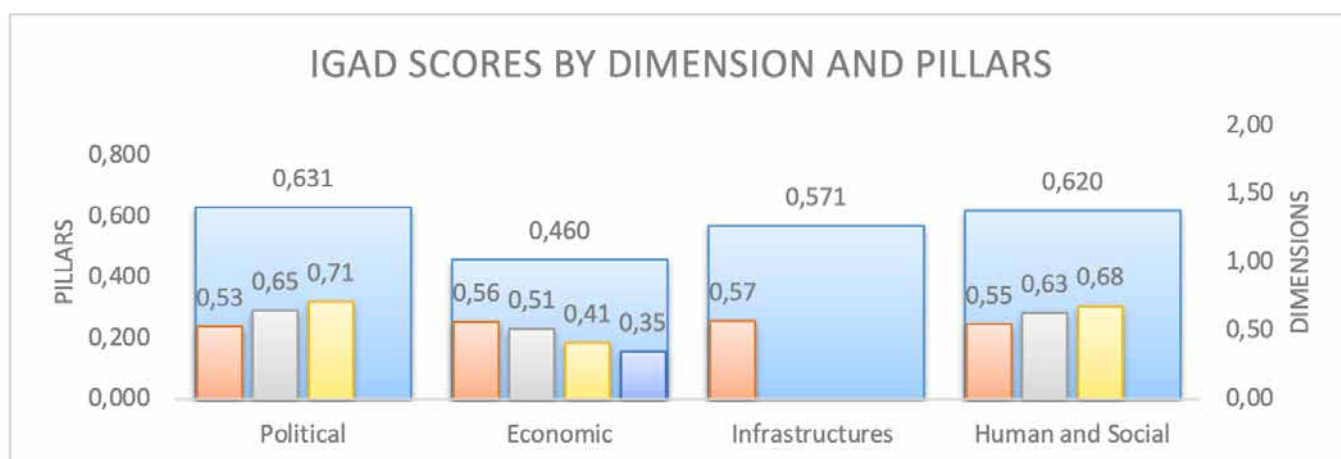
The human and social pillar remains the weak link in regional integration, with an overall score of 0.292, revealing that integration is still marginal when it comes to people-related issues. Free movement and migration, with a score of 0.469, reflects some legal progress (protocols signed) but uneven application, particularly in terms of the right of establishment and mutual recognition of identity documents. The social dimension, at 0.237, suffers from a lack of operational programmes and mechanisms for harmonising regional social policies. Finally, the human development, education and science dimension is at its lowest with a score of 0.17, a sign of the almost total absence of structured action in this area. The absence of regional universities, joint research centres or coordinated education policies explains this underperformance, despite the priorities set out in Agenda 2063.

ECOWAS

ECOWAS is one of the most integrated RECs in Africa, supported by a robust institutional architecture, an extensive normative base and concrete achievements in all the pillars of integration. The human and social pillar, which registers a fairly high score (0.74), reflects ECOWAS's remarkable efforts in the areas of free movement of people, public health, education, empowerment of young people and women, and culture. ECOWAS has harmonised education policies through the regional qualifications framework, supported academic and professional mobility, and implemented programmes to integrate young people into agriculture and entrepreneurship. In the health sector, the region has set up a regional

epidemiological surveillance mechanism (WHAIS), coordinated the response to COVID-19, and supports resilient public health systems through WAPHNet. On the cultural front, pooling efforts to preserve heritage, promote creative industries and disseminate a common West African identity strengthens regional cohesion. ECOWAS is also a pioneer in the free movement of people, with the entry into force of the 1979 Protocol, the ECOWAS passport, the residence certificate and the abolition of visas for citizens of the area. To date, ECOWAS is the only African region where free movement is effectively implemented in practice, although challenges remain at the borders. The infrastructure pillar (0.76) reflects the region's ambitions in terms of connectivity. The adoption of a Regional Infrastructure Master Plan has made it possible to structure priority corridors, such as Dakar-Lagos and Abidjan-Ouagadougou-Niamey, and to strengthen rail, road and energy interconnections. The West African Power Pool (WAPP) facilitates electricity exchanges between states, while the SIGMAT customs interconnection programme is speeding up the digitisation of transit and customs clearance procedures. Efforts are also being made in the digital field, with regional backbone projects and the gradual adoption of coordinated digital policies. On the economic front (0.67), ECOWAS has made substantial progress in consolidating the Customs Union, with a Common External Tariff (CET) and a Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) covering more than 2,700 companies and nearly 8,000 certified products. The organisation is also promoting regional industrialisation through the ECOWAS Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP), the pooling of tax policies, and common agri-food strategies. The monetary agenda remains a priority, with the relaunch of the single ECO currency, framed by a macroeconomic convergence pact to be revised in 2021.





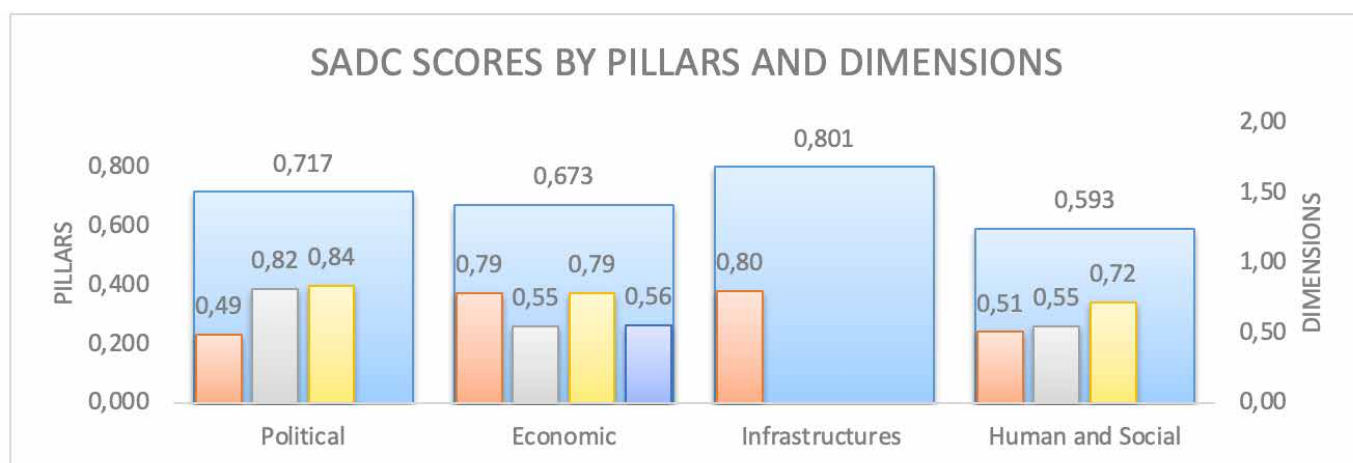
The integration of financial systems is progressing due to cooperation between central banks, the connection of regional payment systems and support for financial inclusion in rural areas. Finally, the political pillar (0.72) is supported by fully functional community institutions: the ECOWAS Commission, the Community Parliament, the Court of Justice, and specialised agencies working in the fields of security, energy and agriculture. In terms of democratic governance, ECOWAS has systematic electoral observation missions, a conflict prevention framework (ECOWARN) and the capacity to intervene via ECOMOG. These tools have enabled regional mediation in several recent crises (Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso), reflecting a genuine desire for political stabilisation. One of the major limitations of ECOWAS to date is the withdrawal of three member states, which could ultimately reduce the integration efforts made in West Africa over the years.

IGAD

On the political front (0.63), IGAD stands out as one of the most advanced RECs in this pillar, thanks to its recognised expertise in peace and security. It has been at the forefront of mediation processes in the Horn of Africa (peace agreements in Sudan, support for the transition process in Somalia, involvement in Ethiopia and South Sudan). Institutions such as CEWARN (Early Warning and Response Network) and platforms such as the Governance Forum reinforce this strategic role. Despite persistent inter-state tensions (notably Ethiopia-Eritrea, Somalia-Kenya), IGAD has a solid political framework, with an effective Executive Secretariat and a validated regional governance strategy. The high score of 0.71 for peace and security, combined with a regional governance score of 0.65, reflects this consolidation, even if political integration in the strict sense (convergence of regimes) remains embryonic. Despite a clear political will, the economic pillar remains one of the weakest,

though some progress has been made, however: the Minimum Integration Plan (MIP), the implementation of an SPS (sanitary and phytosanitary) framework, work on Single Border Posts (OSBPs), and efforts to integrate pastoral markets via the ICPALD. IGAD Member States (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and South Sudan) have signed the IGAD Protocol on Transhumance which will promote the development of pastoral systems for peace and economic development in a region where 70% of the landmass is arid and semi arid (ASAL) with pastoralism as a major economic activity.

However, the economic integration score of 0.46 reflects the low level of operationalisation of the protocols signed, in the absence of customs harmonisation mechanisms and a common tariff strategy. In the industrial and business spheres, initiatives such as the revitalisation of the IGAD Business Forum and support for trade logistics (e.g. warehouse receipt system) are promising, but still fragmented. IGAD is making tangible progress in infrastructure, notably through major projects such as the LAPSSET corridor (Kenya-Southern Sudan-Ethiopia), studies on the Kampala-Juba-Djibouti axis, and the development of the Djibouti free zone. The score of 0.57 reflects this dynamic, although coverage remains uneven across the sub-regions. In terms of human mobility, the signing of the protocols on free movement and transhumance (with a roadmap for implementation) is a remarkable step forward, even if practical implementation remains slow. Digital management and the regional interconnection of IT systems, on the other hand, are struggling to get off the ground. The human integration score of 0.61 sums up this balance between normative ambition and partial implementation. This is one of IGAD's most promising pillars, with strong roots in programmes for the movement of people, social programmes, education and health.



This is one of IGAD's most promising pillars, with strong roots in programmes for free movement of people with the signing for the IGAD Protocol on Free movement of Persons (by Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda) and managing forced displacement in a region of mixed migration of refugees, IDPs and economic migrants. In addition, IGAD has robust social development programmes, on education and health. The regional education programme (IGAD Regional Qualifications Framework, regional scholarships), gender and public health initiatives, as well as resilience actions for young people in pastoral areas, reflect a concrete commitment. IGAD has also invested in innovative projects such as the Regional Cancer Centre and student mobility programmes. Active involvement in the response to COVID-19 has strengthened its role in health coordination.

SADC

Globally, SADC demonstrates a balanced yet differentiated integration profile across its four main pillars, as reflected in the chart below, which highlights a generally strong and coherent performance with some variations in depth and consistency among the different dimensions. The institutional pillar maintains solid results, with scores ranging from 0.49 to 0.84, highlighting strong governance and legal frameworks, particularly in peace and security. The economic pillar follows closely with robust scores between 0.55 and 0.797, illustrating progress in industrialisation, trade, and investment, though slightly held back by lower performance in macroeconomic coordination. The infrastructure pillar continues to shine with consistent scores of 0.808, confirming SADC's commitment to connectivity and regional physical integration. Meanwhile, the human and social pillar shows encouraging performance with scores between

0.513 and 0.72, indicating improvements in gender equality, education, and youth empowerment, though some gaps remain in social protection and migration. Overall, this visual reinforces the notion of SADC as a structurally grounded bloc with impressive achievements in infrastructure and governance, and steady progress in economic and social cohesion, though strategic efforts are still needed to reinforce underperforming dimensions.

The sub-dimensional breakdown of SADC's integration confirms earlier insights by highlighting a strong performance in infrastructure-related areas, particularly roads and water and sanitation, which both achieve near-perfect scores, reflecting mature regional connectivity. High scores are also observed in industrial policy, energy, and governance, reinforcing the strength of the infrastructure and institutional pillars. In contrast, sub-dimensions such as statistical integration and funding score significantly lower, exposing critical weaknesses in macroeconomic coordination and autonomous financial mechanisms. Other mid-range scores in areas like gender, agriculture, and trade facilitation suggest moderate progress with room for improvement. Overall, this sub-dimensional view confirms a pattern of uneven integration, with solid gains in physical infrastructure and policy alignment, but lingering gaps in financial, data, and resource governance.

Chapter V: Intra-African Trade: A Comparative Analysis of Regional Economic Communities

Chapter V focuses on the current status of intra-African trade, which remains modest despite growing political commitment and the launch of

continental initiatives such as the AfCFTA. As of 2023, intra-African exports represented only 15.0% of total African exports, compared to over 60% in the European Union and 38% in Asia, highlighting a persistent structural weakness in Africa's trade integration.

Trade remains concentrated in a few countries and in primary commodities, although manufactured goods now account for nearly 43% of intra-African exports, signalling a gradual shift towards more diversified exchanges. The total value of intra-African trade was estimated at approximately \$85 billion in 2023, with a projected increase to \$101 billion by 2025 if AfCFTA implementation accelerates and trade barriers continue to fall. The chapter highlights that intra-African trade flows are shaped by varying regional dynamics. Eastern and Southern Africa exhibit significant trade activity, supported by regional trade initiatives and infrastructure corridors. Central and North Africa, meanwhile, face specific structural and logistical challenges that affect the intensity and fluidity of trade within and across their borders. Persistent non-tariff barriers, infrastructure deficits, and limited productive capacities—particularly in landlocked countries—continue to constrain trade expansion.

The analysis underscores the strategic importance of strengthening trade facilitation frameworks, digital platforms, and regional logistics corridors to enhance trade performance across all regions.

These trade-related issues are directly reflected in several dimensions of the ASRII—most notably market integration, infrastructure, and productive integration. This alignment underscores the relevance of the index as a comprehensive monitoring tool for assessing not only the overall effectiveness of Africa's integration efforts, but also the specific progress made within each Regional Economic Community (REC). The next section of the report presents a detailed evaluation based on the ASRII, providing a continental and regional overview of integration performance across all eleven dimensions and REC.

Chapter VI: Lessons Learnt and Policy Recommendations

Promote Governance and Peace as Foundations for Lasting Integration

- ✓ Political instability, unconstitutional changes, and recurrent conflict continue to redirect institutional energy away from integration priorities. RECs and Member States have increasingly focused on conflict resolution,

often at the expense of long-term integration programmes.

- ✓ Strengthening democratic institutions, respect for rule of law, and inclusive governance will help reduce fragility and enable sustained regional cooperation.
- ✓ RECs should be equipped with early warning and preventive diplomacy mechanisms that not only respond to crises but also safeguard regional stability in the long run.
- ✓ Leadership and accountability remain key: good governance ensures policy continuity and fosters trust in regional institutions.

Boost Investment in Agriculture, Industry, to Deepen Economic Integration

The underperformance of the productive, rural, and macroeconomic dimensions reveals persistent gaps in sectoral investment and policy implementation. Agricultural productivity, industrial development, and rural transformation are essential to reducing poverty and supporting intra-African trade.

- ✓ Regional agricultural strategies should promote food security, facilitate cross-border value chains, and enable climate-resilient farming systems.
- ✓ Macroeconomic harmonisation, including fiscal convergence and monetary cooperation, remains critical to building stable and predictable economic environments.

Harness the Power of the Private Sector, Youth, and Women as Key Drivers of Integration

Private enterprises, especially small and medium-sized ones, are the backbone of most African economies but are often left out of regional policymaking. Likewise, youth and women, though central to demographic and economic growth, remain underrepresented in integration processes. RECs must create a business-friendly regulatory environment, encourage public-private dialogue, and support SMEs' participation in regional value chains.

- ✓ Synergies between the private sector and education systems are needed to match training with regional industrial demands.
- ✓ Empowering women and youth through targeted regional initiatives will unlock new engines of growth, innovation, and social cohesion.

- ✓ Policy frameworks must also include the informal sector, which provides livelihoods for millions and represents a vital link in regional integration dynamics.

Build and Leverage Shared Infrastructure for Regional Value Chains

The development of cross-border infrastructure is a cornerstone of regional integration. Shared infrastructure—particularly in transport, energy, and digital connectivity—is essential for creating an economic space large enough to exploit complementarities between African economies. It enables the development of regional value chains, reduces transaction costs, and enhances competitiveness across borders.

- ✓ Regional infrastructure facilitates the expansion of financial markets, labour mobility, and innovation ecosystems. Greater connectivity contributes not only to trade efficiency but also to the realisation of regional industrialisation goals.
- ✓ Infrastructure planning must be approached collectively, aligning national investment plans with REC priorities and continental strategies such as PIDA (Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa).

Understand Political Economy Dynamics to Deepen Integration Effectively

Effective integration requires a nuanced understanding of the political and economic dynamics within and among Member States. The varying interests of countries, the influence of national elites, and external partnerships often affect the timing, scope, and sequencing of integration reforms.

- ✓ RECs must tailor their strategies to reflect internal heterogeneity and political sensitivities, ensuring that the costs and benefits of integration are fairly distributed.
- ✓ Political commitment is the foundation of any sustainable integration process. While economic growth, trade, and security are important outcomes, they depend on political stability, trust, and institutional legitimacy.
- ✓ Integration strategies should explicitly consider the risk of political fragmentation or conflict, and adopt mechanisms to strengthen collective ownership and regional solidarity.





INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Over the past two decades, Africa has experienced a gradual but tangible progression in its regional integration journey. Building on the vision of Pan-African unity, this process has been driven by the adoption of landmark frameworks such as the Abuja Treaty and Agenda 2063. Significant achievements have been made in the liberalization of intra-African trade, the expansion of cross-border infrastructure through the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), and the establishment of dedicated mechanisms for peace and security (APSA) and, more recently, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Today, intra-African trade accounts for nearly 16% of total trade, a notable increase from the early 2000s, and major advances have been recorded in the alignment of legal and regulatory frameworks, the operationalization of One-Stop Border Posts, and the reduction of non-tariff barriers.

Despite these tangible gains and a renewed political commitment to integration, the continent still faces persistent gaps between formal commitments and actual implementation. Disparities remain pronounced across Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Member States. While some RECs have successfully launched customs unions or made progress in liberalizing services, others lag due to infrastructure bottlenecks, uneven political will, and limited statistical capacity. Moreover, delays in ratifying or enacting protocols, weak convergence of policies, and insufficiently harmonized trade regimes continue to impede the realization of the continent's full integration potential. These gaps are further widened by external challenges, including rising protectionism, global geo-economic tensions, and the fragility exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this context, the need for a robust, harmonized, and policy-aligned measurement tool has become ever more apparent. Monitoring progress based solely on the adoption of treaties and protocols is insufficient; it is essential to assess their actual implementation and the impact of these instruments on growth, resilience, and sustainable development. Only with a reliable and comprehensive evaluation framework can African leaders, RECs, and stakeholders identify bottlenecks, prioritize actions, and transform integration commitments into tangible outcomes.

Previous attempts to measure African integration, such as the African Regional Integration Index (ARII)

and the Multidimensional African Regional Integration Index (AMRII), have provided valuable insights but have also revealed limitations. The ARII, launched in 2016 by the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and UNECA, laid the foundation for scientific measurement but was criticized for focusing primarily on comparison rather than implementation. It relied on the min-max methodology, which sometimes masked performance gaps and did not sufficiently capture the practical application of regional decisions. The AMRII later broadened the scope to include new dimensions such as the environment, peace and security, and democracy, but its recommendations and indicators were often not fully aligned with the operational priorities of the RECs or the complexity of integration on the ground.

Recognizing these shortcomings, and following consultations with REC leaders, technical partners, and continental institutions, African stakeholders agreed on the need to synthesize and strengthen the integration measurement framework. This consensus was formalized at the AU Coordination Committee meeting in Nairobi in January 2023, which called for the development of the African Synthesized Regional Integration Index (ASRII). The ASRII builds on the lessons of previous indices, combines both qualitative and quantitative indicators, and puts a strong emphasis on the degree of implementation of continental and regional commitments—anchored in Agenda 2063 and the Abuja Treaty.

The present **2025 African Integration Report** “Strengthening the Implementation of Regional Frameworks to Fully Leverage Continental Achievements” is a comprehensive assessment based on the ASRII. It pursues several strategic objectives:

- To provide a data-driven, objective overview of the current state of integration at continental and regional levels, reflecting both achievements and persistent challenges;
- To identify the structural and operational gaps between the commitments made by Member States and RECs and their effective implementation, in order to inform and guide targeted policy responses;
- To support decision-makers in monitoring, prioritizing, and accelerating the implementation of flagship frameworks and programmes, such as AfCFTA, PIDA, and the regional protocols on governance, peace, and human development;
- To foster accountability, ownership, and a culture of continuous improvement among Member States, RECs, and continental institutions, by providing a transparent, harmonized, and actionable measurement tool.

By structuring its analysis around four main pillars—political, economic, infrastructure, and human and social—and eleven dimensions, the ASRII offers a rigorous methodology for monitoring integration performance. Its transparent and adaptable framework, validated through dialogue and collaboration with RECs and technical experts, aims to equip policymakers with practical insights to bridge the gap between formal commitments and transformative impact. Ultimately, the report seeks to contribute to the realization of an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, in line with the aspirations of Agenda 2063.





CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Since independence, regional integration has been a strategic pillar of economic and political development on the African continent. Its aim is twofold: to overcome the fragmentation inherited from colonisation, and to ensure that Africa is part of a long-term dynamic of cooperation and interdependence that is conducive to collective prosperity. With this in mind, a number of theoretical approaches have been mobilised to think about, guide and evaluate the processes of regional integration. These analytical frameworks, at the crossroads of economics, political science and institutional law, make it possible to understand the underlying logic of African initiatives, whether at the level of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) or at the continental level, through the Abuja Treaty or the African Union's Agenda 2063.

This chapter examines these conceptual foundations, starting with economic approaches, which focus on efficiency gains, investment dynamics, macroeconomic convergence and the viability of common currency areas. It then looks at the political theories of integration, which analyse the mechanisms of inter-state cooperation, the logic of institutional spillovers, and the limits imposed by national sovereignty. Finally, the chapter places these theoretical frameworks in the African context, tracing the evolution of pan-African thinking, the debates between models of unification, and the continental

strategies implemented since the 1960s to achieve African unity. The aim is to provide a comprehensive historical, analytical and prospective framework for understanding the dynamics and challenges of regional integration in Africa.

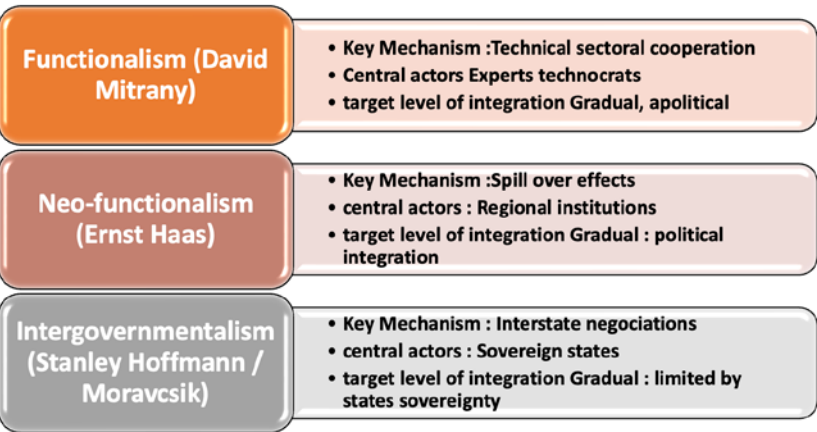
1. Theoretical economic approaches to regional integration

Since independence, regional integration has been a core development strategy for African countries, with several economic theories offering key insights into its mechanisms and implications. The early theory of customs unions by Jacob Viner (1950) emphasized static effects, distinguishing between trade creation and trade diversion—where the former enhances efficiency, and the latter may reduce overall welfare by replacing cheaper third-country imports with costlier intra-regional ones. Further refinements by Lipsey (1957) and Krauss (1972) introduced nuanced views, showing that even trade diversion might yield long-term welfare gains through dynamic effects like FDI inflows, economies of scale, and innovation. These dynamics were formalized by Balassa (1961), who outlined five integration stages—from free trade area to political union—emphasizing transformative gains such as market enlargement, competition-driven efficiency, and macroeconomic coordination. This staged vision underpins Africa's integration frameworks, from ECOWAS to the AfCFTA, and informs current efforts toward an African customs union and common market, as highlighted in recent AUC studies. Monetary integration further enriches this agenda, notably through the theory of Optimal Currency Areas (Mundell, 1961), which stresses

labour mobility, trade openness, fiscal solidarity, and macroeconomic convergence as prerequisites for viable monetary unions. The WAEMU and CEMAC experiences provide practical lessons-both achievements and limitations-while ongoing debates around the ECOWAS single currency and the establishment of continental financial institutions signal the continent’s ambitions for deeper monetary unification. These efforts require strong political commitment and institutional robustness, as reaffirmed during the July 2024 STC meeting in Tunis.

2. Political theories

Beyond economic considerations, regional integration is also shaped by political choices, shared institutions, and state cooperation in strategic sectors like transport, health, and education. Several political theories illuminate this process. Functionalism, initiated by David Mitrany, argues that integration should begin with technical cooperation in “apolitical” areas, where expert-led agencies foster interdependence that gradually overrides political divisions-a dynamic visible in Africa’s proliferation of specialized pan-African institutions. Neo-functionalism, developed by Haas and Lindberg, expands on this by incorporating political spill-over effects, where initial sectoral integration generates momentum and elite loyalty shifts towards supranational bodies, thus deepening the integration process. This self-reinforcing model sees institutions like commissions or secretariats as key engines of integration, though it acknowledges that progress may stall when sensitive issues like sovereignty arise. In contrast, intergovernmentalism,



as developed by Hoffmann, stresses the primacy of national interests and state sovereignty, arguing that integration advances only when governments find it advantageous and low-cost politically. Regional institutions, in this view, are tools of state consensus and can be overridden if political alignment erodes.

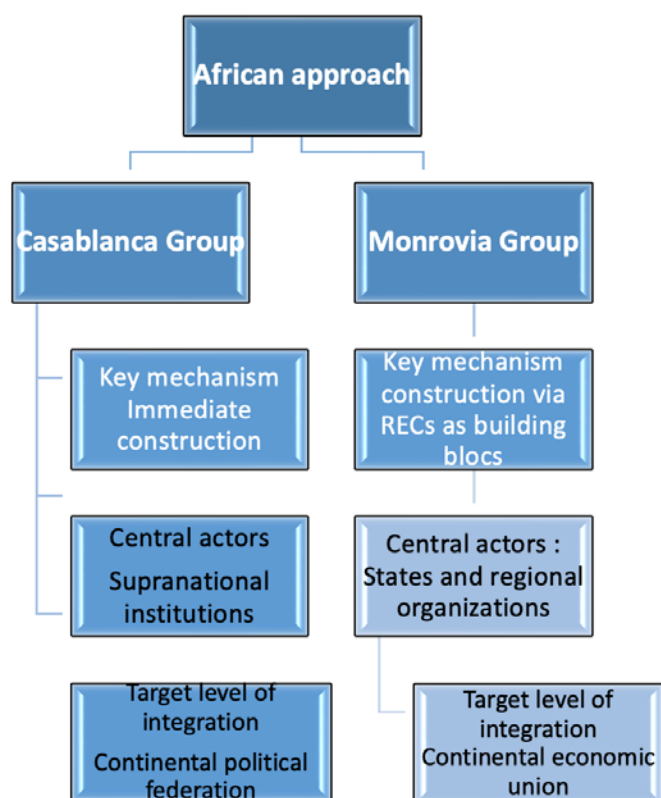
Moravcsik’s liberal intergovernmentalism refines this model by tracing integration preferences back to domestic interest groups and socio-economic forces, emphasizing that states negotiate and institutionalize agreements primarily to lock in mutually beneficial outcomes without relinquishing sovereignty. Together, these approaches reveal the complexity of regional integration as a process shaped by both technocratic agency and strategic political calculation.

3. African integration from the founding ideas to its construction

Most integration schemes in Africa largely reflect this intergovernmental logic. For example, the adoption of the AfCFTA in 2018 required lengthy negotiations and bitter compromises between the member states of the African Union, demonstrating that governments will only deepen economic integration if it is to their national advantage (Moravcsik 1998). Similarly, the reluctance of some countries to cede more sovereignty - in monetary matters, for example - illustrates the priority given to national prerogatives, in line with classic intergovernmentalist analysis.

3.1 The founding ideas of African integration

In the aftermath of African independence, two divergent schools of thought emerged as to the political form that the unity of the continent should take. On the one hand, the Casablanca Group (meeting from 3 to 7 January 1961) brought together so-called “progressive” or “maximalist” pan-Africanist leaders, led by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, a fervent advocate of a united Africa. They advocated the immediate establishment of a continental political federation, an “Africa without borders” with common supranational institutions, a common budget and even a pan-African army. This radical pan-Africanist vision considered that only deep political integration would enable Africa to free itself from neo-colonialism, preserve its sovereignty vis-à-vis the great powers and have a say on the world stage. The maxim guiding the group was to seek political unity first and everything else (prosperity, development) would follow. In other words, for the Casablanca Group, political unity had to take precedence over all other considerations, a condition deemed indispensable to the successful integration of the African continent. In contrast, the Monrovia Group (8-12 May 1961) brought together a majority of young independent states (around 21 countries in 1961) under the leadership of so-called “moderate” or “minimalist”



leaders, such as Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire. These leaders, including Liberia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, most of the French-speaking countries of Africa and others, favoured a more pragmatic and gradualist approach to African unity. Their political doctrine was based on strict respect for national sovereignty and the inviolability of borders inherited from colonisation. Rather than an immediate political merger, the Monrovia Group advocated a flexible alliance of independent states, cooperating inter-governmentally without surrendering sovereignty to a supranational authority. They explicitly rejected the idea of a centralised African federal state or a binding political union - a fundamental difference from the Casablancais. In short, the Monrovia vision advocated a *pan-Africanism of cooperation* rather than a *pan-Africanism of fusion*: African unity was to be built step by step, through diplomacy, consultation and the establishment of limited common bodies, rather than through an immediate leap towards a continental government. This ideological divide between the two groups - often referred to as the confrontation between *maximalist pan-Africanism* (Casablanca) and *minimalist pan-Africanism* (Monrovia) - gave rise to a lively debate on the method of African political integration in the early 1960s. The supporters of Casablanca, influenced by socialism and non-alignment, saw instant political unity as the natural extension of anti-colonial struggles. Conversely, the members of Monrovia, often allies of the Western powers, wanted to consolidate their young states first and feared that a forced federation would threaten

their autonomy or impose the revolutionary vision of leaders like Nkrumah.

3.1 Pan-African strategies for African integration

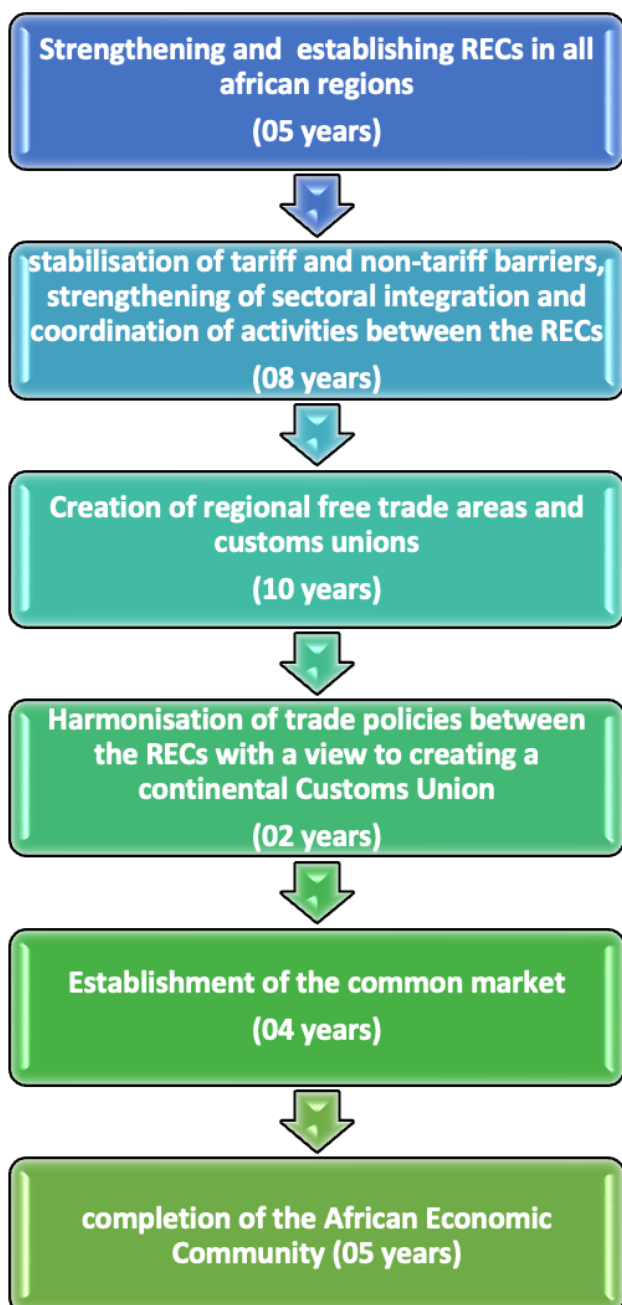
From the middle of the 20th century onwards, leaders and intellectuals championed the idea of a politically united Africa in control of its own destiny. In institutional terms, this aspiration led to the creation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, whose founding states called for the establishment of an African common market. Continental economic integration was a key objective of the post-colonial period, motivating the formation of RECs in each of the continent's sub-regions. Major milestones in this strategy include the Abuja Treaty of 1991, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) launched in 2001 and, more recently, the African Union's Agenda 2063 adopted in 2013.

3.1.1 The Abuja Treaty (1991)

Adopted in June 1991 under the aegis of the OAU, the Abuja Treaty established the African Economic Community (AEC), an ambitious framework aimed at integrating the continent's economies into a unified whole. This treaty follows on from the Lagos Plan of Action (1980), which laid the foundations for collective African self-sufficiency and served as a springboard for its negotiation. The Abuja Treaty, which was signed in 1991 and came into force in May 1994, provides the legal basis and guiding vision for Africa's economic integration programme. Its main objective is to establish, progressively, a fully integrated continental economic union. To this end, the Treaty provides for a gradual approach in six stages over varying periods depending on the scale of the objective to be achieved. By embodying the pan-African desire for economic unity, this treaty inspired the institutional transformation of the OAU into the African Union (AU) in 2002 and continues to guide current initiatives. Although the original timetable (envisaging full economic union by 2028) has been delayed, the Abuja Treaty remains the reference framework for African regional integration, testifying to the commitment of the continent's countries to pursue the ideal of an economically united and mutually supportive Africa.

3.1.2 New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

Launched in 2001 and officially adopted by the OAU (and later the AU), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a pan-African strategic framework aimed at eradicating poverty, fostering sustainable growth, and ending Africa's marginalisation in globalisation. Designed as an



African-led initiative promoting good governance and mutual accountability, NEPAD set out to place the continent on a self-determined development path. Governed by a committee of heads of state and supported by a secretariat, NEPAD introduced the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to promote political and economic reform. It also became a reference for aligning international aid with African priorities, strengthening cooperation with the UN, G8, and financial institutions. Its flagship programmes covered agriculture (notably CAADP), infrastructure (transport, energy, ICTs), human development (health, education), and governance, while addressing

cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and environmental sustainability. By promoting South-South cooperation and shared African ownership, NEPAD played a pivotal role in Africa's development resurgence during the 2000s and has since evolved into the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), the AU's main implementing arm for Agenda 2063.

3.1.3 Agenda 2063

Adopted in 2013 by the African Union as a 50-year strategic blueprint, Agenda 2063 outlines the shared vision of "The Africa We Want" and sets out seven core aspirations for the continent's transformation.

Aspiration 1 envisions a prosperous Africa driven by inclusive growth, industrialisation, and sustainable development, focusing on modern agriculture, a vibrant blue economy, and improved quality of life.

Aspiration 2 promotes an integrated and politically united continent through pan-African ideals, the completion of transport and digital infrastructure, and the full operationalisation of the AfCFTA, alongside people-to-people unity symbolised by the African passport. **Aspiration 3** calls for a continent grounded in democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, supported by strong, accountable institutions and transparent governance. **Aspiration 4** seeks a peaceful and secure Africa, anchored in conflict prevention, the African Peace and Security Architecture, and the "Silencing the Guns" initiative. **Aspiration 5** celebrates Africa's cultural identity and heritage through the promotion of languages, arts, and traditions, the return of cultural artefacts, and support for creative industries. **Aspiration 6** places people at the centre of development, empowering women and youth through access to education, health, and social inclusion. **Aspiration 7** aims to position Africa as a strong, influential global actor, advocating for fair representation in international institutions and ensuring the continent's self-financing capacity. These aspirations are implemented through key flagship projects like the AfCFTA, a single African passport etc. making Agenda 2063 a comprehensive roadmap for Africa's renaissance.

Conclusion

Theoretical approaches and African thinking on regional integration have made it possible to implement this development process in Africa. Results of initiatives presented have varied, and to date it can be argued that the process of regional integration is irreversibly underway. However, if the process is to evolve in a more rational way, it is important that the assessment of the progress made be based on a rigorous methodology that is grounded in the ideas presented in the next chapter.



ultimate goal of the Abuja Treaty: the creation of an African economic community. These four pillars are as follows:

1. Political integration
2. Economic integration
3. Infrastructure
4. Human and Social integration

Each of these pillars is subdivided into integration dimensions, which represent specific aspects or sectors of cooperation on which the sectoral policies of states are defined. This gives concrete expression to the vision of African regional integration.

The dimensions are themselves broken down into sub-dimensions, reflecting specific themes within the various sectors of regional integration. Thanks to this detailed structure, ASRII offers a comprehensive framework for measuring and promoting the progress made by African states towards regional integration.

Pillar 1: political integration

Political integration is a fundamental pillar of unity and cooperation between member states and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa. It determines the capacity of member states to create a framework of peaceful, legal, institutional and governance cooperation to facilitate the achievement of major continental integration objectives. It assesses the capacity of member states and RECs to adhere to continental and sub-regional

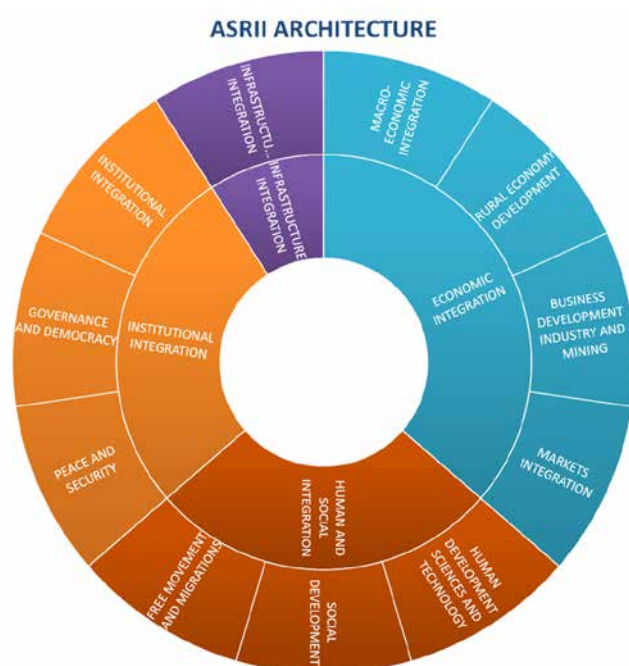
CHAPTER II:

AFRICAN SYNTHESIZED REGIONAL INTEGRATION INDEX (ASRII) METHODOLOGY

The first chapter of this part highlighted the theories that justify the choice of ASRII components, and this second part aims to present each of these components (pillars, dimensions and sub-dimensions) as well as the methodology for calculating the global index, sector indices, regional indices and indicators.

II.1 Architecture and justification of ASRII components

The African Synthesized Regional Integration Index (ASRII) is based on four fundamental pillars, representing the main areas of regional integration in which African states are engaged to achieve the



frameworks for African integration, as well as their ability to create an environment conducive to the implementation of this integration through strong institutions dedicated to each aspect addressed. Political integration is based on three fundamental dimensions: legislation and the institutional framework, governance and democracy, and peace and security. Firstly, legislation and the institutional framework play a crucial role in establishing solid, coherent regional political structures, such as the African Union, which facilitate policy coordination between member states. Secondly, governance and democracy are essential to promote the principles of democracy, good governance and the rule of law. This includes the fight against corruption, the organization of free and fair elections, and the establishment of effective judicial systems. Finally, peace and security are vital for strengthening conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanisms, thus ensuring a stable and harmonious environment conducive to economic and social development. These three aspects combined create an integrative and harmonious political framework, supporting the vision of a unified African economic community. The pillar has three dimensions:

- Institutional integration dimension
- Governance and democracy
- Peace and security dimension

Institutional integration dimension

Institutional integration is based on a solid legislative foundation designed to establish harmonized legislation between member countries, thus creating a homogeneous, coherent legal framework conducive to the establishment of an integrated area that meets the objectives set by member countries. The establishment of this legal framework requires a process of harmonization of national legislation, which can only be guaranteed by regular evaluation, if the greatest possible number of states are to participate in the process. The institutional dimension of regional integration involves the creation of supranational or intergovernmental bodies charged with overseeing and coordinating common policies. These institutions also play a crucial role in the implementation of agreements, and evaluation of their operation and establishment is crucial to the effectiveness of the harmonization envisaged. This dimension therefore includes aspects relating to:

- legislation,
- the institutional and
- financing.

Governance and democracy

Governance and democracy is an essential dimension of an African integration index as the current state of governance in many African countries could be an obstacle to the smooth running of community and pan-African institutions. The aim is to assess transparency, accountability and citizen participation in member countries. It is recognized that the quality of governance plays an important economic role for an economic union such as that envisaged by the Abuja Treaty. It could help to attract foreign investment and boost production in member countries. It is therefore important that the integration assessment framework takes account of this factor in the success of economic integration. The quality of governance is inextricably linked to democracy, the promotion of which guarantees the inclusive development of states, conducive to achieving the aspirations of Agenda 2063 for a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth. Promoting democracy and the rule of law strengthens trust between member countries and ensures political stability. The integration index includes criteria on the quality of democratic institutions and electoral processes. This dimension of the ASRII therefore includes

- governance and the rule of law, and
- the promotion of democratic principles.
- Peace and security dimension

The peace and security dimension makes it possible to guarantee and promote an environment conducive to the smooth running of institutions and the free and peaceful pursuit of economic activities. This dimension measures the effectiveness of regional security agreements and cooperation mechanisms in terms of security and defence. It also assesses mediation initiatives and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. Although security aspects do not feature in all REC founding texts, this issue is now essential to the success of integration processes. The dimension includes sub-dimensions relating to:

- conflict prevention and peace promotion,
- the deployment of African Standby Forces,
- regional security agreements and conflict management, but also
- post-conflict reconstruction initiatives.

Pillar 2: economic integration

Economic integration is the central pillar of regional integration in general, and of the African integration process in particular. It is at the heart of regional integration, insofar as the main reasons for the grouping of states are economic. The ideal evolution of a regional integration process has been sketched out by Bella BALASSA, and includes 5 main stages of integration, as seen at the start of this chapter. Economic integration therefore occupies a fundamental place in the ASRII architecture. Broadly speaking, economic integration consists in harmonizing and coordinating economic policies between different countries or regions, in order to increase the level of trade between them through a process of generalized liberalization. Its assessment is generally based on the reduction of trade barriers, the harmonization of regulations and the promotion of cross-border investment. The assessment can also focus on the level of circulation of goods, services, capital and people, facilitating the emergence of common markets and free-trade zones. In addition, economic integration must also contribute to macroeconomic stability by strengthening cooperation between member states and reducing economic shocks. To achieve the African economic community outlined in the Abuja Treaty, it is important to measure both trade in goods and services, and the policies and instruments developed to accelerate this trade. ASRII's indicators include measures of both flows and the implementation of continental and regional instruments. This pillar comprises four dimensions

- Business development
- Market integration
- Sustainable, productive integration
- Macroeconomic integration

Business development

Business development generally refers to the promotion of initiatives and strategies aimed at identifying and creating new business opportunities, improving operations and increasing revenues. This includes seeking out new markets, establishing strategic partnerships, improving internal processes and adopting new technologies. The impact of these initiatives on regional integration depends on the ability to stimulate business growth and encourage trade between different regions. Business development promotes the transfer of technology, skills and knowledge in ways that contribute to

industrial development and regional competitiveness (World Bank, 2018)¹ integrates aspects relating to competition between multinationals or local firms, the quality of infrastructure and investment promotion. In ASRII this dimension is measured by:

- the level of implementation of competition instruments,
- the level of business development infrastructure in place,
- promoting intra-regional investment and
- the level of intra-regional investment.

Market integration

Trade is often perceived as one of the essential dimensions of regional integration. It is increasingly recognized that trade is the main driver of industrialization and growth, and therefore an important, if not essential, component of regional integration. Moreover, the level of trade is one of the most frequently used indicators for assessing regional integration. Market integration, or trade integration, encompasses a variety of assessment methods, prompting the consideration of several indicators to assess the trade efficiency of a Regional Economic Community (REC). (Bouët, Cosnard, & Laborde, 2017). ASRII assesses the level of market integration based on outcome indicators, notably infraregional trade, but it also measures the willingness of member states to apply Community or pan-African measures through instruments such as trade tariffs. More specifically, the market integration dimension includes:

- regulating trade
- facilitating regional trade
- regional trade flows
- their degree of diversification.

Macroeconomic integration:

Macroeconomic convergence implies that countries strive to harmonize their monetary and budgetary policies in order to reduce existing disparities. Macroeconomic integration prepares or facilitates the operation of a monetary union, through the respect of convergence criteria defined by all States for the sound management of public finances. The objectives of the Abuja Treaty - in terms of setting

¹ World Bank. (2018). World Development report 2019: the changing nature of work.

up regional and then continental monetary unions - amply justify the need to take this dimension into account in the African integration index. This dimension comprises five sub-dimensions relating to:

- macroeconomic convergence,
- tax systems,
- payment systems,
- monetary integration and
- harmonization of statistical systems.

Productive and sustainable integration:

Productive and sustainable integration is essential to an integration process, as it underlines the importance of assessing the complementarity between a region's economies and their ability to establish value chains within the Regional Economic Community (REC). This dimension highlights the effective and efficient integration of countries into the regional value chain, which is crucial to maximizing economic benefits. At the national level, it also helps to determine a country's ability to specialise in those stages of production where it has a comparative advantage, thereby promoting economies of scale. In short, productive and sustainable integration is a fundamental lever for strengthening economic cooperation and promoting harmonious development within the region (ECA, AUC and ADB, 2019). This dimension comprises seven sub-dimensions including:

- agriculture and wildlife;
- the blue economy;
- tourism ;
- development of mineral and industrial resources ;
- the digital economy;
- commodities and
- environmental management.

Pillar 3: infrastructure integration

As the main factor in the movement of people, goods and services, cross-border infrastructures play a vital role in increasing regional trade in goods and

services, while reducing the cost of doing business. Numerous studies have highlighted the impact of adequate infrastructure in reducing transaction costs and improving the competitiveness of African economies (Collier, 2007; Rodrik, 2008)². Through their ability to establish physical links between states, infrastructures are an essential component in African regional integration. The implementation of Agenda 2063 is largely dependent on the ability of African states to develop road, sea and air transport infrastructures, etc. (ECA, AUC, ADB, UNCTAD. 2022).³

However, the state of infrastructure in Africa is marked by uneven development. Some Regional Economic Communities (RECs), such as the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), benefit from a relatively advanced level of infrastructure, while other regions still need to make considerable efforts to achieve a level of infrastructure sufficient to boost regional trade and foster integration. This underscores the importance of a strategic, coordinated approach to infrastructure development on a continental scale.

In order to meet this major challenge, ASRII places great emphasis on the evaluation of development policies, infrastructure financing strategies and, in particular, the implementation of PIDA, the continental program for infrastructure development in Africa, which is crucial to ensuring that infrastructure projects meet the needs of states and promote harmonious economic integration. The Infrastructure Integration Pillar comprises just one dimension, made up of 05 sub-dimensions:

- PIDA governance
- Roads
- Railways
- Air transport
- Water, sanitation and housing
- ICT

Pillar 4: human integration

Human integration plays a fundamental role in the regional integration process, particularly in Africa, by placing human development at the heart of regional dynamics. This pillar underlines the importance of equipping human resources with the skills they need to develop to their full potential, which is essential for fostering economic growth. Skills to be developed include health, education, culture and freedom of

² Collier, P. (2007). *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*. Oxford University Press. - Rodrik, D. (2008). *One Economics, Many Recipes: Globalization, Institutions, and Economic Growth*. Princeton University Press.

³ CEA, CUA, BAD, CNUCED. 2022. *State of regional integration in Africa X Liberalization and integration of trade in services in Africa within the framework of the AfCFTA*

movement, all of which are interconnected and contribute to creating an environment conducive to integration. Assessing human integration involves ensuring that favourable conditions exist for the deployment of human resources, notably through the analysis of health systems, educational institutions and diploma recognition mechanisms within an integrated area. In addition, the social dimension of integration enables us to examine the integration of workers and immigrants, student mobility and the convergence of social policies, while taking into account cultural differences and respect for human rights. This comprehensive approach to regionalism also incorporates environmental considerations, aimed at mitigating negative externalities and promoting sustainable development. In sum, human integration, by encompassing these multiple dimensions, constitutes an essential pillar for building inclusive and resilient societies, thus fostering successful regional integration (Scholtz & Verschuuren, 2015). Accordingly, the human integration pillar integrates 03 dimensions relating to:

- facilitating the movement of people
- social and cultural integration and
- education and knowledge development

Facilitating the movement of people

Assessing the facilitation of the movement of people is essential for measuring the effectiveness of regional integration policies. In Africa, where borders can often represent obstacles to mobility, it is crucial to analyze the mechanisms in place that enable people to move freely between countries. This includes examining visa requirements, free movement agreements and transport infrastructures. Smooth movement of people not only promotes economic exchange, but also strengthens social and cultural ties between nations (Collier, 2007). By assessing these aspects, decision-makers can identify gaps and opportunities for improvement, ensuring that citizens can reap the full benefits of regional integration. Particular attention needs to be paid to the challenges faced by vulnerable groups, such as women and young people, to ensure that mobility is accessible to all. In ASRII's structure, the dimension relating to facilitating the movement of people comprises two sub-dimensions, namely

- the free movement of people
- migration

Social and cultural integration

Social and cultural integration is a dimension of human integration that has the particularity of fostering cohesion and harmony between different communities. In Africa, where ethnic and cultural diversity is rich, it is crucial to promote initiatives that encourage intercultural dialogue and mutual respect. Assessing this dimension involves examining how regional policies support the inclusion of minorities, the protection of cultural rights and the promotion of diversity. Cultural exchange programs, festivals and artistic projects can play a key role in creating links between peoples (Amartya Sen, 1999)⁴. By strengthening social and cultural integration, African countries can not only reduce inter-ethnic tensions, but also build a common regional identity that values the richness of their differences. This dimension integrates 04 sub-dimensions in particular:

- Cultural integration
- Gender policies
- Developing and strengthening youth
- Sports

Education and knowledge development

Knowledge development and education are crucial to supporting regional integration in Africa. Quality education enables individuals to acquire the skills needed to participate actively in the economy and society (Stiglitz J. 2012)⁵. Assessment of this dimension should focus on access to education, the quality of education systems and the recognition of diplomas on a regional scale. By promoting educational programs that integrate regional and intercultural perspectives, countries can prepare a skilled and adaptable workforce. In addition, cooperation between educational institutions through partnerships and student exchanges can strengthen ties between nations and promote a sense of belonging to a regional community. By investing in education and knowledge development, Africa can not only improve its human capital, but also lay the foundations for sustainable and prosperous regional integration.

⁴ Amartya Sen, 1999, Development as freedom.

⁵ Stiglitz Joseph. 2012. The price of inequality.

ASRII Methodology

Background and rationale

With the aim of revising the African integration assessment mechanism, the members of the coordination committee adopted, during the Nairobi session in January 2023, a number of recommendations, among which:

- i. the need to have a single comprehensive and harmonised approach and a single index that builds on the strengths of the AMRII and ARII. The unified index should be aligned with the objectives of the Abuja Treaty (Establishment of the African Economic Community (AEC)) and Agenda 2063;
- ii. carry out the development of a unified index in a systematic manner to ensure that the respective tools, models, indicators and methodological processes are standardised across the continent and that the indicators are stabilised to enable systematic comparison between the different entities;
- iii. implement the above recommendation, convene a more in-depth meeting of technical experts, including mathematicians and statisticians, to conduct a comprehensive review of the existing AMRII, i.e. dimensions, indicators and sub-indicators, as well as the mathematical model used to calculate the indices.

In this context, the African Synthesized Regional Integration Index (ASRII) was developed to provide a comprehensive, harmonized, and policy-relevant tool for measuring the progress of regional integration across Africa. Its main goal is to assess how well African countries and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are advancing towards the objectives set out in the Abuja Treaty and Agenda 2063. The index is designed to serve as both a diagnostic instrument and a planning resource, helping policymakers identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas needing improvement.

Objectives of the ASRII

- Measure the level of implementation of integration commitments within each REC;
- Provide a framework for comparative performance analysis across different periods and dimensions within the same REC;
- Identify strengths and structural gaps that need to be addressed;

- Support political dialogue based on evidence and data-driven insights.

3.2 Building on Previous Indices

The ASRII builds on lessons learned from earlier indices, such as the African Regional Integration Index (ARI) and the Multidimensional African Regional Integration Index (AMRII). While these earlier tools provided valuable insights, they had certain limitations. For example, the ARI focused heavily on comparing states and RECs, which sometimes masked modest performance and did not adequately measure the implementation of continental policies. The AMRII expanded the scope to seven dimensions and included new issues like environment, peace and security, and democracy, but some RECs felt its indicators did not fully capture their specific actions, and its recommendations were often too general.

To address these challenges, the ASRII was developed through extensive consultations with RECs, regional mechanisms, and pan-African institutions. The aim was to create an index that is both scientifically robust and closely aligned with the realities and priorities of African integration.

Summary of the AMRII design approach

The methodological approach used to design the index can be divided into 2 sub-approaches:

- i. the scientific calculation methodology
- ii. the scientific methodology of inclusiveness.

The AUC, in collaboration with the RECs, has taken the Abuja Treaty and Agenda 2063 as the basis of AMRII. The study considered the chronograms, flagship programmes and priorities established on the basis of these two visions for achieving a united Africa. The inclusiveness of the study is clearly verified, taking into account the fact that the pillars, dimensions, indicators and sub dimensions have been determined jointly with the Experts from RECs, and other independent Experts . It should be added that 4 experts group meetings were organized during the whole study; which made it possible to consider the opinions of the stakeholders.

Presentation of ASRII

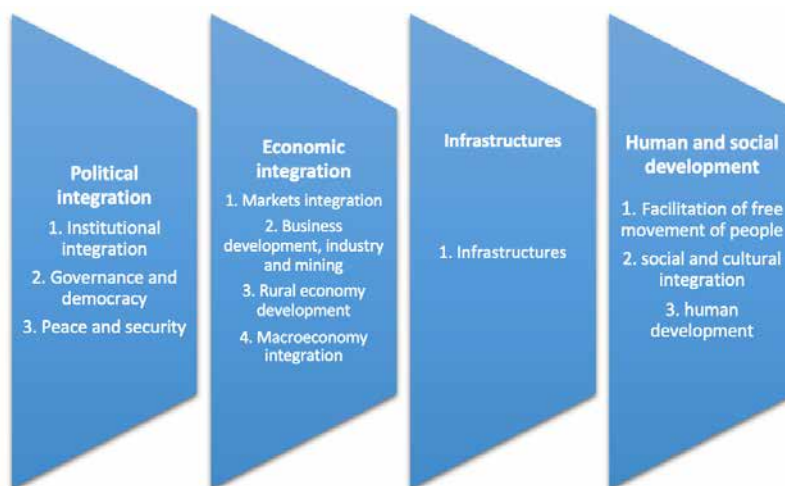
AMRII is a monitoring and evaluation framework designed as a composite index comprising 11 integration dimensions In 4 pillars. The complete structure including subdimensions and indicator is included as an annex to this report.

Dimensions of ASRII by pillars

Each dimension is measured using a set of carefully selected indicators, based on their relevance, reliability, and availability of data.

3.4 Methodology of calculation

The ASRII's methodology follows a rigorous, multi-step process:



- **Indicator Selection:** Indicators were chosen through literature review, expert consultations, and feedback from RECs and other stakeholders.
- **Data Collection:** Data was gathered from official sources, including national statistics offices, regional organizations, and international databases.
- **Standardization:** To ensure comparability, all indicators were standardized using a min-max approach, which scales values between 0 (lowest performance) and 1 (highest performance).
- **Aggregation:** Scores for each indicator are aggregated to produce dimension scores, which are then combined to generate an overall ASRII score for each country and REC.

and activities which don't need to be submitted for States negotiations, signature and ratification.

For programs which don't need to be submitted for States negotiations, signature and ratification.

$$2) \quad Ind_{Reg} = \frac{1}{2}(A) + \frac{1}{2}(Imp) \quad \text{with}$$

$$3) \quad A \text{ or } Imp = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if the REC adopted} \\ & \text{program or implemented} \\ 0 & \text{if not} \end{cases}$$

$$4) \quad Ind_{Count} = \frac{1}{n_{count}} \sum C_i (Imp);$$

$$5) \quad C_i (Imp) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if the country } i \text{ implemented} \\ & \text{the program} \\ 0 & \text{if not} \end{cases}$$

For instruments (policies, institutions etc.) which have to be submitted for negotiations, adoption, and activities which don't need to be submitted for States negotiations, signature and ratification.

- Negotiations
- Adoption
- Signature
- Ratification and
- Domestication/implementation/entry into force.

$$SubDim_{Asrii} = 1/n_{Ind} \sum Ind_{Asrii}$$

$$Dim_{Asrii} = 1/n_{Subdim} \sum SubDim_{Asrii}$$

$$Pil_{Asrii} = 1/4 \sum Dim_{Asrii}$$

- **Validation:** The methodology was validated through pilot testing and peer review, with adjustments made based on feedback.

Calculation of the Indicators

The methodology for calculating Qualitative Indicators of ASRII follows these steps:

a. Qualitative indicators represent integration instruments whose implementation follows a generalized process in 5 stages or just 02 for program

Each of these 5 or 2 phases accounts for the same weightings. 0.2 for 5 stages instruments and 0.5 for 2 stages instruments.

$$1) \text{Ind}_{Asrii} = \frac{1}{2}(\text{Ind}_{Reg}) + \frac{1}{2}(\text{Ind}_{Count})$$

adoption, signature, ratification and domestication/ implementation/entry in force.

$$1) \text{Ind}_{Asrii} = \frac{1}{2}(\text{Ind}_{Reg}) + \frac{1}{2}(\text{Ind}_{Count})$$

$$2) \text{Ind}_{Reg} = \frac{1}{5}(N) + \frac{1}{5}(A) + \frac{1}{5}(S) + \frac{1}{5}(R) + \frac{1}{5}(Enf)$$

$$N/A/S/R/Enf = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if the country is in negotiation, Adopted,} \\ & \text{in signature, in ratification or in force} \\ & \text{the program} \\ 0 & \text{if not} \end{cases}$$

$$3) \text{Ind}_{Count} = 0.15(S) + 0.35(R) + 0.5(Enf)$$

Quantitative Indicators

For these indicators which are already figures, a calculation method is used to harmonize all the numbers in the interval [0; 1]. The methods of harmonization are either standardization, calculation of the variability between the different member states of the REC or the calculation of ratio.

The target values that exist in the Abuja Treaty and Agenda 2063 are used to assess the gap between them and the values collected on the RECs. This deviation is used for the normalization of values in the range 0 and 1.

CHAPTER III: CONTINENTAL ASSESSMENT

This chapter presents an overview of Africa's regional integration at the continental level, based on the 2025 African Regional Integration Index (ASRII). By assessing performance across eleven dimensions grouped under four strategic pillars—political, economic, infrastructure, and human/social—the index provides a comprehensive picture of integration dynamics across the continent. The scores reflect both progress made in institutional

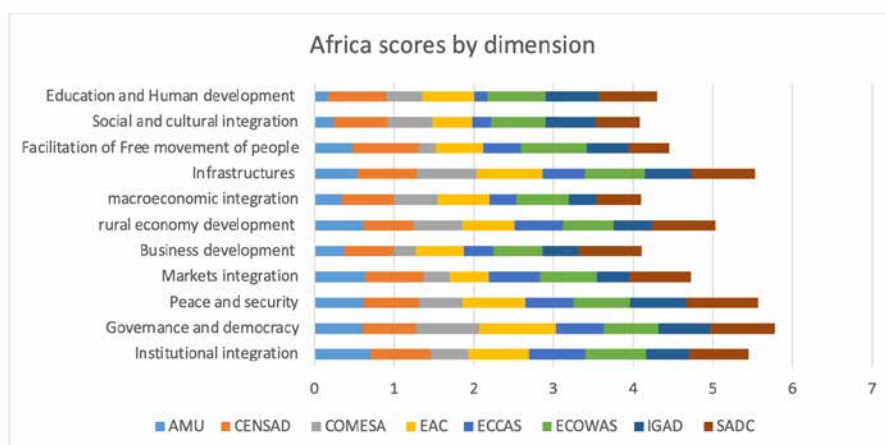
and trade frameworks, and ongoing challenges in achieving inclusive, people-centred integration.

The 2025 ASRII results indicate moderate but uneven progress in Africa's regional integration efforts. The political integration pillar stands out with the strongest performance, notably in governance and democracy (0.722), peace and security (0.696), and institutional integration (0.681), reflecting increasing adherence to continental norms and mechanisms. The economic integration pillar shows mixed results: while rural economy development (0.628) and market integration (0.590) are progressing, both business development (0.513) and macroeconomic integration (0.513) remain below expectations due to limited harmonisation of economic policies and weak private sector coordination. The infrastructure pillar performs relatively well (0.691), driven by investments in road, rail, and digital networks. In contrast, the human and social integration pillar records the lowest scores, with education and human development (0.538), free movement of people (0.557), and social and cultural integration (0.510) all pointing to persistent gaps in mobility, social cohesion, and people-centred initiatives. Overall, the results underscore the need to consolidate achievements in political and infrastructure dimensions while accelerating progress in economic coordination and social integration.

Dimension I: Institutional integration

Overview

Institutional integration is based on a robust legal foundation aimed at harmonizing legislation among member countries, thus creating a coherent and uniform legal environment conducive to the establishment of an integrated area aligned with the objectives set by the states. Establishing such a framework requires a sustained effort to harmonize national laws, which in turn calls for regular evaluations to ensure broad participation.



The institutional dimension of integration also involves the creation of supranational or intergovernmental bodies tasked with supervising and coordinating common policies. These institutions play a key role in implementing agreements, and their establishment and performance are critical to achieving the intended harmonization. This dimension covers aspects related to legislation, institutional architecture, and financing.

At the continental level, the African Union has made notable progress in establishing these common institutions, including a Parliament, a Court of Justice, and various commissions. However, several protocols are still awaiting ratification, and the operationalization of certain institutions remains incomplete. In some cases, regional courts or parliamentary bodies exist but lack binding authority or are underutilized.

The 2025 evaluation indicates that despite ongoing initiatives, significant disparities persist in member states' levels of commitment to institutional integration. While some RECs have made meaningful efforts to harmonize their legal frameworks and establish strong regional institutions, others face persistent delays in ratifying key legal instruments or implementing integration protocols. Moreover, the sustainability of institutional financing remains a major issue, with most regional and continental institutions still heavily dependent on external funding. Strengthening financial autonomy through mechanisms such as community levies could help reduce this dependency and ensure the continuity of integration programs.

Common Challenges

Despite efforts to strengthen the institutional foundations of integration, the African continent still faces a number of persistent challenges.

- First, **the slow pace of ratification and implementation of key legal instruments** undermines the effectiveness of regional and continental institutions. Many Member States delay the domestication of continental decisions or the activation of mechanisms provided for in protocols they have signed. This legal inertia hampers the development of a shared legal and institutional framework.
- Second, **many institutions, whether at the REC or African Union level, suffer from limited technical and financial resources.** This affects their operational capacity, delays the implementation of programs, and reduces their ability to monitor and evaluate the commitments of Member States.

- Third, **the institutional complexity and fragmentation of mandates across different organs** often lead to duplication of efforts, lack of coordination, and sometimes institutional competition, to the detriment of collective action.
- Lastly, **dependence on external funding remains a structural weakness of institutional integration.**

Despite the existence of proposals for autonomous financing (such as regional levies or dedicated funds), implementation is slow, and most institutions rely on donor contributions to function, which compromises long-term sustainability and ownership of the integration agenda. Addressing these challenges requires strong political will, enhanced coordination mechanisms, and greater financial commitment by Member States to make institutional integration a real driver of African unity.

Dimension II: Governance and Democracy

Overview

Governance and democracy are central to the success of regional integration in Africa. This dimension measures the transparency of institutions, the effectiveness of democratic mechanisms, and the rule of law within African Union Member States. Good governance reinforces mutual trust between countries, strengthens the legitimacy of regional institutions, and creates a favourable environment for political stability and sustainable development. At the continental level, the African Union has adopted a number of frameworks and instruments promoting democracy, good governance, and human rights, including the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). These instruments aim to promote best practices and foster a culture of democratic accountability among Member States.

The 2025 assessment reveals a relatively heterogeneous situation. Some regions, notably those where the APRM is actively implemented, show tangible progress in democratic governance. In these areas, regular elections, citizen participation, and the fight against corruption have improved in recent years. However, in other parts of the continent, progress remains limited, and certain countries continue to experience democratic backsliding, with delays in elections, constitutional manipulations, or restrictions on fundamental freedoms.

In terms of institutional governance, the assessment shows that many Member States still lack independent judicial systems and effective control bodies to

ensure government accountability. In several regions, anti-corruption mechanisms are in place but often suffer from limited enforcement capacity and political interference. Overall, the continent has made important normative progress by adopting democratic principles, but there is a gap between formal commitments and actual implementation. Strengthening the monitoring of governance frameworks, improving citizen engagement, and ensuring the effective functioning of regional institutions are key challenges for the coming years. The African Union and RECs are encouraged to intensify peer review, support electoral processes, and strengthen the rule of law as critical levers of integration.

Common Challenges

Despite the adoption of numerous continental frameworks to promote good governance and democracy, significant challenges persist in their implementation.

- Firstly, **gaps between formal commitments and practical enforcement** are widespread. While most Member States have signed and ratified key instruments such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG), effective domestication into national legislation remains slow or symbolic. This undermines the credibility and effectiveness of governance commitments.
- Secondly, **weak institutional capacities** in several Member States limit the ability to ensure transparent public administration, independent judicial systems, and effective anti-corruption mechanisms. These shortcomings affect public trust and hinder the development of an enabling environment for integration.
- Thirdly, **political instability and contested electoral processes** continue to pose serious threats to democratic consolidation. In some regions, authoritarian tendencies, repression of civil society, and manipulation of electoral frameworks have undermined democratic governance and regional cooperation.
- Finally, the **limited reach and variable influence of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)** reduce its ability to foster genuine accountability and learning across countries. Participation remains voluntary, and recommendations are not always followed by concrete reforms.

Addressing these challenges requires reinforcing monitoring mechanisms, increasing support for institutional capacity-building, and enhancing the role

of citizens and civil society in governance processes to foster inclusive, stable, and accountable political systems across the continent.

Dimension III: Peace and Security

The peace and security dimension is fundamental to the success of regional integration, as it provides the stability necessary for the effective implementation of policies and the pursuit of economic and social development. This dimension assesses the existence and effectiveness of regional frameworks for conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict reconstruction. The African Union has progressively strengthened its Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which includes key instruments such as the Peace and Security Council, the African Standby Force, and the Continental Early Warning System. These mechanisms aim to enhance the continent's capacity to prevent and respond to conflicts autonomously.

The 2025 assessment highlights significant progress in the development of continental and regional peace and security frameworks. Some RECs have established operational mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as instruments for post-conflict stabilization. In West and East Africa in particular, regional mediation structures and security cooperation mechanisms have been activated in response to various crises. Nevertheless, progress remains uneven across the continent. In certain regions, institutional mechanisms are either weak or underutilized. Moreover, despite the existence of frameworks, their effectiveness is often hampered by limited human and financial resources, insufficient coordination between actors, and a lack of political will. Armed conflicts, terrorism, and transnational organised crime continue to threaten regional stability and integration dynamics. In this context, peace and security must remain at the heart of integration policies, not only through security cooperation but also by addressing the root causes of conflict such as poverty, inequality, marginalization, and environmental degradation

Common Challenges

Several structural and operational challenges hinder the full implementation of the continental peace and security agenda.

- First, the **proliferation of conflicts and security crises** across different parts of the continent puts pressure on the capacities of RECs and the African Union. This situation limits the ability to provide timely and coordinated responses, often resulting in reactive rather than preventive approaches.

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)

Established in 2002 by the African Union (AU), the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is the continent's primary framework for preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts. It was conceived to provide African-led solutions to the continent's peace and security challenges, grounded in the principles of non-indifference and African ownership.

APSA is built on five core pillars:

- **Peace and Security Council (PSC):** A standing decision-making body for conflict prevention and resolution.
- **Continental Early Warning System (CEWS):** For monitoring and anticipating potential crises.
- **Panel of the Wise:** A body of eminent African personalities supporting mediation and preventive diplomacy.
- **African Standby Force (ASF):** A multidisciplinary and rapid-deployment force composed of regional brigades.
- **Peace Fund:** To finance AU-led peace operations and mediation efforts.

At the regional level, **RECs and regional mechanisms (RMs)** play a critical role in operationalizing APSA, with structures such as ECOWAS's Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN), SADC's Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, and IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN). However, coordination between the AU and RECs/RMs remains uneven and sometimes fragmented, affecting rapid and coherent responses.

APSA has contributed to major conflict interventions in countries like Mali, the Central African Republic, Somalia, and Sudan. Yet it faces persistent challenges, including financial constraints, dependence on external funding, and the need for better harmonization between continental and regional mechanisms.

Strengthening APSA is vital for advancing political integration and stability across Africa, ensuring that peace and security underpin the continent's development and integration goals.

- Second, the **weak operationalization of the African Standby Force** and the lack of interoperability between regional brigades reduce the effectiveness of rapid deployment and joint interventions. Political disagreements among Member States sometimes prevent decisive collective action.
- Third, the **sustainability of peace operations** is often compromised by reliance on external financing and donor-driven agendas. The absence of predictable and autonomous funding mechanisms impedes the long-term viability of African-led responses.
- Finally, there remains a **lack of synergy between regional and continental efforts**, which leads to fragmented strategies and duplicated initiatives. Strengthening coordination, sharing of early warning data, and joint planning remain essential to improving the effectiveness of peace and security interventions.

Dimension IV: Market Integration

Market integration is one of the most emblematic dimensions of regional integration. It aims to reduce barriers to trade and increase intra-African flows of goods and services. It reflects the willingness of Member States to create a common market by harmonizing tariffs, removing non-tariff barriers, facilitating cross-border procedures, and implementing trade agreements at regional and continental levels. At the continental level, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), launched in 2019, has been a major turning point. Its implementation has fostered a renewed momentum for trade liberalization, customs cooperation, and alignment of national policies with regional trade frameworks. Several RECs had already established free trade zones or customs unions, facilitating the consolidation of the AfCFTA.

The 2025 assessment reveals differentiated progress among countries and regions. Some RECs, such as SADC and COMESA, have made significant advances in eliminating tariffs, harmonizing rules of origin, and establishing trade observatories. Others are still in the early stages of liberalization or face political or technical blockages. Moreover, the level of intra-African trade remains relatively low, compared to levels observed in other regions of the world, it represents around 15% of the total trade of the continent. The continent's trade is still largely oriented toward external markets, and structural constraints (infrastructure, industrial base, informality, and limited market access) continue to hinder deeper integration.

Nevertheless, the trend is encouraging, with growing political will, increasing mobilization of customs administrations, and greater involvement of the private sector in regional integration efforts.

Common Challenges

Despite progress, several obstacles continue to limit the scope and depth of market integration in Africa.

- First, the **persistent existence of non-tariff barriers (NTBs)**, such as complex administrative procedures, roadblocks, and technical regulations, significantly slows down intra-African trade. These barriers often persist despite formal commitments to their removal.
- Second, **weak implementation of trade protocols** and a lack of enforcement mechanisms result in fragmented application of integration measures. While trade agreements exist, their translation into concrete administrative practices is uneven across countries.
- Third, the **limited diversification of African economies**, which are still largely dependent on raw material exports, reduces the potential for complementary trade. Many countries produce similar goods and compete in the same markets rather than engaging in value-added production and regional value chains.
- Fourth, **insufficient infrastructure and logistics capacity** hampers the physical flow of goods and increases transport costs, making African trade less competitive.
- Lastly, the **low participation of SMEs in regional trade**, due to information gaps, financing constraints, and regulatory burdens, limits inclusive growth and the broad-based benefits of market integration.

Overcoming these challenges requires coordinated efforts to remove NTBs, promote industrialization and product diversification, invest in trade infrastructure, and empower small and medium enterprises to participate fully in the integrated African market.

Dimension V: Business, Industry and Mining Development

This dimension focuses on the creation of favourable conditions for the development of the productive fabric and the stimulation of investment in key sectors such as industry, mining, and entrepreneurship.

It is based on the premise that regional integration must go beyond trade facilitation to effectively foster productive transformation, job creation, and structural economic change.

At the continental level, several initiatives support this objective. The Action Plan for the Accelerated Industrial Development of Africa (AIDA), the African Mining Vision (AMV), and the various strategies promoting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are all aligned with Agenda 2063's aspirations to develop inclusive, sustainable, and resilient industrial ecosystems. The 2025 assessment highlights growing awareness of the need to integrate industrial policies into regional agendas. In some RECs, industrial strategies have been adopted, mining codes harmonized, and business environment reforms implemented. Several regions are also experimenting with regional special economic zones and investment promotion instruments. However, the overall results remain modest. Industrial value chains remain fragmented, and productive integration across countries is limited. Intra-African investment flows remain weak, and regional complementarities are not sufficiently exploited. The private sector, especially SMEs, often faces constraints in accessing regional markets and financing, limiting its ability to contribute to regional economic dynamics.

Common Challenges

The development of business, industry, and mining in the context of regional integration faces a number of persistent and interconnected obstacles.

- First, the **absence of coherent and aligned regional industrial policies** limits the ability to create cross-border value chains. Many Member States continue to design and implement industrial strategies in isolation, which leads to duplication, competition, and underutilisation of potential complementarities.
- Second, the **weak integration of regional mining policies** hinders the transformation of Africa's mineral wealth into a real lever for integration. National mining codes are often not harmonized, and regional coordination mechanisms remain embryonic.
- Third, **access to finance and infrastructure for businesses, especially SMEs**, is insufficient. The lack of targeted regional financial instruments and inadequate logistics hubs penalise private sector growth and competitiveness.

- Fourth, **barriers to the free movement of capital and investment** persist in several RECs, discouraging intra-African investment and cross-border business development.
- Finally, **the limited involvement of the private sector in the definition of regional economic policies** contributes to the low ownership of regional instruments and poor dissemination of opportunities.

Addressing these challenges requires a shift toward **coordinated industrialization strategies**, regional investment facilitation mechanisms, and the development of regional public-private platforms to align integration priorities with the needs of businesses and investors.

Dimension VI: Rural economy development

This dimension assesses the willingness of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to promote common policies in the areas of agricultural development, the enhancement of rural resources (water, forests, biodiversity), sustainable land management, and climate change adaptation. It is structured around three main sub-components: (i) regional agricultural, pastoral, and fisheries policies; (ii) blue economy policies and the management of marine resources; and (iii) environmental strategies and long-term resilience. The continental average score stands at 0.49, reflecting a moderate level of rural economy development, but with contrasting regional dynamics.

As of 2023, only four RECs had formally adopted a regional agricultural policy (ECOWAS, EAC, COMESA, and SADC). ECOWAS stands out with its agricultural policy (ECOWAP), adopted in 2005 and supported by a regional investment programme (PRIA), while COMESA has implemented a Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) development framework that incorporates land issues and early warning systems. These achievements fall within the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), launched in 2003 under NEPAD. The programme has enabled several RECs to develop Regional Agricultural Investment Plans (RAIPs), monitoring frameworks to evaluate agricultural spending, and multi-stakeholder platforms for policy dialogue. By 2022, more than 40 African countries had validated a National Agricultural Investment Plan (NAIP) aligned with CAADP principles. Annual review meetings, known as “Biennial Reviews,” measure progress through harmonized indicators.

Regarding the blue economy, only three RECs (SADC, IGAD, COMESA) have adopted guidelines or strategies related to marine resource management, maritime governance, and the development of

coastal zones. Initiatives have emerged to integrate sustainable fisheries, coastal management, and offshore energy exploitation. Moreover, several RECs are participating in regional climate adaptation projects (ACPC/ECA Programme, Agenda 2063, GCF-RECs Programme). In terms of environmental management, fewer than 50% of RECs have a regional action plan for biodiversity or desertification control. The coordination of forestry policies or access to drinking water remains marginal in most regional strategic frameworks. Nevertheless, some progress has been made, such as SADC’s programme on integrated natural resource management and the joint COMESA-EAC-SADC climate strategy adopted in 2021.

Common Challenges

- **Fragmentation of agricultural policies:** National agricultural strategies are often poorly aligned with regional frameworks, limiting the coherence of cross-border interventions.
- **Insufficient funding for regional rural investment programmes:** Resources allocated by states and development partners remain inadequate for the implementation of regional agricultural investment plans.
- **Weak cooperation on shared resources (transboundary water, forests, agricultural basins):** Governance frameworks for these resources remain embryonic or ineffective in several RECs.
- **Lack of regional data on climate vulnerability:** The absence of joint data collection and analysis systems hinders planning that is adapted to climate risks.
- **Absence of binding mechanisms for the environment and natural resources:** Existing normative frameworks lack legal force and are rarely accompanied by monitoring or enforcement mechanisms.

Strengthening rural integration requires better coordination between agricultural, environmental, and climate policies, and the development of cross-border projects capable of structuring rural value chains within a regional logic.

Dimension VII: Macroeconomic Integration

The “Macroeconomic Integration” dimension evaluates the degree of harmonization of monetary, fiscal, and budgetary policies among REC Member States, as well as the existence of economic convergence mechanisms and multilateral

surveillance frameworks. It reflects the willingness of regions to build a stable, predictable, and investment-friendly economic space, while reinforcing transparency, fiscal discipline, and economic policy coordination.

The continental average score for this dimension stands at 0.47, reflecting a moderate and still highly uneven level of macroeconomic integration. As of 2023, only two regional groupings recognised by the African Union-WAEMU within ECOWAS and the EAC-have operational macroeconomic convergence frameworks combined with regular multilateral surveillance mechanisms. ECOWAS, for instance, applies a revised Convergence, Stability, Growth, and Solidarity Pact (2015), which sets out eight performance criteria-four of which are primary (budget deficit, inflation, public debt, and domestic arrears). However, only three to five Member States regularly meet these criteria on an annual basis. WAEMU goes further by having a common currency (the CFA franc), a regional central bank (BCEAO), a harmonized budgetary surveillance framework, a common monetary policy, and a unified regional financial market (BRVM), which by the end of 2023 included more than 40 listed companies.

The EAC, for its part, adopted a Monetary Union Protocol in 2013 with the initial goal of establishing a single currency by 2024. An EAC Monetary Institute was created as a precursor to the future regional central bank. However, delays in setting up this institution, persistent macroeconomic disparities among members, and the non-compliance with convergence criteria have led to successive postponements of the target date. COMESA has a non-binding macroeconomic convergence framework with periodic reviews, but implementation of the criteria is irregular and monitoring mechanisms remain limited. SADC defined a roadmap for monetary union, which envisioned the creation of a regional central bank by 2018, but this goal has not materialized due to a lack of political commitment and technical alignment among Member States. Overall, convergence instruments remain weakly binding, and performance is heterogeneous: fewer than 30% of Member States consistently meet the targets set by their regions. In 2022, the average fiscal deficit exceeded 5% of GDP in more than half of African countries, and the public debt ratio often crossed the 60% threshold-particularly in post-conflict countries or those highly exposed to external shocks. Moreover, the lack of comparable and harmonized data among countries makes it difficult to assess convergence effectively: only four RECs have a coherent regional framework for macroeconomic data collection.

Common Challenges

- **Weakly binding convergence frameworks:** Macroeconomic criteria are often defined without effective enforcement mechanisms or sanctions for non-compliance.
- **Structural divergences among Member States:** Large gaps in economic performance, institutional capacity, and development levels slow down harmonization efforts.
- **Lack of reliable macroeconomic data:** The absence of harmonized statistical systems limits the quality of monitoring and comparative analysis.
- **Heightened vulnerability to external shocks:** Global and regional economic crises undermine convergence efforts and exacerbate internal divergences.
- **Low political ownership:** Convergence programmes often suffer from a lack of political will, intergovernmental coordination, and adequate financial resources.

Despite these limitations, macroeconomic convergence remains a crucial pillar for strengthening the credibility of economic policies, facilitating resource mobilisation, building regional financial markets, and ultimately laying the groundwork for a continental monetary union as envisaged in the subsequent stages of Agenda 2063.

Dimension VIII: Infrastructure

Infrastructure integration plays a central role in advancing regional integration in Africa by facilitating the movement of goods, people, and services. This dimension assesses the existence of regional policies and strategies for the development of transport, energy, water, and digital infrastructure. It also evaluates the implementation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), the establishment of regional financing mechanisms, and the deployment of cross-border infrastructure projects.

In 2023, the continental average score for this dimension was 0.69, reflecting encouraging progress in several sectors. The transport sector shows the highest level of integration, particularly in road and air transport. Over 80% of RECs have adopted regional road network master plans, and a majority have implemented road corridors facilitating intra-African trade. The creation of One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs), coordinated by COMESA, EAC, and SADC,

has considerably improved the efficiency of cross-border transport in Eastern and Southern Africa. In the energy sector, all RECs now have regional strategies for energy integration, and five of them have set up regional power pools (SAPP, EAPP, PEAC, WAPP, COMELEC). These power pools are at various stages of operationalisation, with SAPP and WAPP leading in terms of interconnection and regional electricity trade. However, major disparities remain in energy access, production capacity, and grid infrastructure among African regions. In the water and sanitation sector, regional integration remains limited. Only three RECs (ECCAS, ECOWAS, and SADC) have adopted specific water policies or action plans, and cooperation frameworks for transboundary water management remain weak or poorly implemented. Regarding digital infrastructure, initiatives remain largely national in scope, with insufficient coordination at the regional level. Although several RECs have adopted digital transformation strategies, their implementation is fragmented and lacks a common vision for the digital integration of the continent.

Common Challenges

- **Asymmetry in infrastructure development:** Wide disparities in infrastructure levels exist between Member States, hindering the connectivity and functionality of regional corridors.
- **Insufficient investment in regional projects:** National investments dominate infrastructure development, while cross-border projects often suffer from underfunding or delays.
- **Weak institutional coordination:** The multiplicity of actors (ministries, RECs, regional agencies) and the absence of harmonised regulatory frameworks hamper the effectiveness of infrastructure programmes.
- **Limited implementation of PIDA projects:** Despite the existence of project pipelines and prioritised programmes, the execution rate of PIDA Phase I remains low, due to administrative and financial bottlenecks.
- **Digital divide:** Regional strategies for digital infrastructure and broadband connectivity are still at an embryonic stage in most RECs, exacerbating inequalities in access to technology and innovation.

Strengthening infrastructure integration requires stronger political commitment and improved regional

coordination. The deployment of cross-border transport and energy projects must be accelerated, particularly in landlocked and underserved areas. The mobilisation of innovative financing—through public-private partnerships, regional infrastructure funds, or green bonds—could support the implementation of priority PIDA projects. It is also essential to harmonise regulatory frameworks for transport and energy to ensure interoperability and the sustainability of regional investments. Lastly, the development of digital infrastructure must become a continental priority, with the operationalisation of the African Digital Transformation Strategy (2020-2030) and the expansion of broadband networks, data centres, and regional Internet exchange points.

Dimension IX: Facilitation of free movement of people

This dimension assesses the extent to which Regional Economic Communities (RECs) promote the right of African citizens to move, reside, and settle freely within the continent. It examines the adoption of legal frameworks, protocols, and strategies related to the free movement of persons, the mutual recognition of identity and travel documents, and the implementation of regional migration policies.

In 2023, the continental average score for this dimension was 0.51, reflecting a moderate level of integration with major regional disparities. Only four RECs (ECOWAS, EAC, IGAD, and ECCAS) have adopted protocols on free movement that formally guarantee the rights of residence and establishment. Among these, ECOWAS remains the most advanced, having operationalised its protocol since the 1980s. The REC has implemented a harmonised biometric identity card and abolished visa requirements for intra-regional travel, although challenges remain with the recognition of residence and work permits. EAC has also made progress with the implementation of its Common Market Protocol, which guarantees the free movement of persons, workers, and services. However, the process is still uneven among Member States. ECCAS, for its part, adopted a protocol in 2017 on the free movement of persons and the right of establishment, but it remains largely unimplemented due to a lack of institutional and administrative mechanisms. IGAD adopted a Protocol on Free Movement in 2020, but it is still in the ratification phase. In contrast, COMESA, CEN-SAD, SADC, and AMU do not have binding regional legal instruments on the free movement of persons. While several of these RECs support regional mobility programmes or advocate visa facilitation, the absence of a protocol limits the effective implementation of this integration component.

Common Challenges

- **Legal fragmentation:** Only a few RECs have binding legal instruments on free movement, and their implementation often varies widely across Member States.
- **Weak institutional frameworks:** The lack of operational regional migration institutions or agencies hinders the enforcement of adopted protocols and the harmonisation of national legislation.
- **Security concerns:** Fears over terrorism, irregular migration, and human trafficking have led several states to impose restrictions, even within regions that promote free movement.
- **Limited mutual recognition of documents:** Few RECs have mechanisms for the mutual recognition of identity documents, residence permits, or qualifications, restricting effective mobility.
- **Poor intergovernmental coordination:** The absence of common databases and interoperable administrative systems limits cooperation between migration and border control agencies.

The facilitation of free movement is a cornerstone of the African integration agenda and a key element of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Accelerating its implementation requires the effective operationalisation of existing protocols, support for their ratification where needed, and the creation of regional migration observatories. States and RECs must also strengthen institutional capacities and adopt interoperable systems for managing mobility, identity verification, and the portability of rights. Lastly, migration should be approached not just from a security standpoint, but also as an opportunity for economic development, labour market integration, and social cohesion across the continent.

Dimension X: Social and cultural integration

This dimension captures the extent to which RECs promote shared values, foster social cohesion, and support cultural diversity. It evaluates the existence of regional programmes dedicated to public health, gender equality, youth empowerment, sports cooperation, and cultural promotion. It also assesses the alignment of these programmes with the aspirations of Agenda 2063, particularly Aspiration 5, which envisions “an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, shared values and ethics.” In 2023, the continental average score for this dimension was 0.54, indicating a moderate

level of social integration, with variable dynamics across RECs. Most RECs have adopted gender strategies and youth empowerment frameworks, but their implementation remains uneven. Only three RECs (ECOWAS, COMESA, and SADC) have operational regional health programmes coordinated by a specialised agency or unit. These programmes cover areas such as disease prevention, pandemic response (notably during COVID-19), and cross-border health surveillance. In the field of gender equality, seven RECs have developed action plans or regional strategies. However, the integration of gender into sectoral policies (infrastructure, economy, education) is still insufficient. Youth and sports receive varying levels of attention, with few RECs having dedicated institutions or budgets to coordinate youth development or sporting events. Cultural cooperation is one of the least developed areas. Only two RECs (ECCAS and ECOWAS) have adopted regional cultural policies, and support for creative industries, heritage protection, and the circulation of cultural goods remains limited. Despite the central role of culture in identity and cohesion, most REC frameworks continue to marginalise it in favour of economic or security priorities.

Common Challenges

- **Lack of funding for social programmes:** Regional social initiatives are often underfunded, making their implementation sporadic and dependent on external support.
- **Institutional fragmentation:** Social and cultural issues are often scattered across departments with limited coordination, reducing the visibility and impact of initiatives.
- **Limited integration of gender and youth in economic strategies:** Gender equality and youth empowerment are not systematically considered in trade, industrialisation, or infrastructure policies.
- **Weak cultural cooperation frameworks:** Few RECs have cultural agencies or regional platforms for the promotion of arts, heritage, and intercultural dialogue.
- **Inadequate monitoring and evaluation systems:** Most RECs lack tools to measure the social impact of their policies, making it difficult to adjust strategies based on evidence.

To advance social and cultural integration, RECs should prioritise the institutionalisation of gender and youth focal points within all regional programmes, ensuring cross-sectoral coordination and impact. Regional cultural agencies should be

created or strengthened to support the creative economy, heritage preservation, and cultural exchange. Investing in social protection, inclusive health systems, and youth empowerment platforms would reinforce the social legitimacy of integration processes. Lastly, developing performance indicators in health, education, gender, and culture would allow for more effective monitoring of progress and ensure alignment with the people-centred goals of Agenda 2063.

Dimension XI: Human development

This dimension evaluates the efforts of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to foster inclusive education systems, promote human capital development, and strengthen scientific and technological cooperation. It reflects the extent to which regional frameworks support the alignment of national education strategies, the recognition of academic qualifications, the promotion of gender equality, youth empowerment, and the development of research and innovation systems.

In 2023, the continental average score for this dimension stood at 0.53, illustrating moderate integration and uneven progress among RECs. Only a limited number of RECs have adopted regional education strategies. The most advanced (EAC, ECOWAS, and SADC) support the mutual recognition of degrees, harmonisation of curricula, or the development of regional quality assurance frameworks. ECOWAS, for instance, promotes a regional qualifications framework and supports mobility through student exchange programmes. In terms of gender and youth, all RECs have formal commitments, but concrete implementation remains limited. Only a few have created youth or gender observatories to monitor inequalities, promote participation, and support women's entrepreneurship or youth employment. In practice, most initiatives are project-based and lack sustainable institutional mechanisms. Science, technology, and innovation (STI) are among the least developed integration areas. While some RECs (COMESA, SADC) have STI strategies, their implementation is often limited by weak institutional capacity, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of funding. The absence of regional research

centres, innovation hubs, or dedicated STI agencies hampers the development of a continental knowledge economy. Despite the emphasis on digitalisation in Agenda 2063, there is little coordination of digital education or e-learning policies at the REC level.

Common Challenges

- **Limited regional coordination in education:** Most RECs lack harmonised strategies and institutions for managing education and qualifications across borders.
- **Weak institutional frameworks for science and innovation:** Few RECs have operational structures to promote research, technological development, or scientific cooperation.
- **Gender and youth mainstreaming remains superficial:** Despite formal commitments, policies often lack clear objectives, funding, or monitoring mechanisms.
- **Lack of investment in human capital:** Education, research, and innovation remain underfunded in most regions, undermining efforts to build knowledge-based economies.
- **Insufficient data and performance monitoring:** The absence of harmonised indicators makes it difficult to assess progress and guide evidence-based decision-making.

To unlock the full potential of regional integration in human development, RECs must prioritise the creation of regional education frameworks, including systems for mutual recognition of qualifications and regional accreditation agencies. They should invest in STI cooperation by establishing regional research centres, innovation networks, and funding mechanisms aligned with continental priorities. Mainstreaming gender and youth across all sectors-beyond education-will be essential to ensure inclusive growth and resilience. Lastly, digital transformation should be harnessed to scale up e-learning platforms, regional digital libraries, and open science initiatives, thereby reducing inequalities in access to knowledge and innovation across the continent.



CHAPTER IV:

REGIONAL ASSESSMENT

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the level of regional integration achieved by each Regional Economic Community (REC), based on the results of the African Synthesized Regional Integration Index (ASRII). It builds on the dimensions analysed in the previous chapter and provides a breakdown of scores by pillar, dimension, and sub-dimension.

The analysis draws on responses provided by the RECs to the official questionnaire, supported by documentary evidence and validated by the AUC in collaboration with REC focal points. The goal is not to rank or compare RECs, but rather to provide each of them with a diagnostic tool to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.

The regional assessments highlight the diversity of integration trajectories and the efforts made by RECs to align with continental frameworks such as the AfCFTA, Agenda 2063, and the Abuja Treaty. They also reveal the recurring challenges encountered by many communities: institutional fragmentation, disparities in member state commitment, limited funding, and the need for better coordination across sectors.

AMU

1. Presentation of AMU

The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) was officially established on February 17, 1989, in Marrakech, Morocco, during a summit bringing together the Heads of State of Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia. These five countries, bound by a shared history, culture, and language, are today the only members of this regional organization, making it the Regional Economic Community (REC) with the fewest member states in Africa. The AMU spans an area of 6 million km² and, according to World Bank data, had an estimated population of 107.5 million in 2024, with a combined GDP of 492 billion USD. The organization's headquarters is located in Rabat, Morocco.

Originally designed to strengthen solidarity among the Maghreb peoples and accelerate their economic, political, social, and cultural integration, the AMU is based on the Marrakech Treaty and follows in the footsteps of earlier regional initiatives such as the Maghreb Liberation Committee (1927) and the Tangier Conference (1958). Since May 27, 2024, the General Secretariat of the AMU has been headed by Mr. Tarak Ben Salem.

Institutional Framework of the AMU

The AMU has progressively established an institutional framework aimed at guiding and coordinating regional policies in economic, social, security, and cultural domains.

- **The Presidential Council:** The supreme body composed of the Heads of State of the five member countries, responsible for setting strategic orientations.
- **The Council of Foreign Ministers:** Tasked with preparing presidential summits and coordinating diplomatic positions; it operates with greater regularity.
- **The General Secretariat:** Based in Rabat, it manages the day-to-day operations of the organization and monitors the implementation of decisions; it plays a central operational role in implementing the AMU's vision.

The AMU has also established several specialized bodies to strengthen sectoral integration. These include the Consultative Council (similar to a Maghreb parliament) and the AMU Judicial Authority, designed to harmonize legislation and resolve disputes between member states. The Maghreb Bank for Investment and Foreign Trade (BMICE), operational since 2015 and based in Tunis, is a major achievement. It aims to promote investment and intra-Maghreb trade. The AMU's overall functioning is based on the principle of unanimity in decision-making. Ambitious reforms, such as the introduction of qualified majority voting or the strengthening of the executive powers of the General Secretariat, are regularly considered.

Vision and flagship projects

The Arab Maghreb Union was founded with the ambition of building a united, stable and prosperous region based on a shared Maghreb identity and common economic interests. Its vision is based on strengthening solidarity between peoples, consolidating an area of free movement, and putting in place common policies in the strategic, economic, social, environmental and security fields.

The major objectives of the AMU are based on five fundamental axes:

- the establishment of a free trade area and then a common market between its members;***



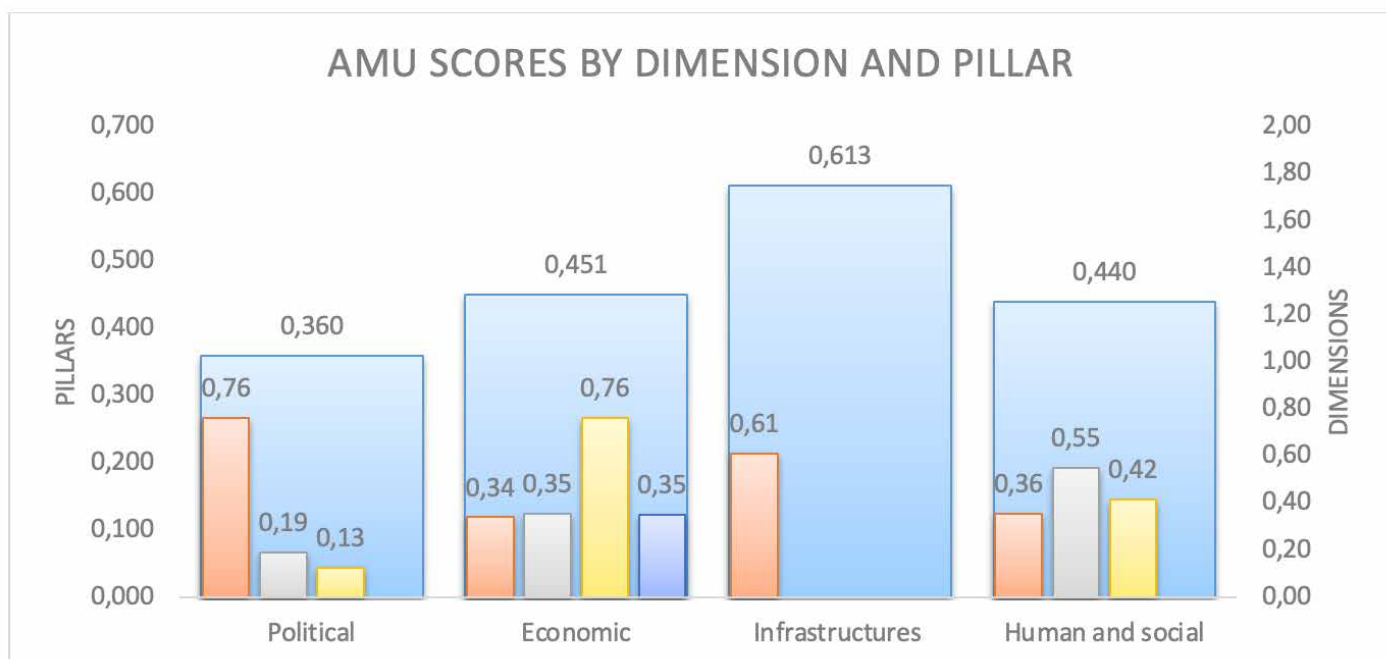
- harmonisation of economic, fiscal and trade policies ;***
- social and human development through cooperation in education, health and culture;***
- joint management of natural resources and a coordinated response to environmental challenges; and***
- building an influential Maghreb on the international stage, in partnership with the African Union, the European Union and the OIC.***

As part of this vision, a number of flagship projects have been identified by the Member States. On the economic and infrastructure front, the AMU has initiated major projects such as the Maghreb free trade zone, the trans-Maghreb motorway and the Maghreb express train. There is also the development of the Tangier Med II port and projects to modernise telecommunications.

2. Assessment of AMU on the basis of ASRII

Global overview

In terms of the results achieved by 2025, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) is showing average performance, reflecting a moderate level of regional integration, marked by targeted progress in certain areas but still hampered by institutional and political constraints . This performance reflects the significant potential for integration, underpinned by an ambitious strategic vision and significant legal achievements. The solidity of the AMU's institutional framework, strengthened by the signing of more than 34 multilateral agreements, the creation of the Maghreb Bank for Investment and Foreign Trade (BMICE) and the establishment of technical institutions such as the Maghreb University, provides

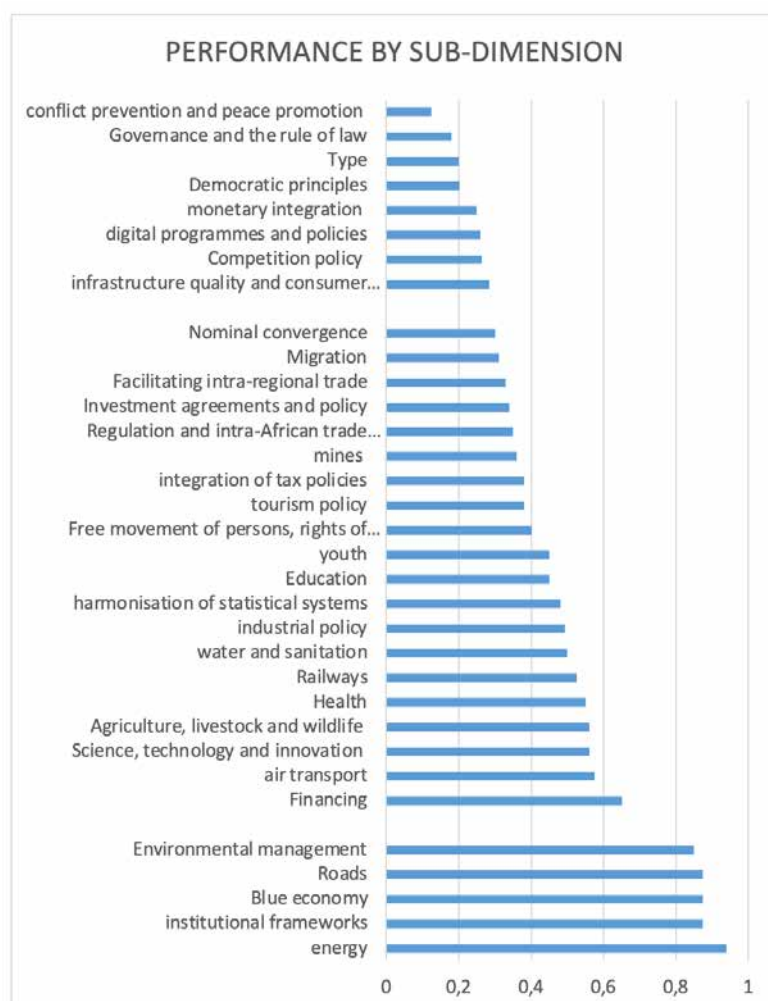


a valuable basis for regional integration. However, this architecture suffers from a lack of activation as well as dependence on decisions by consensus, which can have a slowing effect on reforms.

to relaunch several cross-border initiatives and is now a credible lever for strengthening Maghreb value chains. Efforts have also been made to harmonise customs systems and economic indicators, facilitating

The evaluation shows very contrasting performances between the pillars. The political pillar, which covers the institutional, governance and peace dimensions, shows a mixed overall result. The infrastructure pillar has the highest score in the sub-region at 0.61. AMU has performed strongly in this area thanks to the structuring projects included in the PIDA, which is mobilising several billion dollars in North Africa. Notable initiatives include studies for the Tangiers-Tunis motorway, pilot fibre-optic projects to boost regional connectivity, and the commissioning of the Tangiers Med II port in 2024, now Africa's largest container port with a capacity of 9 million TEUs. By improving physical and digital connectivity, these projects are key to boosting intra-regional trade and strengthening economic integration in the Maghreb.

In the economic and human development pillars, AMU's performance is intermediate, with averages of 0.45 and 0.44 respectively. The economic pillar of the AMU shows average performance, reflecting contrasting institutional progress. The Maghreb Bank for Investment and Foreign Trade (BMICE), operational since 2015 with an initial capital of 150 million dollars, plays a structuring role in financing regional projects and supporting productive investment. It has as assignment



regional comparisons and policy coordination. The Maghreb Business Council plays an essential role in promoting dialogue between economic players, helping to strengthen regional cooperation. However, despite these initiatives, intra-Maghreb trade remains low, representing around 3% of the region's total trade in 2023, underlining the need for deeper economic integration. Human development is one of the Achilles heels of the Maghreb region. The AMU's human development pillar is performing at an average level, supported by promising initiatives that are still limited in their regional scope. Between 2023 and 2025, several bilateral agreements, such as the visa waiver between Morocco and Tunisia. In July 2018, Morocco and Tunisia signed the 'Ibn Khaldoun' agreement, which focuses exclusively on academic mobility (students, doctoral candidates, and academic staff), and does not apply to the general mobility of salaried labor. The AMU has also demonstrated its ability to cooperate in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, through the sharing of information and health resources. Efforts have also been made to boost the employability of young people through vocational training, particularly in the digital sector. However, this progress remains largely fragmented, due to the lack of a harmonised regional framework for the free movement of people, the harmonisation of education systems and the mutual recognition of qualifications. The lack of common mobility mechanisms, the persistence of socio-economic disparities and the absence of a concerted strategy for cultural and scientific development are still holding back truly inclusive human integration at Maghreb level.

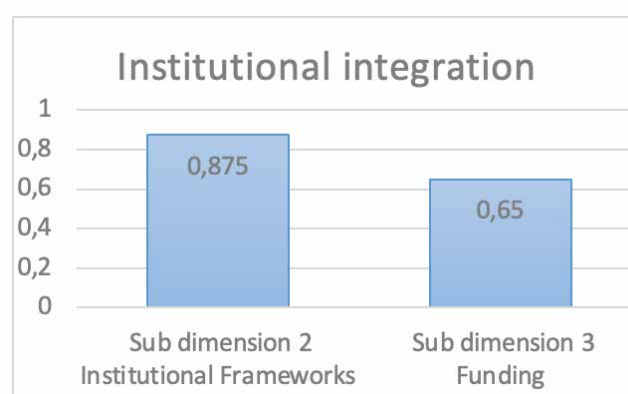
With an average score of 0.36, the political pillar of the AMU is based on an institutional architecture designed from the outset to support an ambitious vision of regional integration, based on stability, shared governance and solidarity. The existence of bodies such as the Presidential Council, the Council of Foreign Ministers, BMICE and the Consultative Council testifies to an initial strong political commitment. However, to respond to the renewed aspirations of the Maghreb peoples, this architecture would benefit from being reactivated and consolidated. The functioning of the institutions could be improved by structural factors, such as the regularity of summits, strengthening the resources of the General Secretariat, or adapting the decision-making mechanism. Similarly, advances in democratic governance, judicial cooperation and the protection of rights remain unevenly applied and would benefit from being translated into operational regional mechanisms. Finally, although the Member States have shown a willingness to coordinate their actions in the face of cross-cutting threats (terrorism, trafficking, instability), the implementation of common peace and security strategies remains

fragmented. With this in mind, strengthening political dialogue, reactivating institutional mechanisms and deepening the instruments of collective governance appear to be priority levers for reaffirming AMU's vocation as an area of stability, cooperation and shared prosperity.

AMU performance by dimension and sub-dimensions

The AMU's performance by sub-dimension reveals significant differences, reflecting an asymmetrical integration dynamic. The highest scores are in structuring sectors, reflecting a sustained commitment to infrastructure, sustainability and sectoral cooperation. Conversely, the weakest performances are recorded in key areas for regional cohesion, such as conflict prevention, governance and the rule of law, democratic principles and the gender dimension. These results underline the need to strengthen political governance, social inclusion and institutional stability to ensure a more balanced and inclusive integration at Maghreb level.

Challenges and prospects AMU



The Arab Maghreb Union is evolving in a complex institutional and political context, with **limited inter-state cooperation** which could improve the full operationalisation of its structures. Existing regional mechanisms, although legally established, are struggling to be deployed effectively due to a low level of dialogue between member countries. This situation limits the scope of joint initiatives in key areas of integration. Furthermore, **the AMU is still in the process of structuring its links with major continental strategies, such as the FTAA and Agenda 2063**. However, prospects for development remain open. The relaunch of a pragmatic dialogue, based on technical cooperation in areas of shared interest - such as the energy transition, education or mobility - could be a lever for strengthening the integration dynamic. Similarly, better coordination with continental initiatives and a gradual commitment to the African Union's structuring projects would revitalise the

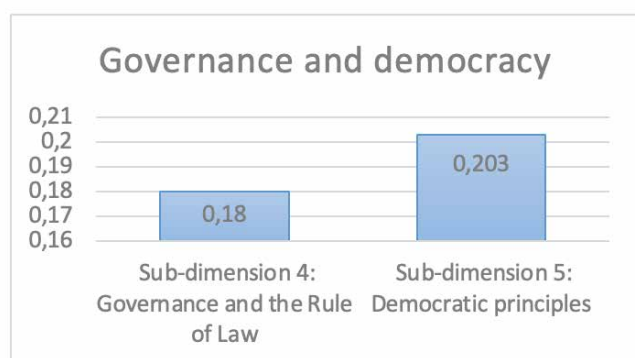
founding ambitions of the Arab Maghreb Union, to the benefit of more inclusive and operational integration.

Assessment by sub dimension

Dimension: Institutional integration

The high scores for the institutional framework (0.875) and financing (0.65) reflect the existence of a solid organisational apparatus. The Council of Ministers, the specialised committees and the BMICE are notable achievements. However, their full operationalisation will only be improved by the resumption and regularity of meetings of the Presidential Council and by a General Secretariat with increased resources.

Dimension: Governance and democracy



The sub-dimensions relating to the rule of law (0.18) and democratic principles (0.203) reveal weak implementation of the conventions signed. The lack of regional election monitoring mechanisms and the absence of legal convergence, despite the formal creation of the Judicial Authority, limit the pillar's effectiveness.

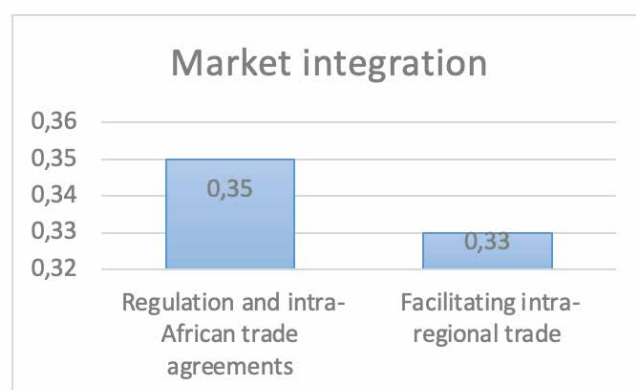
Dimension: Peace and security



The very low score (0.125) for conflict prevention reflects the still embryonic state of regional coordination. Efforts have been made in counter-terrorism cooperation and border security, but these remain limited in the absence of concrete results.

Here, high-level political dialogue should help to accelerate the achievement of the desired objectives.

Market integration dimension



The average performance in facilitating intra-regional trade (0.33) and regulating intra-African agreements (0.35) shows that texts exist but are struggling to be translated into convergent practices. The 2010 protocol setting up the free trade area has not been put into practice, but initiatives such as the harmonisation of customs systems, which has led to the unification of the classification of certain goods and facilitated their marketing, should be encouraged to speed up intra-regional trade.

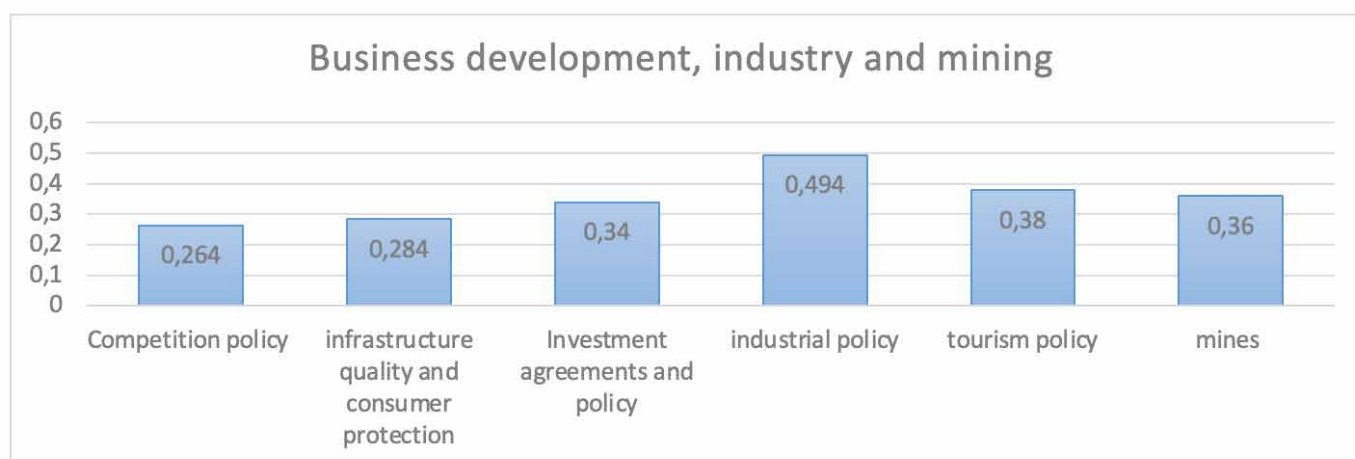
Business development, industry and mining

Industrial (0.494) and tourism (0.38) policies are relatively better established, with converging trends in certain areas, notably the development of agri-food, craft and heritage industries. The mining sector (0.36) is also benefiting from some efforts at technical coordination, although the regulatory frameworks remain largely national.

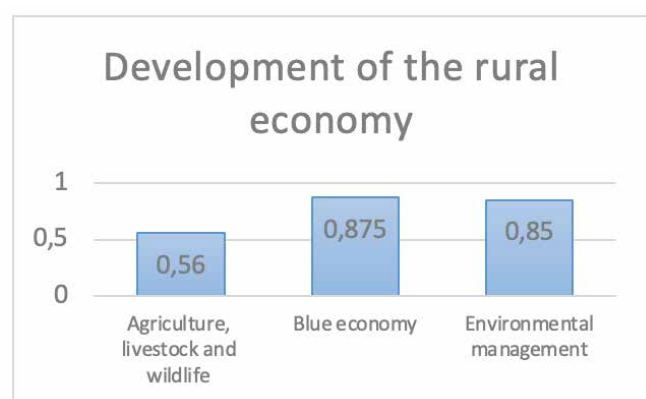
On the other hand, investment (0.34), competition (0.264) and consumer protection (0.284) policies are struggling to align with harmonised regional standards. While the Maghreb Business Council has helped to strengthen exchanges between economic operators, the business environment remains fragmented, and common regulatory instruments are still poorly applied. Harmonisation of investment incentive schemes, mutual recognition of quality standards, and modernisation of competition legislation are among the priorities identified for strengthening economic integration in this dimension.

Dimension: development of the rural economy

The development of the rural economy performed strongly, with scores of 0.56 for agriculture, 0.875 for the blue economy and 0.85 for environmental



management. These results reflect a clear commitment to regional cooperation, backed up by significant sectoral agreements: customs exemption for agricultural products (1990), veterinary coordination (1991), harmonisation of phytosanitary

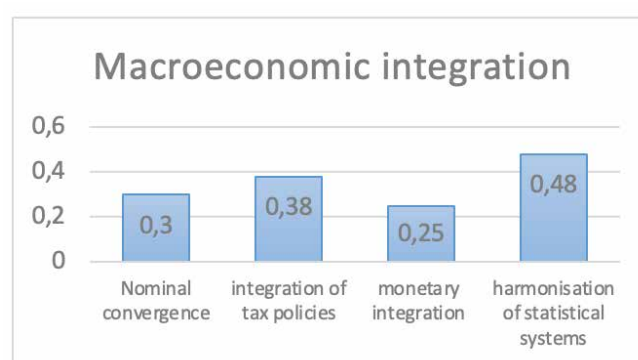


standards (1993) and joint accession to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (1994). These instruments provide a technical basis for joint management of natural resources, although their application remains hampered by structural constraints. Climate change, water shortages and non-tariff barriers hamper intra-Maghreb agricultural and fisheries trade, despite the potential of these sectors to enhance food security, climate resilience and regional economic integration.

Dimension: Macroeconomic integration

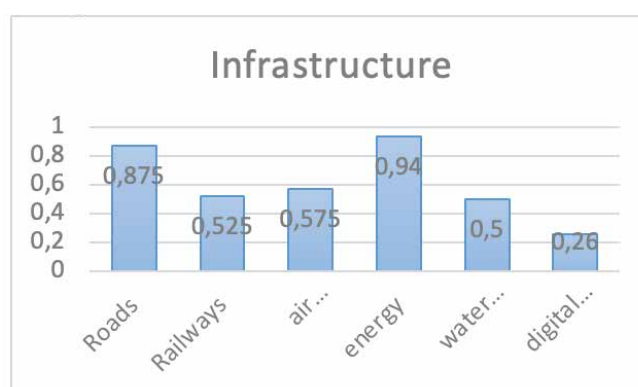
Macroeconomic integration within the AMU remains in its initial stages, as shown by the relatively low scores recorded for the nominal (0.3), fiscal (0.38) and monetary (0.25) convergence programmes. These results reflect the absence of a regional fiscal surveillance framework and the persistence of divergent economic priorities between Member States.

Nevertheless, significant efforts have been made to strengthen the harmonisation of data and economic



steering tools. The standardisation of statistical indicators - particularly in terms of GDP, inflation and unemployment - facilitates regional comparisons and makes performance easier to understand. The AfDB's support for the creation of a statistics unit within the General Secretariat is a major step forward, laying the foundations for more integrated and coordinated management of economic information in the Maghreb region.

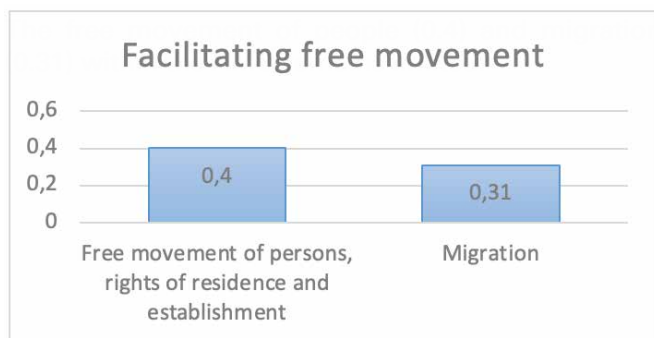
Dimension: Infrastructure



This pillar dimension is one of the most effective axes of the UMA, supported by structuring projects included in the PIDA and supported by BMICE. Road (0.875), rail (0.525), air (0.575) and energy (0.94) infrastructures bear witness to a concrete desire to

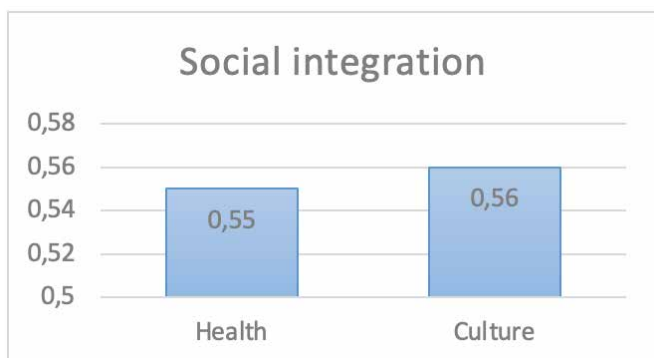
connect the Maghreb economies, notably through the Tangiers-Tunis motorway and the Tangiers Med II port. Access to water and sanitation (0.5) has reached an acceptable level, but the digital transition remains timid (0.26), despite pilot projects in fibre optics. The impact of these infrastructures on reducing logistics costs and integrating markets could be significant if the projects reach full maturity.

Dimension: Facilitating free movement



Although bilateral agreements between some countries, notably Morocco and Tunisia, have waived visas and facilitated the exchange of skilled workers, no coherent regional framework is yet in place. Differences in administrative treatment, the lack of mutual recognition of qualifications and security concerns are holding back the implementation of a truly integrated area of human mobility.

Social integration dimension



The social dimension of the AMU shows moderate results, supported by concrete but still scattered initiatives. In the area of health (score: 0.55), regional cooperation was exemplary during the COVID-19 pandemic, through the sharing of epidemiological information, health strategies and ad hoc assistance between Member States. On the cultural front (score: 0.56), joint actions have enabled the restoration of emblematic sites such as the medinas of Fez, Tunis and Algiers, as well as the progressive digitisation of heritage archives. The idea of creating a Maghreb digital library reflects a desire to integrate cultural capital more fully into the project for regional unity.

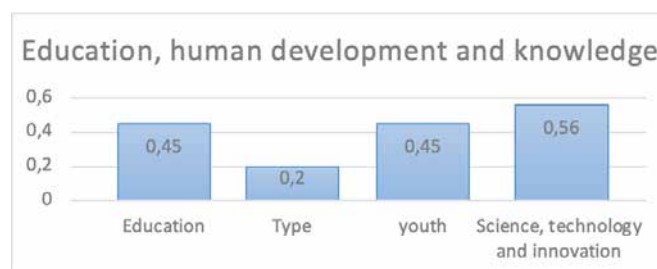
However, the lack of a coordinated regional social strategy and the weakness of dedicated institutional mechanisms limit the structural scope of these initiatives.

Dimension: Education, human development and knowledge

The results for human development, science and technology are mixed, reflecting both notable efforts and significant room for improvement.

Education (score: 0.45) benefits from cooperation initiatives, notably

through vocational training and bilateral programmes, but the absence of a regional framework for the recognition of diplomas still limits academic mobility. Actions in favour of young people (0.45), supported in part by BMICE, have focused on entrepreneurship and digital skills, without however leading to a structured regional strategy. Advances in science, technology and innovation (0.56) reflect a growing awareness of the importance of this lever for integration, particularly through the digitisation of cultural heritage. On the other hand, the gender dimension remains a weak point (0.2), marked by the absence of concrete common policies to promote gender equality within the region.



Recommendations:

In terms of political integration, the AMU must invest in institutional reactivation and collective governance by committing to:

- ✓ Reactivate the key political bodies, in particular the Presidential Council, by ensuring regular summits and better support for the General Secretariat, in order to translate the AMU's political vision into concrete action.
- ✓ Reform the consensus-based decision-making mechanism, exploring alternatives such as qualified voting, to speed up regional decision-making.
- ✓ Implement the Maghreb Judicial Authority to facilitate legal convergence and the settlement of disputes.

On the economic front, it is necessary to deepen productive policies and trade integration by striving to:

- ✓ Make the Maghreb free trade area operational, in particular by activating the 2010 protocol and facilitating intra-regional trade by eliminating non-tariff barriers.
- ✓ Harmonise investment, competition and consumer protection policies, with a common framework of incentives and economic regulation.
- ✓ Strengthen regional industrial sectors (agri-food, crafts, tourism, mining) through joint programmes and innovation platforms.

For infrastructure development, we need to finalise the major integration projects by taking the time to:

- ✓ Accelerate the implementation of key projects such as the Tangier-Tunis motorway, rail corridors and energy interconnections.
- ✓ Strengthening the logistical impact of the Tangier Med II port by improving intra-Maghreb land and digital connectivity.
- ✓ Increase investment in the digital transition, by consolidating fibre optic initiatives and equitable access to digital services.

With regard to the human and social pillar, the AMU must build an inclusive Maghreb community by investing in:

- ✓ Adopt a regional agreement on the free movement of people, complemented by a system of mutual recognition of qualifications and facilitation of worker mobility.
- ✓ Harmonise education systems by establishing a Maghreb framework for higher education, with recognition of diplomas, academic mobility and the creation of joint centres of excellence.

North Africa to sub-Saharan Africa. Together, these countries cover an area of more than 13.5 million km² with a population of around 721 million (2024), making CEN-SAD the largest REC in terms of size and population covered. Its headquarters were initially based in Tripoli, but were temporarily relocated to N'Djamena (Chad) in view of the instability in Libya since 2011. Historically, the CEN-SAD was launched on the initiative of Libya (Guide Muammar Gaddafi) with six founding countries (Libya, Mali, Niger, Sudan, Chad and Burkina Faso) to promote a vast area of cooperation encompassing the Sahel and the Sahara. Rapidly enlarged during the 2000s (including the accession of Nigeria in 2001), it set itself the goal of eventually creating a continental economic union and ensuring the free movement of people, goods and capital between its members, while strengthening regional peace, security and stability. However, after a period of instability, CEN-SAD undertook a restructuring in 2013. At an extraordinary summit held in N'Djamena in February 2013, a revised Treaty was approved to relaunch the Community on a new footing. This treaty, which finally came into force in 2019 after the required ratifications, refocused CEN-SAD's objectives around two major axes: regional security and sustainable development. In 2024, CEN-SAD will have a GDP of USD 1374.056 billion, headed by H.E. ADO ELHADJI ABOU.

Institutional framework

In accordance with the revised Treaty of 2013, CEN-SAD has a new institutional architecture which includes:

- **The Conference of Heads of State and Government**, responsible for defining major political guidelines.
- **The Executive Council** (Council of Ministers), which oversees the implementation of decisions and the coordination of regional policies.
- **The Permanent Peace and Security Council** is a specialised committee responsible for

CEN-SAD

1. Presentation of CEN-SAD

The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) was established on 4 February 1998 in Tripoli, Libya, and has been one of the eight RECs recognised by the African Union since 2000. It brings together 25 Member States with very diverse profiles, stretching from



reflecting one of the two strategic priorities, peace and security.

- **The Permanent Council for Sustainable Development** is supposed to reflect sustainable development issues in the Community's strategies.
- **The Committee of Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives** provides the link at diplomatic level.
- **The General Secretariat** (headed by an Executive Secretary) is the administrative body responsible for day-to-day operations.

CEN-SAD also has consultative and financial institutions, such as

- **The Economic, Social and Cultural Council**
- **The Sahel-Saharan Investment and Trade Bank.**

In practice, the level of operationalisation of these structures remains limited. Most of the new permanent bodies provided for in the revised treaty are not yet fully functional - the Peace and Security Council and the Sustainable Development Council, in particular, are slow to materialise and hold regular meetings. Similarly, the Committee of Ambassadors and certain specific mechanisms (e.g. the Counter-Terrorism Centre decided in 2016 to be based in Cairo) are still in the process of being set up or partially operational. Since 2019, however, there has been a firm determination to relaunch the process: the holding of summits and ministerial councils is tending to return to a normal rhythm, and the new Executive Secretary is giving impetus to administrative reform. Nevertheless, structural challenges remain. The General Secretariat remains of the traditional type (rather than an integrated Commission as in other RECs), which limits its autonomy. Above all, the organisation's funding remains precarious: contributions from Member States are irregular and largely insufficient, making CEN-SAD dependent on support from external partners. The absence of instruments such as a community tax and the withdrawal of certain donors have complicated the financial situation. Finally, unlike some other RECs, CEN-SAD does not have a regional parliament or a community court of justice, which reduces its institutional anchorage with the people. Despite these weaknesses, the reforms underway aim to modernise the governance architecture to make the organisation more effective and credible.

Vision and flagship projects

The renewed vision of CEN-SAD, as enshrined in the revised Treaty of 2013, is to **build an integrated, secure**

and prosperous Sahel-Saharan community, built around the preservation of peace and the promotion of sustainable development throughout the region.

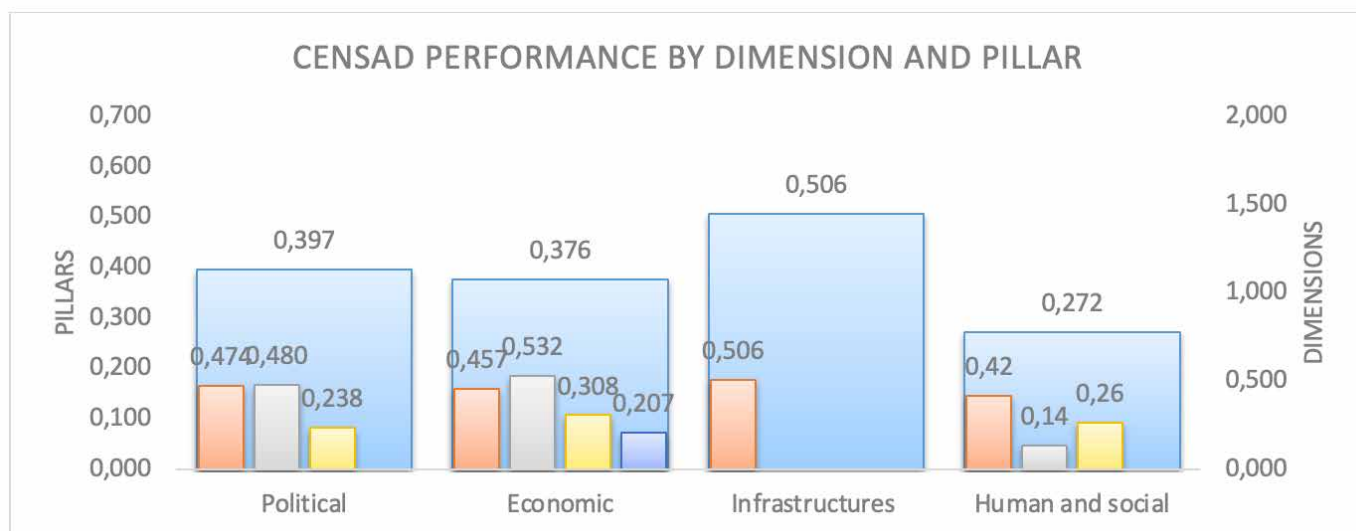
Compared with the founding treaty of 1998, which envisaged a comprehensive economic union (total free movement of goods and people, customs union, etc.), the new agenda focuses more realistically on two major axes:

1. Regional security, including the stabilisation of conflict zones, the fight against terrorism and organised crime, and coordinated border management;
2. sustainable development, encompassing economic cooperation, infrastructure, environmental resilience and human development.

CEN-SAD's priority objectives can be summed up in five main areas: peace and security, sustainable development, economic and trade integration, social and humanitarian affairs, and the advancement of young people and women. In concrete terms, CEN-SAD aims to:

- peace, security and stability throughout its territory
- promote good governance, the rule of law and human rights in its Member States
- facilitate intra-Community trade in line with the FTAA
- developing the interconnection infrastructures essential to physical integration, in particular transport corridors, energy networks and telecommunications;
- ensuring food security and sustainable management of natural resources in the Sahel-Saharan strip (combating desertification, adapting to climate change);
- promote human development, notably through cooperation in the fields of education, culture and health, and through the empowerment of young people and women.

To achieve this vision, CEN-SAD relies on several strategic frameworks. A Strategy for Security and Development (SSD) 2015-2050 has been adopted, setting a long-term horizon for peace and prosperity in the region. Following the 2019 Extraordinary Summit, a Five-Year Action Plan has also been drawn up by the Secretariat to set out concrete projects for the recent period.



2. Assessment of CEN-SAD regional integration based on ASRII

Global overview

The state of regional integration in CEN-SAD as measured by ASRII remains perfectible overall. The level reflects the difficulties experienced by the organisation in realising its integration ambitions, despite some targeted progress. The performance profile by pillar highlights a significant gap between infrastructure integration, which is relatively more advanced, and human and social integration, which is fairly weak. The political and economic pillars remain intermediate. The average scores per major pillar are as follows: around 0.40 for the *political pillar*, 0.38 for the *economic pillar*, 0.51 for *infrastructure*, and 0.27 for the *human and social pillar*.

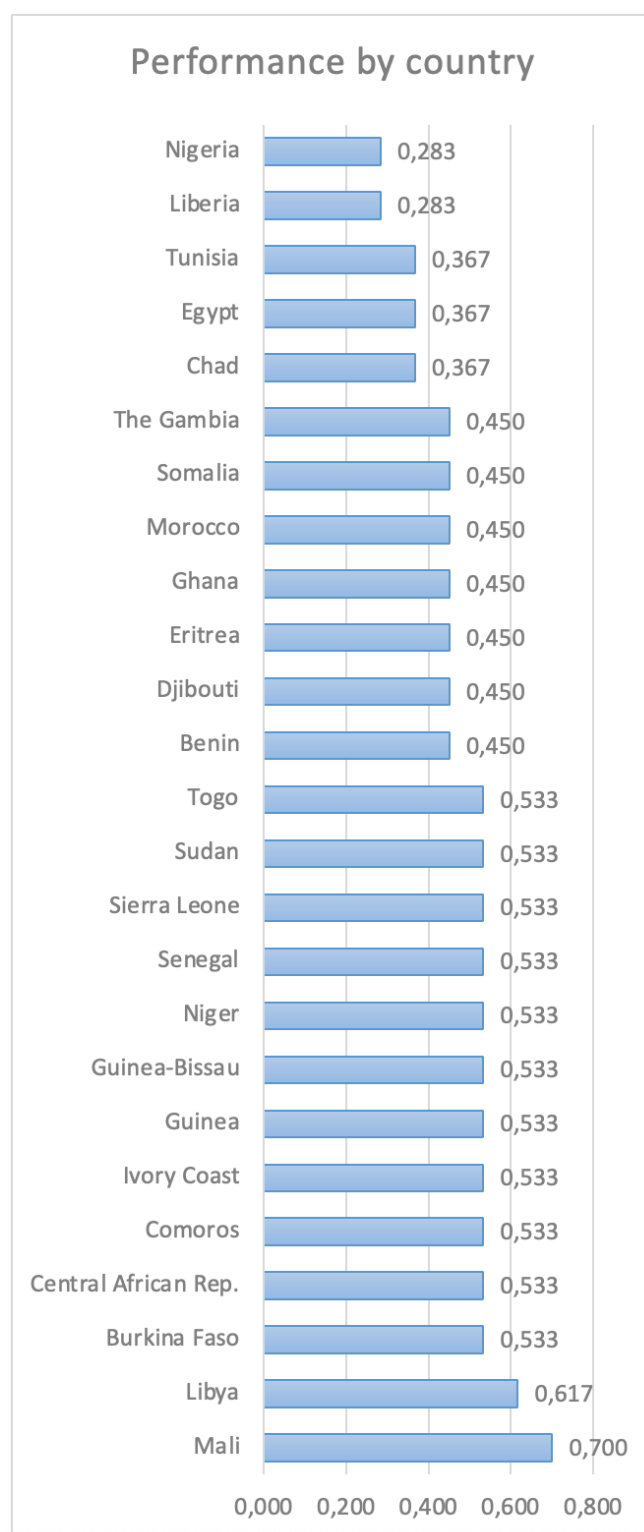
The political pillar obtained an average score of around 0.40, reflecting a mixed situation. On the one hand, the CEN-SAD benefits from an institutional base that is now more solid than before: the revision of the treaty and the revival of community bodies since 2019 have earned it a moderate performance in *institutional integration* (0.47). The setting up of the Executive Secretariat, the existence of common protocols (e.g. the 2000 Security Charter) and the participation of 13 States in the ratification of the revised treaty testify to a certain political will for integration. Similarly, the *governance and democracy* dimension has reached an average level (0.48), reflecting the adoption of a number of regional normative frameworks (commitments to democracy, a planned electoral observatory, etc.) and the insufficient materialisation of the rule of law. However, these advances remain fragile and uneven. In practice, democratic principles and good governance are not applied uniformly: several Member States have experienced unconstitutional changes of government, which weakens the political cohesion of the whole. Cooperation on *peace and*

security remains embryonic (0.238). Despite the existence of a Peace and Security Council within CEN-SAD and agreements such as the Conflict Prevention and Management Mechanism adopted in 2000, the practical implementation of these instruments is limited. The recent momentum of institutional reform will need to be further consolidated if this aspect is to be significantly improved.

The economic pillar has an average score of around 0.38, indicating limited progress in building an integrated economic area. CEN-SAD does not have its own customs or monetary union, relying instead on the arrangements of other organisations (UEMOA/CEMAC, etc.) for its members. Nonetheless, the *market integration* dimension reaches a relatively good level (0.46), a sign that many CEN-SAD states have lowered tariff barriers between themselves via existing agreements, but also that the BSIC is playing its full role as a provider of trade and investment funds. The near-universal accession of its members to the FTAA and the signing of intra-African trade agreements are contributing to this performance. Twenty CEN-SAD countries signed the agreement establishing the AfCFTA in 2018. In this area, initiatives are emerging to facilitate trans-Saharan trade, notably the Lagos-Alger economic corridor via Niger and the free trade zone project between certain sub-regions. The dimension relating to the *development of business and the promotion of industry and mining* obtains the best score in the pillar (0.53), reflecting a number of sectoral policies adopted jointly and the dynamism of the BSIC. In particular, the CEN-SAD has drawn up programmes for the development of regional value chains (in agri-food, mining or crafts) and promotes North-South industrial cooperation (for example, Morocco and Egypt investing in Sahel countries). However, these initiatives are still at an early stage and their real impact remains to be seen. On the other hand, the *macroeconomic and monetary integration* and *rural economic development* strands show weak results (0.21 and 0.31 respectively). There

is no macroeconomic convergence mechanism covering the whole of CEN-SAD - the countries use disparate currencies and fiscal policies, with no overall coordination framework. Only certain sub-groups (UEMOA, CEMAC) have such mechanisms, leaving CEN-SAD without a common tool for macroeconomic stability. Similarly, despite the strategic importance of Sahelian agriculture, food security and rural development are struggling to move beyond the stage of declarations of intent: CEN-SAD's special agricultural programme is currently no more than a pilot scheme in a few countries, with limited funding. The absence of common policies on agricultural subsidies, water management or emergency food reserves explains this modest score. To sum up, the economic pillar reveals an integration that *is still in its infancy*, where some progress in the liberalisation of trade and industrial cooperation contrasts with the absence of a truly dynamic common market. The full implementation of the provisions of the FTAA and the development of regional economic infrastructures (Sahel-Saharan special economic zones, improvement in the investment climate) are levers to be used to stimulate this economic integration.

The infrastructure pillar appears to be the relatively most positive aspect of CEN-SAD integration, with a consolidated score of around 0.51. The Member States have become aware of the need to make good the infrastructure deficit in order to open up the Sahel-Saharan region and encourage trade. As a result, a number of structuring projects have been launched over the period 2023-2025, particularly under the PIDA. These efforts are reflected in the *road transport infrastructure* sub-dimension, where the CEN-SAD is achieving notable results. For example, the opening up of roads is progressing through the rehabilitation of transnational corridors (Tripoli-Windhoek corridor underway, Algiers-Lagos Trans-Saharan partially completed, Dakar-Abidjan coastal link improved, etc.). The score for air transport is also high, reflecting an increase in direct links between Sahelian and Maghreb capitals - airlines such as Royal Air Maroc, Ethiopian Airlines and Air France now provide better connectivity between West Africa, the Sahel and the North. Similarly, rail connections have made some progress (also a high score), thanks to projects such as the planned Tangiers-N'Djamena line or the modernisation of existing networks (e.g. Sudan-Egypt). However, other sectors are lagging behind. The integration of energy networks is very inadequate (0.20): cross-border electricity exchanges remain marginal in the absence of reliable connections. The establishment of a regional energy market in the Sahel is still in its infancy. Furthermore, digital coordination is almost non-existent, resulting in a modest score for ICT integration. Despite these challenges, the infrastructure pillar bears witness



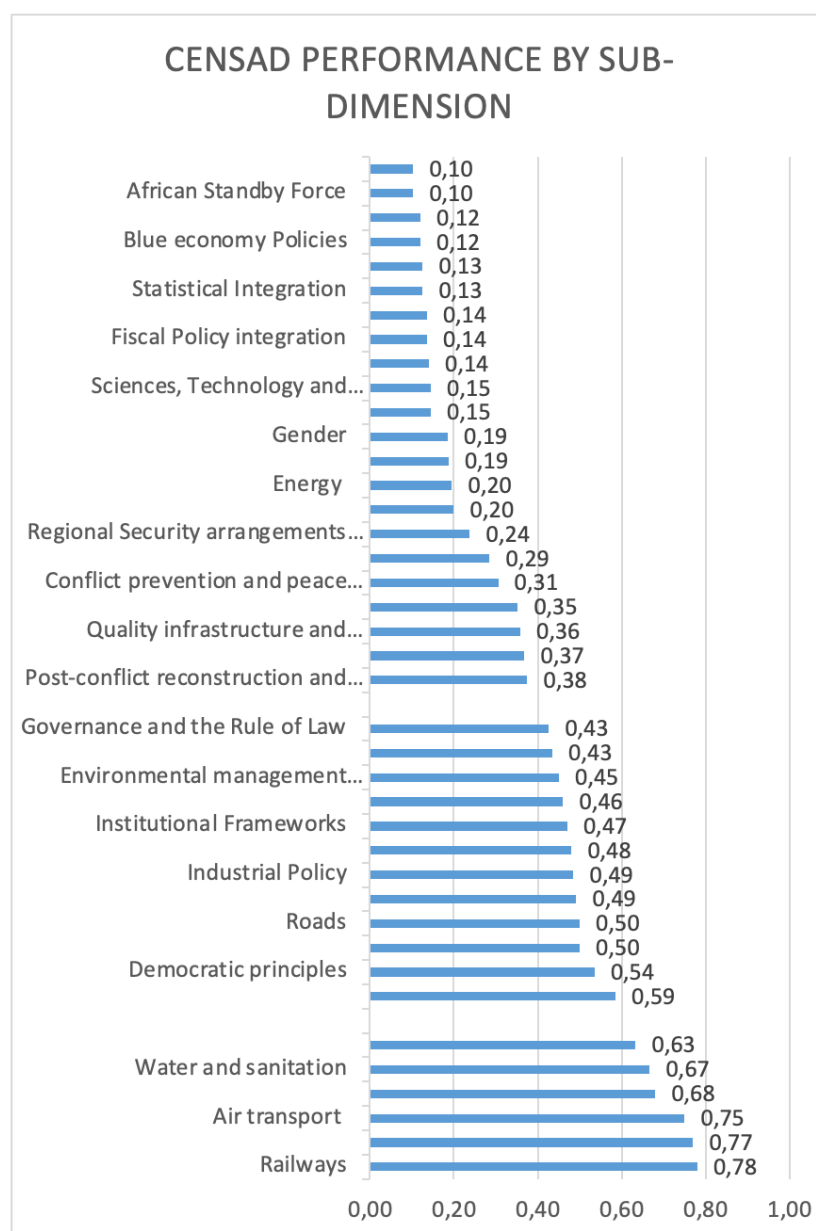
to a tangible political will: the CEN-SAD has made infrastructure a priority and is mobilising resources, with the support of the AfDB, the EU and Arab partners, to finance roads, transport corridors and solar energy projects in the desert.

The human and social pillar is the weakest link in integration within CEN-SAD, with an overall score of around 0.27. This indicates that cooperation in areas directly affecting the population (mobility,

education, health, culture) is still very underdeveloped. On the *free movement of people and migration*, the score of around 0.42 conceals disparities: it mainly reflects the fact that some of the CEN-SAD states already apply visa-free regimes under other organisations. However, CEN-SAD as such does not have its own fully effective free movement protocol. The relevant agreement was drawn up a few years ago, but few countries have ratified it. Thus, beyond a few legal advances, intra-Community mobility remains limited: the right of establishment for citizens of one CEN-SAD country in another is not guaranteed, and mutual recognition of professional qualifications or identity documents is virtually non-existent. The *social development* dimension (inclusion, health, social protection) is rated very poorly (0.14), reflecting the absence of regional social programmes. There is no common policy on public health, social protection or employment at CEN-SAD level. For example, there is no regional mechanism for epidemiological surveillance or pooling of health resources - a situation highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the response was mainly at national level or through the AU, with CEN-SAD playing an almost non-existent role. Finally, the *education, human development and science* sub-dimension is at its lowest level (0.26). There is no common framework for diploma equivalence or harmonisation of educational curricula between CEN-SAD countries. Exchanges of students and researchers are rare, due to a lack of programmes (no Sahel-Saharan university, no operational regional research centre). This fragmentation of educational and scientific policies deprives the Community of an essential lever for bringing societies closer together. To sum up, humanitarian and cultural integration remains largely to be built: despite declarations of intent on Sahel-Saharan solidarity, few concrete actions have been taken to bring people closer together. The implementation of the *"Sahel-Saharan Citizenship"* initiative and the involvement of civil society organisations could improve this pillar in the future.

Performance by country

The performance of CEN-SAD member countries shows a moderate dispersion, ranging from a minimum score of 0.283 to a maximum of 0.700, which reflects a certain heterogeneity in the implementation



of regional integration policies. Mali clearly stands out with a score of 0.700, reflecting strong involvement in several key dimensions, notably institutional and sectoral. It is followed by Libya (0.617), which, as a founding country and main financial supporter of the community, remains a pillar of integration. An intermediate group of 11 countries, including Senegal, Niger, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Chad, has a uniform score of 0.533, reflecting an average but relatively stable performance. These countries appear to have implemented regional commitments in a partial but consistent manner. A third group of countries, including Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Ghana, Somalia and Gambia, achieved a score of 0.450, indicating incomplete participation in EU mechanisms, often concentrated on specific sectors such as infrastructure or business. Finally, Nigeria and Liberia close the gap with a score of 0.283, reflecting a low level of formal integration into CEN-

SAD mechanisms. This situation can be explained by the weak link between their membership of other more active RECs and their commitment to CEN-SAD.

Challenges and prospects for CEN-SAD

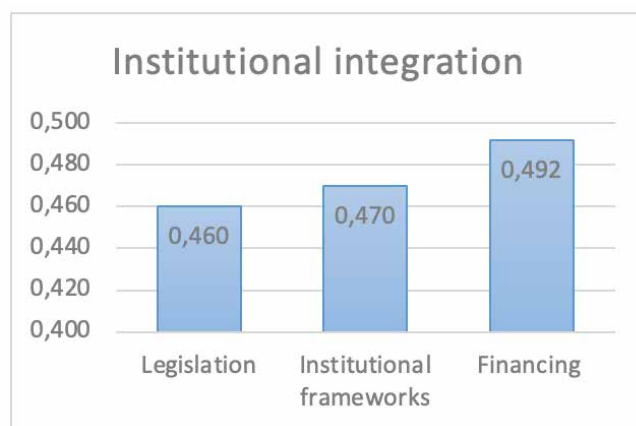
CEN-SAD is facing major structural and economic challenges that will determine its future. First and foremost, the chronic political and security instability in the region is a major obstacle to integration. Several members are in the grip of armed conflicts (Libya, Sudan) or jihadist insurgencies (central Sahel), while others are undergoing uncertain political transitions. A second challenge is the institutional and financial weakness of the organisation. Although CEN-SAD has been revamped in theory, in practice it remains a fragile structure, lacking its own resources and technical capacity. The revised Treaty of 2013 has not yet been ratified by all the States, which may limit the legal scope of certain decisions. The funding shortfall is particularly problematic: many Member States are in arrears with their contributions, and the organisation has not introduced a Community tax to ensure stable income. This budgetary situation is a major constraint on CEN-SAD, which is dependent on occasional external funding for its projects (World Bank, European Union, Gulf donors, etc.). As far as the outlook is concerned, a number of flagship programmes and projects are underway or planned: the Peace and Security Preservation Programme; the Good Governance Promotion Programme; initiatives to facilitate intra-African trade and support the FTAA ; development of regional infrastructure; a special food security programme to increase the agricultural resilience and self-sufficiency of the Sahelian states; an environmental protection programme focusing on the sustainable management of natural resources ; actions to strengthen basic social services and support vulnerable populations ; as well as youth projects - for example, promoting education for citizenship and support for entrepreneurship among young people and women.

All of these priorities are in line with the aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and aim to establish the CEN-SAD as a key player in the achievement of the FTAA and the Sustainable Development Goals in the Sahel-Saharan region.

Assessment by sub-dimension

Institutional integration dimension

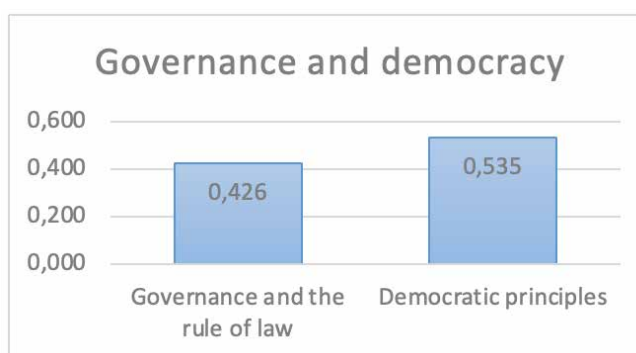
With an average score of 0.47, CEN-SAD shows moderate results in institutional integration, reflecting uneven progress in consolidating its governance structures. The institutional framework scores 0.4701, reflecting the partial implementation of the provisions of the 2013 revised treaty. While the Executive Secretariat is functional and some



ministerial meetings have resumed since 2019, several planned bodies - such as the Committee of Ambassadors or the specialised Permanent Councils - are still not operational. Community legislation is rated at 0.4602, highlighting the fact that basic texts exist (treaty, sectoral protocols), but that their application remains limited, in particular due to the slow pace of ratification by the Member States. Funding scored 0.4917, reflecting a worrying situation: national contributions are irregular, no autonomous funding mechanism has been put in place, and the organisation is heavily dependent on external partners for its activities.

Overall, this dimension shows that, despite a complete institutional architecture on paper, CEN-SAD is still struggling to make it fully operational and effective. Recent efforts at revival and reform are to be welcomed, but their consolidation will require greater political commitment and stronger enforcement mechanisms.

Dimension II: Governance and democracy

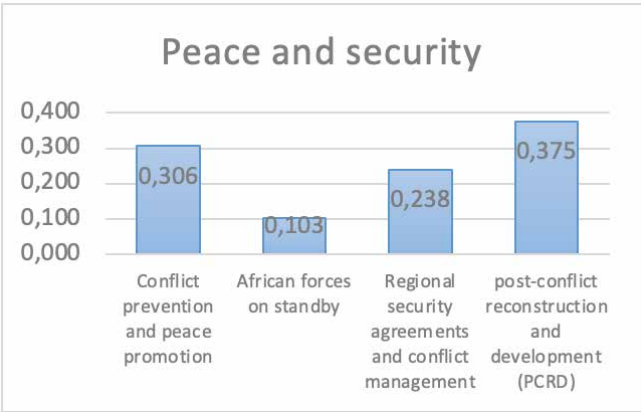


CEN-SAD's performance in terms of governance and democracy has an average score of 0.48, reflecting a mixed situation where normative commitments coexist with institutional practices that are still fragile. Governance and the rule of law scored 0.426, reflecting the existence of Community texts promoting legality and justice, but their application is often hampered by national legal divergences, unstable political transitions and a lack of monitoring mechanisms. The sub-dimension of democratic

principles reaches 0.535, indicating a certain regional recognition of electoral processes, civil rights and citizen participation, although their effectiveness varies greatly from one member country to another. This dimension thus reveals a desire for institutional and democratic convergence, albeit faced with the challenges of harmonisation, national ownership and political stability in an often unstable Sahelo-Saharan environment.

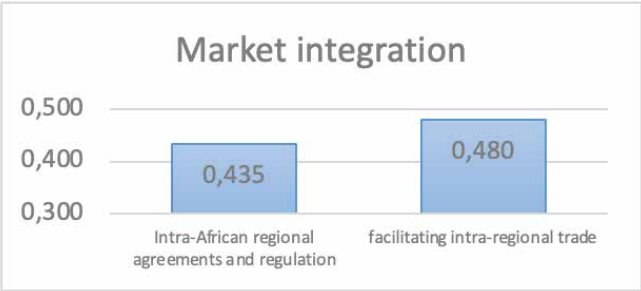
Dimension III: Peace and security

The level of regional integration in terms of peace and security within CEN-SAD remains low at an average of 0.238, as shown by the scores for most of the sub-dimensions. Conflict prevention and peace promotion received a score of 0.31, underlining a willingness to act but a lack of operational mechanisms. The very low score of 0.10 for the African Standby Force illustrates the lack of regional capabilities that can be mobilised for rapid intervention. Post-conflict crisis management and security arrangements scored 0.24, while post-conflict reconstruction received a slightly better score (0.38), due to ad hoc bilateral initiatives. Overall, implementation of the CEN-SAD Peace and Security Council and the Counter-Terrorism Centre remains very limited, and coordination with African Union mechanisms remains insufficient to respond to regional crises.



Dimension IV: Market integration

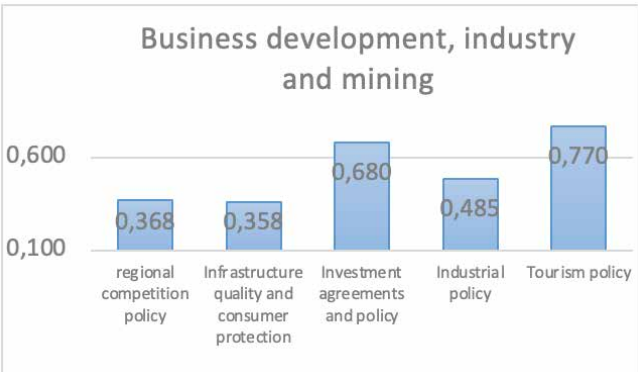
The CEN-SAD obtained an average score of 0.46 in this dimension, reflecting a certain potential for trade integration, but still hampered by the poor implementation of existing texts. The sub-dimension regulation of intra-African trade agreements scores 0.4346, reflecting the signing of several framework texts, such as the free trade area protocol in 2010 and the accession of the majority of member states to the FTAAZ. However, these texts suffer from very limited application: few have been ratified or incorporated into national legislation, and no mechanism for monitoring their implementation

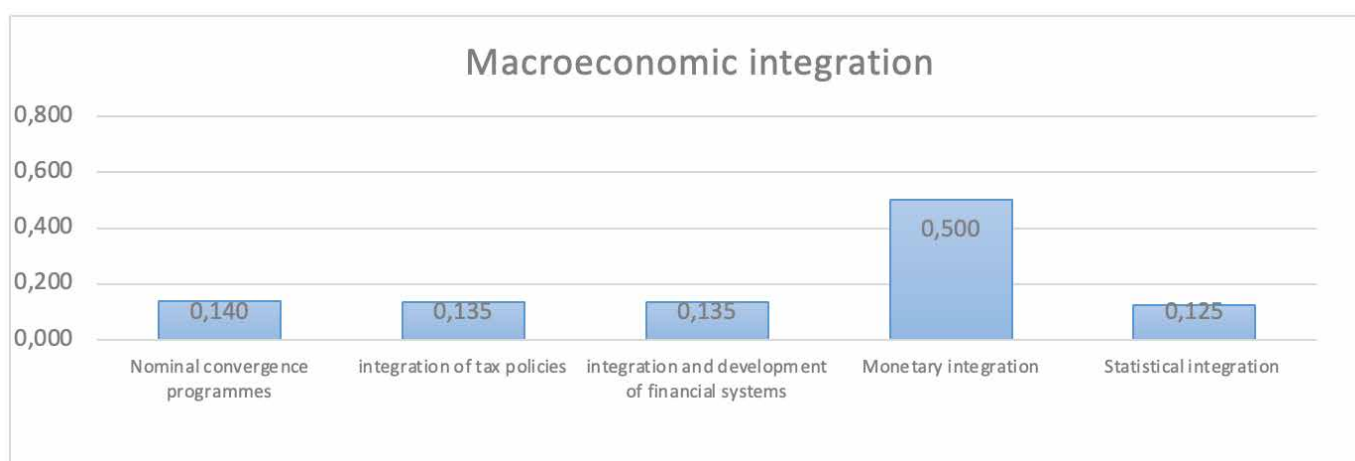


has been institutionalised at Community level. The facilitation of intra-regional trade, with a score of 0.48, shows signs of improvement, thanks in particular to efforts at customs harmonisation between certain countries and the simplification of goods classification. Initiatives such as the gradual adoption of the harmonised system have helped to make trade easier to understand, but border procedures are still cumbersome, and non-tariff barriers persist in several strategic corridors. The CEN-SAD free trade protocol, although adopted more than a decade ago, has still not been effectively implemented, preventing the creation of a genuine Sahel-Saharan common market. In short, this dimension reflects a desire for trade integration through legal means, but its translation into concrete action remains incomplete, due to a lack of institutional coordination and technical support for national customs administrations.

Dimension V: Business development, industry and mining

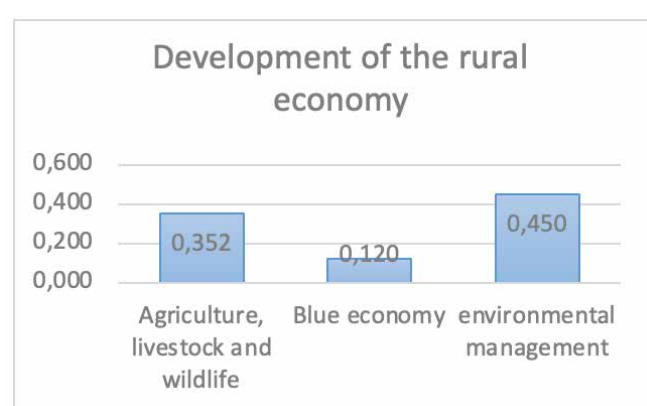
The CEN-SAD recorded an average score of 0.53 in this dimension, making it one of the most dynamic areas in the community. This result is partly attributable to the structuring role played by the Sahel-Saharan Investment and Trade Bank (BSIC), which was set up in 1999 and has since become a key regional player in development financing. With operations in around ten member countries, the BSIC has financed projects in the agro-industry, services, energy and commercial infrastructure sectors, thereby promoting the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises in the Sahel-Saharan region.





The investment policy sub-dimension received a score of 0.68, reflecting a favourable environment in certain member countries, reinforced by BSIC's targeted co-financing and guarantee interventions for investors. Industrial policy, with a score of 0.485, benefits from sustained projects in the agri-food, textiles and extractive industries, although regional coordination remains embryonic. Tourism, with a high score of 0.77, benefits from bilateral cooperation programmes and growing connectivity between desert and coastal areas, supported in part by credit lines for tourism infrastructure. Mining policy, also rated at 0.485, is seeing occasional advances in resource-rich countries, often accompanied by funding from the BSIC or national initiatives facilitating joint ventures. Finally, competition (0.368) and consumer protection (0.358) policies remain underdeveloped at EU level, due to the lack of a harmonised legal framework.

Dimension VI: Development of the rural economy



With a score of 0.31, this dimension reveals the limits of regional cooperation in agriculture, natural resource management and rural resilience, despite long-term initiatives. The agricultural, livestock and wildlife policies sub-dimension scores 0.352, boosted by the existence of a 1990 regional agricultural agreement exempting certain agricultural products from

customs duties, and by the veterinary cooperation initiated in 1991 to combat cross-border epizootics. However, these texts remain weakly applied on the ground, in the absence of common monitoring and phytosanitary control mechanisms. Environmental management, with a score of 0.45, benefits from a collective commitment to the Convention to Combat Desertification (1994) and joint projects in the Sahel (afforestation, adapted farming techniques), but institutional fragmentation and a lack of technical coordination limit the impact. Finally, the blue economy policy scored particularly low (0.12), due to a lack of awareness at regional level of this sector, which is nevertheless strategic for coastal countries (Libya, Egypt, Mauritania, Senegal, Comoros).

Dimension VII: Macroeconomic integration

With an average score of 0.21, this dimension highlights the low level of macroeconomic convergence between CEN-SAD Member States, in the absence of a structured community framework. Nominal convergence scores particularly low at 0.14, revealing the absence of shared objectives in terms of inflation control, budget deficit or public debt. Convergence of fiscal policies is not yet envisaged within CEN-SAD, although the fact that some member countries belong to two monetary unions means that these countries are moving closer together. Fiscal convergence is also very low, with a score of 0.135, reflecting heterogeneous tax systems, the absence of agreements on tax exemptions and little harmonisation in terms of VAT or customs duties. Convergence of financial systems also scores 0.135, reflecting underdeveloped, non-interconnected financial markets and a lack of common instruments to stimulate the integration of banking systems. On the other hand, monetary convergence scores 0.50, mainly because a large number of member countries already share sub-regional monetary unions (UEMOA, CEMAC), which artificially raises the overall score. However, CEN-SAD as a community does not have its own monetary convergence strategy.

Finally, statistical integration, rated at 0.125, remains embryonic, in the absence of a regional statistical unit or a harmonised framework for processing economic data. This dimension therefore reveals a high degree of dispersion in macroeconomic policies, in the absence of a common framework, and confirms that economic coordination is not yet a structured priority for CEN-SAD.

Dimension VIII: infrastructure integration

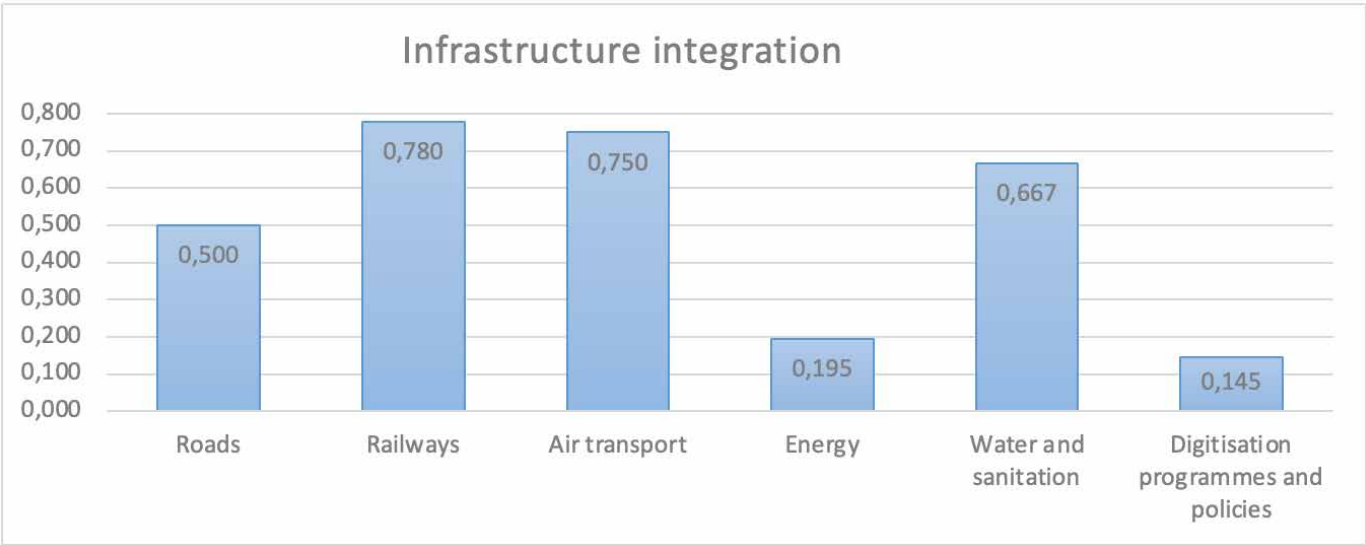
The CEN-SAD obtained a score of 0.56 in this dimension, making it one of the most advanced areas of regional integration. Rail connectivity, with a high score of 0.78, benefits from structuring projects carried out by certain Member States such as Morocco, Egypt and Sudan. Cross-border lines are being rehabilitated or planned, particularly in the corridors linking the Maghreb to the Sahel. Air transport, rated at 0.75, reflects a significant improvement in connectivity between regional capitals, supported by the growing involvement of national and pan-African airlines in Sahelo-Saharan links. Road transport received a more moderate score of 0.50, reflecting the uneven development of land corridors. While some major routes (Dakar-N’Djamena, Algiers-Lagos, Tripoli-Nouakchott) are partially operational, many sections still suffer from delays in maintenance, security or customs facilitation. The water and sanitation sector, rated at 0.67, reflects regional initiatives in the shared management of water resources, particularly in cross-border basins such as Lake Chad. Energy policies, on the other hand, score low (0.195), due to the absence of a genuine regional electricity market and limited interconnection projects. Finally, digital integration remains marginal (0.145), due to the low level of coordination of national strategies and the absence of a regional telecommunications or shared data infrastructure. Despite these disparities, this dimension shows that infrastructure is a tangible lever of integration for CEN-SAD. However,

their consolidation will require better regional coordination and prioritisation of integration projects in investment plans.

Dimension IX: Freedom of movement, right of residence and right of establishment



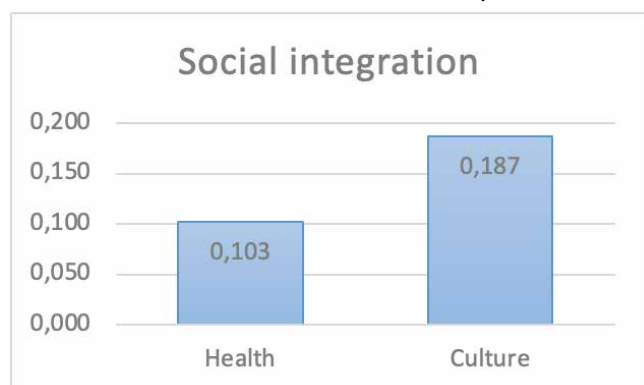
The CEN-SAD obtained an average score of 0.42 in this dimension, reflecting partial but still insufficient progress in terms of human mobility. The sub-dimension Free movement, right of residence and establishment is the best rated, with a score of 0.63, reflecting the existence of several bilateral or sub-regional agreements facilitating movement between member countries. For example, some states that are also members of ECOWAS or UEMOA already benefit from the abolition of visas between them, which helps to artificially raise this score at CEN-SAD level. On the other hand, the Migration sub-dimension scores a very low 0.20, reflecting the absence of a common migration management policy. There is no harmonised regional framework dealing with the recognition of professional qualifications, the regulation of economic migration flows, or the protection of migrant workers’ rights. Effective freedom of movement therefore remains limited to a few specific cases, with no systematic application of the principles throughout the community.



Dimension X: social integration

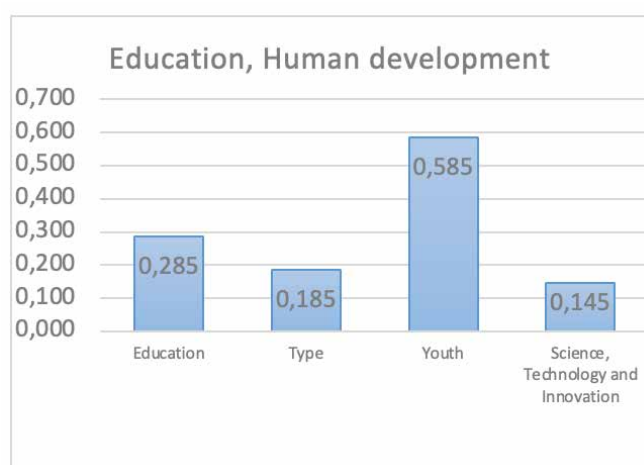
CEN-SAD has an average score of 0.14 in this dimension, reflecting scattered social initiatives and a lack of a structured regional framework.

The health sub-dimension, with a very low score of



0.10, reveals the total absence of an EU programme in this area. The response to the COVID-19 crisis illustrated this shortcoming, with each state adopting an independent strategy, without any regional coordination in place or a common health alert or solidarity mechanism. Culture, with a score of 0.187, benefits from some cooperation efforts around the Sahel-Saharan heritage, but without a shared strategy for development or cultural exchange at community level. Initiatives are essentially bilateral or supported by other frameworks (UNESCO, AU).

Dimension XI: Education and human development



CEN-SAD obtained an average score of 0.27 in this last dimension, illustrating a very low level of integration in areas that are essential in the long term for regional cohesion and transformation. The education sub-dimension, with a score of 0.285, reflects the absence of a common framework for the recognition of diplomas, academic mobility or the harmonisation

of curricula. Student and teacher exchanges are rare, and university cooperation remains non-existent at EU level. Science, technology and innovation, with a score of 0.145, is still marginal in regional policies. No joint research centre or cross-border scientific programme has been set up by CEN-SAD, despite the potential for collaboration in strategic areas such as climate adaptation, agriculture or solar energy. The gender sub-dimension, rated at 0.185, highlights the absence of a clear regional strategy for the promotion of women's rights and gender equality. There is no regional platform for coordinating national policies in this area, and legal frameworks vary widely between member countries. Finally, youth and empowerment, with a relatively higher score (0.585), reflects sustained national efforts, sometimes supported by the BSIC or other partners, notably through training, entrepreneurship or access to finance programmes. However, these initiatives remain poorly connected at regional level.

Recommendations

To enable CEN-SAD to realise its full integration potential, a number of recommendations can be made.

With regard to the political pillar, it is important to rapidly complete the establishment of institutional bodies and to invest a little more in financial sustainability and resource mobilisation. In concrete terms, CEN-SAD should:

- ✓ operationalise the Permanent Peace and Security Council and the Sustainable Development Council by defining their mandates, appointing their members and ensuring that they meet regularly.
- ✓ adopt an innovative mechanism for financing Community activities. This could include the study of a Community contribution based on a percentage of extra-regional imports or State budget revenues in order to ensure regular resources for CEN-SAD.
- ✓ diversify its financial partnerships. It could establish a unit dedicated to mobilising resources and setting up projects, responsible for forging partnerships with emerging donors (Arab funds, African Development Bank, European Union, Agence française de développement, etc.).

With regard to the promotion of trade and infrastructure integration, to strengthen the economic potential of CEN-SAD, it is necessary to focus on concrete integration projects. the Community should:

- ✓ draw up a Trade Roadmap aligned with the FTAA, identifying measures to be taken to improve intra-CEN-SAD trade (simplification of customs formalities at Sahelian borders, creation of one-stop border posts, harmonisation of phytosanitary standards for agricultural products, etc.).
- ✓ promote and facilitate bilateral or trilateral trade agreements between its members located in contiguous areas (for example between Morocco and the Sahel countries, or between the West African coastal countries and those of the Sahel hinterland) to remove specific obstacles.
- ✓ develop a CEN-SAD Regional Infrastructure Master Plan, as a complement to PIDA, which would identify and prioritise projects critical to Sahelo-Saharan connectivity and encourage its members to join continental initiatives facilitating transport, such as the Single Market for Air Transport in Africa (MUTAA), to increase intra-African air links, or the development of maritime cabotage

In terms of socio-cultural integration and human mobility, in order to catch up in the human sphere, CEN-SAD should

- ✓ finalise and adopt a protocol on the free movement of persons specific to CEN-SAD. This protocol could initially provide for simplified multi-entry visas for businessmen, students and tourists from member countries, before moving towards the gradual abolition of visas for all citizens. The introduction of a CEN-SAD passport within a defined timeframe would send out a strong signal.
- ✓ launch pilot cultural and educational exchange programmes to support youth initiatives and promote Sahelo-Saharan culture.

COMESA

1. Presentation

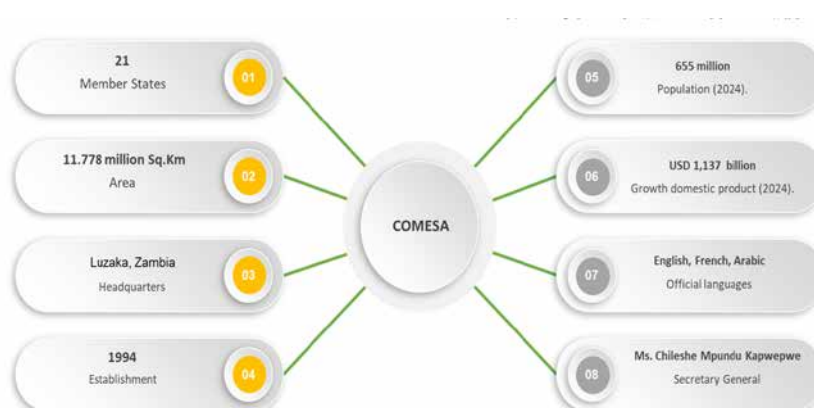
The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) was established in 1994, replacing the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) created in 1981. It is one of Africa's largest regional economic blocs, with a long-term ambition to evolve into a common market, customs union, and eventually an economic union. The COMESA Secretariat is headquartered in Lusaka, Zambia. COMESA currently comprises

21 Member States, covering a total surface area of over 13 million km², representing approximately 45% of Africa's landmass. In 2024, the bloc's combined population is estimated at nearly 620 million people, with a nominal GDP of approximately USD 930 billion, making it one of the most economically significant regional communities on the continent. The official languages of COMESA are English, French, and Arabic, reflecting the linguistic and cultural diversity of its members. The organization is structured around several key institutions, including a Court of Justice, the COMESA Trade and Development Bank (TDB), a Council of Ministers, a General Secretariat, and a planned Economic Parliament. Since July 2018, COMESA has been led by Her Excellency Chileshe Mpundu Kapwepwe of Zambia, the first woman to hold the position of Secretary General. She oversees the coordination of regional programmes in trade facilitation, infrastructure development, industrial integration, investment promotion, and regulatory harmonization. COMESA plays a pivotal role in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and in promoting regional value chains across Eastern and Southern Africa.

Institutional framework

COMESA operates under a well-defined institutional architecture designed to facilitate decision-making, coordination, implementation, and oversight of regional integration programmes. Its institutional framework includes the following key bodies:

- **The Authority of Heads of State and Government:** This is the supreme policy-making organ of COMESA. It provides overall direction, sets strategic priorities, and decides on matters of regional importance. It meets annually in Summit format.
- **The Council of Ministers:** Composed of ministers designated by Member States, typically those in charge of trade or regional integration. The Council is responsible for



implementing decisions of the Authority and ensuring that COMESA's policies and programmes are properly executed.

- **The Committee of Governors of Central Banks:** This body coordinates monetary and financial policies in the region, and plays a key role in preparations for monetary integration and the future COMESA Monetary Union.
- **The Intergovernmental Committee:** Made up of Permanent/Principal Secretaries from Member States, it prepares the groundwork for the Council's decisions and oversees the implementation of COMESA programmes and activities.
- **The Secretariat:** Headquartered in Lusaka, Zambia, the Secretariat is the executive organ of COMESA. It is responsible for the day-to-day administration of COMESA and the coordination of regional activities. It is headed by the **Secretary General**, who serves as the principal executive officer and legal representative of the organization.
- **The COMESA Court of Justice:** This judicial body ensures compliance with the COMESA Treaty and resolves disputes between Member States or between Member States and institutions or individuals, where jurisdiction is recognized.

Specialized Institutions and Agencies COMESA has also established various specialized bodies to implement sector-specific mandates, such as COMESA Competition Commission (CCC) in Malawi; COMESA Trade and Development Bank (TDB) in Kenya and Mauritius; COMESA Leather and Leather Products Institute (LLPI) in Ethiopia; Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) in Zambia; COMESA Reinsurance Company (ZEP-RE) in Kenya.

Vision and objectives

The vision of COMESA is to be a fully integrated, internationally competitive, and prosperous regional economic community in which all people enjoy high living standards, peace, and sustainable development. To achieve this vision, COMESA pursues the following core objectives:

1. **Establish a fully integrated and competitive regional common market**, through the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers, and the harmonization of trade-related policies.
2. **Promote sustainable economic growth and development** through cooperation in all sectors of the economy, including trade, customs, monetary affairs, infrastructure, agriculture, industry, and investment.
3. **Strengthen peace, security, and good governance** as fundamental conditions for social and economic transformation in the region.
4. **Enhance regional infrastructure and interconnectivity**, particularly in transport, energy, and information and communication technologies.
5. **Foster industrialization and value addition**, by supporting regional value chains, innovation, and industrial development.
6. **Encourage private sector participation**, entrepreneurship, and public-private partnerships as key drivers of regional integration and development.
7. **Support gender equality, youth empowerment, and inclusive development**, ensuring that integration benefits reach all segments of society.

These objectives are aligned with the broader goals of the **African Union's Agenda 2063** and the AfCFTA, positioning COMESA as a central player in Africa's integration process.

COMESA assessment

Results achieved by COMESA highlight a regional dynamic that is strongly focused on institutional integration and infrastructure development, where the organization demonstrates particularly high performance. The analysis of COMESA's integration performance across the four pillars highlights both progress and structural imbalances. The institutional pillar is marked by good but contrasting results: while one dimension reaches 0.80, reflecting strong institutional development or legal frameworks, other dimensions remain below 0.6, showing challenges in governance and policy implementation. The infrastructure pillar continues to stand out with the highest scores, as dimensions relating to institutional framework and Governance and democracy both reach 0.743, underscoring significant advancement in regional connectivity, a core driver of integration... The economic pillar demonstrates an average and stable performance, with scores ranging from 0.56 to 0.70, indicating some progress in trade and

business-related dimensions, while macroeconomic and sectoral integration remain limited. The human and social pillar remains the weakest, with the lowest score of 0.38 in one dimension and an average performance of 0.453 and 0.50 in others, highlighting continued weaknesses in regional social policy alignment, knowledge exchange, and mobility. Overall, COMESA exhibits an institutional and infrastructure driven integration model, with notable efforts in institutional structuring, but persistent gaps in macroeconomic coherence and human capital integration that must be addressed to achieve more balanced and inclusive regional development. Sub-dimensions such as post-conflict reconstruction and development (score: 1.00), nominal convergence programs (1.00), financial systems integration (0.97), and road infrastructure (0.95) reflect a strategic commitment to macroeconomic stability and regional connectivity. These achievements are aligned with COMESA's priorities outlined in its Sixth Medium-Term Strategic Plan (2021-2025), which emphasizes infrastructure expansion, policy harmonization, and trade facilitation. High scores are also noted in gender policies (0.88) and industrial policy (0.80), indicating attention to inclusive development and economic diversification. However, critical weaknesses are apparent in several key areas. The African Standby Force and fiscal policy integration both register a score of 0, underscoring the lack of operational regional security mechanisms. Similarly, low scores are observed in migration (0.33), education (0.21), funding mechanisms (0.45), and health (0.35), revealing serious gaps in the social and human integration agenda. These disparities suggest

a fragmented regional integration model, where economic progress has far outpaced social cohesion and security cooperation.

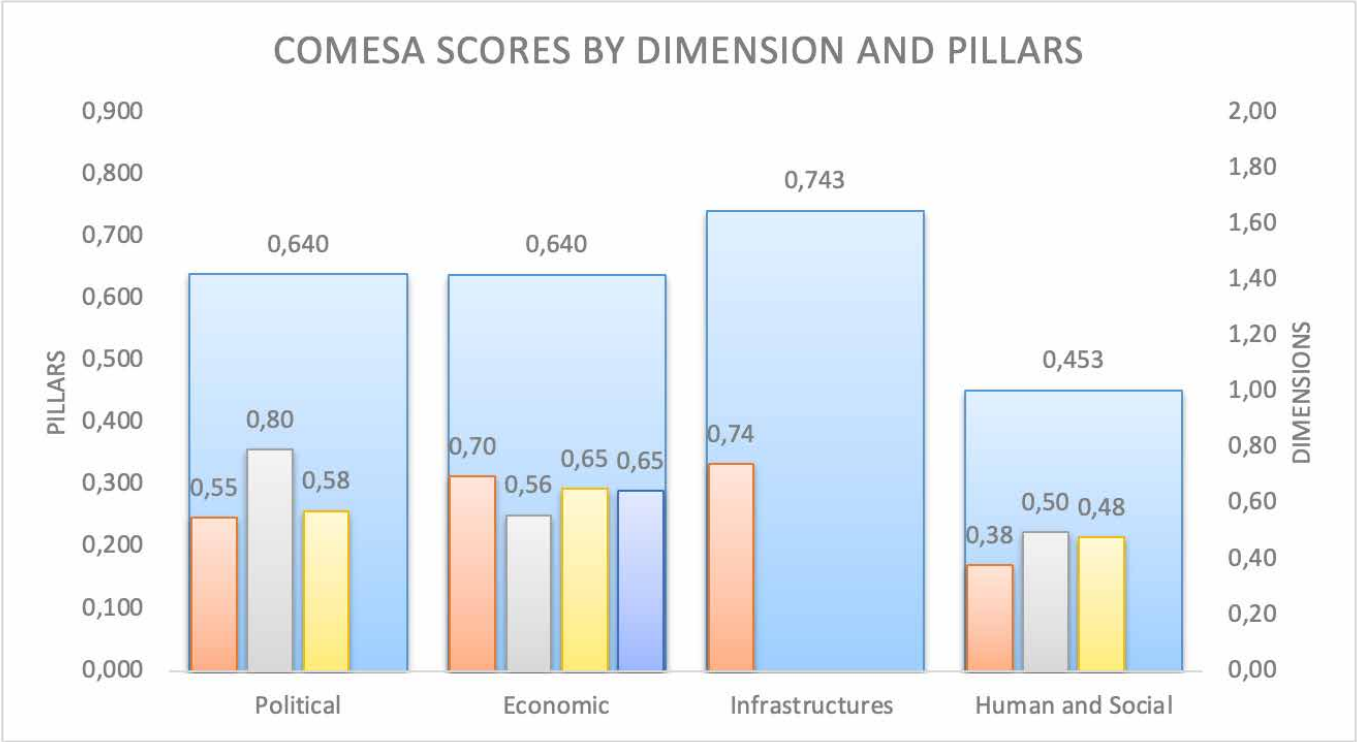
Countries performances in COMESA

The COMESA integration scores reveal significant disparities among member states, highlighting both regional champions and countries lagging behind. Kenya, with the highest score of 0.712, stands out as a leader in regional integration, driven by robust infrastructure, strong institutional alignment, and active participation in trade and policy frameworks. Zambia (0.657) and Uganda (0.619) also demonstrate solid integration, benefiting from established trade corridors, active engagement in COMESA's legal instruments, and cross-border cooperation. In contrast, Eritrea (0.251), Libya (0.273), and Somalia (0.287) are the least integrated, reflecting longstanding political instability, weak institutional participation, and limited implementation of regional agreements. Overall, while a core group of countries is making substantial progress toward deeper regional integration, others require targeted support to overcome structural and governance barriers and align more closely with COMESA's collective goals.

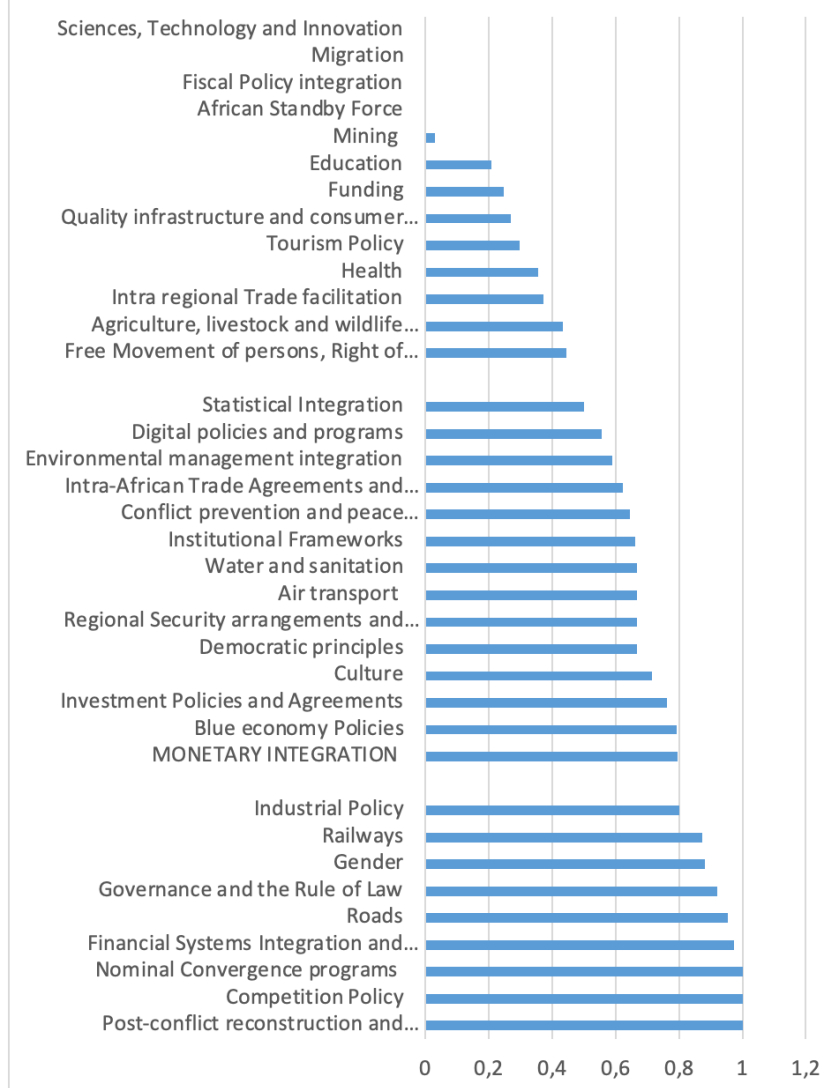
Assessment by dimension

Dimension I: Institutional Integration (0.55)

The Institutional Integration dimension assesses the depth of the legal and institutional mechanisms through which a Regional Economic Community



COMESA Scores by sub-dimensions



justice, a court of auditors or a regional development bank, have been set up and are operating effectively. These institutions embody the political and legal framework of regional integration, structuring governance, arbitration and development. In the case of COMESA, this sub-dimension reveals a partially achieved institutional integration. Although the community does not have its own regional parliament - which constitutes a shortcoming in terms of regional democratic representation - and even though some of its member states participate in the EAC parliament (Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, DRC), it can rely on a functional regional Court of Justice, integrated into its founding texts and ratified by 20 member states. In addition, the COMESA Development Bank, which is also active, offers significant financial and structural support for regional projects. On the other hand, the absence of an autonomous regional Court of Auditors, not explicitly provided for in the founding texts, limits accountability mechanisms. COMESA's score of 0.66 in this sub-dimension reflects a relatively high level of institutionalisation compared with other sub-dimensions in the same category. This shows that, structurally, the community has coherent levers for action, even if the representative deficit (absence of a parliament) weakens its democratic scope. This performance contributes positively

to the overall score for the dimension, confirming that institutional structuring is a relative strength of COMESA, even if it is still incomplete.

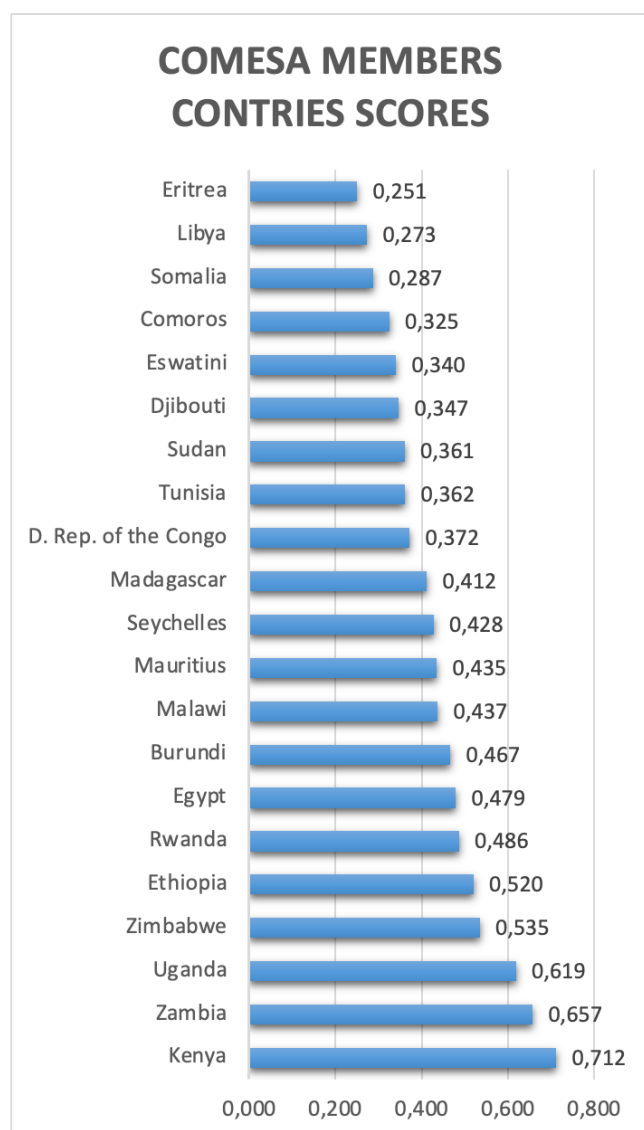
Sub-dimension 2: Funding

The Funding sub-dimension is strategic in that it makes it possible to assess the degree of financial autonomy of a regional economic community, an essential condition for ensuring its decision-making sovereignty, the sustainability of its programmes and the responsiveness of its policy implementation. This component is central to the institutional dimension, because without autonomous funding, institutions remain fragile and dependent on external donors. COMESA's results reveal a contrasting situation. On the one hand, no effective community tax is in place, although this is mentioned in Article 168 of COMESA Treaty and efforts are being made to finalize a resource mobilization strategy for the approval

(REC) is structured to drive its integration. It encompasses the establishment of dedicated regional institutions-such as a parliament, court of justice, or development bank-and the financial autonomy required for their effective functioning. In the case of COMESA, this dimension shows mixed results, with well-established legal and economic bodies, but limited budgetary autonomy. Of the two sub-dimensions assessed, Institutional Framework scored 0.66, indicating a partially consolidated institutional structure, while Funding scored 0.45, revealing a marked financial dependence.

Sub-dimension 1: Institutional framework

In the logic of institutional integration, strengthening common bodies is a fundamental priority. The Institutional Framework sub-dimension is specifically designed to measure the extent to which community bodies, such as a regional parliament, a court of



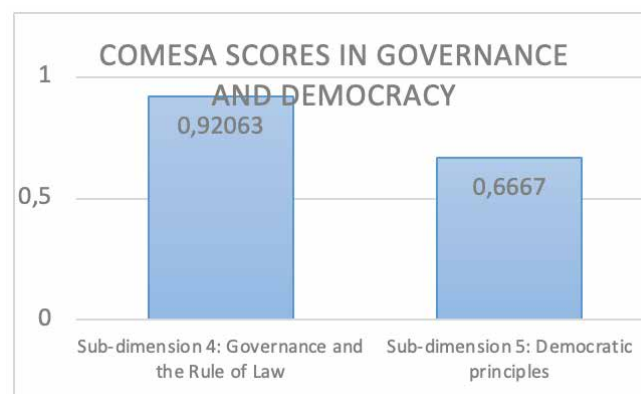
of Council in 2025. The strategy outlines numerous sources of funding including a market levy. On the other hand, the share of internal contributions to the organisation's budget remains low, at around 22-33 %, reflecting significant dependence on external partners. In any given year, less than 60% of the budget due from Member states is funded. This reflects a need to strengthen COMESA financial sovereignty, which weakens its ability to act autonomously, initiate ambitious projects and effectively steer regional policies. Countries such as Egypt (12%), Kenya (12%), Tunisia (9.3%) and the DRC (8.9%) are among the main contributors. This result is therefore a major focus for strengthening the credibility and solidity of COMESA's institutional architecture in the medium term.

Dimension II Governance and Democracy

COMESA's Governance and Democracy dimension performed well overall, thanks in particular to the

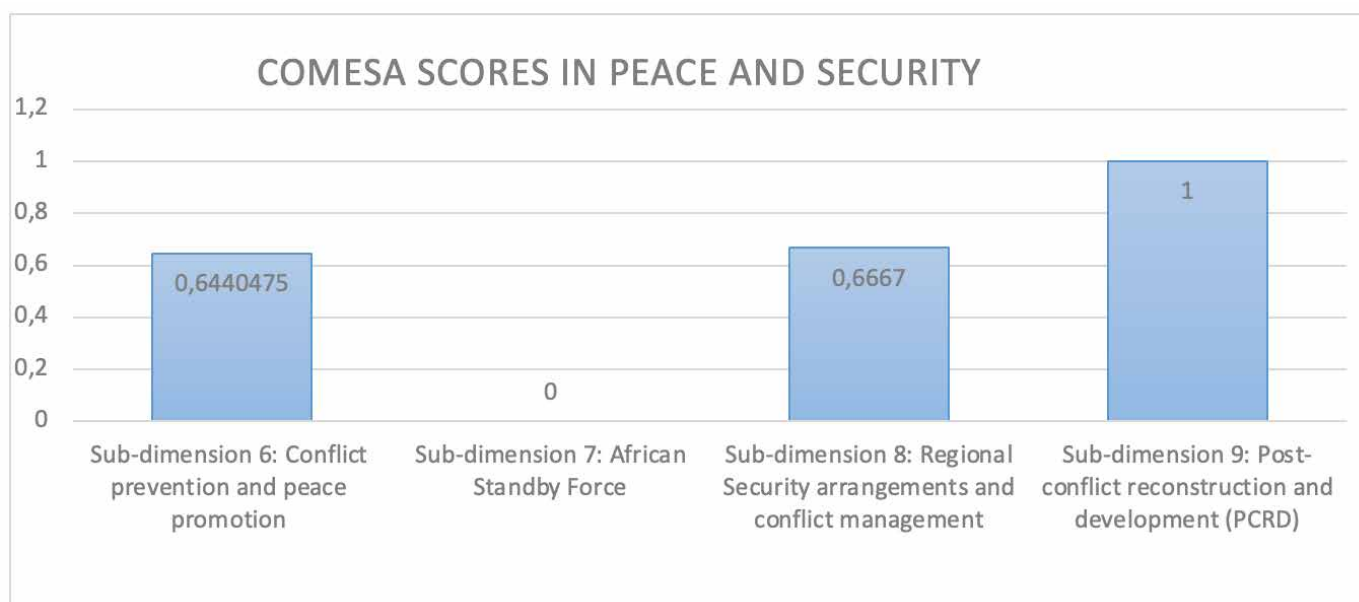
existence of regional mechanisms for political governance and election observation. Two main sub-dimensions were scored: Governance and the Rule of Law, with a high score of 0.92, and Democratic Principles, with a score of 0.66, reflecting a good level of commitment, although there is still room for improvement. These results reflect a favourable dynamic for the consolidation of political integration within the community

Sub-dimension 3: Governance and the Rule of Law (Score: 0.92)



The Governance and the Rule of Law sub-dimension assesses the implementation of regional frameworks to promote transparency, public integrity and the fight against illicit practices such as corruption, fraud, money laundering and smuggling. It plays a central role in consolidating the rule of law at regional level and harmonising governance standards.

In the case of COMESA, this sub-dimension is undoubtedly one of the organisation's strengths. Robust regional frameworks are in place, including a strategy to combat transnational organised crimes, mechanisms to combat the financing of terrorism, and the Structural Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) methodology. What's more, 15 Member States, including Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Rwanda and Ethiopia, have already implemented measures against money laundering, while 10 of them have carried out SVA assessments and dissemination at the national levels, including the , Kenya, Zambia, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Seychelles, Mauritius, Malawi, Madagascar and Burundi, demonstrating a growing sense of ownership and commitment. The very high score of 0.92 reflects this remarkable performance. It testifies to an advanced degree of institutional convergence in the fight against illicit practices, with concrete adoption and implementation by the majority of members. This result confirms COMESA's maturity in normative governance, positioning this sub-dimension as a strategic lever in the regional governance architecture.



Sub-dimension 4: Democratic Principles (0.66)

The Democratic Principles sub-dimension measures the extent to which democratic practices have taken root, in particular through the existence and effectiveness of regional mechanisms for monitoring electoral processes. This component is essential for ensuring the legitimacy of regional institutions and strengthening trust between member states.

COMESA has a structured election observation mechanism, with formalised guidelines for missions. All the Member States that regularly organise elections (21) request COMESA's intervention in the framework of observation, which reflects solid institutional recognition of the community's role in supporting democracy. Missions have been deployed to eighteen of the countries that comprise the membership including in the recent past Kenya, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Rwanda, Madagascar, the DRC and Zambia. This widespread participation is a positive sign of ownership of democratic tools. The recommendations proffered after the election observation have been shared with the concerned governments towards informing the holding of future electoral processes. COMESA has also put in place the Election Management Bodies (EMBs) Forum that plays a pivotal role in capacity-building through training and sharing of best practices in the conduct of elections. Lastly, COMESA has established the COMESA Committee of Elders (CCoE) a structure comprising of eminent that work with similar structures of the AUC and other RECs in leading and coordinating election observation missions as well the undertaking conflict resolution and mediation assignments.

With a score of 0.66, this sub-dimension performed satisfactorily, indicating a good level of functionality. However, it still lags slightly behind legal governance.

This can be explained by the limitations of election observation in terms of its direct impact on transparency, the resolution of post-election disputes and the prevention of political tensions. The challenge now is to increase COMESA's capacity to positively influence the electoral environment beyond mere technical support.

Dimension III: Peace and Security

The Peace and Security dimension is one of the most sensitive pillars of regional integration. It assesses the capacity of Regional Economic Communities to prevent conflicts, coordinate regional security responses and build lasting peace. In the case of COMESA, the results reveal uneven structuring. While significant progress has been made in the areas of conflict prevention (0.64) and security coordination (0.67), the African Standby Force component remains completely non-existent (0.00). In contrast, post-conflict reconstruction and development activities are highly developed, with a perfect score of 1.00, signalling COMESA's strategic specialisation in supporting sustainable peace.

Sub-dimension 5: Conflict Prevention (0.64)

The Conflict Prevention sub-dimension aims to assess the existence of conflict prevention mechanisms, both at regional level and within Member States, and their interconnection with early warning systems. It is a key component in anticipating and defusing tensions before they degenerate into open crises.

COMESA has the COMWARN (COMESA Conflict Early Warning System), a regional mechanism for monitoring security risks. In addition, 10 Member States have set up national conflict prevention mechanisms through engagement in the Structural Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) process, some

of which are connected to the regional warning system. COMESA also participates in inter-state initiatives on counter-terrorism and border security issues, reinforcing its coordinating role. The score of 0.64 reflects a real but partial implementation of prevention mechanisms. While the institutional architecture exists, its integration at state level remains variable, and some countries have not yet formalised a national structure linked to the regional level. This limits the effectiveness of the continental network. However, ongoing efforts at establishing national peace infrastructures and the addressing of structural vulnerabilities and enhance resilience through the Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment (CSVRA) process in the Member States will be vital.

Sub-dimension 6: African Standby Force

The African Standby Force (ASF) sub-dimension assesses the operational readiness of regional forces through troop availability, simulation exercises and joint missions with the African Union or other RECs/RMs. It is a key factor in guaranteeing a rapid response capability to crises. This sub-dimension particularly concerns RECs where regional contingents have been deployed. This is not the case for COMESA.

Sub-dimension 7: Regional Security Arrangements (0.67)

This sub-dimension measures the existence of regional security cooperation mechanisms, particularly in the fight against transnational crime, terrorism, the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, as well as mediation and conflict management. It assesses COMESA's capacity to create a secure and coordinated regional environment.

COMESA is making significant efforts in this direction. It supports information-sharing initiatives with the CEWS, conducts preventive diplomacy missions (Comoros 2018, DRC 2018, Kenya 2022, Zimbabwe 2023) and implements border programmes against terrorism involving 16 countries. Concrete action has been taken through joint missions in the DRC, Burundi, Comoros, Zambia, Kenya and Zimbabwe. COMESA also hosts a regional mediation and conflict management mechanism (the Committee of Elders) recognised by its founding texts.

The score of 0.67 reflects these solid results, but also the differences in participation between Member States. While the architecture is well established, its effectiveness still depends on the regularity of national contributions and the formalisation of certain mechanisms (e.g. ratification of agreements, funding, inter-institutional coordination).

Sub-dimension 8: Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Conflict Management (1.00)

The Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Conflict Management (PCRD) sub-dimension assesses a community's capacity to support post-conflict peace processes, through development, reintegration and reconciliation programmes and alignment with continental policies. COMESA is unique in this respect. It has implemented the "Trading for Peace" programme, a cross-border programme in line with the African Union's 2006 PCRD policy, particularly in sensitive cross-border areas of the DRC and its neighbours including Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia and Burundi. The Trading for Peace Project uses trade as a mechanism for peacebuilding and seeks to improve the livelihoods of post-conflict communities by enhancing their socio-economic conditions and rehabilitating cross-border trade infrastructure facilities including markets, roads, and sanitation among others. Funding was provided through the APSA IV programme, and the region has demonstrated its ability to lead initiatives that are fully aligned with continental frameworks. COMESA is one of the few RECs with an active and well-funded post-conflict reconstruction mechanism. The maximum score of 1.00 reflects COMESA's maturity and experience in post-conflict support. It positions this sub-dimension as a major strategic asset in the community's security arrangements.

Dimension IV: Market Integration

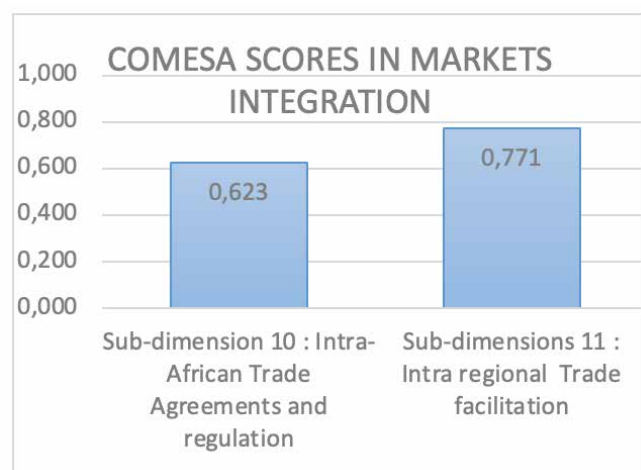
The Market Integration dimension measures the degree of coherence of trade policies, regulatory frameworks and supporting infrastructure to strengthen market integration between Member States. It reflects the capacity of a regional area to harmonize its trade regulation instruments, facilitate the movement of goods and services, and establish frameworks conducive to fair competition and investment. In the case of COMESA, performance is globally good: some sub-dimensions score very well, such as Trade Facilitation. The overall average score for the dimension is 0.77, indicating that market integration is advanced with good institutions and mechanisms.

Sub-dimension: Intra-African Trade Agreements and regulation

This sub-dimension assesses the degree of harmonisation of regional trade policies. COMESA has had a regional free trade area (FTA) in place since 2000, with 16 member states currently actively participating while 5 countries have significantly reduced tariffs and trading on reciprocal tariff basis implying a 76.2 percentage. The process of moving towards a customs union is underway, although the Common External Tariff (CET) is not yet fully

harmonised. In terms of customs duties, the average tariff applied to food imports remains relatively moderate, but varies from country to country, which still limits tariff convergence. The score of 0.623 reflects an advanced but incomplete commitment to consolidating the regional market.

Intra-regional trade sub-dimension



The intra-regional trade facilitation sub-dimension measures Member States' efforts to simplify customs procedures, harmonise trade formalities and improve intra-COMESA logistical fluidity. COMESA has set up several trade facilitation instruments, including an Online Non Tariff Barriers system, the Regional Customs Transit Guarantee Scheme (Carnet), the National Single Window system, an Electronic Certificate of Origin, the Yellow Card Scheme, Coordinated Border Management (One Stop Border Points and the Simplified Trade Regime. Besides, COMESA has established several specialised institutions including the Trade Development Bank, the Clearing House, the Re-Insurance Company (Zep – Re), the African Trade and Investment Development Insurance Company, the Regional Investment Area, COMESA Federation of Women in Business, the African Leather and Leather Product Institute,

the COMESA Monetary Institute and the Court of Justice all of which help implementation of various integration programmes. Some of the institutions are offering services beyond the COMESA Region, while the instrument like the Online NTB system, the Simplified Trade Regime and the carnet have been scaled up to continental levels.

DIMENSION V: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, INDUSTRY AND MINING

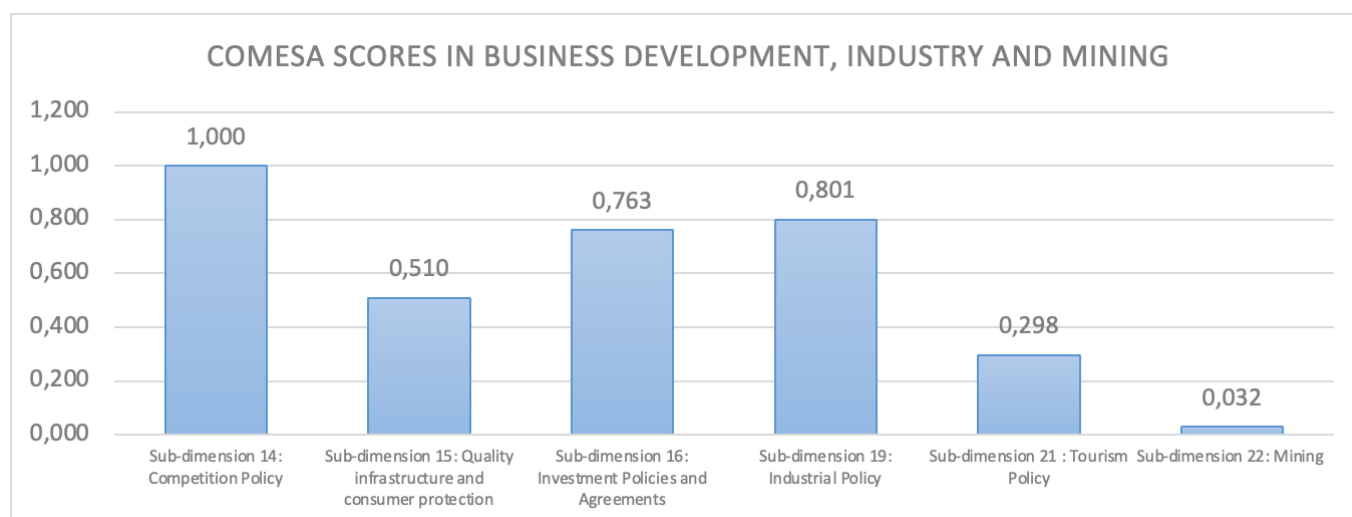
The *Business Development, Industry and Mining* dimension aims to assess the policy, regulatory and institutional environment designed to encourage the growth of regional businesses, industrial development and the exploitation of mining resources. COMESA's results in this dimension are mixed, with high scores on investment (0.763) and industrialisation (0.801) policies, but weak performances in the tourism (0.298) and especially mining (0.032) sectors. The overall level of integration therefore remains very heterogeneous depending on the sector with an overall score of 0.56.

Sub-dimension: Competition policy (1)

COMESA excels in this sub-dimension, as it has a specialised community body: the COMESA Competition Commission, based in Malawi, responsible for supervising regional markets. It has been operational since 2013 and has handled several cross-border cases (e.g. mergers in the agro-industrial or banking sectors). The maximum score of 1,000 reflects advanced integration in terms of competition regulation, positioning COMESA as a regional model in this area.

Sub-dimension: Quality Infrastructure and Consumer Protection (0.51)

This sub-dimension evaluates regional infrastructure standardisation policies and consumer protection.



Despite recognition of the importance of these issues in Community texts, their implementation remains very uneven. The vast majority of Member States (17) have national agencies that are fully integrated into regional standards. Certification of industrial and agri-food products to COMESA standards is only applied by a small number of countries, including Kenya and Egypt. Consumer protection remains largely unharmonised. The score of 0.510 reflects a balance between strong performance in infrastructure quality and areas needing improvement in consumer quality.

Sub-dimension: Investment Policies and Agreements (0.763)

COMESA has adopted a regional framework for investment promotion and protection, with instruments such as the COMESA Common Investment Area (CCIA). Several countries (e.g. Egypt, Mauritius, Rwanda, Tunisia) have one-stop investment shops in line with EU guidelines. Regional platforms also facilitate the exchange of information between national agencies. The high score of 0.763 reflects a favourable dynamic for the integration of investment frameworks, although this is still incomplete in several countries, particularly those in unstable situations or with weak institutional capacity.

Sub-dimension: Industrial Policy (0.801)

COMESA has adopted a regional industrial strategy (2017-2026) aimed at improving manufacturing competitiveness, with priority given to the agri-food, textile and pharmaceutical sectors. Several member states (e.g. Zambia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Egypt) have formulated national industrialisation plans aligned with regional priorities. Regional support mechanisms for local processing are being set up, in line with the local content strategy. With a performance of 0.801, COMESA shows a high level of political alignment, but practical industrialisation remains uneven between states, and depends heavily on infrastructure, energy and logistics capacity.

Sub-dimension: Tourism Policy (0.298)

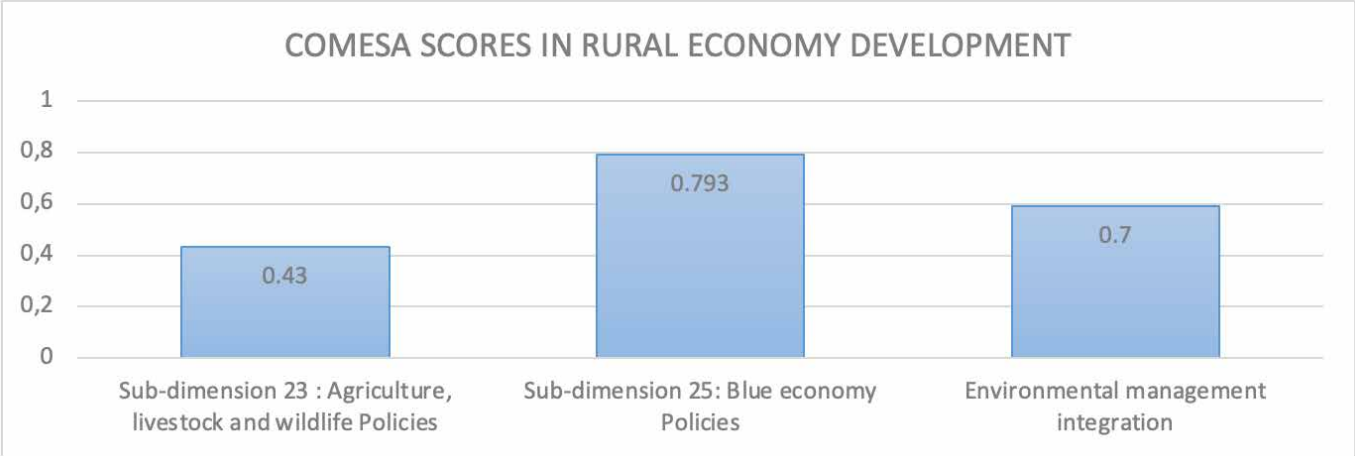
This sub-dimension assesses the existence of a regional tourism development strategy, the coordination of national policies and joint promotion efforts. Although several COMESA states have strong tourism potential (e.g. Egypt, Kenya, Mauritius, Uganda), the community does not yet have a fully implemented regional tourism strategy. There are still no joint visa mechanisms or integrated regional offers. Joint promotion is sporadic, often left to the initiative of individual countries. The score of 0.298 reflects this lack of coherent regional architecture, despite COMESA’s obvious strengths in the sector.

Sub-dimension: Mining (0.032)

This sub-dimension measures the regional coordination of mining policies, the implementation of the African Mining Framework (AMF), and the sharing of geological data. COMESA does not yet have a consolidated regional mining policy. Very few countries have incorporated the African Union’s guidelines on the sector (AMV), and regional cooperation on mining remains marginal. The absence of shared mapping mechanisms, common environmental standards or harmonised taxation limits the integration of this strategic sector. With an extremely low score of 0.032, there is a significant structural gap that needs to be bridged to bring the region into line with continental ambitions for the development of natural resources.

Dimension VI: Rural Economy Development

The *Rural Economy Development* dimension assesses the degree of integration of regional policies on agriculture, the blue economy and environmental management. It is particularly strategic in a region like COMESA, where a large proportion of the population depends on rural systems and natural resources. With an average score of 0.65 on the sub-dimensions assessed, COMESA’s performance is moderate, marked by significant progress in environmental



(high score of 0.79), but also by more limited results in agricultural policies (0.43) and a still perfectible implementation of the Blue economy (0.7).

Sub-dimension 1: Agriculture, Livestock and Wildlife Policies (0.43)

This sub-dimension examines the presence of coordinated agricultural, pastoral and wildlife policies at regional level, and their alignment with continental frameworks. COMESA has formulated a regional strategic framework supporting the transformation of agricultural systems and food security, with variations in several countries such as Malawi, Zambia and Uganda. However, many Member States have not yet fully aligned their national policies with regional priorities, and there are major disparities in the application of continental objectives. Cross-border wildlife management also remains poorly structured at COMESA level. The score of 0.43 reflects a still limited level of integration in this central area. Despite relevant regional initiatives, institutional fragmentation and implementation gaps reduce the impact of these policies on the rural economy.

Sub-dimension 2: Environmental Management Integration (0.79)

In environmental management, COMESA stands out for its commitment to regional environmental governance.

The Tripartite Climate Change Programme, which concluded in 2016, was jointly funded by the European Union (EU), UK Department for International Development (DFID), and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This initiative laid the groundwork for subsequent interventions, including the EU-funded follow-up programme (2018–2022). Notably, COMESA remains the only Regional Economic Community (REC) actively implementing a dedicated and standalone Climate Change Programme. In contrast, the other two RECs have mainstreamed climate change into broader thematic areas such as the Blue Economy, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Desertification. COMESA's continued commitment reflects a strategic prioritization of climate action as a central pillar of regional integration and sustainable development. It supports adaptation to climate change and the integrated management of resources (water, forests, wetlands) in countries such as Zambia, Rwanda and Kenya. For now, COMESA should encourage its Member States to adhere to and implement the continental strategies, namely the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy Action Plan (2022–2032), the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Program of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework in Africa, and its successor,

the Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology (Weather and Climate Services). The high score of 0.79 confirms that environmental management is an area of regional leadership for COMESA, with active policy frameworks and coordinated action at cross-border level.

Sub-dimension 3: Blue Economy Policies (0.7)

This sub-dimension assesses the existence of integrated policies on the blue economy (fisheries, aquaculture, maritime transport, coastal management), as well as their coherence at regional level. There is considerable potential in countries such as Egypt, Djibouti, Kenya, Madagascar and Mauritius. COMESA has developed a comprehensive Blue Economy Strategy that is fully aligned with the African Union's continental frameworks, including the Africa Blue Economy Strategy and Agenda 2063. In line with this, the REC has been providing technical and policy support to Member States to facilitate the development and domestication of their national Blue Economy strategies. This coordinated approach aims to harness aquatic and marine resources sustainably, promote regional integration, and unlock the economic potential of the blue economy across the COMESA region.

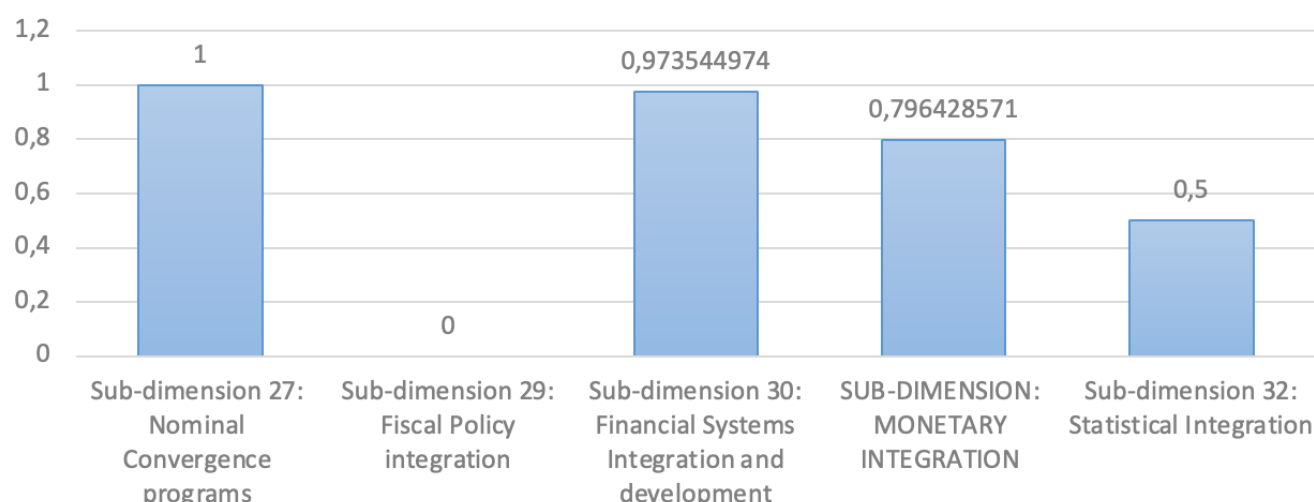
Dimension VII: Macroeconomic and Statistical Integration

The Macroeconomic and Statistical Integration dimension is at the heart of the architecture for successful regional integration. It assesses the coordination of fundamental macroeconomic policies (budgetary, monetary and financial), efforts to achieve nominal convergence, and the integration of national statistical systems into a coherent regional framework. For COMESA, the results are mixed. While progress has been remarkable in the areas of nominal convergence (1,000) and financial integration (0,974), regional taxation remains non-existent (0,000). The monetarisation of integration is progressing (0.796), while statistical integration is at an intermediate level (0.500). This imbalance highlights an architecture under construction, with strong but still incomplete institutional advances.

Sub-dimension 1: Nominal Convergence Programs (1)

COMESA has had a regional nominal convergence programme in place since 2005, based on target criteria such as inflation below 5%, a budget deficit below 5%, public debt below 60% of GDP, and a level of reserves covering at least 4 months of imports. These criteria are monitored as part of a regional macroeconomic surveillance mechanism based on national reports. The COMESA secretariat

COMESA SCORE IN MACROECONOMIC INTEGRATION



coordinates multilateral evaluation missions, and several member states (notably Rwanda, Mauritius, Uganda and Egypt) have made significant progress in meeting these criteria. The statistical dimension also supports this process through harmonised data collection. The maximum score of 1,000 reflects full institutionalisation of the framework, although actual compliance with the criteria varies from country to country and from period to period.

Sub-dimension 2: Fiscal Policy Integration (0)

Budgetary coordination within COMESA remains non-existent. No fiscal convergence framework has been defined, and there are no common budgetary rules or structured alignment of national fiscal strategies. Each state retains total autonomy in defining, implementing and controlling its public finances. The questionnaire confirms this shortcoming: there is no binding regional mechanism to guide members' budgetary policies. No convergence plan, no monitoring report, and no institutionalised harmonisation forum is in place to date. This zero score (0) reveals a major strategic gap in the process of macroeconomic integration, severely limiting the credibility of a future fiscally coherent area.

Sub-dimension 3: Financial Systems Integration (0.974)

When it comes to integrating financial systems, COMESA has made real progress. The flagship mechanism in this area is the *Regional Payment and Settlement System* (REPSS), which enables the central banks of participating Member States to carry out secure cross-border transactions in local currency via the Central Bank of Zambia, which acts as the system manager. In addition, there are frameworks

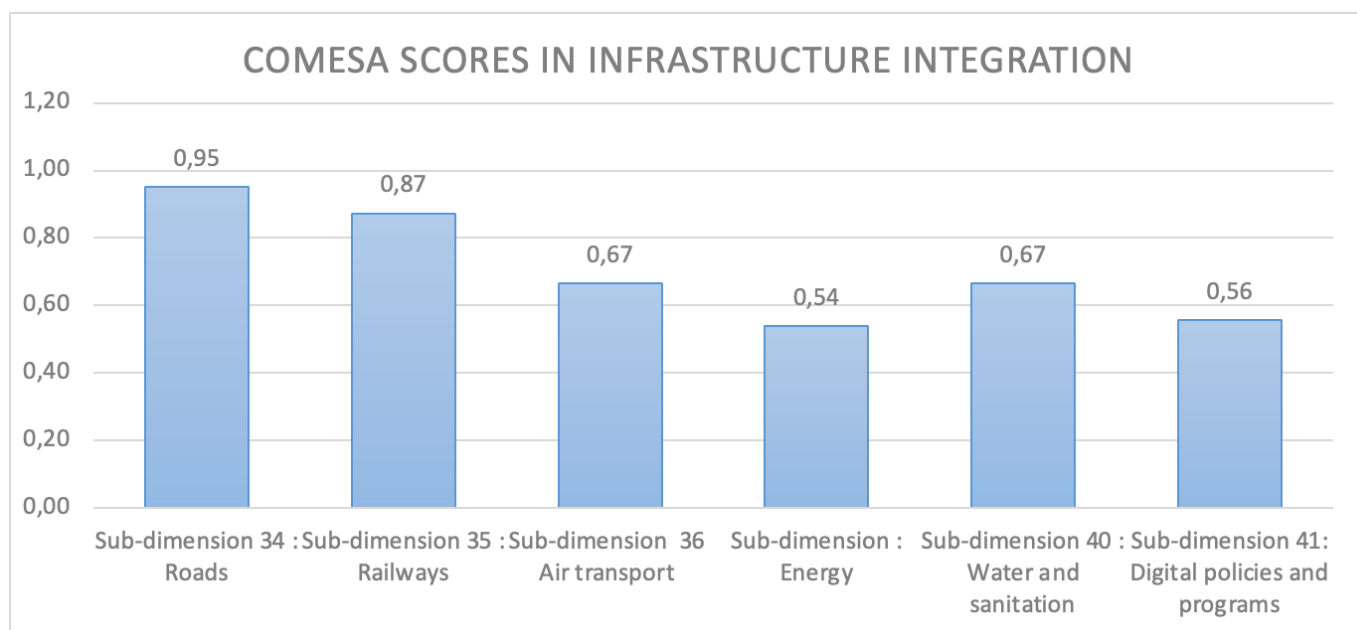
for regional banking cooperation, a platform for exchanging prudential data, and joint training courses in banking supervision. COMESA is also working with regulators to facilitate the interoperability of fintechs and payment systems. The very high score of 0.974 reflects very advanced regional financial integration in terms of infrastructure and regulatory cooperation, although REPSS coverage still needs to be extended to all member countries.

Sub-dimension 4: Monetary Integration (0.796)

Since the declaration of the COMESA Monetary Union, the community has set up a Regional Monetary Institute based in Harare, responsible for preparing monetary unification. Convergence criteria have been defined, and scenarios are being considered for a common currency, although no firm timetable has yet been set. The member central banks are actively participating in the work of the regional monetary committee, and tools for coordinating exchange rate and inflation policies are being developed. However, differences in macroeconomic performance, external vulnerabilities and institutional differences are slowing down the process. The score of 0.796 indicates a strong commitment, materialised by functional institutions, but still in the preparatory phase.

Sub-dimension 5: Statistical Integration (0.5)

COMESA has established a strategic framework for the harmonisation of statistics, fully aligned with the continental SHaSA2 strategy. COMESA actively supports capacity building for Member States through workshops and meetings (over 10 on annual basis), fostering the adoption of best international statistical practices. Multiple regional technical working groups



operate across different statistical sectors, enhancing sector-specific coordination and integration. A regional technical group on statistics coordinates collaboration with National Statistical Offices (NSOs), and a regional data portal is operational. While fewer than 10 Member States regularly produce statistics according to regional standards, COMESA's sustained efforts in capacity building, advocacy, and provision of operational tools have significantly advanced statistical integration. Adoption of harmonised standards depends on Member States' financial, human resource, and policy environments, which vary across the countries. The score of 0.85 reflects this strong intermediate-to-advanced level, recognizing both the solid institutional frameworks and ongoing progress toward comprehensive regional statistical integration.

Dimension VIII: Infrastructure Integration

The *Infrastructure Integration* dimension measures regional coordination of transport, energy, water and digital technology networks. This is essential for the physical and digital connectivity of territories, which is a prerequisite for the free movement of goods, people and data. COMESA scores very well in the areas of roads (0.952), railways (0.873) and aviation (0.667). It also obtained a solid score in water management (0.667) and an average score in digital policies (0.556). These performances reflect advanced but still incomplete infrastructure integration, particularly in the areas of energy and cyber security.

Sub-dimension 1: Roads (0.952)

COMESA has a regional cross-border road connectivity programme mentioned in its founding texts. This programme is effectively implemented

with the participation of 17 Member States, notably through corridors such as Djibouti-Addis Ababa, Beira and North-South. Even the Northern Corridor Authority was formed by COMESA (linking the Port of Mombasa in Kenya, through Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC and South Sudan to the Democratic Republic of Congo). These projects are often supported by international partners, but structured on a regional scale, with common standards. The score of 0.952 reflects almost complete road integration, positioning COMESA among the most advanced regional communities in Africa in this area. COMESA has over the years developed road transport transit facilitation instruments which have been very instrumental in the smooth flow of trade e.g. COMESA Yellow Card, COMESA Carrier License, One Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) etc. COMESA has therefore promoted regional integration through improvements in corridor efficiency.

Sub-dimension 2: Railways (0.873)

COMESA has established a regional cross-border rail programme, which is currently being implemented in 14 Member States, including the DRC, Djibouti, Egypt, Kenya, Ethiopia, Malawi, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Projects include upgrades (e.g. Djibouti-Addis Ababa) and extensions (e.g. corridors to SADC and EAC). Although several projects are still in the development phase, the level of regional commitment is high. The score of 0.873 indicates strong rail integration, although results are sometimes hampered by ageing national infrastructure and slow funding.

Sub-dimension 3: Air Transport (0.667)

COMESA is the pioneer of air transport liberalization

in Africa through its Legal Notice Number 2 which informed the Yamoussoukro Decision. Currently, COMESA is leading the implementation of the Support to the Air Transport Sector Development in the Eastern and Southern Africa programme covering COMESA, EAC, IGAD, IOC and SADC regions. The project's objectives are to support operationalization of the SAATM, strengthening capacity of aviation institutions and improving air navigation efficiency. Through a signed Memorandum of Cooperation, COMESA works closely and jointly with the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) on the implementation of SAATM. COMESA also works closely with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) through a signed MoU, to advance various critical elements of air transport. COMESA is an active participant in the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), in conjunction with the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite. All members participate in the regional framework, but the single aviation market is not yet fully operational. Moreover, no formal regional initiative on aviation cybersecurity has yet been launched. The score of 0.667 reflects a solid but still incomplete political integration, awaiting effective implementation and integrated services for airlines and passengers.

Maritime and Inland Water Transport

COMESA is coordinating the implementation of the Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative (PICI) transport project to Establishment of a Navigational Route between Lake Victoria and the Mediterranean Sea along the Nile River. The PIDA PAP 2 project covers ten countries namely Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan Tanzania and Uganda. This will be the shortest route to Europe from Eastern Africa. Once implemented, the transport corridor will be transformed into a development corridor.

COMESA is implementing an inland water transport programme through the Lake Tanganyika Inland Water transport programme which seeks to link Eastern and Southern Africa through multimodal transport facilities. Transport corridors in Southern Africa will be easily integrated with those in Eastern Africa.

Sub-dimension 4: Water and Sanitation (0.667)

The management of transboundary water resources is often the responsibility of specific regional basins (Nile, Zambezi, Congo, Lake Victoria), but COMESA actively supports these initiatives through joint programmes on the environment and agriculture. The organisation also encourages integrated approaches to water management in line with food security and climate resilience objectives. The score

of 0.667 reflects a strategic support role, although direct governance of these basins is provided by other specialised institutions.

Sub-dimension 5: Digital Policies and Programs (0.556)

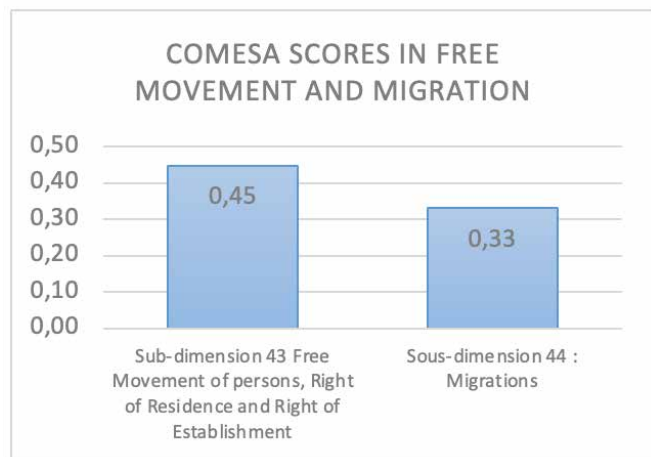
In the past COMESA produced Model ICT Policy and Bill, and Model Broadcasting Policy and Bill, Model Policy and Bill on Postal Services, Consumer Protection Guidelines. COMESA is implementing (fifth year now) the Enhancement of Governance and Enabling Environment which seeks to promote the development and reviewing policies and regulations to promote competitive and gender sensitive markets. Several frameworks on e.g regional roaming and interconnection, fibre optic open access and licensing, e-commerce and universal access have been developed. The programme covers the five RECs in Eastern and Southern Africa namely COMESA, EAC, IGAD, IOC and SADC. COMESA is also implementing an eight-year World Bank funded Inclusive Digitalization for Eastern and Southern Africa (IDEA) programme covering beyond the COMESA region. The impact of the programme will be...to promote regional harmonisation in the areas of digital inclusion, emerging technologies, least cost models and integrated infrastructure planning. y. COMESA has a developed model policy guidelines and bill for cybersecurity, many member states have already domesticated these frameworks and others are in the process, of domesticating. In 2003, COMESA formed the Association of Regulators for Information Communications for Eastern and southern Africa (ARICEA) which provides a platform for exchanging views and knowledge on regulatory matter and helps in the regional policy and harmonisation. The score of 0.556 reflects a moderate commitment, requiring institutional strengthening and increased coordination in sensitive areas such as cyber protection, data regulation and digital services.

Sub-dimension 6: Energy

COMESA has developed a number of policies and regulations through the Regional Association of Energy Regulators for Eastern and Southern Africa, one of its institutions. Other energy policies, regulations and standards have been developed and domesticated under the Regional Infrastructure Finance Facility, a World Bank funded project covering the COMESA region and beyond, e.g South Sudan. COMESA is actively involved in the development of physical energy infrastructure like interconnectors e.g Egypt – Libya regional interconnector (PIDA PAP 2 project), the Zambia Tanzania Kenya (ZTK) interconnector which will facilitate power trading between Eastern and Southern Africa through the Eastern African Power Pool. COMESA is currently

implementing the World Bank funded Accelerating Sustainable & Clean Energy Access Transformation (ASCENT) in the Eastern and Southern Africa Region programme which also covers non-COMESA Member States e.g Sao Tome and Principe.

Dimension IX: Free Movement and Migration



The *Free Movement and Migration* dimension assesses the level of implementation of regional policies relating to the free movement of people, the concerted management of migration, the liberalisation of professions and the protection of migrants. In the case of COMESA, this dimension is only partially operational. Although instruments exist in the founding texts, their practical application remains limited, particularly in the area of migration (zero score). The overall score for this dimension is moderate at 0.389, with 0.446 for free movement and 0.33 for integrated migration policies.

Sub-dimension 1: Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Establishment (0.446)

Article 164 of the COMESA Treaty provides the legal basis for Member States to progressively adopt individual, bilateral, or multilateral measures to achieve free movement of persons, labour and services, the right of establishment and residence by citizens within the Common Market. The provision aims at enabling citizens of COMESA to move freely, take up offers of employment in any Member State under similar conditions as national workers. COMESA Member States have been implementing the Protocol on the Gradual Relaxation and Eventual Elimination of Visas (Visa Protocol) at varying levels. All Member States, except for Egypt, Mauritius, Seychelles and Somalia have ratified the Visa Protocol.

While the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Service, Labour and the Right of Establishment and Residence Free Movement has not yet entered

into force as it has not yet received the requisite signatures and ratifications, to date, only 2 Member States, namely the Republic of Burundi and the Republic Rwanda, have ratified it. Pursuant to Article 164(3) of the COMESA Treaty, Member States agreed that the Visa Protocol shall remain in force until the Free Movement Protocol enters into force.

It is important to note that the slow implementation of the Free Movement Protocol affects the promotion of regional integration and the success of the COMESA migration agenda and overall continental migration agenda. Additionally, it has also adversely affected an expeditious realization of the aspirations of the COMESA Treaty of having COMESA citizens moving freely within the COMESA region.

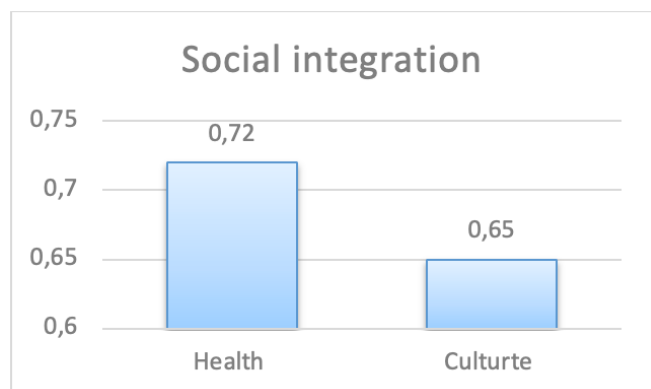
However, in line with Article 164 of the COMESA Treaty, the Visa Protocol recognizes that two or more Member States can maintain existing bilateral or multilateral arrangements (or enter into new ones) among themselves in respect of free movement of persons which provide for more favorable treatment for their nationals than are provided for in the Protocol. In this regard, some COMESA Member States facilitate mobility on a bilateral basis (e.g. Kenya-Rwanda, Zambia-Malawi), but there is neither a common visa nor a formalised system of mutual recognition of residence or work documents. Despite this, it is important to note that the adopted Visa Protocol serves as a harmonization tool for the region. The score of 0.446 reflects this situation of institutional transition: instruments exist, but their implementation remains largely theoretical.

Sub-dimension 2: Migration (0.33)

COMESA has no harmonised regional strategy on labour migration, whether in terms of labour mobility, migrant protection, regularisation or diaspora management. No common policy has yet been formulated, but the organisation has developed a regional labour statistics database and an annual labour migration report which has thus far released two editions.

The COMESA Dialogue on Migration (MIDCOM) serves as the organisation's regional consultative process. Although no formal inter-State coordination mechanism is in place to deal with migratory flows or respond to humanitarian crises linked to population movements, the forum supports efforts towards inter-state migration management. The score of 0.33 therefore reflects efforts made and the need of an integration in this area, despite the high level of intra-regional mobility observed in practice (particularly in the Nile and Southern Corridor basins and in border mining areas).

Dimension X: Social Development



The *Social and Human Development* dimension has been refocused in the updated ASRII on the health and culture as a fundamental lever for human well-being, social resilience and regional mobility. It examines the existence of regional health policies, their alignment with continental standards, and the implementation of joint schemes in member states. COMESA obtained a global score of 0.685 with solid score of 0.722, demonstrating a concrete commitment to health cooperation and a score of 0.65 with a new program in culture.

Sub-dimension: Health (0.722)

COMESA has a regional health strategy that is integrated with continental efforts led by the African Union and CDC Africa. It contributes to initiatives on maternal, child and reproductive health, and the prevention of epidemics. Some Member States (Zambia, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda) are implementing policies in line with regional priorities. COMESA also supports pharmaceutical regulation and digital health projects, although the coverage of these initiatives remains uneven. The score of 0.722 reflects significant sectoral integration, based on functional regional policy instruments, but which would benefit from being better institutionalised and monitored by common evaluation mechanisms.

Sub-dimension 3: Culture (0.65)

COMESA has implemented a regional programme to promote policy and legal frameworks for Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI), and cultural exchanges in Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. Further, the programme promotes ratification of regional policy and legal frameworks and UNESCO Conventions on culture. In addition, the programme provides sensitization and capacity building of artists on intellectual property rights.

Dimension XI: Human Development, Science and Technology

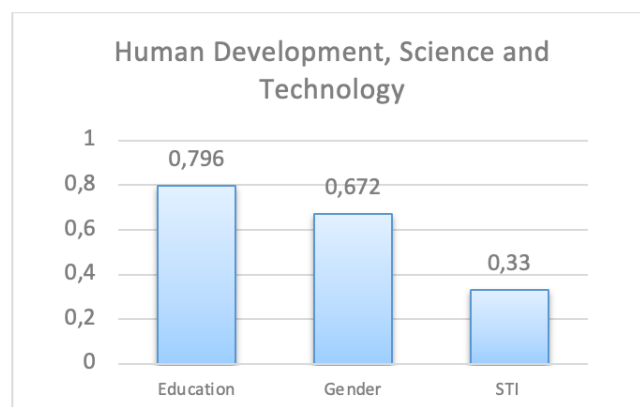
The *Human Development, Science and Technology* dimension assesses a regional community's commitment to sustainable human development, through education, the promotion of gender equality, cultural enhancement and the revitalisation of research, innovation and technology. In the case of COMESA, this dimension shows heterogeneous results, with globally good performances in education (0.796), gender (0.672) and STI (0.33)

Sub-dimension 1: Education (0.796)

COMESA is implementing a programme to harmonise higher education, notably through the recognition of qualifications, support for academic mobility and cooperation between universities in the region including on the implementation of the COMESA Masters Degree Programme in Regional Integration. Several COMESA Member States are actively involved in these mechanisms. Initiatives also exist in vocational training (TVET), with partial alignment to regional standards. The high score of 0.796 reflects a high level of sectoral integration, based on coordinated policies and concrete results.

Sub-dimension 2: Gender (0.672)

COMESA has adopted a regional gender policy and policy on prevention and response to gender-based violence at the workplace. These regional policies on gender guide national policies towards gender equality, the fight against gender-based violence and the economic empowerment of women. Monitoring frameworks are in place, and several member countries (Burundi, DRC, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe) have incorporated regional indicators into their national plans and submit annual reports to COMESA secretariat on the implementation of the gender policy. The score of 0.672 reflects active integration, with strong political recognition and partially operational instruments.



Sub-dimension 3: Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) (0.33)

Although COMESA currently does not have a standalone regional policy framework exclusively dedicated to Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), it is important to emphasize that STI is recognized as a vital driver for industrialization and economic transformation within the COMESA region. This commitment is reflected in COMESA's Industrialisation Policy and Strategy, which outlines concrete guidelines for promoting innovation, technology transfer, and scientific collaboration among Member States. Furthermore, the COMESA Treaty itself explicitly mandates the sharing and optimal utilization of industrial and scientific research institutions and technical expertise, the adoption of a common approach to technology transfer and development, and the exchange of industrial and technological information—including research results, patents, investment opportunities, and technical processes. While dedicated implementation mechanisms such as a regional innovation centre or a joint research fund are still in development, the existing policy and legal frameworks establish a robust foundation for coordinated STI action. COMESA remains actively engaged in exploring practical ways to operationalize these commitments, working closely with Member States and strategic partners to harness the full potential of STI for regional industrial and economic advancement.

EAC

Presentation

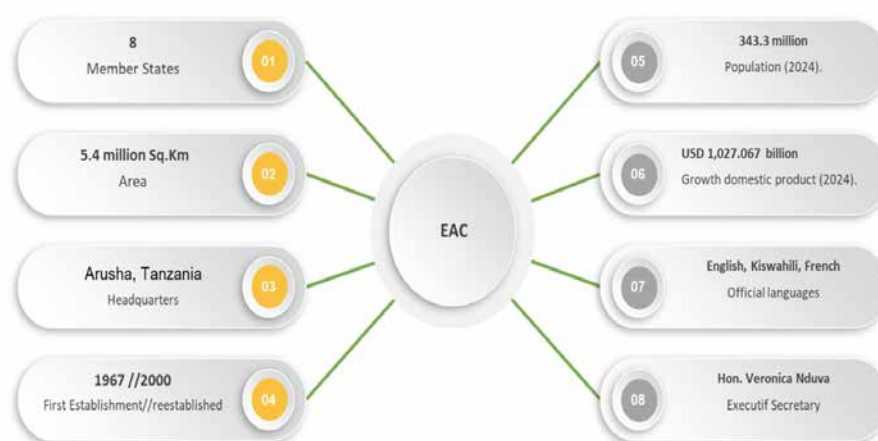
Created in 2000 following the signing of the Treaty re-establishing the East African Community in 1999, the EAC comprises eight Member States: Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, South Sudan (joining in 2016), the Democratic Republic of Congo (2022) and Somalia (2023). Its headquarters are in Arusha, Tanzania. The Community covers an area of around 4.8 million km², with an estimated population of around 315 million in 2024. Its combined gross domestic product (GDP) exceeds USD 270 billion, making it one of the most dynamic economic blocs on the continent. The official languages of the EAC are English, Swahili and French (recently introduced in connection with enlargement). The EAC is distinguished by its ambition for deep integration, based on four major stages: customs union (established in 2005), the common market (in force since 2010), monetary union (in preparation), and political federation (envisaged in the long term).

It has active Community institutions, including the General Secretariat, the EAC Parliament, the Court of Justice and a number of specialised bodies. The current Secretary General of the Community is Dr. Peter Mutuku Mathuki (Kenya), in office since April 2021. The EAC occupies a strategic position in the continental integration process, with one of the most advanced levels of legal harmonisation and technical cooperation in Africa

Vision and Objectives

The vision of EAC is to be a prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa.

The regional cooperation and integration envisaged in EAC is broad-based. Article 5 (1) of The Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community states that “the objectives of the Community shall be to develop policies and programmes aimed at widening and deepening cooperation among the Partner States in political, economic, social and cultural fields, research and technology, defence, security and legal and judicial affairs for their mutual benefit.” Since then, the EAC Customs Union, which was established in March 2005, has made significant progress. In 2010, the EAC established a Common Market and signed the Monetary Union in 2013 that will come into force in 2023. The EAC plans for a Political Federation as its ultimate goal; however, in the short term, work is going on to prepare for Political Confederation as the transitional stage.



For the period 2021-2026, the priorities of the EAC as outlined in the 5th EAC Development Strategy are:

1. Full implementation of the Single Customs Territory
2. Attainment of EAC single currency
3. Strengthening regional peace, security, and good governance

4. Development of quality multi-dimensional strategic Infrastructure Strengthening regional peace, security, and good governance
5. Enhancing domestication and implementation of regional commitments in line with the EAC Common Market Protocol

Institutional framework

The EAC institutional architecture is based on the Treaty Establishing the Community (1999), which provides for a hierarchical and functional system designed to ensure effective governance, implementation, and monitoring of regional integration.

- **The Summit of Heads of State:** The highest decision-making body of the EAC. It comprises the Heads of State of all Partner States and gives general direction and impetus to the development and achievement of the objectives of the Community.
- **The Council of Ministers:** The main policy organ, consisting of Ministers responsible for EAC affairs in each Partner State. It oversees the implementation of decisions made by the Summit and monitors the functioning of the EAC.
- **The EAC Secretariat:** Based in Arusha, Tanzania, the Secretariat is the executive body of the Community. It is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the EAC, coordination of activities, and implementation of decisions taken by the Summit and Council. The Secretariat is headed by the Secretary General, currently Veronica Mueni Nduva (since June 2024), who acts as the principal executive officer.
- **The Coordination Committee:** Made up of Permanent/Principal Secretaries from the relevant ministries, this Committee reports to

the Council and coordinates the activities of the Sectoral Committees.

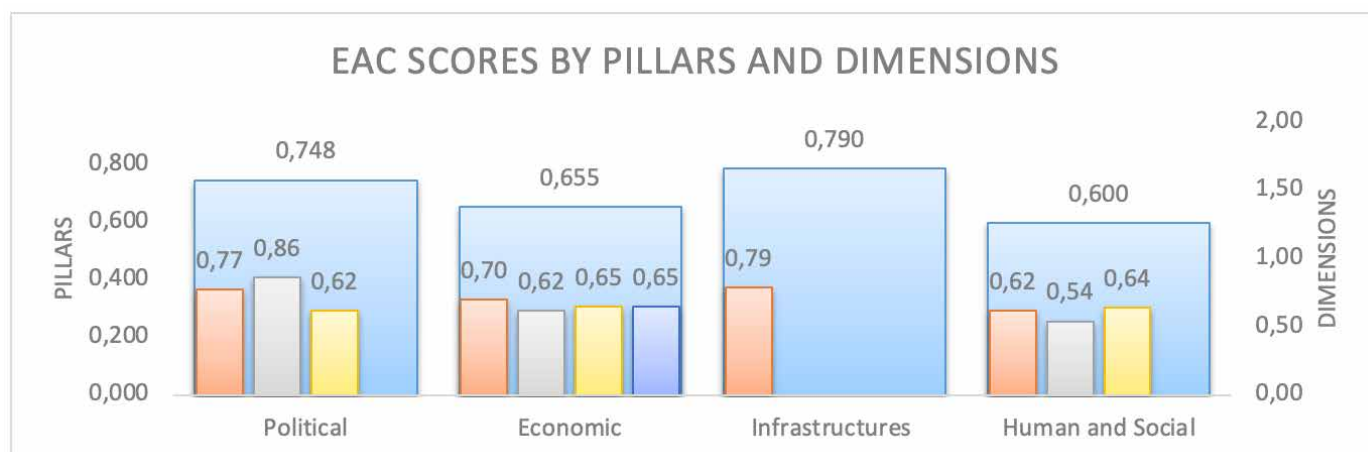
- **The Sectoral Committees:** These are technical bodies that formulate and monitor programmes and projects in their respective sectors. They provide recommendations to the Coordination Committee and the Council.
- **The East African Court of Justice (EACJ):** The judicial organ of the Community, responsible for interpreting and ensuring adherence to the EAC Treaty. It also resolves disputes involving Partner States and other parties with standing.
- **The East African Legislative Assembly (EALA):** The legislative arm of the EAC. It enacts legislation, approves budgets, and provides oversight of the EAC Secretariat. Its members are elected by national parliaments of Partner States.

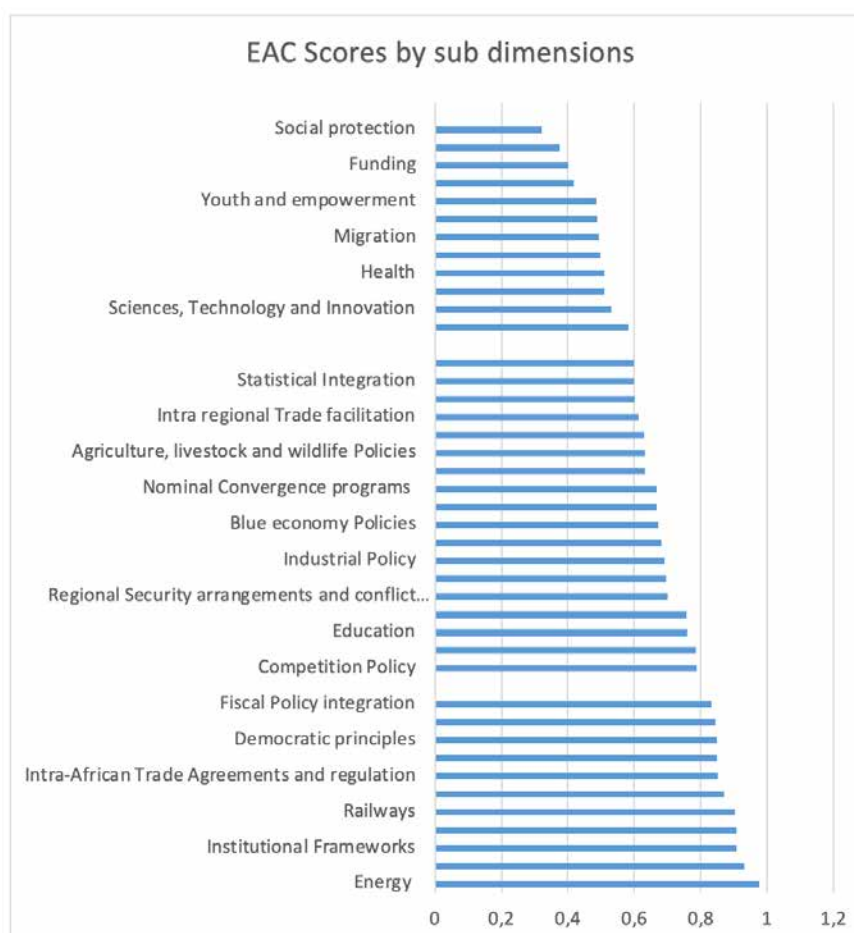
To operationalize regional programmes, the EAC has established several institutions and autonomous agencies including: Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC); East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO); East African Health Research Commission (EAHRC); East African Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency (CASSOA); Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA); East African Kiswahili Commission (EAKC); East African Competition Authority (EACA).

These institutions serve specific technical, educational, regulatory, or sectoral mandates and contribute to the deeper integration and harmonization across the EAC region.

Challenges and Prospects

The East African Community (EAC) has made remarkable progress in advancing its regional integration agenda, particularly in establishing





sector, and strategic location position it as a hub for trade and investment. Progress in key infrastructure projects, digital transformation, and youth empowerment further provide a strong foundation for inclusive development. If the EAC can consolidate its achievements, reinforce compliance mechanisms, and enhance internal cohesion, it will continue to serve as a leading model for African integration.

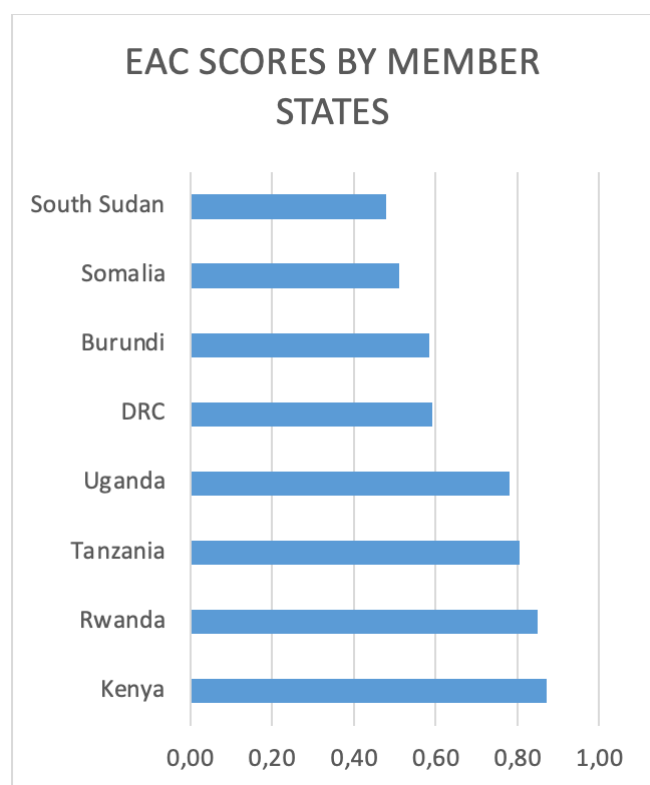
EAC assessment

Progress made per dimension of integration

EAC demonstrates a relatively advanced level of regional integration, particularly in its institutional and governance dimensions, while notable gaps remain in economic and social integration. From an institutional standpoint, EAC performs strongly. It scores 0.77 on institutional framework, with 0.86 on governance and democracy, and 0.615 on peace and security. These figures reflect a well-established legal foundation, the existence of operational regional organs (such as EAC J and EALA), and clear political commitment to

a Customs Union and a Common Market, and expanding its membership to include eight Partner States. However, the region continues to face several structural and operational challenges that may hinder deeper and more effective integration. One key challenge lies in the **asymmetry in national capacities and implementation of regional commitments**. While legal and institutional frameworks have been developed at the regional level, the pace and consistency of their domestication and enforcement at national levels remain uneven. This gap risks creating regulatory fragmentation and limiting the full benefits of a harmonized market. The delayed operationalization of the Monetary Union and the protracted discussions on political federation also illustrate the complexity of consensus-building in a diverse regional bloc. Financial contributions from Partner States to the EAC budget are sometimes delayed, affecting the effective functioning of regional institutions and programmes. Additionally, **the expansion of the Community, most recently with the accession of Somalia**, while a positive step toward continental integration, calls for renewed efforts to strengthen institutional capacities, ensure equitable participation, and manage divergent political, security, and governance contexts. Despite these challenges, the EAC's prospects remain promising. The region's growing population, dynamic private

democratic principles and regional stability. In this regard, EAC stands out as one of the most institutionally developed regional economic communities in Africa. On the economic front, however, the picture is more mixed. Market integration receives a score of 0.73, highlighting ongoing realisations in eliminating non-tariff barriers, harmonizing customs regimes, and ensuring the smooth movement of goods. Business and industrial development shows better progress (0.62), though it still falls short of its full potential despite promising initiatives in regional value chains. Macroeconomic integration remains partial (0.65), suggesting the need for stronger alignment in fiscal, monetary, and financial policies among member states. In terms of statistical systems and social integration, efforts remain at a foundational stage. Social, cultural, and human development dimensions score 0.61, 0.57, and 0.92, respectively, indicating positive momentum in education, gender, and innovation, though further consolidation is required to ensure inclusive and equitable outcomes. The free movement of persons and migration, a cornerstone of continental integration, remains incomplete with a score of 0.51. Despite formal commitments to protocols on the right of residence and establishment, implementation remains uneven across member states.



When we have a deep look by sub dimensions, we can admit that EAC exhibits a strong level of regional integration, particularly in institutional, legal, and infrastructure-related dimensions. High scores in areas such as energy (0.975), legislation (0.93), and governance (0.85) reflect a solid legal framework, well-functioning institutions, and effective regional coordination. Mid-performing dimensions-including fiscal integration, competition policy, education, and movement of people-indicate tangible progress, though implementation gaps remain across member states. In contrast, weaker scores in social protection (0.32), post-conflict reconstruction (0.32), monetary integration (0.38), and migration (0.49) highlight structural vulnerabilities and limited harmonization in key socio-economic areas. While EAC has laid a robust foundation for deeper integration, addressing disparities in execution, enhancing financial autonomy, and reinforcing capacities in health, digital governance, and social inclusion are essential to achieving a more balanced and sustainable regional integration process.

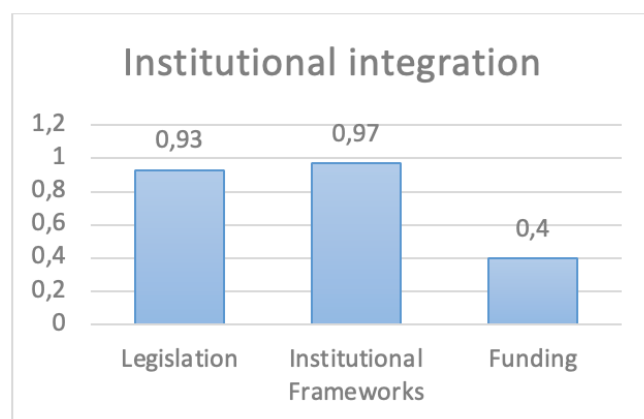
EAC performances by member states

The country-level integration ranking within EAC highlights a clear multi-speed dynamic, with Kenya (0.87), Rwanda (0.85), Tanzania (0.80), and Uganda (0.78) leading the process through strong institutional capacity, infrastructure development, and consistent political commitment to regional objectives. In contrast, mid-ranking countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (0.59) and Burundi (0.58) show moderate engagement, reflecting either

recent accession or structural constraints. Somalia (0.51) and South Sudan (0.48) remain at the lower end, largely due to ongoing governance, security, and implementation challenges. This distribution underscores the need for differentiated support mechanisms to ensure that all member states can meaningfully contribute to and benefit from regional integration.

Assessment by dimension

Institutional integration (0.77)



On this dimension, EAC is performing well, with an average overall score of 0.77. This good performance is based on a solid legal foundation, an institutional framework that is in place and relatively well structured, and a clear political will in the texts. EAC has achieved notable progress in institutional development by establishing key organs that support its governance and regional integration agenda. These include EAC Secretariat in Arusha, which functions as the executive arm of the Community; the East African Court of Justice (EACJ), tasked with resolving disputes arising from the interpretation and application of the Treaty; and the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), which exercises legislative authority within the regional framework. In addition, specialised institutions such as the East African Competition Authority and the East African Science and Technology Commission have been established to enhance regulatory harmonization and foster innovation across the region. Beyond the core organs, EAC has expanded its institutional landscape by establishing several specialized bodies to support regional development and sectoral coordination. Institutions such as the Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC), the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), and the East African Health Research Commission (EAHRC) have played pivotal roles in advancing harmonization in areas such as environmental management, higher education, and public health. These institutions provide the technical backbone for implementing sectoral policies across Partner States.

Legislative framework

With a score of 0.93, EAC has a very high ratification rate for founding instruments such as EAC Treaty (1999), the Customs Union (2004) and the Common Market (2010). All member states, including the most recent (DRC, South Sudan, Somalia), have signed these fundamental texts, although their implementation is uneven. For example, the Protocol on Monetary Union signed in 2013 has yet to be ratified by some members, and the Political Confederation remains at the exploratory stage. In 2024, efforts continued to strengthen harmonization, but delays due to internal constitutional differences persist.

Regional institutions (0.97)

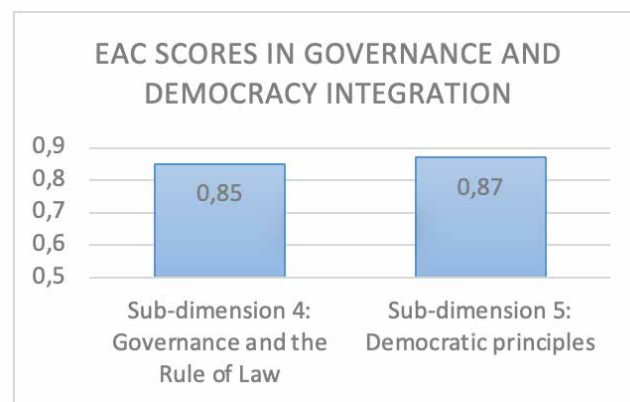
EAC is one of the few African regional blocs to have a complete institutional architecture comprising a Parliament (EALA), a Court of Justice (EACJ) and an Executive Secretariat. These institutions operate with a certain degree of autonomy, even if problems of funding and human capacity inherent in any REC persist.

Funding (0.4025) EAC's self-financing is improving, but remains fragile. With a regional performance of 0.4025, This score is due in particular to persistent delays in contributions from certain members. On the other hand, the EAC still has no Community levy mechanism (0.2% tax), unlike other blocs such as ECOWAS. This situation affects the predictability of resources and complicates strategic planning. In response, the Institutional Review recommended the adoption of alternative financing levers, including public-private partnerships and targeted voluntary contributions. In 2025, a working group was set up to explore the future implementation of a regional levy mechanism inspired by the ECOWAS model.

Governance and Democracy

Governance and rule of law (0.85)

This score reflects EAC 's strong adherence to governance norms and rule of law principles. Member states have adopted regional charters and legal instruments to promote accountability, human rights, and institutional transparency, which are critical for stable integration. EAC 's performance in this sub-dimension is quite good. A key milestone is the development of EAC Protocol on Good Governance, which aims to harmonize governance standards across Partner States and promote adherence to democratic principles and rule of law. The East African Court of Justice (EACJ), operational since 2001, plays a critical role in interpreting and applying EAC Treaty. It has contributed significantly to upholding the rule



of law within the region and has gradually expanded its jurisdiction to cover areas such as human rights, further reinforcing legal accountability at the regional level. In support of electoral governance, EAC consistently deploys Election Observer Missions (EOMs) to monitor elections in Partner States. These missions assess the fairness and transparency of electoral processes and provide recommendations aimed at strengthening democratic institutions and practices. EAC also promotes anti-corruption efforts through regional collaboration. Partner States engage in joint initiatives including capacity-building, policy harmonization, and best practice exchanges through bodies like the East African Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (EAAACA).

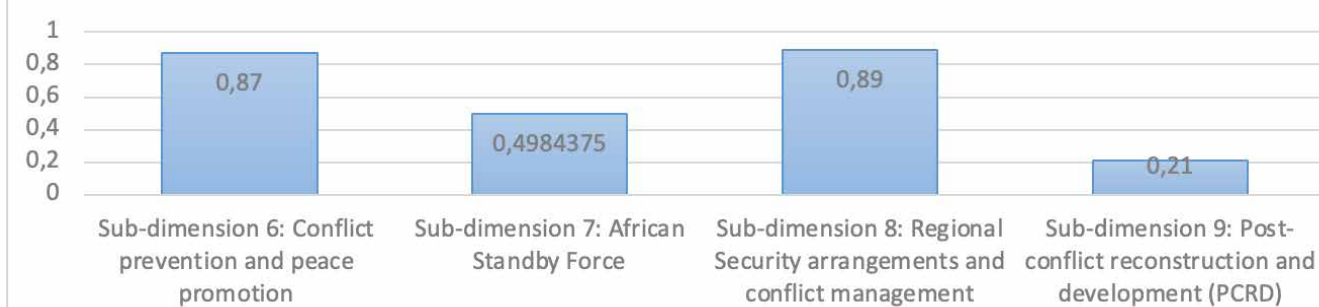
Democratic principles (0.87)

EAC shows full alignment with democratic values, scoring 0.87. Electoral observation missions, national-level reforms, and regional support for democratic consolidation contribute to this performance, even if challenges remain in the political practices of some member states. On this sub-dimension, EAC stands out positively for the regular dispatch of electoral observation missions to member states, demonstrating a willingness to ensure the transparency and fairness of electoral processes.

Dimension Peace and Security (0.6)

With a performance of 0.6, EAC exhibits a mature regional security architecture marked by structured early warning mechanisms, peace diplomacy, and legal frameworks to manage conflicts. The region has notably invested in institutional tools and collaboration with continental frameworks. However, implementation gaps persist in operational capacities and post-conflict recovery. The overall performance is encouraging, but significant disparities exist between political commitment and field-level capabilities, especially in fragile areas such as South Sudan and eastern DRC.

EAC SCORES IN PEACE AND SECURITY DIMENSION



Conflict prevention and peace promotion (0.87)

EAC has put in place structured mechanisms to anticipate and defuse conflicts, notably through its early warning system and the creation of the Panel of the Wise. Several diplomatic interventions were carried out between 2023 and 2024, including mediation in Burundi, the DRC, between Rwanda and Uganda, and in South Sudan. Between 40% and 70% of potential conflicts in the region were averted thanks to these measures, demonstrating a tangible impact.

In addition, collaboration with the African Union's Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and regional mechanisms such as IGAD enables better coordination, although response to alerts often remains slow and dependent on the national political context. The absence of systematized data on the implementation of early warning report recommendations remains an obstacle to rigorous evaluation.

African Standby Force ASF (0.49)

Despite the existence of a formal structure within the continental African Peace and Security Architecture, EAC's contribution to the African Standby Force remains limited. The score reflects the challenges in operational readiness, joint training, and force deployment, pointing to the need for renewed coordination and resource mobilization. EAC is actively contributing to the East African component of the African Standby Force (ASF), although its level of operational readiness is still partial. Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda are the biggest contributors in terms of manpower and logistics, with an estimated 2,000 to 3,000 troops each.

Regional security arrangements and conflict management (0.89)

With a high score, the CER shows a good level of cooperation and conflict management. EAC has a

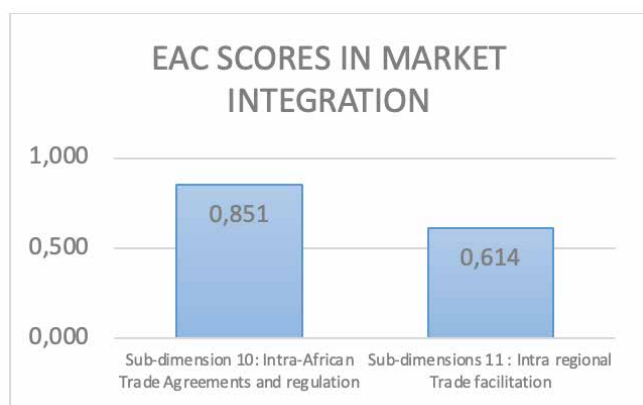
Peace and Security Protocol (2013) which provides a framework for peacekeeping operations and conflict management. It has led several peacekeeping and monitoring missions in the DRC, Burundi and South Sudan. The Panel des Sages, FemWise and PanWise have also been mobilised in various mediation contexts. In 2023-2024, five regional peace agreements were concluded or strengthened, including the Rwanda-Uganda reconciliation and the transition agreement in South Sudan. However, overlapping competencies with other regional communities (IGAD, ICGLR) sometimes create strategic tensions. Regular meetings are held on security issues, but without a clear timetable or permanent regional post-agreement follow-up mechanism. Above all, the persistence of certain conflicts undermines the effectiveness of existing instruments.

Post-conflict reconstruction and development (0.21)

Although EAC has made significant strides in conflict prevention and regional diplomacy, the issue of post-conflict reconstruction (PCRD) remains underdeveloped in its institutional set-up. Between 2023 and 2025, no formal initiative in this area has been implemented, and the Community does not yet have a specific funding mechanism to support stabilization and recovery actions in post-crisis contexts.

Dimension: Market Integration (0.68)

Market integration within EAC has progressed significantly, particularly through the establishment of a customs union, the adoption of common external tariffs, and initiatives to harmonize trade policies. However, persistent non-tariff barriers, uneven implementation of protocols, and disparities in investment regulation still hinder full economic convergence. While legal frameworks are mostly in place, practical enforcement and infrastructure constraints continue to slow down the seamless movement of goods, services, and investments across borders.



Intra-EAC trade has grown considerably, reaching USD 10.9 billion in 2022, up from USD 7.1 billion in 2020, demonstrating resilience and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. This growth has been supported by improved trade facilitation measures, such as the establishment of a Non-Tariff Barriers (NTB) monitoring mechanism, where more than 90% of reported NTBs have been resolved via an online reporting platform.

Intra-African Trade Agreements and Regulation (0.85)

The high score reflects EAC's strong commitment to aligning with continental trade frameworks, including the AfCFTA. Member states have ratified key agreements and undertaken efforts to harmonize customs procedures and trade legislation, facilitating greater integration at both regional and continental levels. The operationalization of One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) at key trade corridors-such as Malaba, Busia, and Namanga-has greatly reduced clearance times and enhanced customs efficiency. Intra-Regional Trade Facilitation (0.61) With a moderate score, this sub-dimension indicates that while trade facilitation programs exist, bottlenecks persist. These include border delays, infrastructure deficiencies, and inconsistent application of trade policies, which affect the fluidity and efficiency of cross-border trade. EAC has also made strides in harmonizing trade standards, adopting over 1,500 regional standards to improve product quality, safety, and regional conformity assessment. Lastly, EAC has actively engaged in international trade frameworks, participating in EPA negotiations with the EU and implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) protocols, including submission of tariff offers and service commitments, thus aligning regional trade with continental and global markets. Despite notable progress in market integration, EAC continues to face several trade-related challenges. Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) such as import/export licensing restrictions, roadblocks, and administrative delays persist, undermining trade efficiency.

Dimension: Business Development Industry and Minerals

Competition Policy (0.79) EAC has made considerable progress in establishing a regional competition framework. The East African Competition Authority plays a central role, although more consistent enforcement at national levels and capacity building are required to ensure fair market conditions. The uneven implementation of Common Market provisions across Partner States, due to differing levels of legal harmonization and political commitment, has created disparities in market access. Infrastructure deficits, particularly in transport and logistics, continue to hinder trade flows, especially for landlocked countries. Moreover, limited private sector participation, including MSMEs and informal traders, is constrained by high compliance costs and restricted access to finance. Lastly, while One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) have improved clearance processes, inconsistencies in customs procedures and ICT systems still cause delays and revenue losses.

Quality Infrastructure and Consumer Protection (0.63)

This mid-range score suggests that while some regional standards exist, quality control systems and consumer protection mechanisms are still under development. There is a need for harmonized technical regulations and stronger institutional enforcement across member states.

Investment Policies and Agreements (0.51)

The score points to fragmented investment environments across the region. Although several bilateral and regional agreements exist, their implementation remains uneven, limiting investor confidence and the development of a unified investment space.

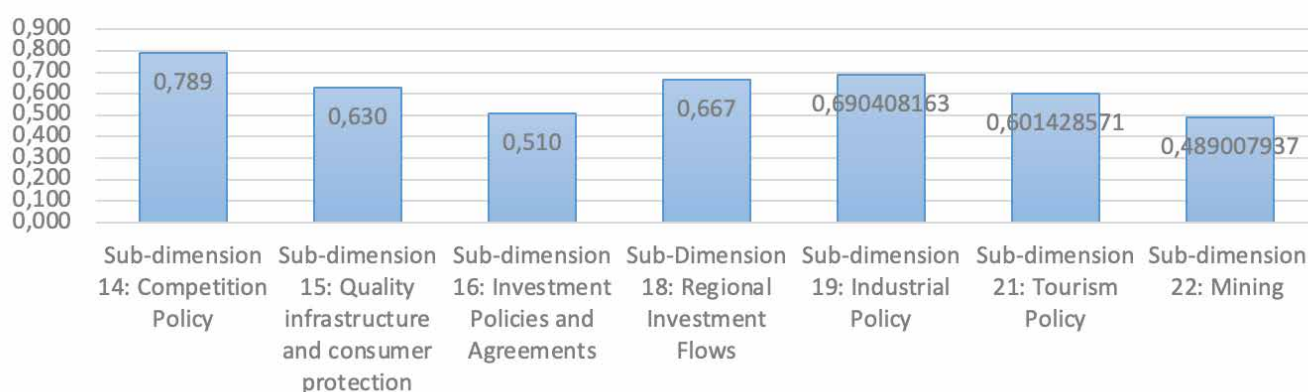
Regional Investment Flows (0.67)

This sub-dimension shows growing intra-regional investment, particularly among the bloc's more advanced economies. Nonetheless, disparities in legal frameworks, fiscal incentives, and infrastructure continue to restrict balanced flows across all EAC countries.

Industrial Policy (0.69)

Industrial integration is progressing, with joint initiatives to develop value chains and promote regional manufacturing. However, inconsistent policy implementation and limited support for SMEs in some countries hinder broader regional industrial development. EAC has made significant

EAC SCORES IN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIMENSION



strides in investment promotion by developing EAC Investment Guide and establishing investment promotion agencies across all Partner States. The adoption of EAC Investment Policy and Strategy (2022-2032) marks a major step toward harmonizing investment-related legal frameworks, improving the business environment, and encouraging cross-border investments within the region. Tourism Policy (0.60) While EAC has adopted a single tourist visa and joint promotional strategies, actual coordination among tourism authorities remains limited. The disparity in infrastructure and security perceptions also affects the region's unified branding as a tourist destination. The tourism sector has also benefited from a regional marketing strategy, joint promotion in global fairs, and increased mobility through EAC e-passport, all of which strengthen the region's appeal as a unified tourist destination. In the mining and extractives sector, EAC has introduced a regional mining policy framework that promotes legal harmonization, responsible resource extraction, and mineral certification systems like the Great Lakes Certification Mechanism to improve traceability and sustainability. Mining (0.49) The relatively low score reflects weak coordination in the exploitation and regulation of mineral resources. Fragmented legal frameworks, varying taxation regimes, and limited value addition at the regional level remain key obstacles to sectoral integration.

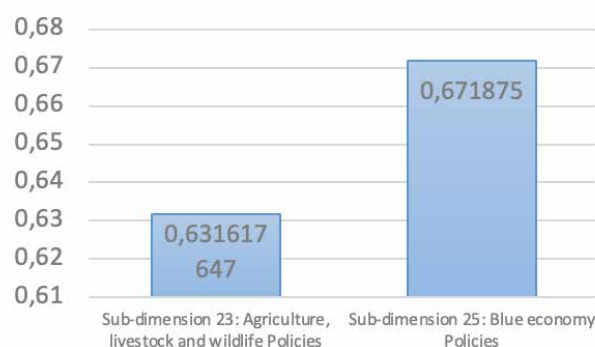
Dimension VI: Agriculture, Livestock, And Fisheries (0.63)

EAC has made substantial progress in developing a cohesive regional framework for agricultural transformation. EAC Agriculture and Rural Development Policy (2006) provides an overarching strategy to guide agricultural planning and harmonize sector priorities across Partner States. Complementing this, EAC Food and Nutrition Security Strategy (2018-2022) has directed efforts toward improving nutrition and food security, particularly in

response to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and recurrent droughts, by strengthening emergency food supply chains and regional coordination. In the livestock sector, EAC has achieved progress through harmonized animal health policies and protocols, including disease control for Foot and Mouth Disease and Rift Valley Fever, and veterinary certification systems for cross-border livestock movement. These efforts have significantly improved disease surveillance and trade in livestock products across the region. Similarly, in fisheries, the adoption of EAC Fisheries and Aquaculture Strategy (2015-2020) and the operationalization of the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization (LVFO) have enhanced the sustainable management of shared water bodies. These initiatives promote research, ecosystem monitoring, and responsible exploitation of fisheries resources.

To promote long-term sustainability, EAC has integrated climate-smart agriculture into its regional development agenda. EAC Climate Change Policy (2011) and related frameworks support sustainable land management, water-efficient irrigation systems, and the use of drought-resilient agricultural technologies.

EAC SCORES IN AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND WILDLIFE POLICIES



Dimension Macroeconomic Integration and Statistics

EAC Monetary Union Protocol, signed in 2013, outlines a phased roadmap towards the establishment of a single currency. It provides the legal and institutional framework for achieving macroeconomic convergence, establishing common institutions, and harmonizing monetary and fiscal policies. The protocol sets clear criteria for inflation, fiscal deficits, and debt-to-GDP ratios that Partner States are expected to meet as part of their commitment to a unified monetary area. To support this transition, EAC Secretariat has been actively monitoring macroeconomic convergence across Partner States. Regular peer reviews and convergence reports assess each country’s progress in meeting the agreed criteria. These reports promote transparency, accountability, and collective learning, enabling countries to address structural imbalances and adopt more disciplined fiscal and monetary policies in line with regional targets.

The establishment of the East African Monetary Institute (EAMI) in 2023 marks a major milestone in advancing monetary integration. As the precursor to the planned East African Central Bank, the EAMI is tasked with supporting the harmonization of monetary and fiscal frameworks and developing a regional payment and settlement system. This institutional development reflects EAC ’s growing capacity to operationalize commitments under the Monetary Union Protocol.

In the area of statistics, EAC has made notable progress through the implementation of EAC Statistics Development Strategy (2020-2030). This strategy has led to harmonized statistical methodologies, the conduct of joint surveys and censuses, and the development of a unified EAC Statistics Portal. Partner States’ national statistics offices have benefited from technical assistance from regional and international partners, improving data

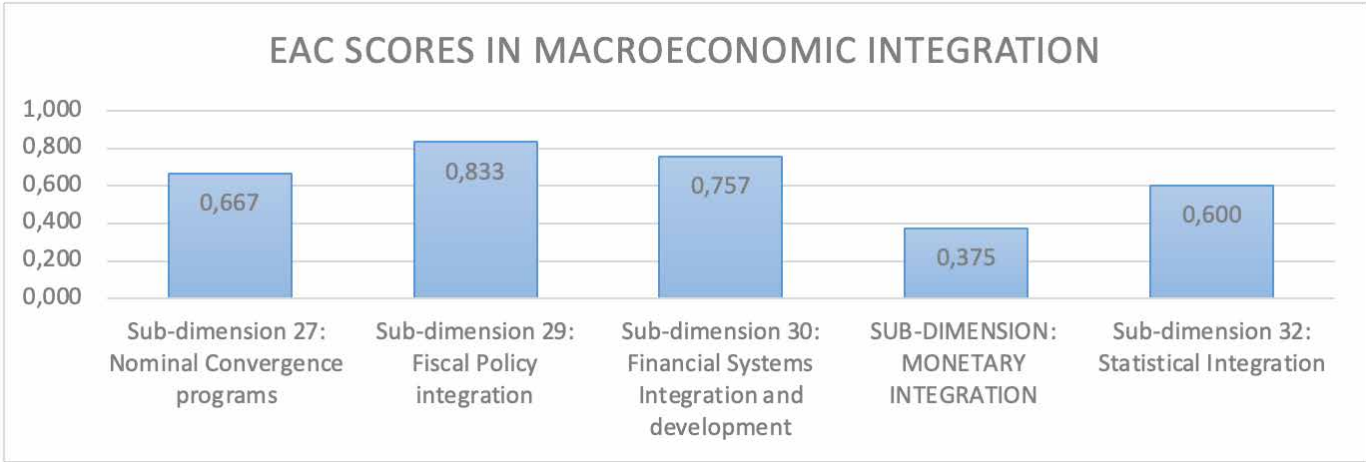
reliability, comparability, and accessibility to inform evidence-based policymaking.

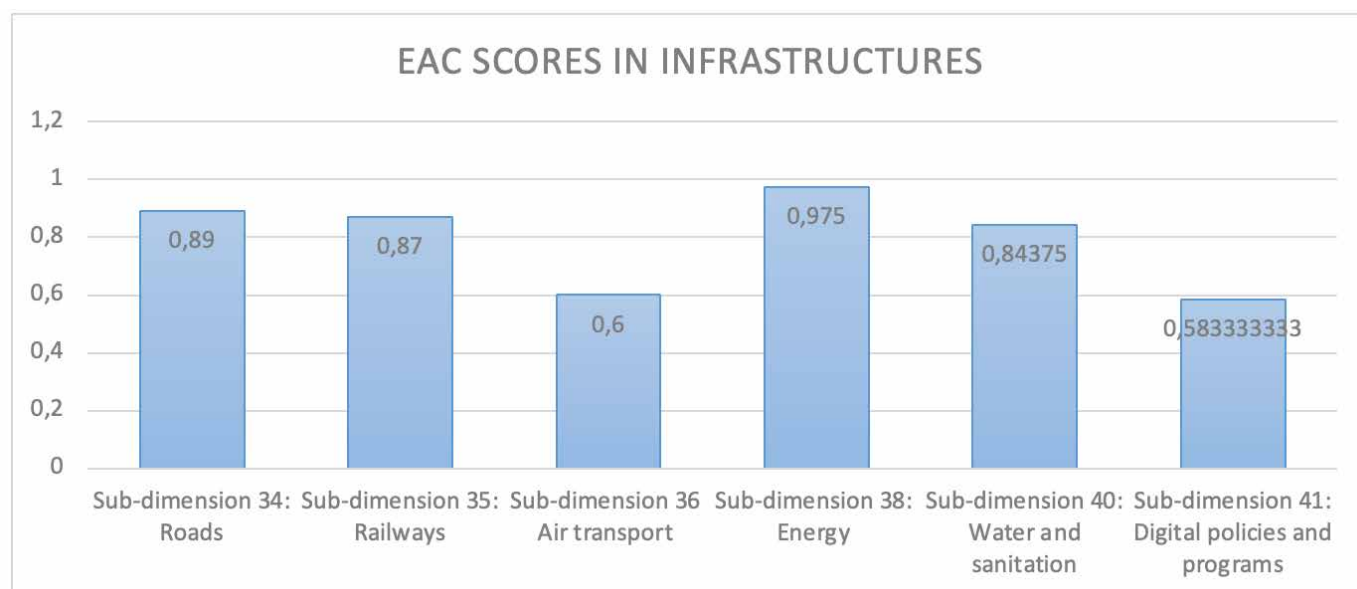
The implementation of EAC Monetary Union faces several challenges that slow its progress. Key among these is the divergence in economic structures across Partner States, including disparities in development levels and fiscal capacities, which hinder the uniform application of macroeconomic policies. While convergence programs are in place, not all countries consistently meet the agreed thresholds for inflation, fiscal deficits, and debt ratios. Additionally, limited independence and underfunding of national statistical systems compromise the quality and timeliness of economic data critical for informed decision-making. Institutional delays have further impeded progress, with key bodies such as EAC Statistics Bureau and the East African Surveillance, Compliance and Enforcement Commission yet to be operationalized. Compounding these challenges are external shocks-such as the COVID-19 pandemic and global commodity crises-which have placed pressure on national budgets, disrupted macroeconomic stability, and complicated efforts to meet convergence targets.

Infrastructure (Transport, Energy, ICT)

Infrastructure development is a key enabler of regional integration, economic competitiveness, and social transformation within EAC.

EAC has made significant progress in regional transport integration through the development of the Northern and Central Corridors, which connect key seaports like Mombasa and Dar es Salaam to landlocked Partner States, including Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These multi-modal corridors incorporate road, railway, and inland waterway infrastructure. The operationalization of over 15 One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) has streamlined customs procedures, reduced clearance times, and improved





trade efficiency. Additionally, the enforcement of EAC Vehicle Load Control Act (2016) has harmonized axle load limits, helping to reduce road damage and transportation costs across the region.

In the energy sector, EAC Partner States have enhanced cross-border electricity trade through their participation in the Eastern Africa Power Pool (EAPP). Key interconnectivity projects, such as the Kenya-Uganda and Tanzania-Zambia transmission lines, have facilitated power exchange and improved energy reliability. Joint initiatives are underway to boost renewable energy capacity, particularly in hydropower, geothermal, and solar energy. EAC Regional Energy Master Plan provides a coordinated framework to guide investment in energy generation, transmission, and distribution across the bloc, promoting energy security and sustainability.

EAC has also recorded notable achievements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) development. The One Area Network (OAN), currently implemented in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and South Sudan, has significantly lowered mobile roaming charges, improving regional communication. EAC Digital Agenda 2028 outlines a strategic approach to harmonizing ICT policies, promoting digital trade, enhancing cybersecurity, and expanding e-governance. Further progress has been made in interconnecting national fibre optic networks, which is key to building a unified regional broadband infrastructure that supports the digital economy.

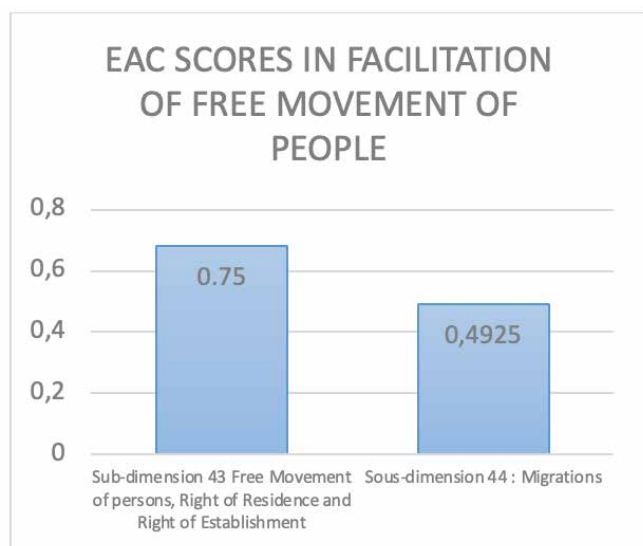
EAC faces several constraints in infrastructure development despite notable progress. Major challenges include financing gaps, as many large-scale transport, energy, and ICT projects require substantial capital that exceeds the current availability of concessional funding, especially amid rising

public debt levels. Cross-border initiatives are also frequently delayed due to procurement bottlenecks, land acquisition disputes, and inconsistent political commitment among Partner States. Moreover, disparities in technical standards and regulatory frameworks undermine the interoperability of regional infrastructure and deter private investment.

In the energy sector, rural electrification and access to clean energy remain uneven, limiting inclusive economic participation. Similarly, while ICT advancements have been made, high internet and broadband costs, alongside limited rural coverage, continue to restrict digital inclusion and regional connectivity.

Dimension: Facilitation of Movement and Migration (0.62)

EAC has made notable progress in facilitating the free movement of people across the region through implementation of EAC Common Market Protocol. This includes Partner States' commitment to gradually eliminate restrictions on movement and labor. As a result, citizens from most EAC countries can now travel visa-free within the region for up to 90 days, enhancing regional integration and mobility. A major milestone in this regard was the introduction of the regional EAC electronic passport in 2018. Adopted by six Partner States-Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi, and South Sudan-the e-passport has significantly streamlined immigration processes and modernized travel across the region. Additionally, the establishment of One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) has facilitated faster and more secure clearance for travelers, transporters, and goods, reducing waiting times and strengthening border management cooperation.



EAC has also taken steps to support labor mobility and social protection. Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) for professionals in fields such as accountancy, engineering, and architecture enable the movement of skilled workers across national borders. Furthermore, regional frameworks such as EAC Labor Migration Policy and the Social Protection Policy (2018) aim to harmonize labor standards, safeguard workers' rights, and enable the portability of social security benefits, contributing to a more integrated and inclusive regional labor market.

Social Integration (0.49)

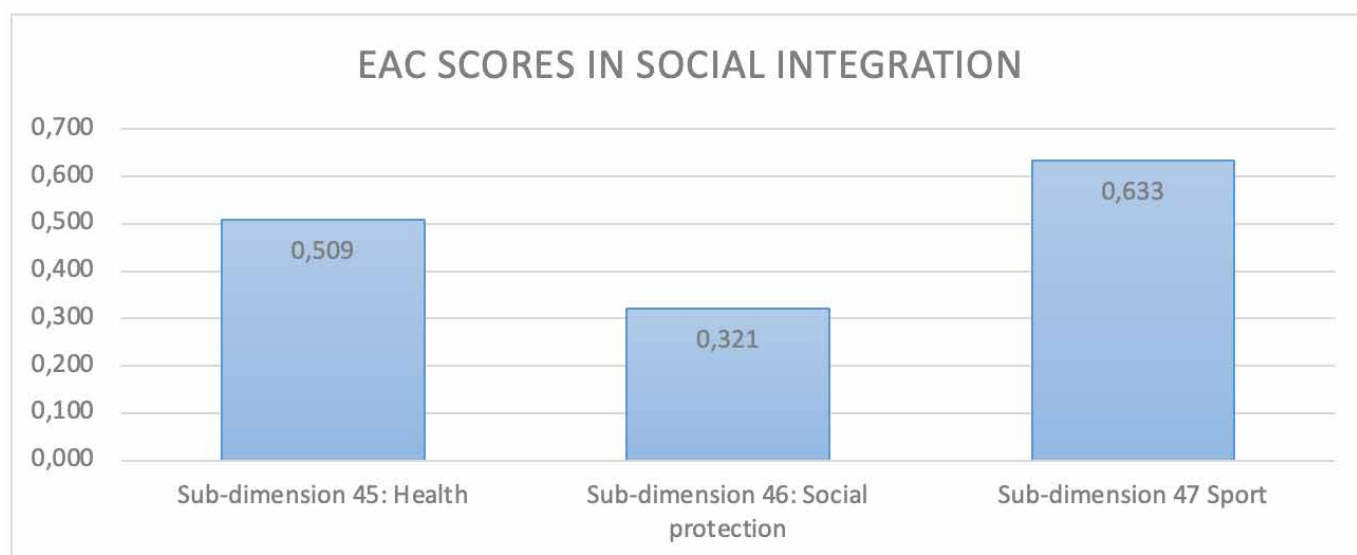
EAC has made considerable progress in advancing regional health and social protection through comprehensive policies and strategic initiatives. EAC Regional Health Policy (2018) provides a unified framework for health systems strengthening, disease prevention, and coordinated responses to public health threats. Building on this, EAC Health Sector Strategic Plan (2020-2025) prioritizes key areas

such as reproductive health, immunization, and the advancement of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). On the social protection front, EAC Social Protection Policy (2018) provides a framework for inclusive and coordinated responses to poverty, old-age risks, child welfare, and the vulnerabilities faced by migrant workers and informal sector populations, reinforcing the region's commitment to equitable development.

Dimension: Education, and Knowledge Development (0.65)

EAC has made substantial progress in promoting gender equality and youth empowerment through the development of regional policies and strategic initiatives. EAC Gender Policy (2018) serves as a comprehensive framework for advancing women's empowerment across multiple sectors, including health, education, economic participation, and leadership. Complementing this is EAC Youth Policy (2013), which addresses youth-specific challenges such as unemployment, exclusion, and limited access to financial services, while also fostering innovation and civic engagement. The adoption of the Gender Equality and Development Bill (2017) provides Partner States with a model law to guide the creation of gender-responsive legal and institutional frameworks.

Notable achievements also include improvements in women's representation in political and decision-making roles within EAC institutions and Partner States, including the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA). Youth empowerment has been actively promoted through platforms such as EAC Youth Ambassadors and Youth Leadership Summits, which encourage young people's involvement in regional integration and leadership development. Furthermore, EAC has developed regional strategies to combat gender-based violence (GBV), resulting in national action plans and legal reforms across



Partner States aimed at protecting women's rights and promoting gender justice. In Education EAC has made significant strides in advancing regional integration in education through key frameworks and collaborative initiatives. Since its operationalization in 2017, EAC Common Higher Education Area (CHEA) has enhanced academic mobility by enabling mutual recognition of qualifications and facilitating credit transfers and exchanges of students and academic staff. Similarly, the adoption of the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE) in 2015 has standardized educational qualifications and strengthened regional comparability and equivalence. The Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) continues to spearhead efforts in curriculum harmonization, regional accreditation, and institutional quality assurance, laying the groundwork for a cohesive and high-quality higher education system across Partner States. In addition to higher education reforms, EAC has focused on strengthening teacher education and vocational training. EAC Teacher Education and Training Framework (2022) has supported regional efforts to improve pedagogical standards and facilitate teacher mobility. Significant attention has also been given to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), with reforms promoting competency-based approaches and the recognition of prior learning to enhance youth employability. Moreover, collaboration among regional universities and research institutions has fostered joint research and innovation, particularly in STEM fields, thereby contributing to knowledge generation and regional development. Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) EAC has made substantial progress in advancing regional education integration. The establishment of EAC Common Higher Education Area (CHEA) in 2017 has enabled

the mutual recognition of academic qualifications, promoted credit transfers, and facilitated the mobility of students and academic staff across Partner States. The East African Qualifications Framework supports this for Higher Education (EAQFHE), adopted in 2015, which provides a standardized framework for recognizing and comparing educational credentials across the region.

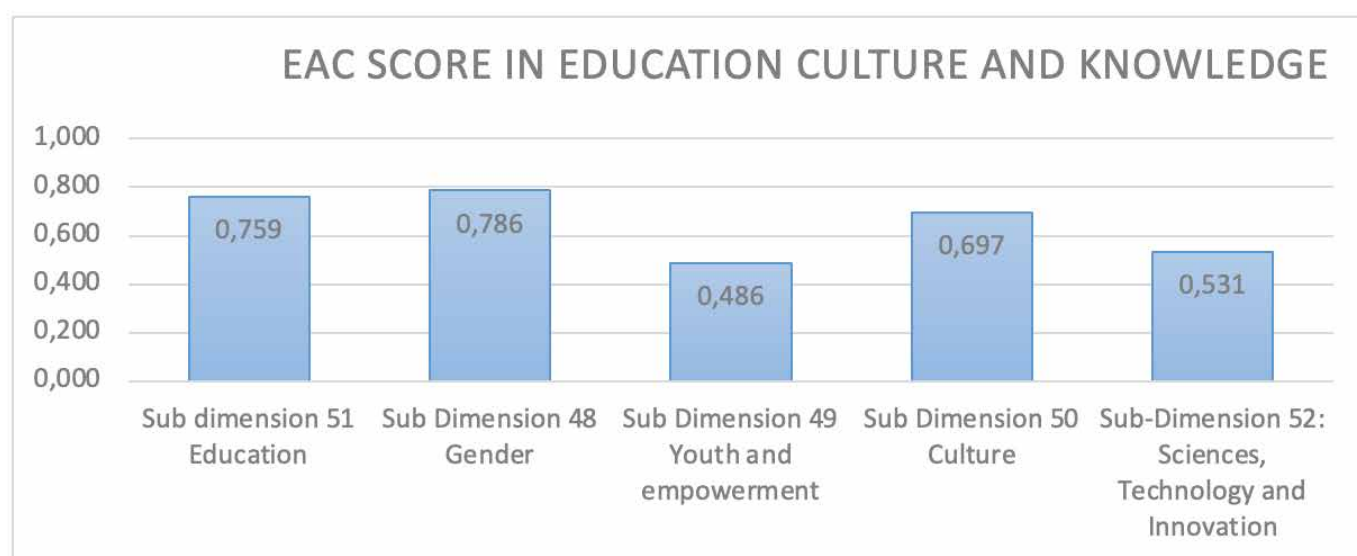
RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding the Political Pillar, EAC need to:

- ✓ **Strengthen institutional efficiency** by fully operationalizing key organs such as the East African Court of Justice and East African Legislative Assembly, and ensure regular financial contributions from all Partner States.
- ✓ **Harmonize governance standards across member states** by accelerating the ratification and enforcement of the Protocol on Good Governance and strengthening the rule of law through consistent implementation of court decisions.

In order to enhance the Economic Pillar EAC should:

- ✓ **Reduce Non-Tariff Barriers** by improving enforcement mechanisms and harmonizing trade policies to ensure full implementation of the Common Market Protocol.
- ✓ **Advance the implementation of the EAC Monetary Union** by strengthening macroeconomic convergence mechanisms and accelerating the operationalization of the East African Monetary Institute.



Concerning the Infrastructure Pillar, the Community should:

- **Increase investment in cross-border transport corridors** and ensure timely implementation of key regional infrastructure projects through better coordination and risk mitigation frameworks.
- **Accelerate digital integration** by harmonizing ICT regulations, expanding broadband infrastructure, and improving cybersecurity frameworks under the EAC Digital Agenda.

For the development of Human and Social Pillar, EAC need to:

- **Fully implement Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs)** in education and health sectors to enhance the mobility of professionals and improve service delivery.
- **Promote inclusive health systems and universal health coverage by harmonizing health** financing models and strengthening cross-border disease surveillance mechanisms.

ECCAS

1. Presentation of ECCAS

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), established on 18 October 1983, is one of the eight Regional Economic Communities recognised by the African Union. It comprises eleven member countries: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe and Chad. It covers an area of more than 6.6 million km² and has an estimated population of more than 218 million in 2022. Its headquarters are in Libreville, Gabon.

Succeeding the Customs Union of Central African States (UDEAC), ECCAS was created to strengthen regional cooperation and promote harmonious economic and social development. Recognised as a pillar of integration for the Central African region within the framework of the FTAA zone, ECCAS initiated a major institutional reform in 2019, marked by the transformation of its General Secretariat into a Commission. It shares a high degree of convergence on certain aspects of regional integration with the Economic and Monetary Commission for Central Africa (CEMAC), to which six of its members belong.

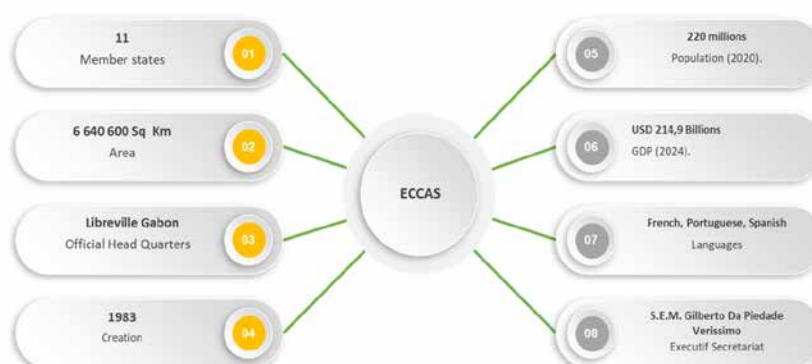
ECCAS institutional framework

Since the adoption of its revised Treaty in December 2019 in Libreville, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) has undertaken a major institutional reform aimed at modernising its architecture and strengthening its effectiveness. This reform has resulted in the following structure:

- **The ECCAS Commission**, with an executive headed by a Commission President assisted by seven Commissioners with specialised portfolios (common market, peace and security, infrastructure, human integration, environment, agriculture, etc.).
- **The Conference of Heads of State and Government** is the organisation's supreme body, responsible for defining the major political guidelines, although its presidency is currently vacant.
- The **Council of Ministers** ensures the technical monitoring of regional policies and the control of the executive. The system is completed by
 - **Specialised technical committees**,
 - The **Permanent Representatives Committee** (COREP), and
 - **Specific peace and security mechanisms** (COPAX, FOMAC, MARAC)

Vision and flagship projects

ECCAS's vision is based on the ambition to build a stable, prosperous and integrated Central Africa, founded on solidarity, sustainable development and peace. Through the 2019 institutional reform and its 2021-2025 strategic plan, ECCAS is asserting its central role in implementing regional integration, in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Its priority objectives cover five strategic areas:



- economic and commercial integration,
- peace and security,
- physical and digital integration,
- human and social development, and
- preserving natural resources and combating climate change.

Key projects include

- implementation of the Central African Common Market,
- the regional trade and transport facilitation programme, and
- the energy interconnection project including the Central African Electricity Exchange System (CEAC).

ECCAS is also piloting the FOMAC (Central African Multinational Force), which is part of the COPAX regional security mechanism, and is developing initiatives under the Action Plan on the Free Movement of Persons. Other structuring projects concern:

- the digitisation of public services,
- promoting sustainable agriculture, and
- the integration of regional statistical systems, supported in particular by the AfDB and the ECA.

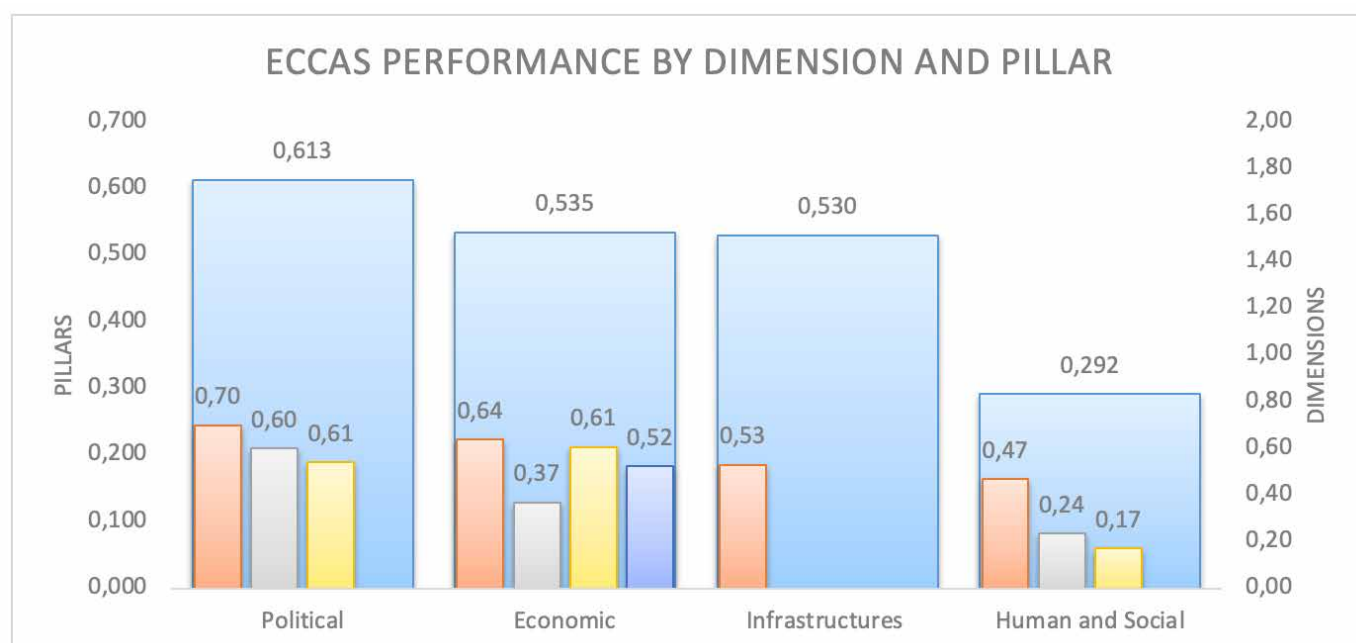
Despite some delays, these projects reflect a growing desire to pool efforts and promote inclusive and integrated growth in the sub-region.

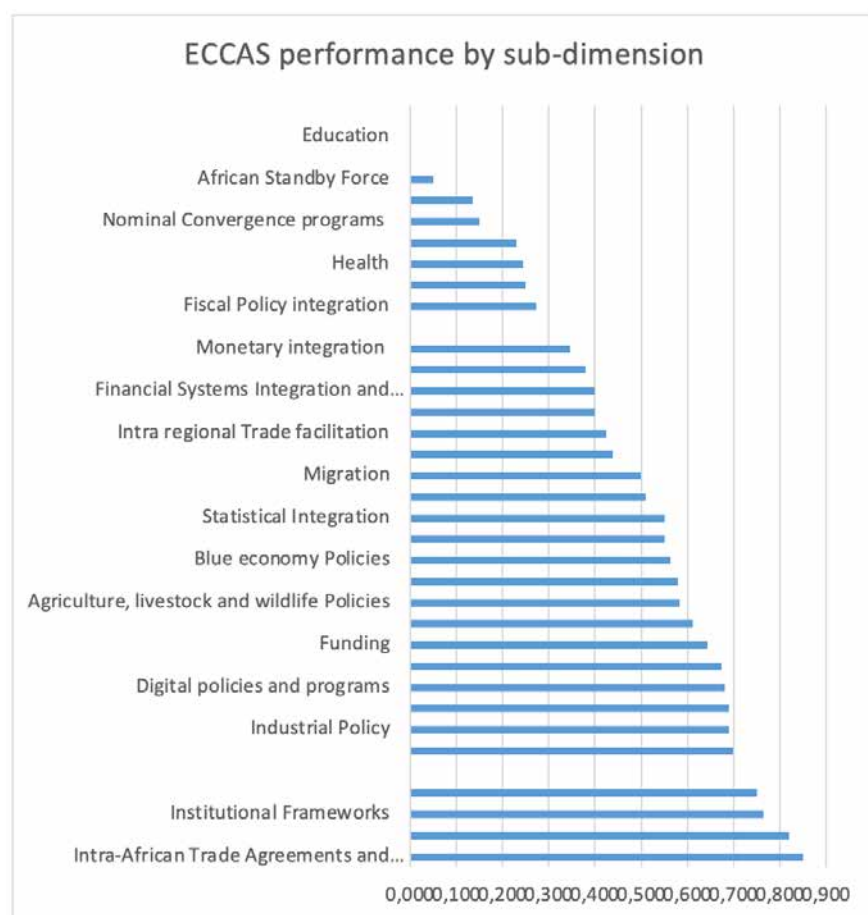
3. ECCAS evaluation based on ASRII

Global overview

The political pillar remains one of ECCAS's strong points, with an average score of 0.638, reflecting relative institutional stability, improved governance and notable progress in regional security. The 'institutional integration' dimension, with a score of 0.703, reflects the consolidation of the structures put in place following the 2020 reform, with active bodies, a revised treaty and a functional Commission. Governance and democracy, although marked by tensions in several countries, achieved a respectable score of 0.601, reflecting a desire to improve the normative framework, even if democratic practices remain heterogeneous. Finally, peace and security recorded a performance of **0.61**, driven by the efforts of COPAX, MARAC and joint initiatives with the African Union to resolve conflicts in sensitive areas such as the DRC and CAR. Despite the challenges, this pillar illustrates a relatively coherent basis for regional governance.

With an average score of 0.535, the economic pillar shows an intermediate performance, revealing visible but still fragile progress in structuring an integrated economic area. Market integration stands out positively, with a score of 0.638, showing efforts to strengthen trade liberalisation and harmonise trade rules, particularly in connection with the implementation of the FTAA. The development of the rural economy, with a score of 0.607, is also a strong





area, supported by regional agricultural initiatives and sustainable development policies. On the other hand, results remain average for macroeconomic integration (0.52) and low for industry and mining (0.369), due to the low level of coordination of budgetary and fiscal policies, the absence of common convergence mechanisms, and the still marginal importance of regional industrial value chains. The ECCAS economy is making progress, but without a fully-fledged common market dynamic.

Infrastructure is a well-identified priority for ECCAS, with a consolidated score of 0.536. This result can be explained by the implementation of several interconnection projects in the road, energy and digital sectors, often in partnership with donors such as the ADB, the European Union and NEPAD under the PIDA programme. Strategic corridors are being rehabilitated, and regional hydroelectric projects have been supported. However, the challenges of maintenance, local financing and project governance are still holding back large-scale impact. This pillar confirms the central place given to infrastructure in the vision of the region's physical integration.

The human and social pillar remains the weak link in regional integration, with an overall score of 0.292, revealing that integration is still marginal when it comes to people-related issues. Free movement

and migration, with a score of 0.469, reflects some legal progress (protocols signed) but uneven application, particularly in terms of the right of establishment and mutual recognition of identity documents. The social dimension, at 0.237, suffers from a lack of operational programmes and mechanisms for harmonising regional social policies. Finally, the human development, education and science dimension is at its lowest with a score of 0.17, a sign of the almost total absence of structured action in this area. The absence of regional universities, joint research centres or coordinated education policies explains this underperformance, despite the priorities set out in Agenda 2063.

Overview by sub-dimension

Generally speaking, the overview by sub-dimension shows that ECCAS performs best in the sub-dimension relating to intra-African trade agreements and tariff harmonisation, with a high score reflecting good adherence to the FTAA instruments and shared tariff commitments.

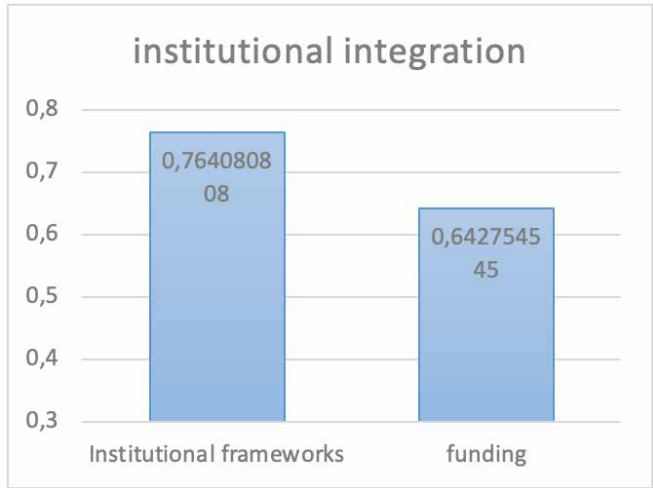
Next comes the quality of institutional frameworks, reflecting the positive effects of the 2020 reform, which clarified the roles and improved the functionality of Community bodies. Other notable strengths include industrial, digital and agricultural policies, which, although there is room for improvement, reflect efforts to structure them at regional level (particularly around agri-food processing and digital technology), supported by the implementation of sectoral programmes and the development of regional strategies. On the other hand, the weaknesses are marked in the sub-dimensions of education, health and the African Standby Force, where the scores are extremely low. Regional education remains virtually non-existent in terms of harmonisation of curricula, recognition of diplomas and academic mobility, which has a serious impact on the human pillar. In terms of health, the absence of shared mechanisms for responding to health crises and coordinating national policies limits regional resilience. Common security also suffers from a glaring operational deficit, as shown by the very low score of the standby force, underlining the delay in making collective defence arrangements operational. Other sub-dimensions of macroeconomic convergence (monetary and fiscal integration, nominal convergence) also remain weak, due to the lack of shared mechanisms, the heterogeneity of monetary policies (with only some

states in the CEMAC), and the absence of a regional macroeconomic supervision body.

Institutional integration dimension

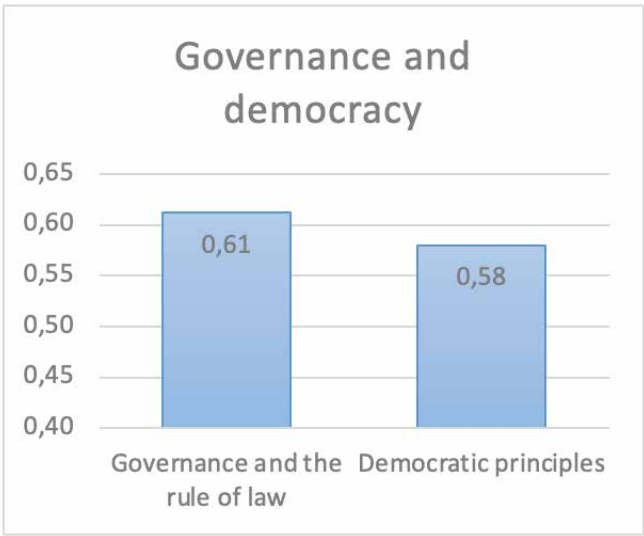
ECCAS demonstrates strong performance in institutional integration, as evidenced by its high score of 0.703, supported by a result of 0.764 for institutional frameworks. This reflects the operational status of its key governance bodies — the Conference of Heads of State and Government, the Council of Ministers, and the Commission — as well as the effective implementation of the revised 2020 Treaty, which clarified mandates and enhanced institutional efficiency.

A dedicated regional parliament for ECCAS has not yet been established. However, a regional parliamentary body exists among some member states within CEMAC, which brings together six countries (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon). The creation of a regional parliament for ECCAS as a whole is envisioned in the Community’s founding texts. The process is currently at the signature stage, and all 11 member states have endorsed the principle of establishing the Parliament — a strong political signal toward deeper institutional integration. Nonetheless, effective implementation remains essential to enhance regional representation and governance. Similarly, ECCAS does not yet have an operational regional Court of Justice. Such a judicial institution does, however, exist within CEMAC for some member countries. The creation of a regional court for ECCAS is also foreseen in its foundational instruments. The initiative is currently at the signature stage, and the 11 member countries have adopted the principle of its establishment. This demonstrates a clear regional will to strengthen legal mechanisms and institutional integration, though full operationalisation is still pending.



Nevertheless, the score of 0.64 for the institutional financing sub-dimension highlights a persistent weakness: strong dependence on external funding. The mobilisation of domestic resources remains inconsistent, with member state contributions often falling short of budgetary forecasts. This imbalance between strong institutional frameworks and limited financial autonomy poses a strategic challenge for the long-term sustainability of regional integration. Compliance with statutory contributions to the ECCAS budget varies across member states. Countries such as Gabon, Chad, the Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic have demonstrated relatively good performance thanks to automatic deductions under the Community Integration Levy (CCI). In contrast, others face frequent delays or irregular payments, often linked to national budgetary constraints or the absence of automated collection mechanisms. This situation undermines ECCAS’s capacity to plan and implement its programmes effectively, underscoring the need for harmonised financing mechanisms and enhanced budgetary discipline within the Community.

Dimension: Governance and democracy



Democratic governance is a relatively well-rated dimension within the overall political pillar, with a global score of 0.601. This performance is based on progress in the structuring of regional legal frameworks related to governance and the rule of law, and more importantly, on the growing recognition of democratic principles embedded in the political commitments of member states. However, national disparities, non-consensual political transitions, and gaps in the implementation of binding democratic monitoring mechanisms reduce the actual impact of this dimension. ECCAS has established a regional mechanism for monitoring democratic governance and elections, which applies to all its member states. This mechanism enables, among other

things, the deployment of electoral observation missions and the formulation of recommendations to strengthen democratic processes. All ECCAS countries participate in this framework and have implemented the recommendations to varying degrees. This reflects a collective commitment to promoting political stability, electoral transparency, and good governance in the region. Nevertheless, further efforts are needed to harmonise practices and ensure the effective and sustained implementation of reforms. The absence of a legally binding protocol on democracy and the limited regional involvement in electoral processes constrain the enforceability and reach of democratic norms. Thus, the current score reflects more the existence of a normative and institutional foundation than a fully operational community-wide system for democratic governance.

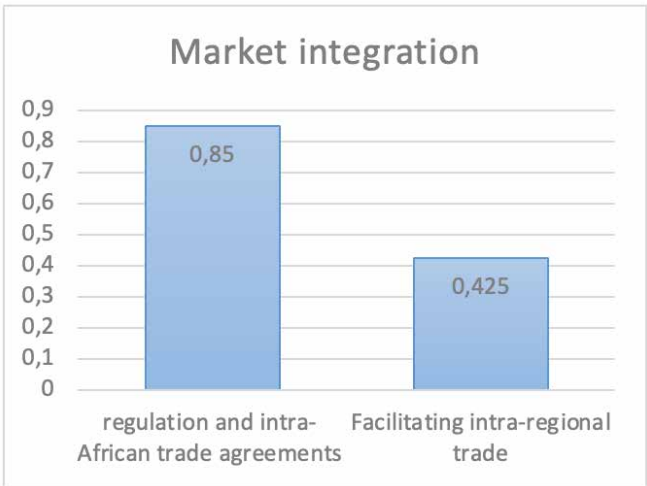
Dimension: Peace and security



With a score of 0.610, ECCAS demonstrates a moderate capacity to manage peace and security challenges, despite often unstable national contexts. This performance is driven by the existence and gradual operationalisation of regional tools such as COPAX and MARAC, which form the backbone of the Central African Peace and Security Architecture.

ECCAS has played a notable role in crisis prevention and mediation, particularly in Chad and the Central African Republic, through diplomatic missions and early warning actions. A regional conflict prevention mechanism is in place, involving all member states and relying on early warning, mediation, and preventive diplomacy tools. Five coordination meetings were held in 2023 and 2024, focused on assessing risks and proposing mediation measures. However, operational deployments remain limited, and the standby force is poorly structured, reflecting a low sub-score. Persistent reliance on external funding undermines rapid response capacity. Overall, while regional political commitment and coordination are improving, strengthening the mechanism requires better financing, stronger political support, and improved institutional responsiveness.

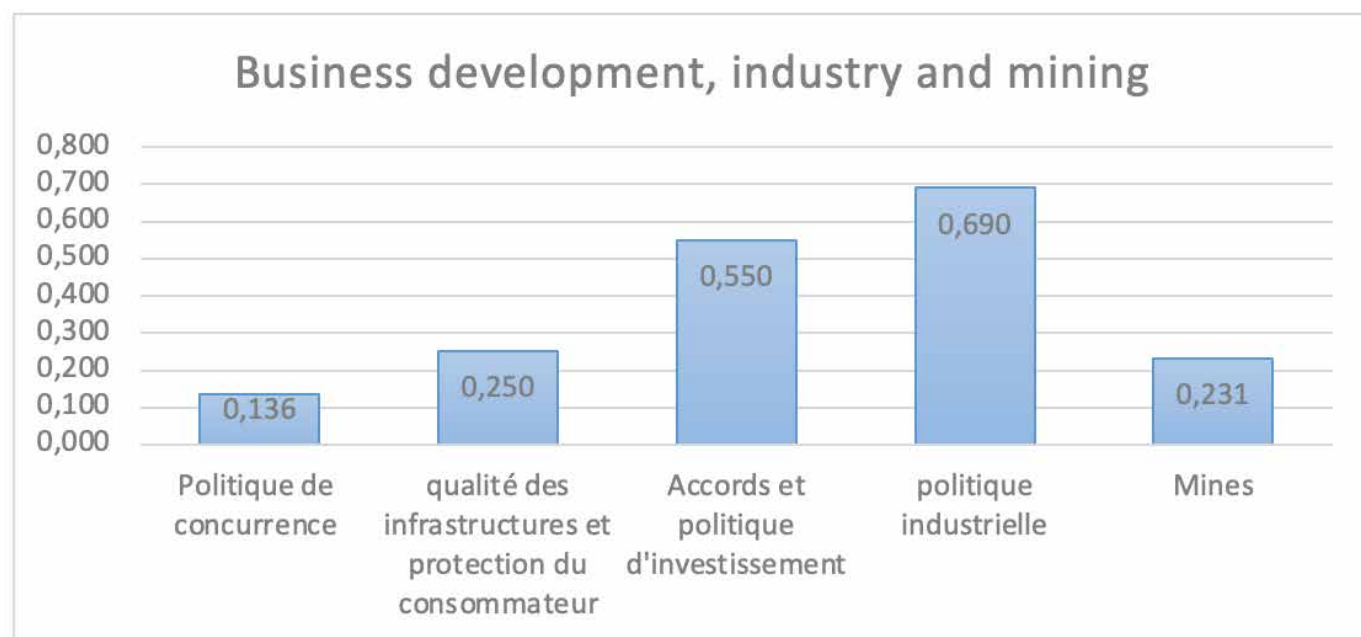
Market integration dimension



ECCAS records strong performance in market integration, with an overall score of 0.6375, largely driven by high adherence to intra-African trade agreements and tariff harmonisation, which received a notable score of 0.85. This reflects the region’s commitment to implementing AfCFTA instruments and aligning regulatory frameworks. However, the score for intra-regional trade facilitation is lower (0.425), revealing persistent challenges such as non-tariff barriers, complex customs procedures, and weak border logistics coordination. As a result, the region’s trade potential remains underexploited due to regulatory and technical bottlenecks. ECCAS has officially established a regional free trade area, with all 11 member states having signed the agreement. Yet, implementation levels vary. The six CEMAC countries (Cameroon, Chad, Congo, CAR, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea) are more advanced, benefiting from a customs union, while others like Angola, Burundi, and São Tomé and Príncipe are progressing more slowly. In short, the framework exists, but implementation remains uneven across the region.

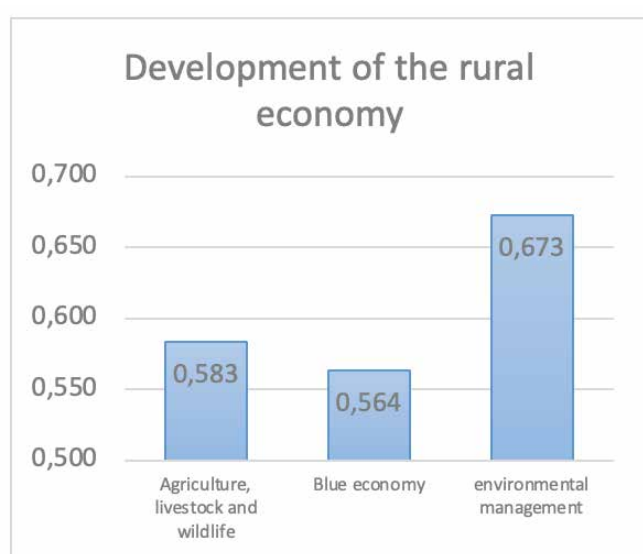
Business development, industry and mining

This dimension shows a moderate performance with an average score of 0.369, revealing real but uneven efforts to structure productive sectors. Industrial policy is the strong point of this dimension, with a high score of 0.69, reflecting the adoption of regional strategic frameworks for manufacturing transformation and the promotion of value chains. Investment policies (0.55) are also developing, although their operational implementation remains partial. On the other hand, there are clear weaknesses in competition policies (0.136) and in quality infrastructure and consumer protection (0.25), illustrating the absence of solid regional mechanisms to regulate markets and guarantee common standards. The mining sector, rated at 0.231, suffers from a lack of regional integration despite the shared resource potential.



Dimension: Development of the rural economy

This dimension performed satisfactorily, with an average score of 0.607, reflecting the growing attention paid to the agricultural, maritime and environmental sectors. Agricultural, livestock and wildlife management policies scored 0.583, and blue economy policies rose to 0.564, reflecting the interest of some coastal states in the sustainable development of marine resources. The highest score in this dimension is for the integration of environmental management (0.673), supported by commitments to regional climate strategies and cross-border natural resource management initiatives. This dynamic confirms that economic integration is not limited to formal sectors, but extends to areas linked to sustainability and rural resilience.

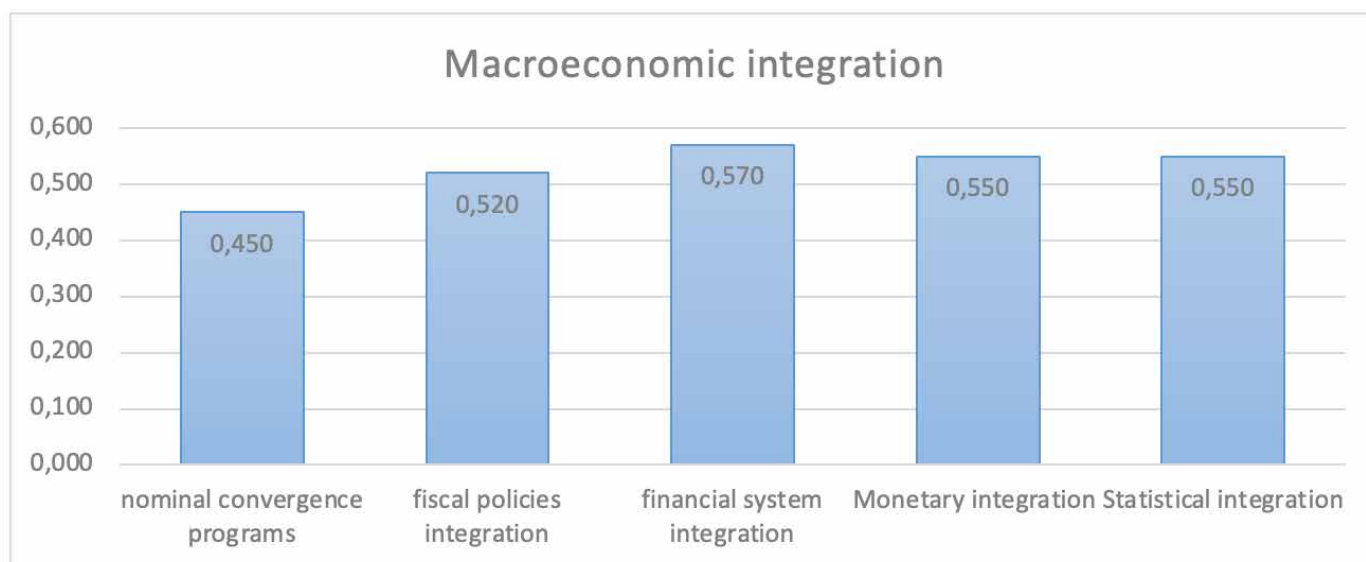


Dimension: Macroeconomic integration

With an average score of 0.528, progress has been slow in nominal convergence (0.45) and fiscal policy integration (0.52), due to the heterogeneity of macroeconomic frameworks between member countries and the absence of regional surveillance mechanisms. Monetary integration, rated at 0.55, is limited to the CEMAC area, with no real extension to all member states. The statistical dimension, however, scores 0.55, reflecting efforts to harmonise national statistical frameworks, facilitate the collection of comparable data and support regional planning. Overall, this dimension shows a significant lag, which is holding back the deepening of an integrated and coherent economic area.

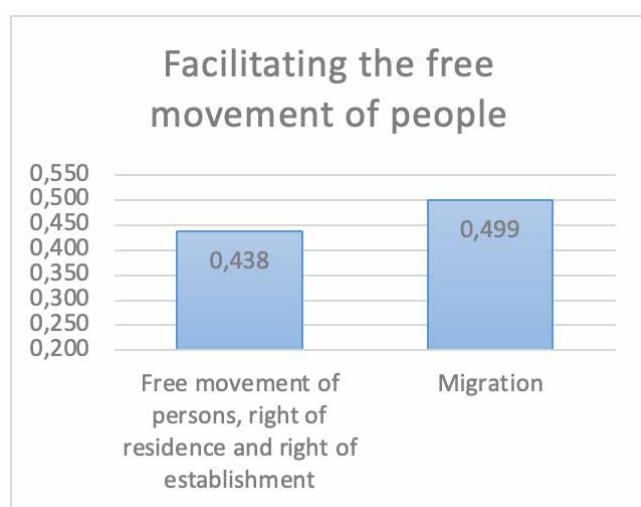
Dimension: Infrastructure

The infrastructure pillar recorded an average score of 0.536, reflecting tangible but still insufficiently consolidated efforts in the area of physical interconnection. This score is driven by sustained regional initiatives in the transport, energy, telecommunications and water and sanitation sectors, supported by partners such as the AfDB and the World Bank. Several projects of regional interest are currently being implemented, including road corridors (Brazzaville-Pointe-Noire, Bangui-Douala), electricity interconnections (Republic of Congo-Gabon) and regional digital platforms. However, coordination often remains vertical (State-technical partner), with little strong regional steering. The lack of common funding mechanisms, inadequate maintenance of existing infrastructure, and the absence of a harmonised regulatory framework all contribute to limiting the overall impact. This average score therefore reflects a regional strategy



of integration through infrastructure that is making progress, but which would benefit from being consolidated through more integrated governance, particularly within the framework of the PIDA (Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa).

Dimension: Facilitating free movement

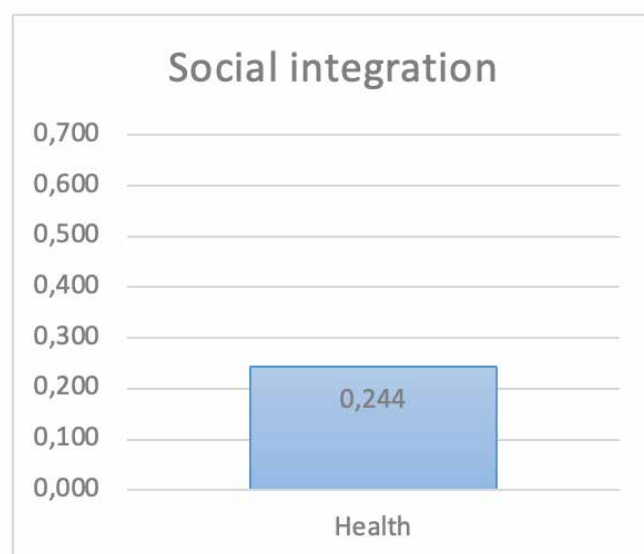


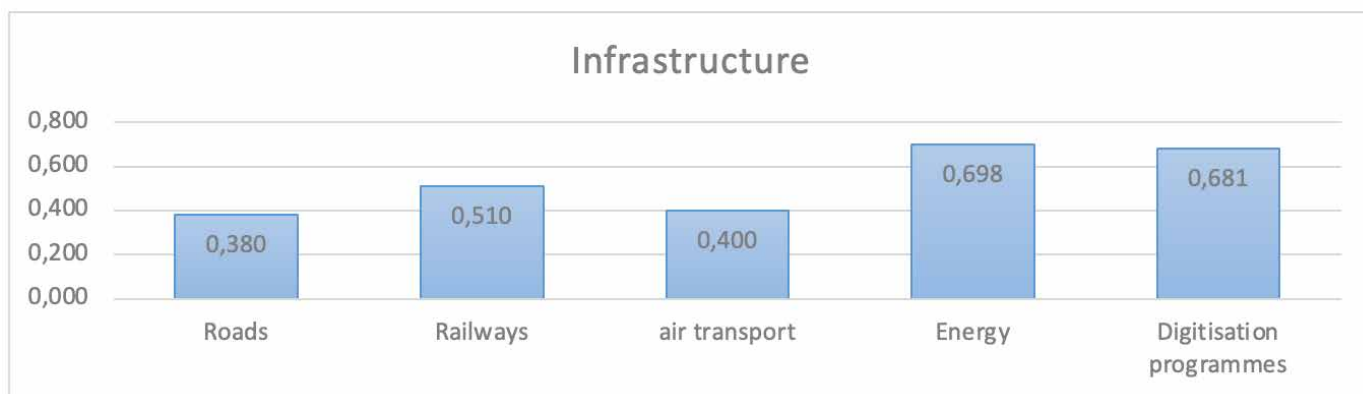
ECCAS's performance in terms of the free movement of people and migration management is moderate, with a score of 0.469, illustrating a legal framework that is partially in place but still not very effective in practice. Several protocols have been adopted on freedom of movement, residence and establishment, but their ratification and, above all, their application are very uneven from one Member State to another. Border controls remain rigid, intra-regional visas are still widely required, and there are few concrete measures to facilitate the mobility of workers, students or entrepreneurs. In terms of migration, ECCAS does not yet have a regional observatory

or a harmonised policy on cross-border flows, although some bilateral cooperation does exist. This intermediate score therefore reflects a gap between legal commitments and the reality on the ground, which hampers human fluidity in the region.

Social integration dimension

The social dimension is one of the least integrated areas in ECCAS, with a score of 0.237. This result reflects the lack of harmonisation of social policies (health, social protection, gender equality, youth) at regional level. Although certain texts and strategies exist, such as the gender roadmap or commitments relating to youth, their implementation remains marginal, due to the lack of dedicated monitoring, coordination or funding mechanisms. Transnational projects on health or social inclusion are very rare, and the pooling of experience remains embryonic. In addition, the participation of social players (trade unions, associations, NGOs) in regional processes

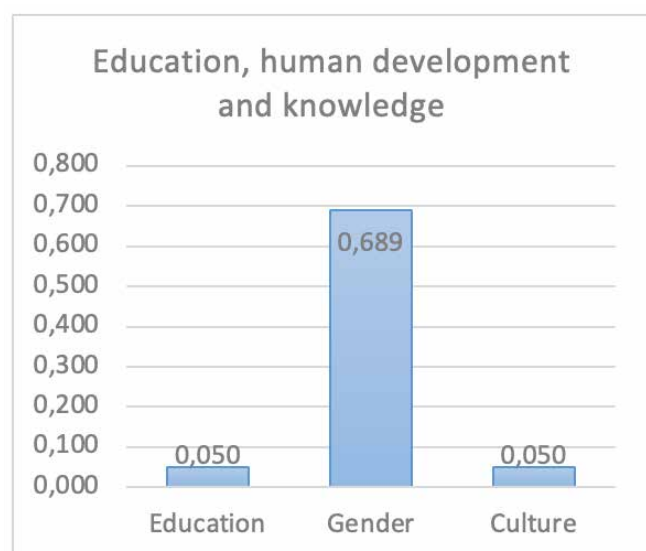




is very limited. This structural weakness hinders the construction of an integrated community based on shared rights, common social safety nets and supportive social policies.

Dimension: Education, human development and knowledge

The score of 0.17 in this dimension reflects a weak regional structure in the fields of education, science, technology and innovation within ECCAS. There is still no integrated regional education programme, nor a common system for the recognition of diplomas or academic mobility. Nor does the region have a community university or joint research centres, which is hampering the construction of a regional knowledge area. However, some Member States have undertaken national reforms in higher education and the digitisation of education, and bilateral partnerships are emerging, laying the potential foundations for future regional cooperation. In addition, a few isolated initiatives have been identified in the field of applied sciences and agricultural technologies, in connection with rural and climate priorities. Despite these weak signals, the lack of regional governance in this strategic area remains a cause for concern, especially as human, scientific and technological development is a fundamental



lever for economic transformation in Agenda 2063. This score therefore calls for a new political impetus, to build the foundations of a competent, innovative and connected regional human capital.

Recommendations

On the political front, it is important to consolidate the institutional foundations and strengthen governance. This could involve:

- ✓ **Operationalise the Community Court of Justice** and speed up the ratification of Community texts to guarantee the effectiveness of regional law and the resolution of disputes in accordance with common rules.
- ✓ **Strengthen regional mechanisms for democratic governance** by adopting a binding protocol on democracy and elections, and monitoring political transitions in accordance with AU standards.
- ✓ **Increasing the Commission's financial autonomy** by introducing a predictable and compulsory Community levy mechanism to reduce dependence on external donors.

On the economic front, ECCAS will need to accelerate the convergence of policies and productive development. To this end, it could:

- ✓ **Deepen the implementation of the FTAA** by harmonising tariff policies, removing non-tariff barriers and improving regional logistics via a trade facilitation platform.
- ✓ **Adopt a common industrial policy framework**, based on regional value chains (agri-food, mining, light manufacturing) and supported by incentives for cross-border investment.
- ✓ **Enhance rural and blue economy policies** by better integrating environmental and sustainability issues into sectoral development programmes.

For infrastructure development, the recommendation is to strengthen the coherence and governance of projects. This will require:

- ✓ **Set up a regional project monitoring unit** with a mandate for technical and financial coordination, and for mobilising resources from partners.
- ✓ **Harmonise technical and regulatory standards** in the fields of transport, energy and telecommunications, to facilitate regional interoperability.
- ✓ **Strengthen the maintenance of existing infrastructure** by developing regional maintenance mechanisms and sharing technical expertise.

Finally, with regard to the Human and Social Pillar, we need to relaunch the integration of people. The actions to be undertaken could be as follows:

- ✓ **Implement a regional programme for the free movement of people**, including an ECCAS regional visa, a common passport, and recognition of legal status (residence, establishment).
- ✓ **Harmonise regional social policies** (health, social protection, gender, youth) through binding directives, monitoring mechanisms and dedicated funding.
- ✓ **Create a regional higher education area**, with the establishment of a platform for the mutual recognition of diplomas, academic mobility and inter-university partnerships.

ECOWAS

General presentation

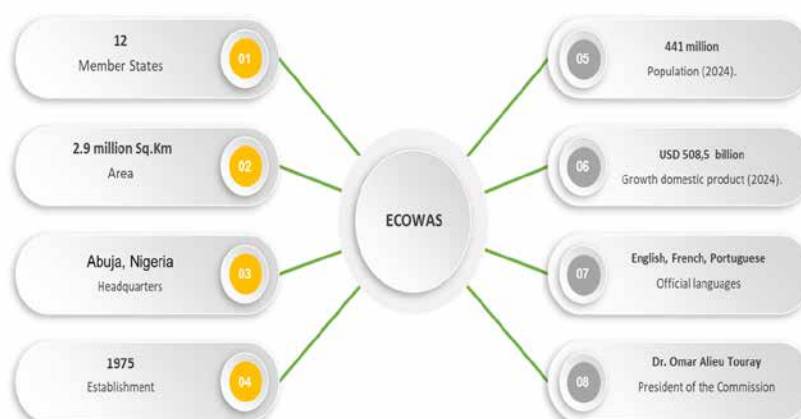
ECOWAS is a West African intergovernmental organisation created on 28 May 1975 by the Treaty of Lagos, with the mission of promoting regional economic integration. It brings together 15 West African countries (including 8 French-speaking, 5 English-speaking and 2 Portuguese-speaking states), with a combined population of around 400 million and an economic weight estimated at over 600 billion US dollars in cumulative GDP. ECOWAS has its headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria, and its official working languages are French, English and Portuguese. The founding objectives of the organisation include the creation of a West African common market

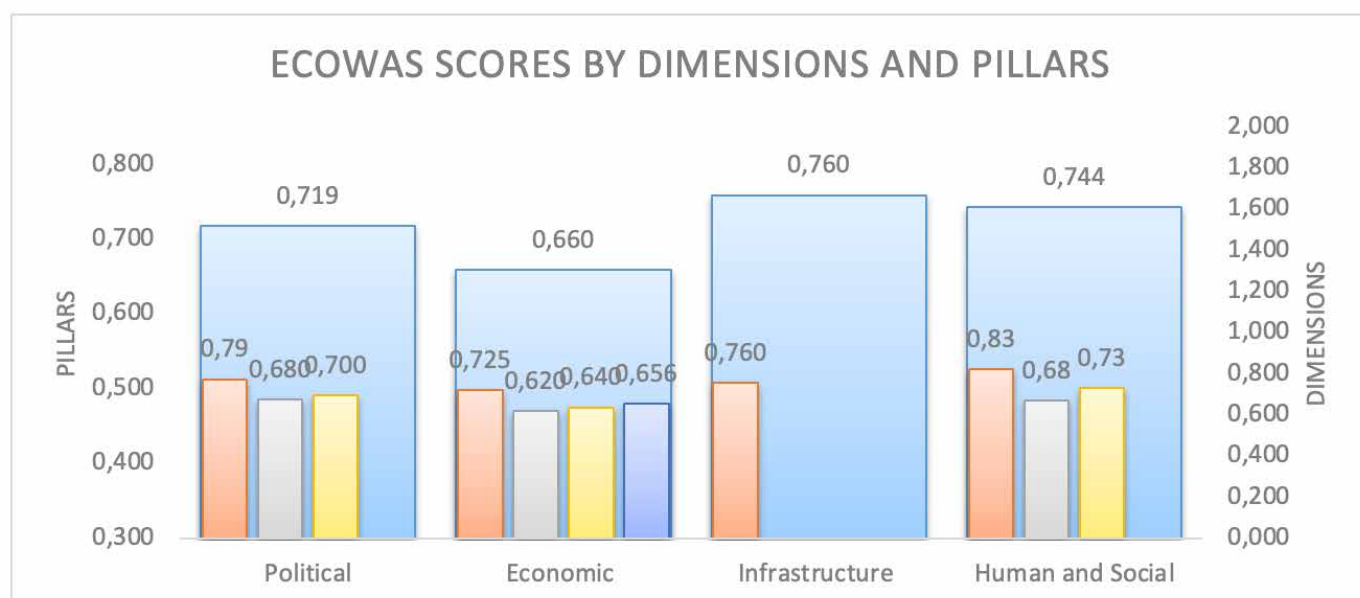
and the gradual establishment of an economic and monetary union, in order to stimulate development, cooperation and stability in the region.

Institutional framework

ECOWAS governance is organised around a number of key bodies.

- **The Conference of Heads of State and Government**, which periodically brings together the leaders of the member countries, is the supreme authority of ECOWAS and defines the organisation's strategic orientations. It delegates the implementation of its decisions to the Council of Ministers, made up of the sectoral ministers (Foreign Affairs, Economy, etc.) of each State, which prepares Community policies and ensures their implementation.
- **The ECOWAS Commission**, based in Abuja and headed by a President assisted by Commissioners, acts as the permanent executive body responsible for implementing decisions and managing integration programmes on a day-to-day basis.
- **The Community Parliament**, in legislative and legal terms, is a consultative body representing the populations of the Member States. Before the establishment of the Parliament, an **Interparliamentary Committee** of national parliamentarians played a transitional consultative role to accompany integration.
- **The Court of Justice**, which ensures compliance with Community law and rules on disputes involving Member States or citizens under regional texts.
- **A regional Chiefs of Staff Committee** and a regional intervention force (ECOMOG) to prevent and manage conflicts and maintain peace in its area of influence.





In addition, ECOWAS relies on various specialised agencies (health, agriculture, finance, infrastructure, etc.).

Current vision and strategic objectives

ECOWAS' current strategic vision is embodied in **Vision 2050**, which promotes an "ECOWAS of the people" - that is, a fully integrated, peaceful, borderless and prosperous West Africa, driven by strong institutions, good governance and inclusive sustainable development.

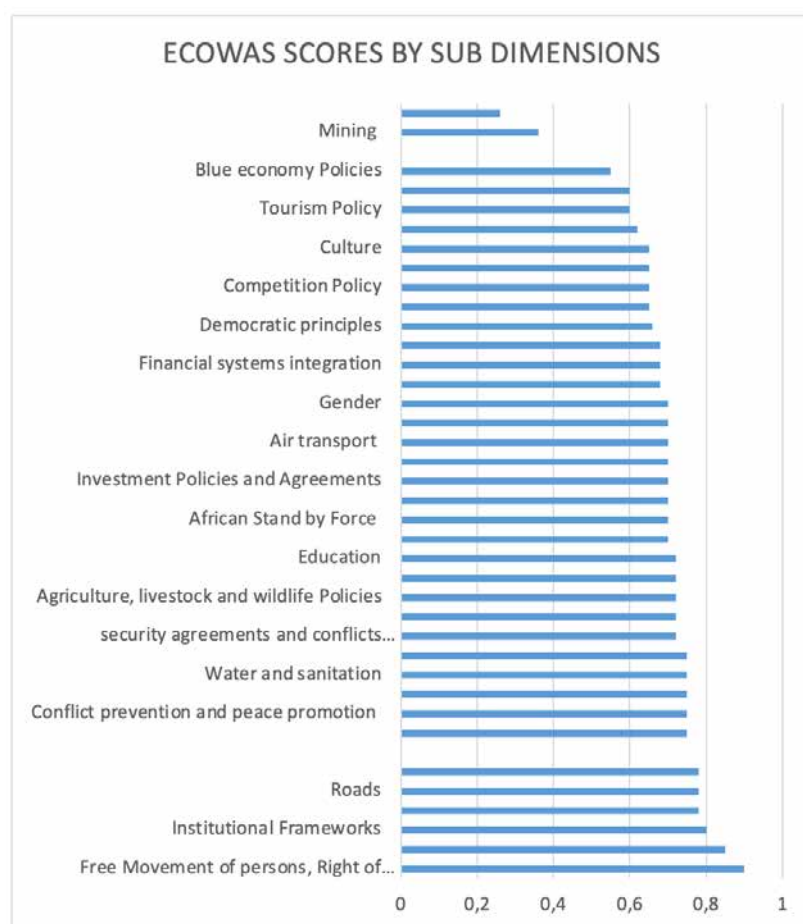
With this in mind, the organisation has set itself a number of priority objectives:

- deeper economic integration (completion of a regional common market and convergence towards a single currency),
- promoting the free movement of people and goods,
- strengthening regional peace and security (particularly in the face of terrorism and political crises),
- accelerating industrialisation, infrastructure development and economic transformation in the sub-region.

Several recent emblematic projects illustrate these ambitions, such as the relaunch of the West African single currency ("Eco") project, the construction of major transport corridors (e.g. the Dakar-Lagos motorway) and the interconnection of energy networks, the strengthening of the regional standby force for crisis management, and the introduction of a common biometric passport to facilitate the mobility of West African citizens.

2. Assessment of integration on the basis of ASRII

ECOWAS is one of the most integrated RECs in Africa, supported by a robust institutional architecture, an extensive normative base and concrete achievements in all the pillars of integration. The human and social pillar, which registers a fairly high score (0.74), reflects ECOWAS's remarkable efforts in the areas of free movement of people, public health, education, empowerment of young people and women, and culture. ECOWAS has harmonised education policies through the regional qualifications framework, supported academic and professional mobility, and implemented programmes to integrate young people into agriculture and entrepreneurship. In the health sector, the region has set up a regional epidemiological surveillance mechanism (WHAIS), coordinated the response to COVID-19, and supports resilient public health systems through WAPHNet. On the cultural front, pooling efforts to preserve heritage, promote creative industries and disseminate a common West African identity strengthens regional cohesion. ECOWAS is also a pioneer in the free movement of people, with the entry into force of the 1979 Protocol, the ECOWAS passport, the residence certificate and the abolition of visas for citizens of the area. To date, ECOWAS is the only African region where free movement is effectively implemented in practice, although challenges remain at the borders. The infrastructure pillar (0.76) reflects the region's ambitions in terms of connectivity. The adoption of a Regional Infrastructure Master Plan has made it possible to structure priority corridors, such as Dakar-Lagos and Abidjan-Ouagadougou-Niamey, and to strengthen rail, road and energy interconnections. The West African Power Pool (WAPP) facilitates electricity exchanges between states, while the SIGMAT customs interconnection programme is speeding up the digitisation of transit and customs



via ECOMOG. These tools have enabled regional mediation in several recent crises (Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso), reflecting a genuine desire for political stabilisation. One of the major limitations of ECOWAS to date is the withdrawal of three member states, which could ultimately reduce the integration efforts made in West Africa over the years.

Overview by sub-dimension

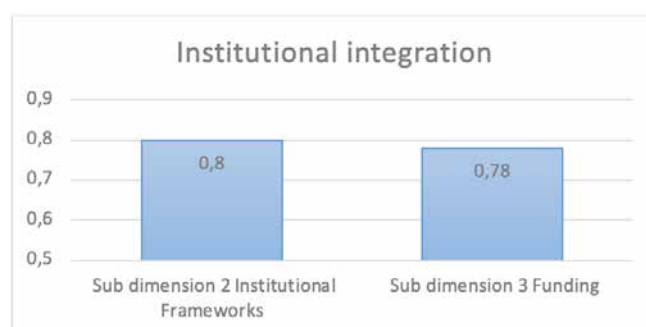
Dimension I: institutional integration

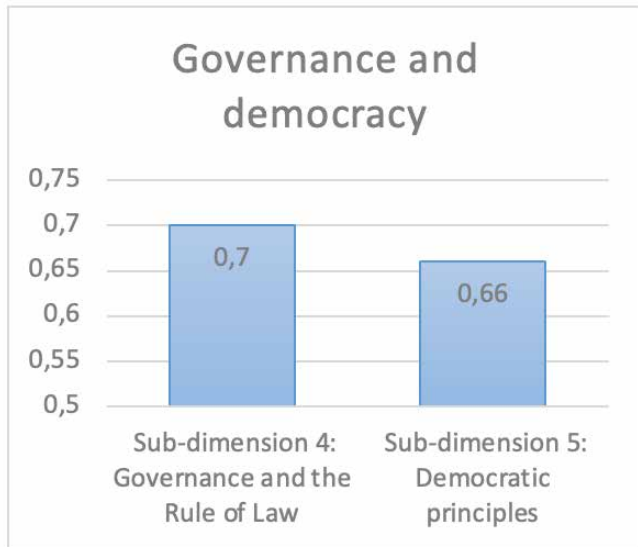
ECOWAS has a well-established legal and regulatory framework, with a body of Community law comprising protocols, additional acts, regulations and directives directly applicable in the Member States. The score of 0.75 for legislation reflects this density of standards, reinforced by the existence of founding texts on free movement, democracy and good governance, and economic integration. This legal base encourages the harmonisation of national policies, although effective transposition remains uneven across the EU. The high score of 0.80 for institutional structures reflects the maturity and operability of regional bodies. The ECOWAS Commission in Abuja

ensures the proper implementation of Community decisions and coordinates the specialised agencies. The ECOWAS Parliament, Court of Justice and Audit Chamber are fully operational. In terms of financing, the score of 0.78 is explained by the existence of a Community levy introduced in 2003, representing 0.5% of Member States' imports. However, there are still delays in payments from some Member States, which can slow down programme implementation. The institution is striving to strengthen budgetary discipline and accountability, notably through reforms to the multiannual financial programming cycle. The WAEMU, made up of 8 countries, is sufficiently advanced in terms of macroeconomic integration and has achieved a first level of convergence.

clearance procedures. Efforts are also being made in the digital field, with regional backbone projects and the gradual adoption of coordinated digital policies. On the economic front (0.67), ECOWAS has made substantial progress in consolidating the Customs Union, with a Common External Tariff (CET) and a Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) covering more than 2,700 companies and nearly 8,000 certified products. The organisation is also promoting regional industrialisation through the ECOWAS Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP), the pooling of tax policies, and common agri-food strategies. The monetary agenda remains a priority, with the relaunch of the single ECO currency, framed by a macroeconomic convergence pact to be revised in 2021.

The integration of financial systems is progressing thanks to cooperation between central banks, the connection of regional payment systems and support for financial inclusion in rural areas. Finally, the political pillar (0.72) is supported by fully functional community institutions: the ECOWAS Commission, the Community Parliament, the Court of Justice, and specialised agencies working in the fields of security, energy and agriculture. In terms of democratic governance, ECOWAS has systematic electoral observation missions, a conflict prevention framework (ECOWARN) and the capacity to intervene





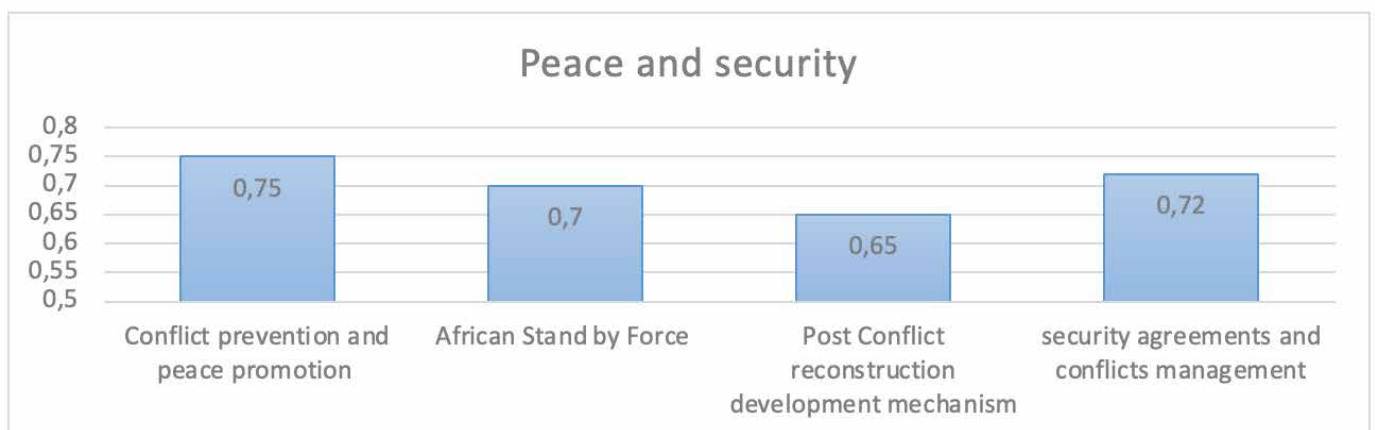
Governance and democracy

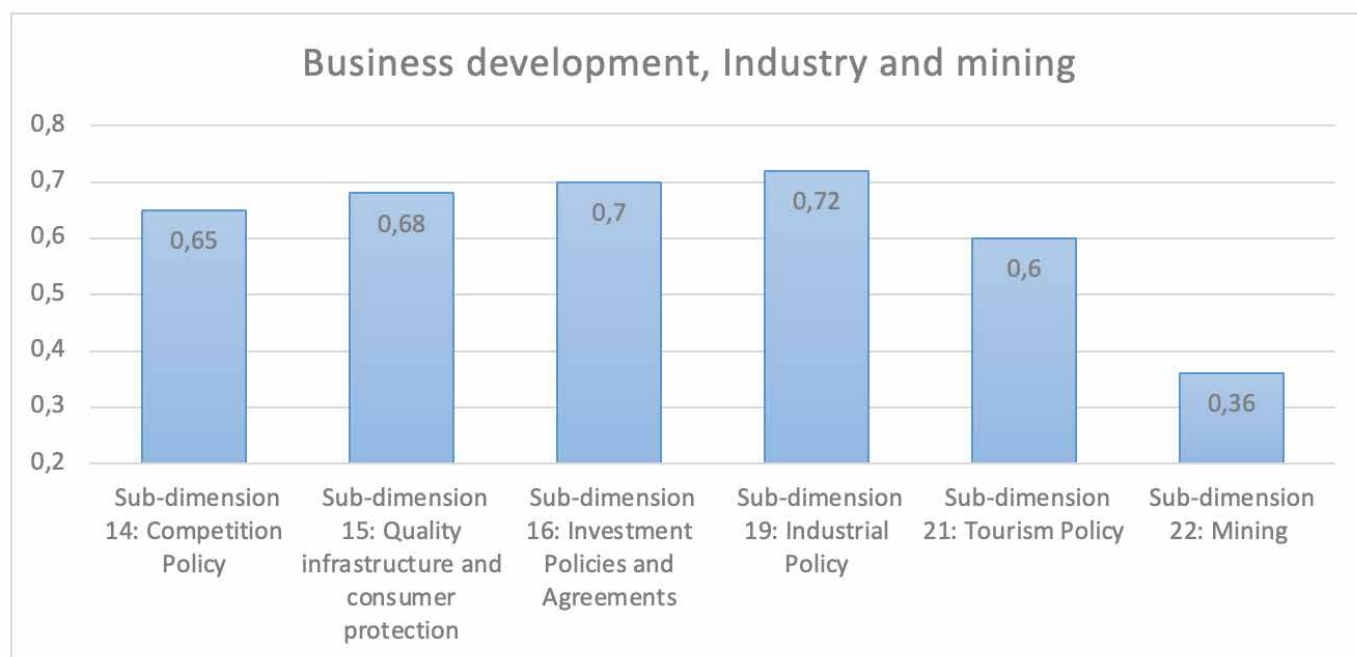
ECOWAS is recognised for its pioneering role in promoting democracy, the rule of law and good governance in Africa. The score of 0.70 assigned to the sub-dimension 'Governance and Rule of Law' reflects the existence of a robust legal framework, embodied in particular by the 2001 Additional Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, which prohibits any unconstitutional change of government and lays down guiding principles for electoral, judicial and administrative practices. ECOWAS also has an early warning mechanism (ECOWARN), a regional Court of Justice with jurisdiction over disputes between citizens and member states, including human rights issues, and a system for monitoring democratic commitments through electoral observation missions (EOMs). These legal and operational instruments justify a high score for regional governance, even if their application is sometimes limited in the context of recent political crises (Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso). With regard to democratic principles (score estimated at 0.66), ECOWAS has made significant progress in promoting the holding of regular, transparent and pluralist elections, deploying election observers

in all member states during major polls, and facilitating political mediation during transitions or post-election disputes. However, the persistence of military regimes or institutional instability in several countries (three suspensions since 2021) limits the full effectiveness of this democratic convergence. Nevertheless, ECOWAS remains a legitimate and proactive authority in advocating constitutional democracy, notably through the reaffirmation of its principles at extraordinary summits and the revision of the 2001 Protocol.

Peace and security dimension

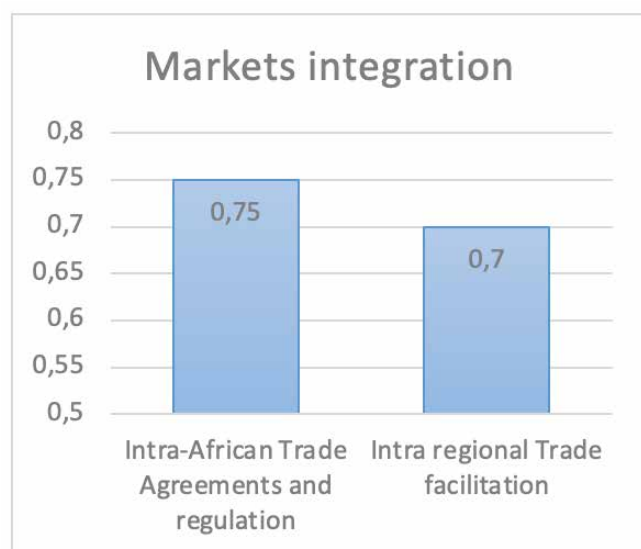
ECOWAS has one of the most comprehensive and responsive regional mechanisms for conflict management, collective security and peace promotion on the continent. The sub-dimension 'Conflict prevention and peace promotion' scores highly (0.75) thanks to the ECOWARN early warning mechanism, based on a network of national observation, information gathering and risk forecasting offices. ECOWAS has also institutionalised mediation missions, often led by former heads of state or representatives appointed by the Conference. The African Standby Force sub-dimension scored 0.70, reflecting the operational functionality of ECOMOG/ESF (ECOWAS Standby Force). This force has been deployed in numerous crises (Gambia 2017, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Liberia) and remains an essential tool for regional deterrence. Despite the challenges associated with funding, uneven logistical mobilisation, etc., it remains an essential regional deterrent. The sub-dimension's score on regional agreements and conflict management (0.72) is justified by the existence of bilateral and multilateral security cooperation agreements, regular meetings of defence and interior ministers, and joint programmes to combat terrorism, cross-border crime and arms trafficking. ECOWAS works actively with the G5 Sahel, the AU, the United Nations and Interpol in crisis zones, particularly in the Lake Chad Basin and Liptako-Gourma. Finally, the score of 0.65





for post-conflict reconstruction (PCRD) reflects efforts that are still unevenly distributed. While ECOWAS has developed DDR programmes, stabilisation funds and support for security sector reform, these initiatives remain ad hoc and dependent on the political context of each country.

digital customs interconnection, and the adoption of regional manuals of procedures for border posts. However, the persistence of non-tariff barriers and multiple border controls still prevents trade from flowing smoothly.



Market integration dimension

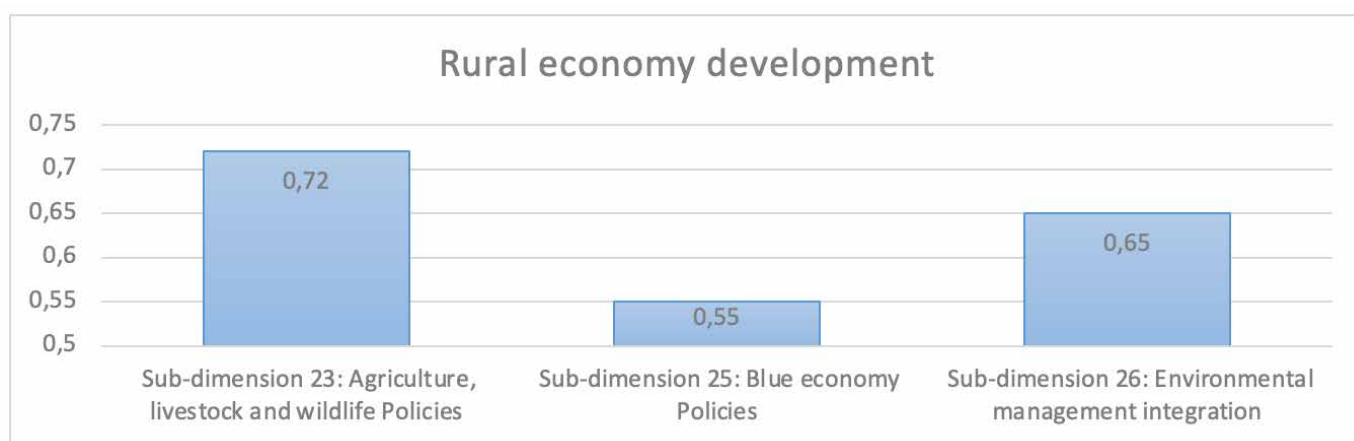
ECOWAS has made solid progress in market integration. The score of 0.75 in trade agreements reflects the adoption and implementation of the Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS), with more than 2,700 companies registered and nearly 8,000 products certified. This scheme guarantees exemption from customs duties for goods of EU origin, boosting intra-regional trade. The trade facilitation score of 0.70 is based on customs harmonisation via the Common External Tariff (CET) in force since 2015, the implementation of the SIGMAT system for

Business development, industry and mining

ECOWAS has a regional framework for harmonising investment and industrial policies, supported by the West Africa Competitiveness Programme (WACOMP). This programme supports agri-food and industrial value chains on a regional scale, justifying a score of 0.72 in industrial policy. Investment policy (0.70) is supported by the adoption of a Community Investment Code and a Framework for the Promotion of Public-Private Partnerships, although performance remains uneven across the region. In terms of quality and consumer protection (score: 0.68), ECOWAS has developed regional standards and created standardisation and accreditation bodies to strengthen the regulatory business environment. Competition policy (0.65) is based on the 2008 EU Competition Regulation, but its application remains uneven, notably due to the lack of an independent regional authority. Finally, tourism policy (0.60) is in the process of being structured, with a recent regional strategy, but the potential remains largely under-exploited due to security challenges and a lack of integrated regional marketing.

Development of the rural economy

The high score for agriculture and livestock (0.72) reflects the implementation of the ECOWAS Agricultural Programme (ECOWAP), which is the regional framework for investment in agriculture, food security and climate resilience. It supports the

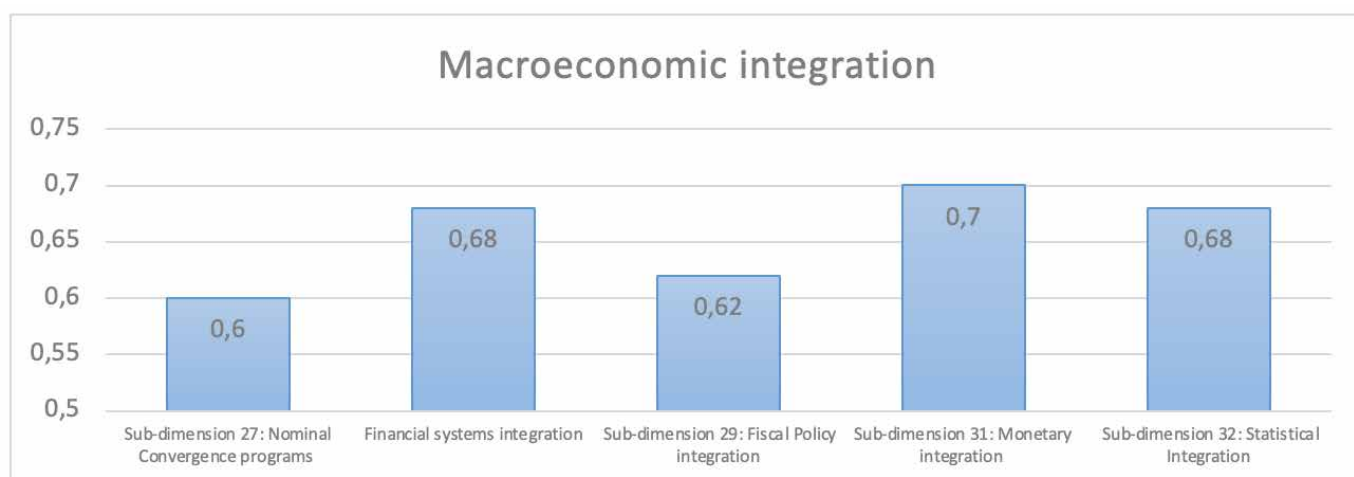


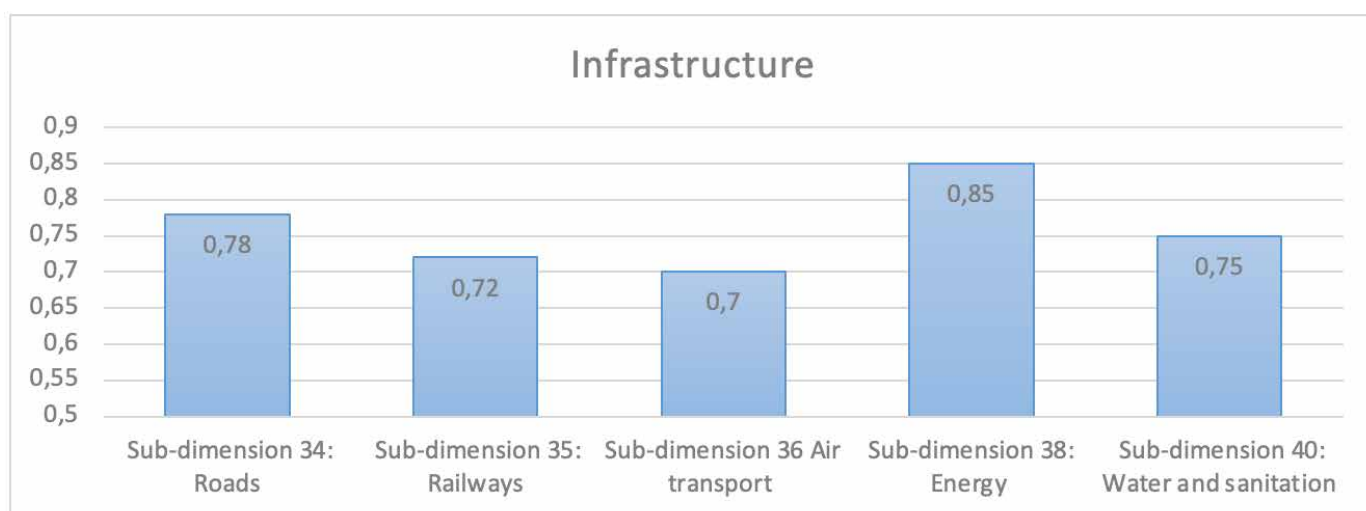
harmonisation of agricultural policies, agronomic research and the financing of structuring projects in agro-sylvo-pastoral value chains. The blue economy received a more moderate score (0.55). Although ECOWAS has adopted a regional strategy on fisheries and aquaculture, its implementation remains limited due to a lack of port infrastructure, a heterogeneous regulatory framework and still fragmented maritime governance. In terms of environmental management (0.65), ECOWAS has launched programmes to combat desertification and manage cross-border basins (such as the River Niger and the Volta Basin), and has adopted a regional strategy on climate change. However, the lack of a binding monitoring mechanism reduces the overall impact of these initiatives.

Macroeconomic integration dimension

ECOWAS is making varying degrees of progress on the macroeconomic front, driven largely by the consolidated achievements of the WAEMU, which is a fully integrated monetary zone comprising 8 of the 15 member states. The monetary integration score of 0.70 reflects the existence of a single currency (the CFA franc), managed by the BCEAO, and a unified

monetary policy in the zone. At ECOWAS level, work towards a single ECO currency is governed by a revised Convergence Pact, but implementation remains partial, justifying a score of 0.60 for nominal convergence. The integration of fiscal policies (0.62) is progressing thanks to the WAEMU, which has harmonised VAT, excise duties and customs rules in the French-speaking area, with standardised manuals and procedures. At ECOWAS level, efforts are underway to align these frameworks with those of English-speaking countries, notably via the CET and the SIGMAT system for computerised regional transit. As regards the development of financial systems (0.68), progress can be seen in the strengthened cooperation between central banks (via WAMA and WAMZ) and the creation of WASRA, which promotes the interconnection of regional stock exchanges and the harmonisation of accounting and prudential standards. Finally, statistical integration (score: 0.68) benefits from the ECOSTAT framework and WAEMU's contribution to the production of reliable and comparable indicators. Macroeconomic dashboards, multilateral surveillance reports and harmonised surveys are regularly published by regional institutions.

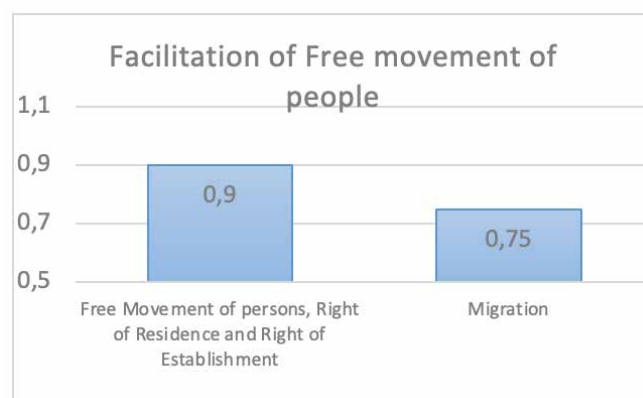




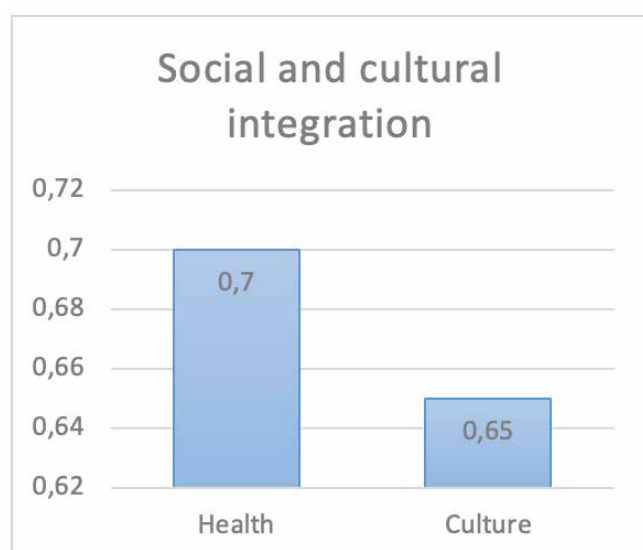
Infrastructure dimension

ECOWAS is recording its best results in the field of infrastructure, with coordinated policies and high-impact regional projects. The Regional Infrastructure Master Plan (RIMP) is the strategic roadmap for connecting the region's capitals and economic hubs. The RIDP, funded by ECOWAS, the AfDB, the EU and other partners, supports more than 20 major projects, several of which are currently under way. In terms of roads (score: 0.78), key corridors are being developed or upgraded, including the Dakar-Lagos motorway, the Abidjan-Ouagadougou-Niamey corridor, and the routes linking Nigeria to Niger and Benin. These projects facilitate intra-regional trade and the physical integration of markets. Railways (0.72) are the subject of inter-state partnerships, with interconnection projects between Ghana, Burkina Faso, Togo and Niger, and plans to rehabilitate existing railways to ensure better logistical continuity. In air transport (0.70), regional airlines such as ASKY and Air Côte d'Ivoire are strengthening intra-African services. Work is also underway to harmonise aviation regulations and bring them into line with the standards of the African Civil Aviation Commission (CAFAC). The energy sector (score: 0.85) is one of the most integrated thanks to the West African Power Pool (WAPP), which currently connects a dozen member countries. Several cross-border interconnection lines have been completed, and the ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA) ensures that tariff frameworks are consistent. The regional electricity market, officially launched, aims to improve access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy. Finally, in the water and sanitation sector (0.75), ECOWAS supports cross-border river basin management projects (Volta, Niger, Mano), the construction of hydraulic infrastructure and environmental monitoring, in conjunction with specialised agencies (ABN, VBA, etc.).

Facilitating the free movement of people



ECOWAS stands out as the most advanced African region in terms of freedom of movement. The score of 0.90 for the freedom of movement sub-dimension reflects the effective implementation of the 1979 Protocol, guaranteeing West African citizens the right to enter, reside and establish themselves in any Member State without a visa. This provision is reinforced by concrete instruments such as the ECOWAS passport, recognised throughout the region, and the regional biometric card, deployed in several countries (Senegal, Benin, Ghana, etc.). In practice, almost all land borders allow people to move freely, with facilitation mechanisms in border areas. The migration sub-dimension scores an estimated 0.75, reflecting the significant efforts made by ECOWAS in the concerted management of human mobility. The organisation adopted a regional strategy on migration in 2015, coordinates several projects with IOM and the EU, and has set up an annual forum of migration directors from the member states.



Social and cultural integration

ECOWAS has made significant progress in the social field, particularly in public health (0.70), thanks to enhanced regional coordination through specialised agencies. The Regional Centre for Disease Surveillance and Control (RCSDC), based in Abuja, plays a central role in detection, rapid response and health coordination, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the regional strategy for universal health coverage, adopted by the health ministers, aims to reduce inequalities in access to healthcare and to strengthen the resilience of national health systems. ECOWAS also supports regional initiatives on nutrition, reproductive health and emerging pandemics, with the support of partners such as the WHO, UNICEF and the AfDB. Harmonisation of pharmaceutical policies and common recognition of health qualifications are currently being developed. In the area of culture (0.65), ECOWAS promotes West African identity through the preservation of intangible heritage, the promotion of local languages, and regional cultural festivals such as the ECOWAS Festival of Arts and Culture (ECOFEST). The organisation also supports the creation of

regional archives and historical memory centres, as well as cultural heritage digitisation programmes. However, the impact of these initiatives remains limited by insufficient funding, misaligned national policies and the absence of a fully implemented regional cultural strategy.

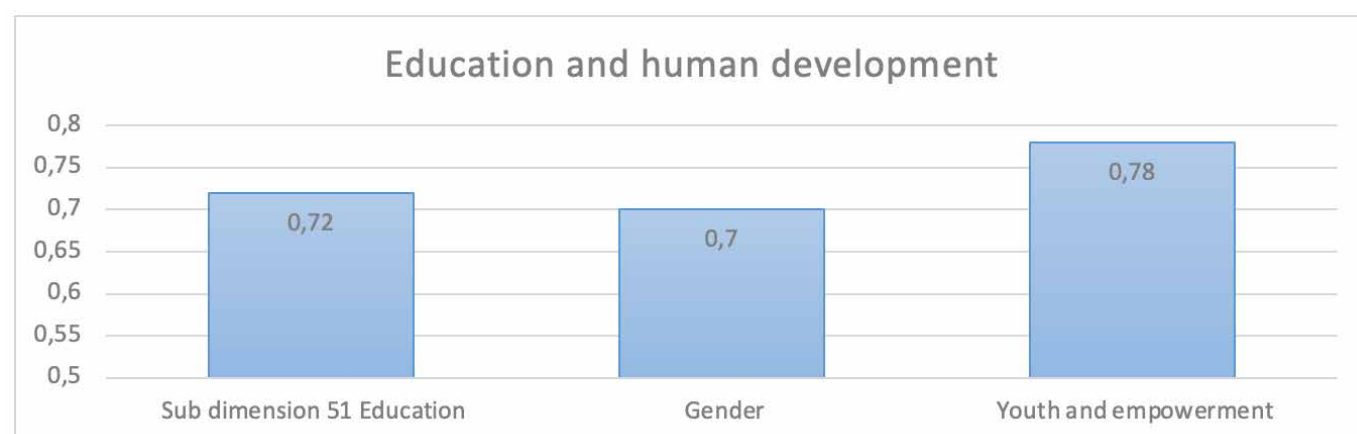
Education and human development

ECOWAS has made human capital a priority area for integration. In education (0.72), the region has set up a Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) aimed at harmonising technical and academic qualifications and facilitating student mobility. Academic mobility, community scholarships and inter-university cooperation programmes have been set up, notably in the agriculture, health and governance sectors.

Gender scored an estimated 0.70, thanks to the adoption of a Policy Framework for Gender Equality and concrete action on political participation, combating gender-based violence and access to finance for women entrepreneurs. However, implementation of these commitments varies from country to country. As far as youth is concerned (0.78), ECOWAS relies on a regional youth strategy, entrepreneurship programmes (via WACOMP and regional incubators), and civic participation mechanisms such as the ECOWAS Youth Parliament. These initiatives address the issues of employment, training and inclusion of young people, who make up more than 60% of the regional population.

Challenges and prospects

Despite its strong performance, ECOWAS faces a number of multi-dimensional challenges that are holding back the deepening of its integration. On the political front, the recurrence of institutional crises is weakening democratic convergence and regional stability. Although ECOWAS has reaffirmed its role as mediator and guarantor of democratic principles, its effectiveness is sometimes called into question by the



suspension or withdrawal of certain member states. On the economic front, disparities between WAEMU and non-member countries are slowing down monetary and fiscal harmonisation at regional level. The process of convergence towards the single ECO currency remains on hold, due to the non-compliance of many states with macroeconomic criteria and the fragility of their economies. Persistent non-tariff barriers, slow implementation of the liberalisation scheme (ETLS) and inadequate compensation mechanisms are also hindering the flow of trade. In terms of infrastructure, although structuring projects are underway, implementation remains slow due to the complexity of financing and procedures, and the lack of technical capacity at national level. In addition, the digital and energy divides between the member states are leading to unequal integration of the territories. In the human and social spheres, ECOWAS has yet to meet the challenge of effective inclusion. Regional mobility, although legally established, is still hampered by illicit border practices and restrictive national measures. **Inequalities in access to health, education and employment** between Member States remain high, and regional social protection mechanisms are still in their infancy.

Recommendations

On the political front, it is important to consolidate the institutional foundations and strengthen governance. This could involve:

- ✓ **Strengthen the operational capacity of the Court of Justice**, ensuring effective application of its decisions and facilitating direct access for citizens to reinforce the credibility of Community law.
- ✓ **Adopt a binding mechanism for applying the Additional Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance**, with clear procedures for dealing with violations of democratic principles and unconstitutional changes of government.

On the economic front, ECOWAS should accelerate policy convergence and productive development. To this end, it could:

- ✓ **Implement a regional industrialisation strategy focusing on agri-food, mining and manufacturing value chains**, supported by a common incentive framework for regional and foreign investment, as well as specific Community financing instruments.
- ✓ **Enhance the region's agricultural and environmental potential** by systematically integrating sustainability and climate resilience objectives into agricultural, fisheries

and common natural resource management policies.

For infrastructure development, the recommendation is to strengthen the coherence and governance of projects. This will require:

- ✓ **Establish a regional coordination unit for infrastructure projects** with a clear mandate to mobilise funding, provide technical support to governments and monitor and evaluate priority projects (roads, energy, telecommunications).
- ✓ **Greater harmonisation of regional technical and regulatory standards** in the land, rail and air transport sectors, as well as in energy interconnection, to ensure full interoperability of cross-border infrastructures.

Finally, with regard to the Human and Social Pillar, it will be necessary to deepen integration centred on populations. The actions to be undertaken could be to:

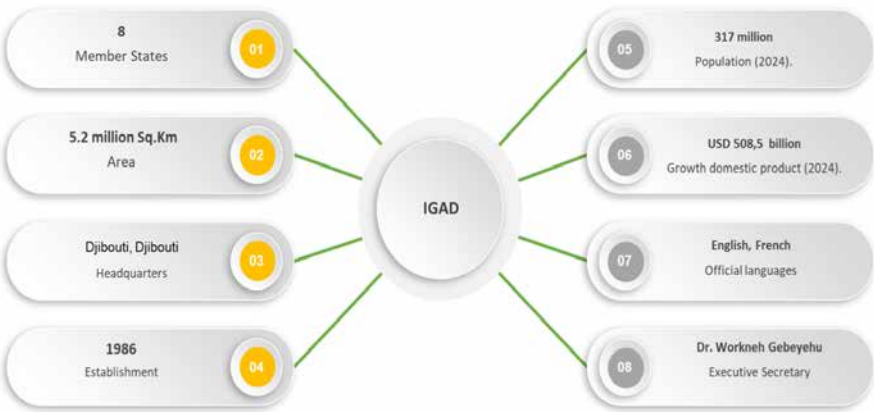
- ✓ **Develop a binding regional framework for harmonising social policies**, including health, education, gender and youth, with regular monitoring mechanisms, common indicators and specific regional funding.
- ✓ **Create a genuine West African higher education and research area**, by developing a digital platform for the automatic recognition of diplomas, increasing student and university mobility grants, and promoting inter-university partnerships based on regional priority sectors.

IGAD

Presentation

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is a regional organisation founded in 1996 to replace the former IGADD (1986), with the aim of broadening its initial mandate from combating drought and desertification to include wider areas of economic, political and security cooperation. It comprises eight Member States from the Horn of Africa and the wider East African region: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan (member since 2011) and Uganda. The IGAD region covers an area of around 5.2 million km² and is home to more than 280 million people (2024 estimate). IGAD is characterised by great geographical and socio-economic diversity, ranging from arid Sahelian zones to the fertile highlands of East Africa, and a young and dynamic population. The organisation's executive secretariat is based in Djibouti, the capital of the Republic of Djibouti.

IGAD maintains functional links with the African Union, as one of the eight recognised Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and cooperates actively with other regional and international players. It plays a strategic role in coordinating regional efforts for peace, development, natural resource management and humanitarian response to cyclical crises.



Institutional framework

IGAD is based on a solid institutional architecture, designed to meet the multidimensional challenges of the region.

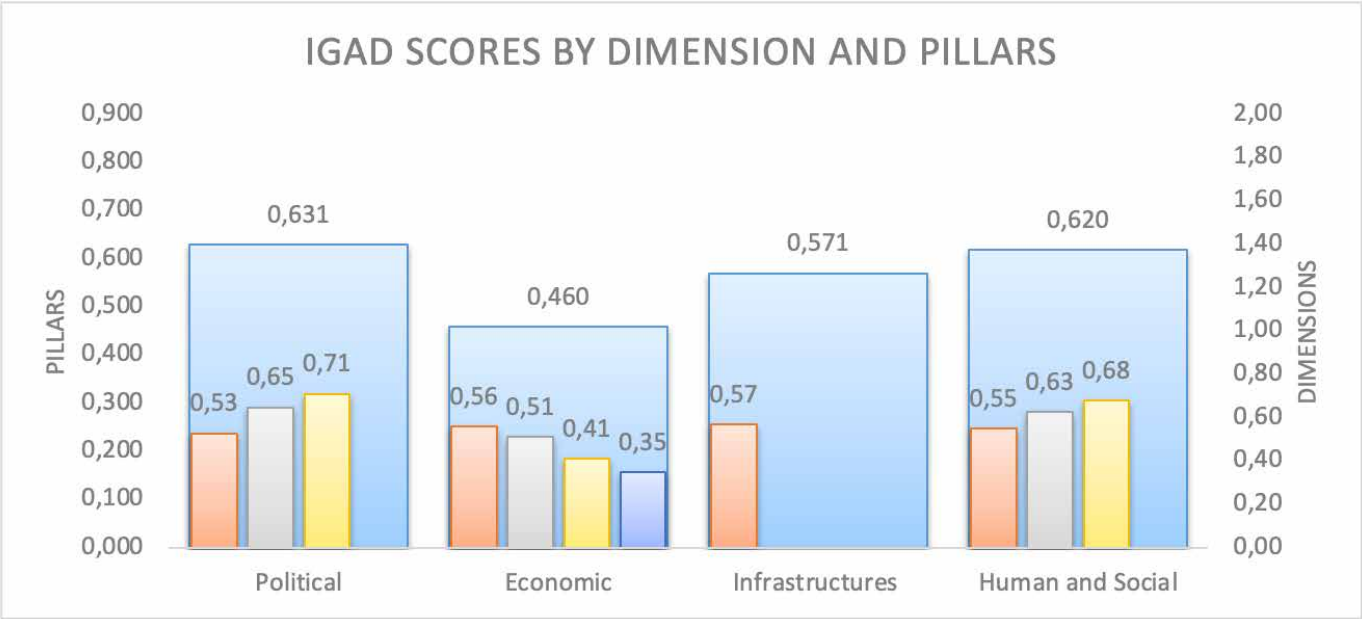
- **The Summit of Heads of State and Government** is the supreme body, responsible for defining the major political and strategic guidelines.
- **The Council of Ministers**, made up of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, which oversees the implementation of decisions, examines reports from the Executive Secretariat and adopts regional policies.
- **The Executive Secretariat**, based in Djibouti, is responsible for the operational coordination of the organisation’s programmes and projects. Headed by an Executive Secretary appointed by the Summit, it is supported by a number of technical divisions covering areas such as peace and security, economic development, the environment, agriculture and health.

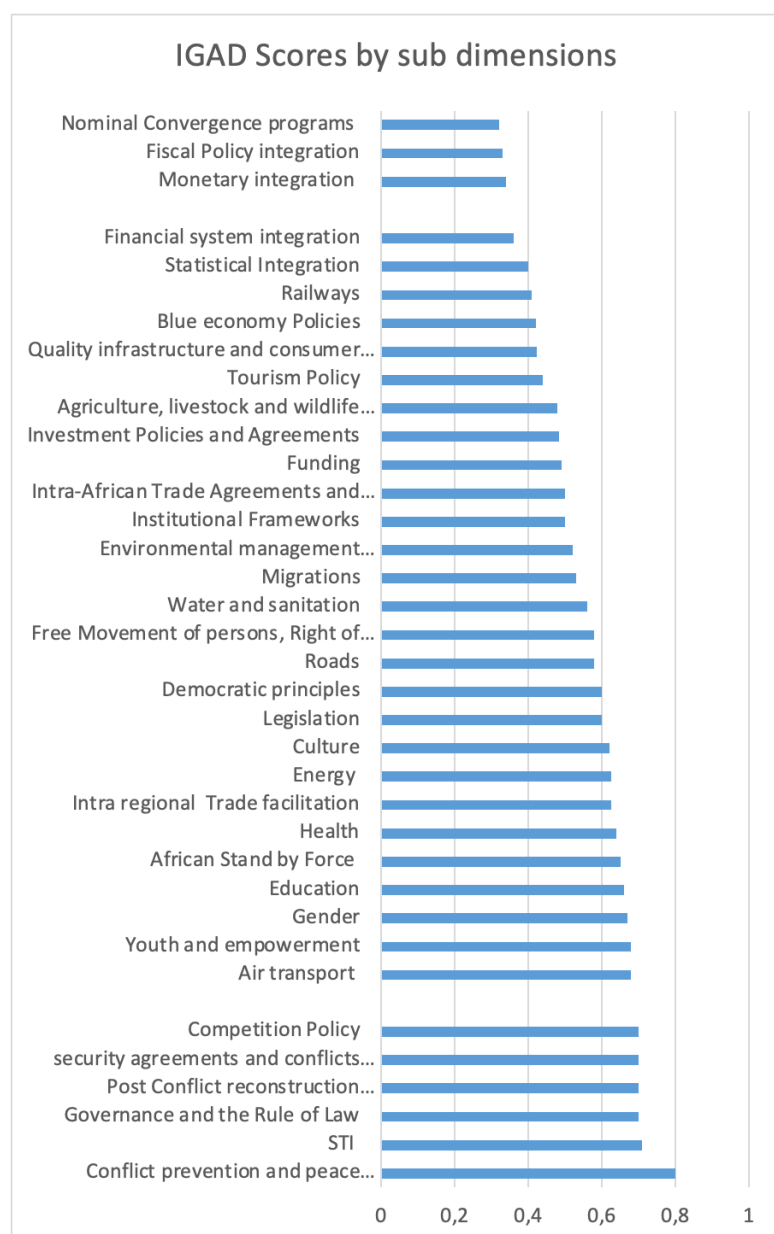
- **Decentralised thematic offices have been set up** in Member States to enhance sectoral effectiveness, such as the Disaster Prevention and Food Security Centre in Nairobi and the Climate Centre in Addis Ababa.

IGAD also benefits from multi-sectoral regional platforms bringing together representatives of Member States, civil society, the private sector and development partners. It works closely with the African Union, the ECA and other RECs to promote inclusive regional governance. Despite these institutional advances, budgetary constraints, the low regularity of high-level meetings and the geopolitical complexity of the region continue to limit the organisation’s effectiveness and responsiveness.

Vision and flagship projects

IGAD’s vision is to build “a peaceful, prosperous and integrated region” based on political cooperation, human security and sustainable development.





Through its Strategic Plan 2021-2025, the organisation aims to strengthen the resilience of states and populations to climatic, security and economic shocks, while promoting regional economic integration and structural transformation.

IGAD's priority objectives include:

- ✓ conflict prevention and management;
- ✓ the development of regional infrastructures;
- ✓ food security and adaptation to climate change;
- ✓ promoting intra-regional trade and free movement;
- ✓ strengthening governance, inclusion and sectoral coordination.

On the basis of its 2021-2025 strategic plan, IGAD has developed a series of flagship projects, the most important of which are *the regional protocol on the free movement of persons, adopted in 2020*, which aims to facilitate the mobility of Member States' citizens (workers, students, families) and harmonise migration policies.

There is also the IGAD *Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI)*, through which the REC aims to provide a response to recurrent droughts, with a portfolio of integrated projects in agriculture, water and natural resource management. Regional economic and infrastructure corridors are a key part of IGAD's drive to connect states through road infrastructure.

This project is being carried out in conjunction with the AUC, the ADB and other partners.

2. Analysis of ASRII results

Global analysis

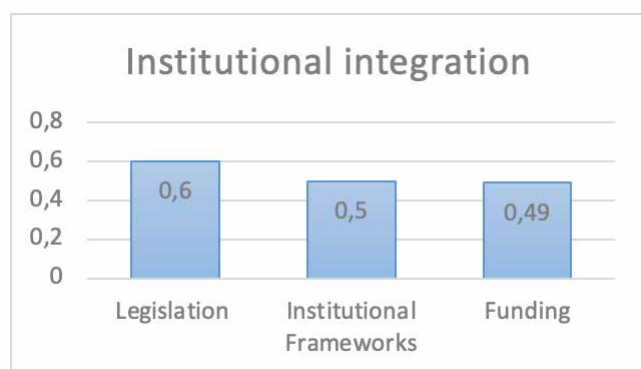
On the political front (0.63), IGAD stands out as one of the most advanced RECs in this pillar, thanks to its recognised expertise in peace and security. It has been at the forefront of mediation processes in the Horn of Africa (peace agreements in Sudan support for the transition process in Somalia, involvement in Ethiopia and South Sudan). Institutions such as CEWARN (Early Warning and Response Network) and platforms such as the Governance Forum reinforce this strategic role. Despite persistent inter-state tensions (notably Ethiopia-Eritrea, Somalia-Kenya), IGAD has a solid political framework, with an effective Executive Secretariat and a validated regional governance strategy. The high score of 0.71 for peace and security, combined with a regional governance score of 0.65, reflects this consolidation, even if political integration in the strict sense (convergence of regimes) remains embryonic. Despite a clear political will, the economic pillar remains one of the weakest, though some progress has been made, however: the Minimum Integration Plan (MIP), the implementation of an SPS (sanitary and phytosanitary) framework, work on Single Border Posts (OSBPs), and efforts to integrate pastoral markets via the ICPALD.

However, the economic integration score of 0.46 reflects the low level of operationalisation of

the protocols signed, in the absence of customs harmonisation mechanisms and a common tariff strategy. In the industrial and business spheres, initiatives such as the revitalisation of the IGAD Business Forum and support for trade logistics (e.g. warehouse receipt system) are promising, but still fragmented. IGAD is making tangible progress in infrastructure, notably through major projects such as the LAPSSET corridor (Kenya-Southern Sudan-Ethiopia), studies on the Kampala-Juba-Djibouti axis, and the development of the Djibouti free zone. The score of 0.57 reflects this dynamic, although coverage remains uneven across the sub-regions. In terms of human mobility, the signing of the protocols on free movement and transhumance (with a roadmap for implementation) is a remarkable step forward, even if practical implementation remains slow. Digital management and the regional interconnection of IT systems, on the other hand, are struggling to get off the ground. The human integration score of 0.61 sums up this balance between normative ambition and partial implementation. This is one of IGAD's most promising pillars, with strong roots in programmes for the movement of people, social programmes, education and health. The regional education programme (IGAD Regional Qualifications Framework, regional scholarships), gender and public health initiatives, as well as resilience actions for young people in pastoral areas, reflect a concrete commitment. IGAD has also invested in innovative projects such as the Regional Cancer Centre and student mobility programmes. Active involvement in the response to COVID-19 has strengthened its role in health coordination.

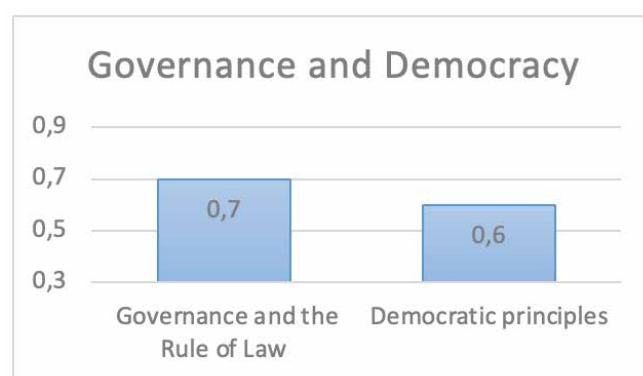
Institutional integration dimension

IGAD has a relatively advanced institutional framework, in line with its strategic mission. Its Executive Secretariat, based in Djibouti, is up and running, with consolidated technical capacities and strengthened by decentralised specialist centres (in agriculture, climate change, governance, etc.). The Council of Ministers meets regularly, and the



Summits of Heads of State and Government have defined coherent political guidelines, particularly in the areas of security, freedom of movement and human development. The institutional framework score of 0.60 reflects this structural solidity. On the other hand, regional legislation remains weakly binding: although protocols have been adopted (mobility, transhumance, migration, etc.), their ratification and integration into national legislation remain incomplete, which justifies a more moderate score (0.50). The organisation's funding, based mainly on contributions from member states and donors, is irregular and exposes the institution to persistent external dependency, hence the score of 0.49 for this sub-dimension. Overall, IGAD has an effective and credible institutional apparatus, which ensures active multisectoral technical coordination. However, the implementation of texts, the lack of financial autonomy and the absence of a legally binding mechanism still limit the effectiveness of its institutional integration.

Governance and democracy



Regional governance is one of the areas in which IGAD has made significant progress, with a growing commitment to transparency, participation and accountability. The score of 0.70 in the *Governance and Rule of Law* sub-dimension reflects IGAD's significant efforts to promote democratic norms and support the political dialogue processes in its member states. The creation of the IGAD Governance Forum, recently endorsed by the Committee of Ambassadors, provides a unique regional forum for addressing issues of constitutional governance, public accountability and citizen participation. On the other hand, the *"Democratic Principles"* sub-dimension, rated at 0.60, reflects the mechanisms for supporting electoral processes, political mediation and the prevention of democratic breakdowns. IGAD has, on several occasions, deployed electoral observation missions (Somalia, South Sudan) or facilitated inclusive dialogues. However, the

differences between the political systems of its members and the frequency of institutional crises (coups d'état, prolonged transitions) complicate the emergence of a harmonised democratic space. This dimension therefore illustrates IGAD's growing power as a regional standard-setter in the field of governance, although its ability to guarantee uniform practices is still hampered by major structural constraints such as security.

Peace and security dimension:

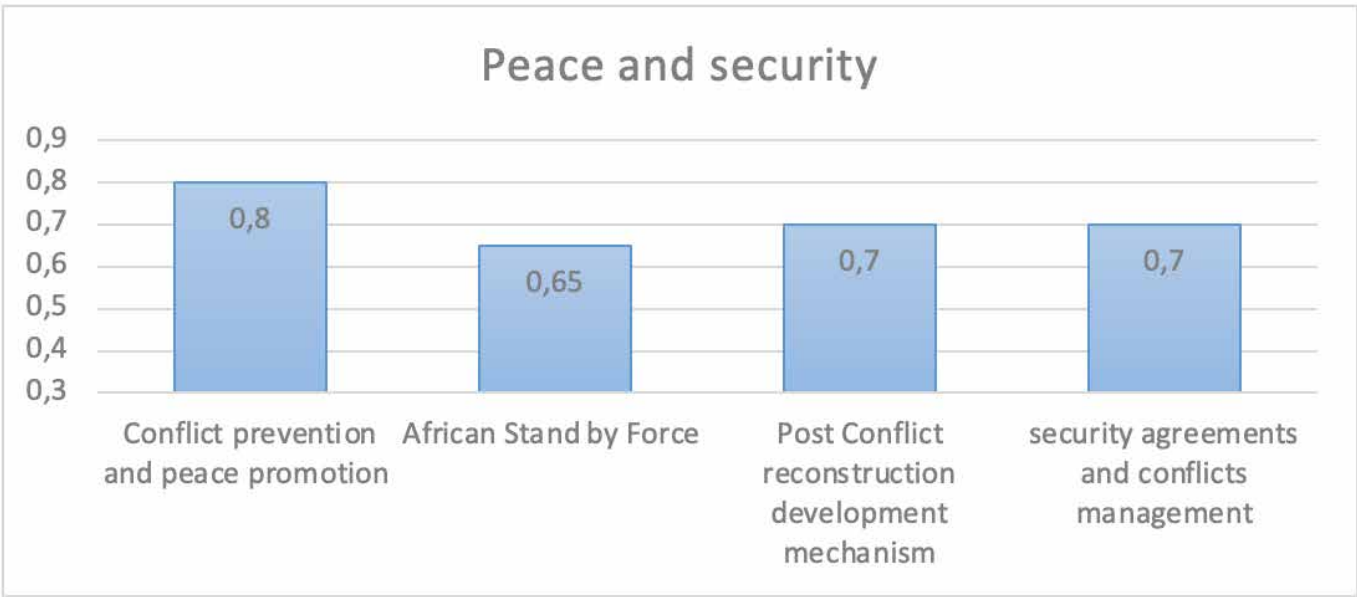
IGAD is one of the most advanced RECs on the African continent in terms of peace and security, thanks to its active role in conflict prevention, mediation, crisis management and post-conflict stabilisation in the Horn of Africa. The sub-dimension *'Conflict prevention and peace promotion'*, rated at 0.80, illustrates the organisation's ability to intervene upstream of crises thanks to mechanisms such as CEWARN (Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism), which has been operational since 2002 and covers several sensitive areas (Karamoja, Somali Cluster, South Sudan, Ethiopian border, etc.). This mechanism is supported by a regional community alert platform, national teams, groups of local observers and a data processing system for rapid response. IGAD has also distinguished itself in major political processes, in particular the mediation of peace agreements in South Sudan (Peace Agreement of 2015, then R-ARCSS of 2018), and support for the transition in Somalia and Sudan. The *"African Standby Force"* sub-dimension, although still theoretical for IGAD, is rated at 0.65 to reflect the presence of identified units in some member states, although logistical coordination and actual deployment capabilities are limited. IGAD is, however, linked to the African Union's continental peace and security architecture, and its member states participate in peacekeeping operations (e.g.

AMISOM/ATMIS in Somalia). The score of 0.70 for the sub-dimension *'Regional security arrangements'* is explained by the formalisation of several thematic initiatives: the fight against terrorism (particularly in the border areas of Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia), transnational crime, radicalisation, maritime security (Gulf of Aden), and collaboration with partners (EU, USAID, UNODC). IGAD also has a Regional Strategy to Combat Violent Extremism, which was adopted in 2018. Finally, post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) is rated at 0.70, justified by the implementation of stabilisation projects in sensitive areas (Southern Sudan, pastoral areas affected by armed conflict) and the integration of resilience as a central axis of the 2021-2025 strategy. The approach is multi-sectoral, combining local governance, inclusion of women and young people, basic infrastructure and social cohesion.

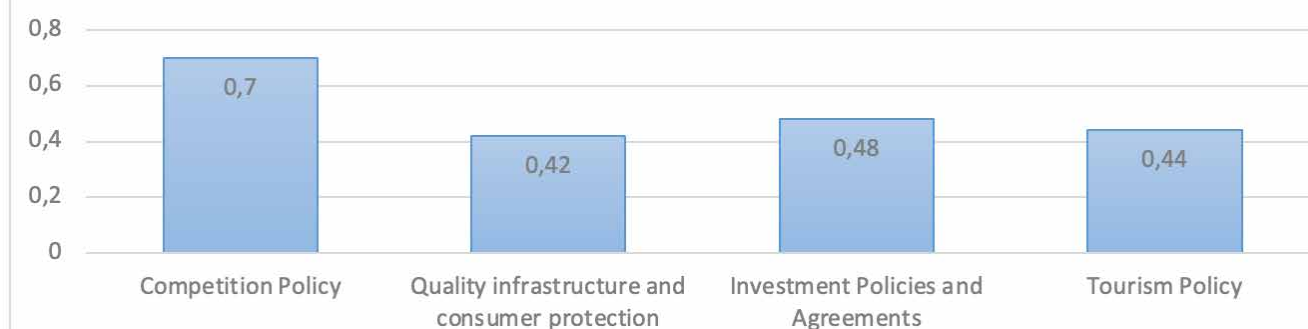


Market integration dimension

Historically focused on environmental and security crisis management, IGAD has only gradually



IGAD SCORES IN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, INDUSTRY AND MINING



incorporated economic and trade issues into its mandate. This strategic shift is reflected in the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, which broadens regional priorities to include the promotion of economic integration, regional competitiveness and trade liberalisation. With this in mind, a Minimum Integration Plan (MIP) has been drawn up, marking a first step towards more structured economic coordination. The score of 0.5 assigned to the sub-dimension "*Intra-African trade agreements*" reflects the accession of member countries to the FTAA, as well as IGAD's active participation in the development of regulatory frameworks such as the regional SPS (sanitary and phytosanitary) framework currently being harmonised. However, to date, no internal IGAD trade protocol has been implemented at Community level, which limits the concrete effects on intra-regional dynamics. *The facilitation of intra-regional trade*, estimated at 0.625, remains hampered by the absence of a customs union, a common tariff policy or mechanisms for the mutual recognition of standards. However, a number of pilot projects do exist: the One Stop Border Posts (OSBP) on the Ethiopia-Kenya border, the strengthening of pastoral trade corridors, and the gradual automation of customs procedures in the Member States. These initiatives, although disparate, demonstrate a desire to make up for structural delays.

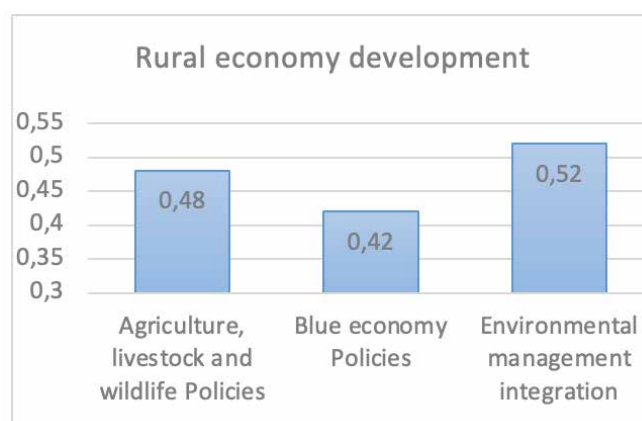
Business development, industry and mining

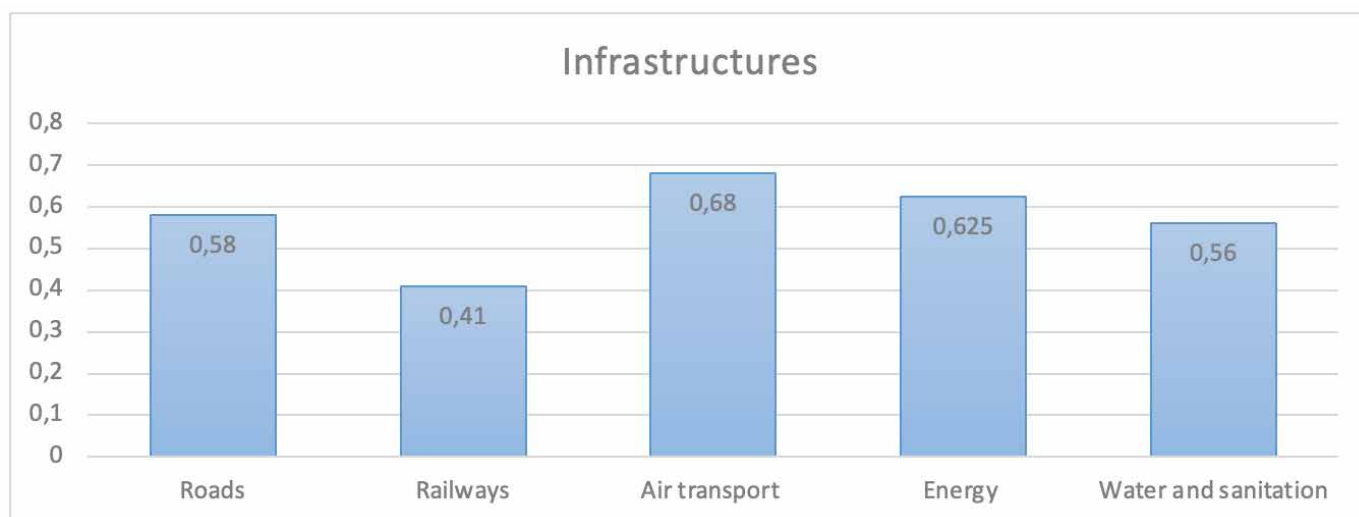
IGAD has a moderate level of integration in the area of business development and productive sectors, reflecting a still fragmented but consolidating dynamic. The organisation does not currently have a common industrial policy or a regional strategy for the extractive sectors. However, it does support the networking of chambers of commerce and employers' organisations through the IGAD Business Forum, which aims to strengthen cooperation between private operators in the member states. This platform is a lever for encouraging cross-border investment and promoting regional entrepreneurship, hence the estimated score of 0.51 in this dimension. In terms

of investment policy, IGAD has worked to develop harmonised frameworks, in particular by supporting the introduction of simplified business registration systems in some countries, and by strengthening trade logistics through pilot initiatives (e.g. warehouse receipts). These efforts are being made in the context of cooperation with the World Bank, the ADB and GIZ. The sub-dimension "*investment policies*", evaluated at 0.48, reflects an intention that is affirmed but not yet institutionalised at Community level. Tourism policy is the weakest in this block (0.44), as IGAD does not have a regional tourism promotion programme or a network of integrated circuits. However, the natural and cultural wealth of the Member States (cross-border parks, nomadic cultural heritage) represents under-exploited potential. As far as competition policy, consumer protection and quality standards are concerned, no Community directive has yet been adopted, which results in moderate scores (between 0.40 and 0.42). These issues are often dealt with at national level, with little technical or standards harmonisation.

Development of the rural economy

The rural economy is a central pillar of IGAD's action, due to the region's strong rural character and the importance of cross-border pastoralism, family farming and the sustainable management of natural resources. This specificity justifies the existence





of a dedicated regional Centre of excellence, the ICPALD (Policy Centre for Livestock and Agricultural Development), based in Nairobi, which coordinates regional initiatives in these areas. The estimated score of 0.48 reflects sustained but still scattered efforts to structure an integrated agricultural market. In terms of environmental management, rated at 0.52, IGAD has set up a Climate and Environment Unit (ICPAC, based in Nairobi), which steers the implementation of programmes to combat land degradation, drought and the effects of climate change. Joint strategies for the management of river basins (Nile, Juba-Shabelle, Turkana, etc.) are under way, but their governance is still largely national. On the other hand, blue economy policy, rated at 0.42, remains underdeveloped at regional level. Although IGAD includes coastal countries (Djibouti, Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia), no joint programme for the development of fisheries resources, port regulation or maritime protection has yet been structured within a community framework. The potential for an integrated strategy in this area therefore remains considerable.

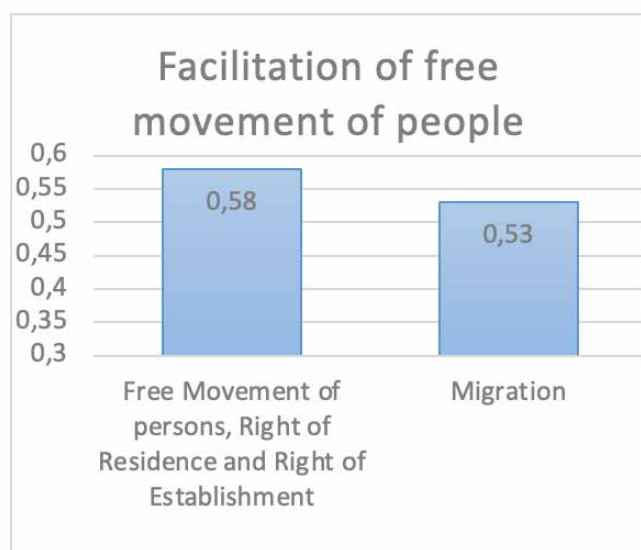
Infrastructure Integration dimension

IGAD has achieved relatively solid results in this area thanks to a number of key regional corridors and projects supported by technical and financial partners. Infrastructure is seen as a lever for stabilisation, economic development and resilience, particularly in terms of linking landlocked regions to sub-regional and international markets. Road infrastructure, with a score of 0.56, benefits from notable transnational projects such as the LAPSSSET (Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia) corridor, which aims to link the Kenyan coast to the Ethiopian and South Sudanese hinterlands, and the rehabilitation of the Djibouti-Addis Ababa route and the development of the Djibouti-Kampala corridor. The development of One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) is also helping to improve the flow of logistics. The railways, rated at 0.60, are marked by flagship projects such as the modern

railway line between Djibouti and Addis Ababa, in service since 2018. Other projects are being studied to extend this connectivity to South Sudan and Uganda, but their implementation still depends on external funding. Air transport, with a score of 0.58, is one of the region's strong points, with regional hubs (Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Djibouti) offering significant connectivity. The presence of high-performance airlines (Ethiopian Airlines, Kenya Airways, Uganda Airlines) strengthens the interconnection between regional capitals, although high fares and the lack of liberalisation of African airspace remain challenges. In terms of energy, the score of 0.54 reflects uneven progress. Electricity interconnection projects are operational (Ethiopia-Djibouti) and some are underway (Ethiopia-Sudan, Kenya-Ethiopia), but the absence of a regional energy market limits gains of scale. Renewable energy projects (particularly solar and geothermal) offer significant potential. Water and sanitation management, rated at 0.56, is based on bilateral cooperation and integrated management projects for transboundary basins (Nile, Shabelle, Turkana). IGAD also supports community-based water management initiatives in pastoral areas.

Facilitating the free movement of people

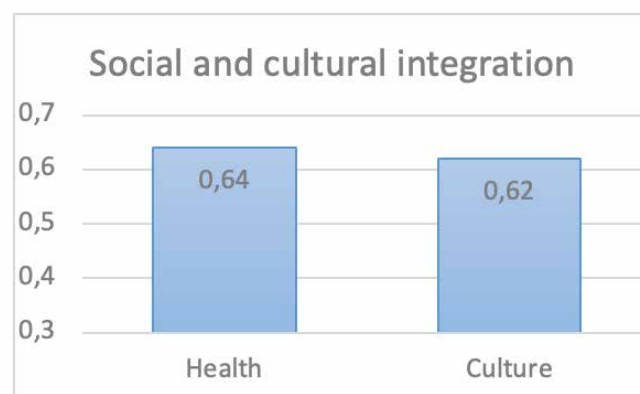
The issue of human mobility is a priority field of action for IGAD, given the cross-border and pastoral realities of the region, as well as the challenges associated with migration, refugees and mobile labour. IGAD stands out for the adoption of innovative texts, but concrete implementation is still at an early stage. The *"Free movement, right of residence and establishment"* sub-dimension registers 0.58, based on the adoption in 2020 of the IGAD Regional Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, an ambitious legal instrument aligned with the AU's Agenda 2063 and the FTAA. In particular, it provides for visa exemption, mobility of workers, students and researchers, recognition of identity documents, right



of residence, the right of establishment and response to disaster displacement. The Protocol also provides for a cross border cooperative framework to address transnational crime in the context of free movement and so aligns itself to IGAD extradition Convention and IGAD Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in criminal Matters so far signed and ratified by two IGAD Member States i.e. Ethiopia and Djibouti. Although the IGAD Protocol on Free Movement of Persons has been signed by five IGADS member States: Uganda, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia, its ratification and implementation is only in process at Member state level. . Nevertheless, its participatory design, alignment to AU Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in Africa, unique inclusion of an article on IGAD Member States response to Disaster Displacement and political validation testify to a willingness to move forward on this crucial issue. Regional migration, rated at 0.53, benefits from a structured policy framework with the IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework (2012, revised in 2022) and its Migration Action Plan (Revised 2024), which covers policy development on migration governance in the region, thematic areas of free movement of persons, labour migration and education, managing forced displacement and support to Refugees and IDPs, , human trafficking and disaster and environmental migration. IGAD has also set up a regional programme on migration data, in partnership with Statistics Sweden, AU StatAfrica, ILO IOM, GIZ and the EU, to improve knowledge of migration flows and support national and regional policies. Regional migration analysis and protection centres have been set up in several countries. Capacity building support is also beign given to Immigration and Border Police and the Marines to enhance their capacity in managing high flows of mixed migration in the region.

Social and cultural integration

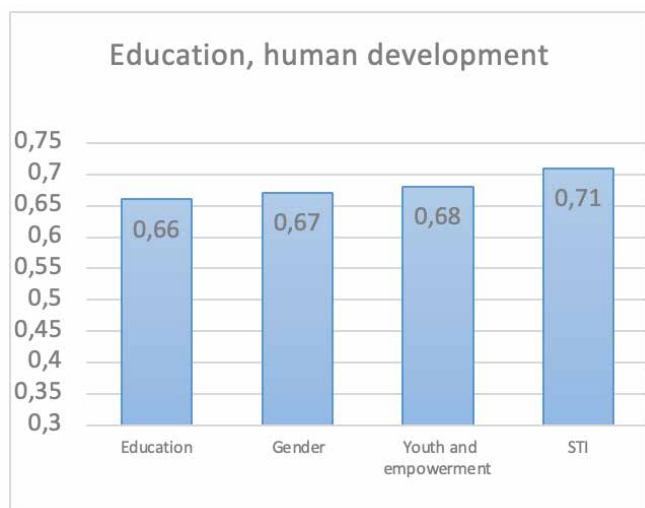
IGAD has achieved encouraging results in the social and cultural field, driven by an approach resolutely centred on the resilience of populations and regional cohesion. Although this dimension is not yet the subject of a fully integrated legal framework, it is increasingly anchored at institutional level through a number of multi-sectoral social programmes. The “Health” sub-dimension, rated at 0.64, reflects IGAD’s commitment to the regional coordination of health responses, particularly during the



COVID-19 pandemic. Mechanisms for early warning, epidemiological data sharing and cross-border assistance have been put in place, notably through the EU-supported COVID-19 Response programme. The organisation has also launched initiatives in reproductive health, the fight against HIV/AIDS and capacity-building for health systems. The cultural dimension, rated at 0.62, remains moderately advanced. Although no regional cultural strategy has been fully established, IGAD is supporting initiatives to promote pastoral identities and preserve cultural practices linked to cross-border mobility. Culture is also involved in peace education programmes and community awareness-raising initiatives. Several pilot projects relating to shared historical memory (conflict resolution, oral traditions, customs) are being carried out by IGAD’s regional offices. Despite this progress, social and cultural integration is still fragmented between the various sectoral initiatives, with no harmonised normative framework. The development of a common regional social policy (covering social protection, social security systems and fundamental social rights) would be an important step towards greater coherence and inclusion.

Education and human development dimension

IGAD has recorded one of its best results in this pillar, with a marked focus on human development, in line with the objectives of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. The organisation focuses on education, the



empowerment of youth and women, and the mobilisation of knowledge as vectors of resilience and regional integration. The 'Education' sub-dimension, rated at 0.66, is based on ambitious initiatives such as the IGAD Regional Qualifications Framework, which aims to harmonise educational standards and promote mutual recognition of diplomas in member countries. IGAD also funds regional scholarships for student mobility and promotes technical and vocational training, particularly in border areas. The gender issue, with a score of 0.67, is integrated transversally into the regional strategy. Programmes for gender equality, the fight against gender-based violence and women's access to local governance have been deployed as part of cross-border initiatives. IGAD has also supported the creation of regional networks of women leaders, particularly in areas affected by conflict. The "Youth and empowerment" sub-dimension, which received a very high score of 0.68, is based on the Regional Youth Initiative, which includes entrepreneurial training, access to credit, regional mobility and civic participation. Socio-economic integration programmes are run in pastoral and peri-urban areas in cooperation with UNICEF and the AfDB. Finally, science, technology and innovation, rated at 0.71, is an emerging but dynamic area. IGAD has launched several programmes focusing on open data, climate knowledge management, cybersecurity and the digitisation of regional information systems (particularly in relation to migration, markets and health). The organisation is also working on setting up a regional observatory for research and innovation.

Recommendations

With regard to the political integration pillar, it is more a question of strengthening governance mechanisms and instruments. To this end, IGAD should:

- ✓ Formalise the implementation of the IGAD Governance Forum as a platform for regular

political dialogue, involving civil society, national parliaments and young leaders. This would institutionalise the convergence of democratic values and strengthen regional transparency.

- ✓ Extend and strengthen CEWARN in vulnerable cross-border areas (e.g. South Sudan-Ethiopia-Uganda, Somalia-Kenya), with community focal points, local observers and a rapid response mechanism based on the data transmitted.
- ✓ Mobilise technical and financial partners to set up a flexible fund dedicated to the reconstruction of post-crisis areas, in support of infrastructure, basic social services and social cohesion.

As far as the economic integration pillar is concerned, IGAD should strengthen this pillar through targeted and progressive sectoral frameworks:

- ✓ Consolidate the implementation of the AfCFTA in the IGAD region by drawing up a regional roadmap for the coordinated implementation of AfCFTA commitments, harmonising SPS standards, rules of origin and customs procedures and setting up an IGAD-AfCFTA technical unit with the trade ministries of the Member States.
- ✓ Boosting the region's business and investment ecosystem by structuring the IGAD Business Forum as a permanent platform for public-private dialogue, creating a regional network of incubation centres for SMEs and young entrepreneurs, and opening a regional microfinance fund dedicated to women and young people in border areas.

In terms of infrastructure development, it is important to develop interconnected infrastructures and facilitate regional mobility. Actions to be taken could include:

- ✓ Create a regional fund for rural infrastructure, to finance mobile health centres and structured pastoral markets, with integrated environmental components, in cooperation with local communities.

Human development requires the facilitation of human mobility, education and the promotion of social innovation. To achieve this, IGAD should

- ✓ Promote the free movement and coordinated management of regional migration through

the full ratification and implementation of the IGAD Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, ensuring its integration into national legislation.

- ✓ Harmonising education systems and professionalising regional skills by setting up a Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) to facilitate the recognition of diplomas and academic mobility.
- ✓ Strengthening the empowerment of young people and women through inclusive regional initiatives, for example by extending the IGAD Youth Initiative to include entrepreneurial pathways, cross-border forums and mobile incubators, and adopting a regional gender framework with quotas for integrating women into regional projects.

SADC

Presentation

Officially created in 1992 following the transformation of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC, founded in 1980), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is a regional organisation comprising 16 member states. Its headquarters are in Gaborone, Botswana. SADC covers an area of approximately 9.9 million square kilometres and has an estimated population of 390 million in 2022. The combined gross domestic product (GDP) of its members is estimated at around 843 billion US dollars in 2023, making it one of the most dynamic regional groupings on the continent. The official languages of the organisation are English, Portuguese and French. Since August 2021, the Executive Secretariat has been headed by Mr Elias Mpedi Magosi from Botswana.

Institutional framework

SADC governance is based on several key bodies. At the top of the hierarchy are

- **the Conference of Heads of State and Government**, the main decision-making body responsible for defining the political direction of the Community.
- **the Council of Ministers**, which oversees policy implementation.

- **The Executive Secretariat**, based in Gaborone, is responsible for the technical and administrative coordination of the regional programmes.

SADC has also set up specialised institutions in areas such as trade, energy, water and agriculture. However, certain structures, such as the SADC Tribunal, have remained inactive since their suspension in 2010, although a relaunch has been envisaged.

Vision, objectives and priority programmes

SADC's vision is of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful region founded on the principles of democracy, good governance and sustainable development. Its objectives include

- promoting economic growth,
- the eradication of poverty,
- political and security cooperation, and
- harmonisation of policies between Member States.

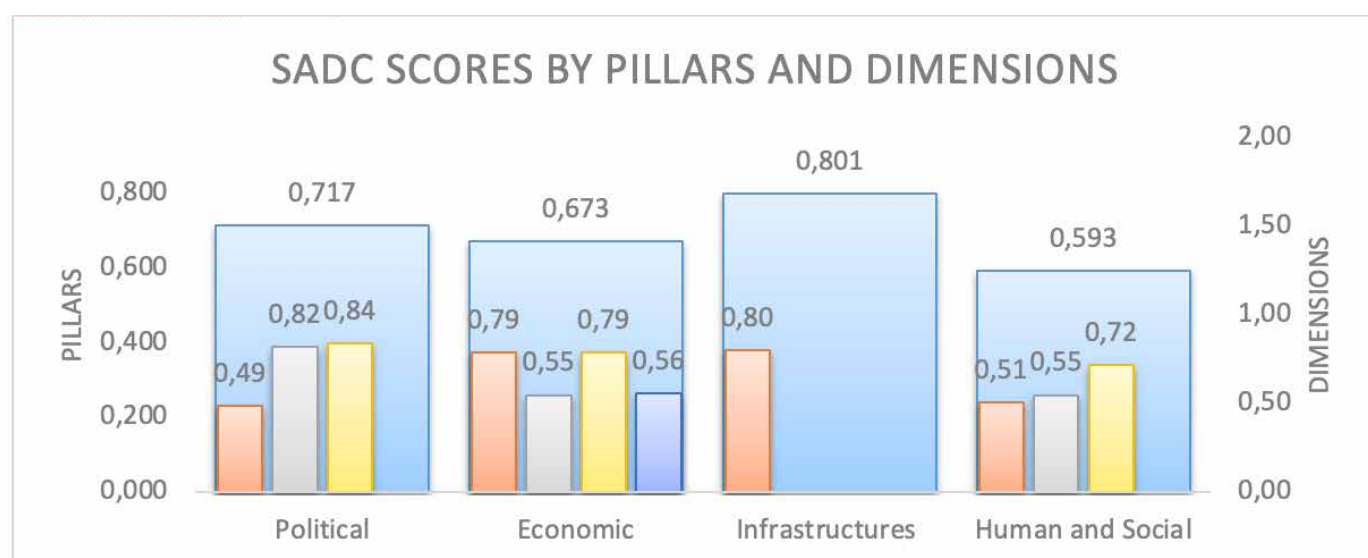


SADC's ambition is to establish a Customs Union and a common market. Its flagship initiatives include the Free Trade Area launched in 2008, the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan (RIDMP), the Trade Facilitation Programme, and conflict prevention and management mechanisms. These efforts are aimed at strengthening connectivity, economic resilience and regional cohesion.

2. SADC assessment

Global overview

Globally, SADC demonstrates a balanced yet differentiated integration profile across its four main pillars, as reflected in the chart below, which highlights



a generally strong and coherent performance with some variations in depth and consistency among the different dimensions. The institutional pillar maintains solid results, with scores ranging from 0.49 to 0.84, highlighting strong governance and legal frameworks, particularly in peace and security. The economic pillar follows closely with robust scores between 0.55 and 0.79, illustrating progress in industrialisation, trade, and investment, though slightly held back by lower performance in macroeconomic coordination. The infrastructure pillar continues to shine with consistent scores of 0.808, confirming SADC's commitment to connectivity and regional physical integration. Meanwhile, the human and social pillar shows encouraging performance with scores between 0.513 and 0.72, indicating improvements in gender equality, education, and youth empowerment, though some gaps remain in social protection and migration. Overall, this visual reinforces the notion of SADC as a structurally grounded bloc with impressive achievements in infrastructure and governance, and steady progress in economic and social cohesion, though strategic efforts are still needed to reinforce underperforming dimensions.

The sub-dimensional breakdown of SADC's integration confirms earlier insights by highlighting a strong performance in infrastructure-related areas, particularly roads and water and sanitation, which both achieve near-perfect scores, reflecting mature regional connectivity. High scores are also observed in industrial policy, energy, and governance, reinforcing the strength of the infrastructure and institutional pillars. In contrast, sub-dimensions such as statistical integration and funding score significantly lower, exposing critical weaknesses in macroeconomic coordination and autonomous financial mechanisms. Other mid-range scores in areas like gender, agriculture, and trade facilitation suggest moderate progress with room for improvement. Overall, this sub-dimensional view confirms a pattern of uneven

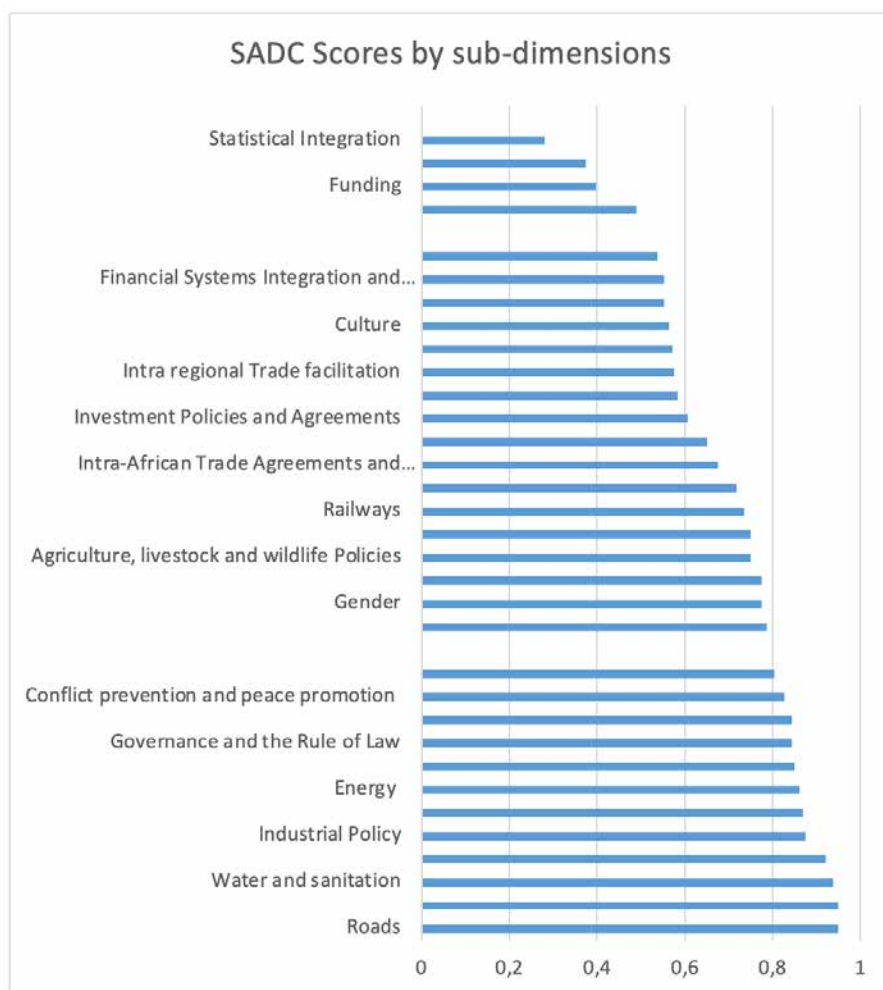
integration, with solid gains in physical infrastructure and policy alignment, but lingering gaps in financial, data, and resource governance.

Countries performances in SADC

The country-level performance view for SADC members highlights a highly uneven distribution of integration scores across the region. South Africa emerges as the clear leader with a near-perfect score of 0.950, followed closely by Zambia (0.912), Botswana (0.904), and Zimbabwe (0.900). All of them demonstrate strong institutional alignment, economic integration, and infrastructure development. These countries likely benefit from established regional connectivity, proactive participation in SADC frameworks, and relatively stable governance environments. In contrast, Comoros, with a notably low score of 0.138, lags significantly behind, reflecting limited engagement in regional mechanisms and structural constraints such as geographic isolation and weaker infrastructure. Seychelles also falls below the regional average, suggesting that insular states may face specific integration barriers. The remaining countries, such as Malawi, Tanzania, Mozambique, and DRC, occupy mid-range positions, pointing to gradual but uneven progress. Overall, the data illustrates a core-periphery dynamic within SADC, where a cluster of well-integrated states leads the way, while others require targeted support to bridge institutional, economic, and infrastructural gaps.

Challenges and prospects

SADC faces a number of structural challenges that are hampering the full realisation of its integration agenda. The lack of completion of certain key institutions such as Parliament and the Tribunal limits the effectiveness of its legal framework. Moreover, the absence of binding mechanisms for implementing the protocols adopted means that regional policies



are applied unevenly. On the economic front, the disparities in development between the Member States, the lack of harmonisation of trade policies and the absence of a common investment code are hampering the coherence of the regional market. In terms of freedom of movement, the non-ratification of the protocol on persons prevents the establishment of a common area of mobility. Nevertheless, SADC has solid assets, including a clear strategic vision, ambitious programmes in industrialisation and infrastructure, and a proven capacity to respond to security crises. Going forward, the organisation will need to consolidate its institutions, strengthen the harmonisation of economic policies and accelerate human integration if it is to turn its potential into tangible results for the people of the region.

Dimension I: Institutional Integration (0.4901)

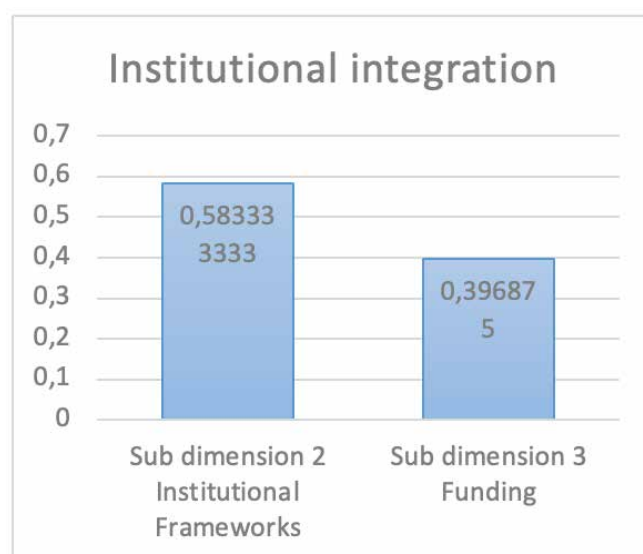
SADC's performance in terms of institutional integration is moderate, with an estimated average of around 0.49. This dimension is intended to measure the REC's commitment to establishing common legal texts, effective regional institutions and autonomous funding mechanisms. SADC has a robust but not fully developed legal architecture, with regional institutions that have been created but still need to be

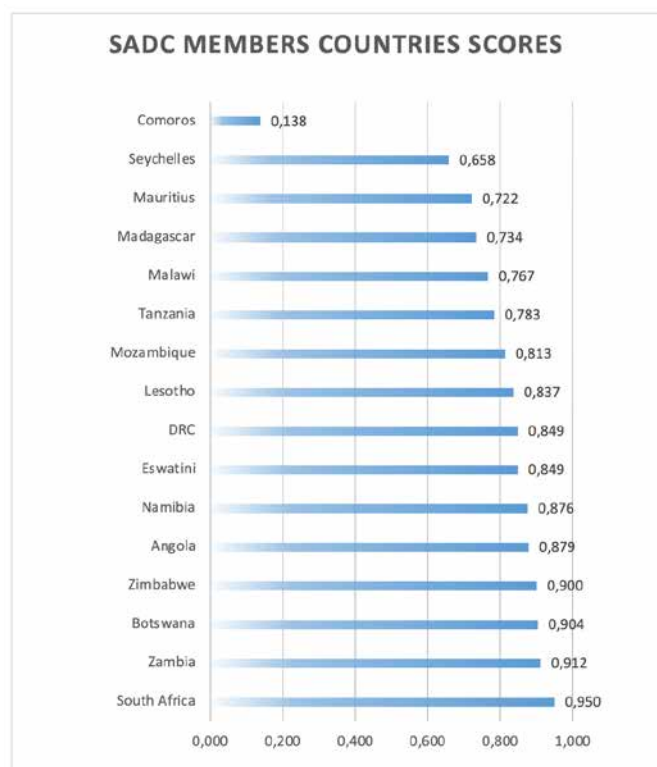
activated. It has a well-advanced financing mechanism thanks to the effective contribution of its members, but the absence of a levy lever limits the predictability of resources.

Sub-dimension: Institutional managers (0.583)

With regard to the "institutional frameworks" sub-dimension, the SADC has adopted several protocols (Parliament, Tribunal) which are currently inactive for various reasons. The Tribunal has been suspended since 2011, the legal framework is in place but its effectiveness remains very limited. The regional parliament was created by an amendment to the SADC Treaty that came into force in July 2024. It is a consultative and deliberative body with no legislative powers or other binding authority. It will only become operational once the Protocol enters into force. At present, there is a SADC Parliamentary Forum comprising 15 member states. This Parliamentary Forum will cease to exist once the Protocol on the SADC Parliament enters

into force. With certain institutions such as the Audit Office up and running, SADC appears to be robust in regulatory terms, but with efforts still to be made to make all its flagship institutions operational. Sub-dimension: Financing (0.397) SADC has relative budget autonomy, with 65% of its budget made available by the Member States, almost all of which have shown remarkable discipline. It is worth noting,

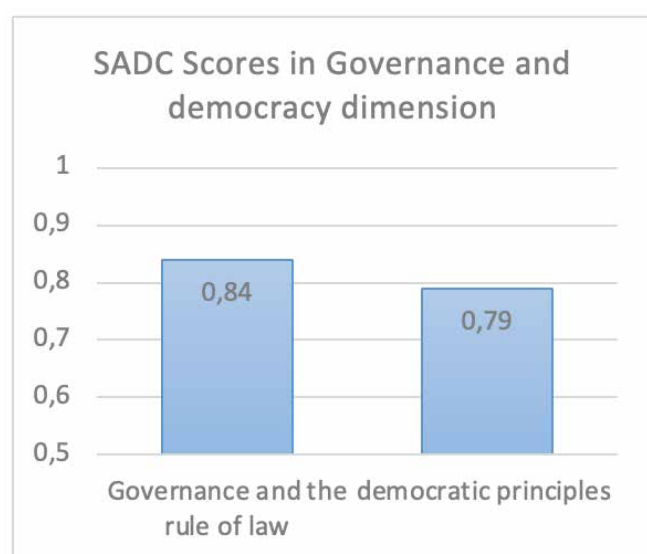




however, that some States that have recently joined the REC need to be integrated into the SADC dynamic in this respect in particular. In terms of financing, the CDR would benefit from setting up a tax levy, as is the case in some other countries. This mechanism would strengthen its budgetary autonomy.

Dimension II: Governance and Democracy (0.815)

SADC stands out for its fairly advanced implementation of governance standards, with very high scores. Anti-corruption protocols, regional election observation missions and strong adherence to democratic principles mark this dimension.



Application is relatively uniform between states, but achievements in this area are to be encouraged.

Sub-dimension: Governance and rule of law (0.84)

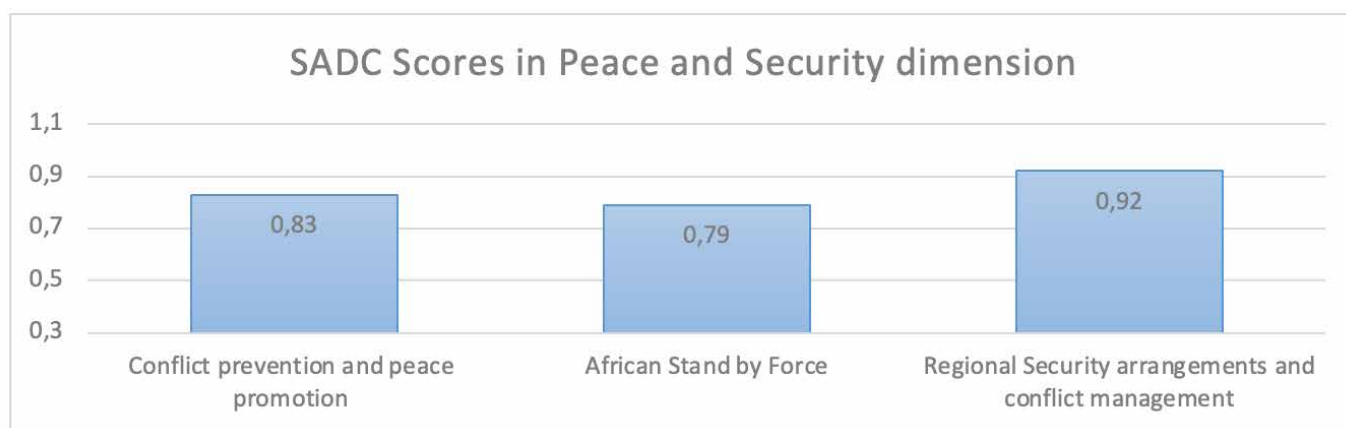
In terms of governance and the rule of law, there is an anti-corruption protocol that has been implemented in fifteen of the sixteen member states. This Strategic Action Plan 2022-2027 against corruption aims to strengthen the prevention, detection and prosecution of corruption through a coordinated regional approach. Despite these advances, disparities remain between countries in the level of independence and effectiveness of anti-corruption institutions, which limits the overall impact of the plan at regional level.

Sub-dimension: Democratic principles (0.79)

SADC has an advanced culture of democratic principles, which are generally well respected by its member states. The organisation of free, transparent and pluralistic elections is a regular feature, particularly in countries such as Botswana, which is often cited as a model of democratic stability, and Namibia and South Africa, where electoral processes are generally praised for their credibility. The existence of election observation mechanisms in almost all member states is a major asset. The SADC Electoral Observation Mission (SEOM) plays a central role in monitoring, analysing and publishing reports on elections held in the region. These missions were deployed, for example, during the general elections in Zambia (2021), Malawi (2019) and Namibia (2024), and often helped to ease post-electoral tensions and boost public confidence in the democratic process. The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, although under the auspices of the African Union, is also a reference framework that the majority of SADC states are endeavouring to respect. Within this framework, a number of member states have adopted modernised electoral laws, enhancing transparency and fairness, as in Eswatini, where a gradual electoral reform is underway, or in Lesotho, with the adoption of provisions favouring a balance of political forces. However, despite this notable progress, a number of challenges remain, particularly in relation to the need to increase freedom of expression or to take account of opposition parties in certain countries. Continued efforts are therefore needed to consolidate democratic gains and ensure that they are effective in all national contexts.

Dimension III: Peace And Security (0.84)

SADC has a good record on peace and security, with structured regional mechanisms (OPDS, Standby Force), but implementation is uneven. The assessment varies greatly according to the indicators, showing areas of excellence (Mozambique) and shortcomings (absence of a warning system in some countries).



Sub-dimension: Conflict prevention and peace promotion (0.83):

On the sub-dimension of conflict prevention and peace promotion, SADC has solid institutional mechanisms, in particular through the Organ for Political, Defence and Security Cooperation (OPDS), which plays a central role in coordinating conflict prevention, management and resolution activities. The regional Early Warning System is up and running, but its effectiveness is still hampered by the fact that some Member States have not yet put their national branches into operation, which limits the feedback of strategic information

Sub-dimension: African Standby Force (0.87)

In terms of deployment, the SADC Standby Force is fully operational and has demonstrated its capacity to intervene, notably through its deployment in Mozambique in 2021 as part of the fight against armed insurrection in the province of Cabo Delgado.

Sub-dimension: Regional security arrangements (0.92)

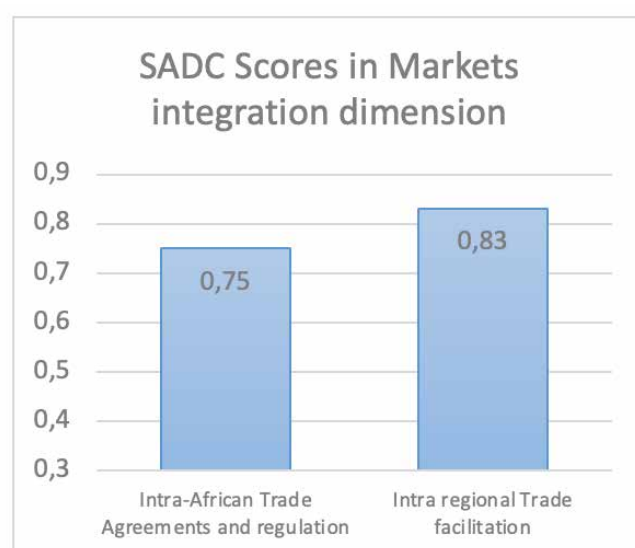
In this sub-dimension, SADC's good performance can be explained by the fact that it has a Mutual Defence Protocol, signed in 2003, which establishes a legal framework for security and defence cooperation between Member States. Joint exercises such as *Blue Hungwe*, *Blue Crane*, *Tanzanite* and *Airborne Africa* have been organised to enhance the interoperability of regional armed forces.

Dimension IV: Market Integration (0.79)

SADC has a functional Free Trade Area (FTA), but no customs union. Non-tariff barriers are dealt with through a regional mechanism. Trade in goods is growing, while trade in services remains unharmonised. The absence of an active commercial court and a guarantee system limits legal and financial security.

Sub dimension: Regional trade agreements and trade regulation (0.83)

SADC's performance on this indicator could be improved, but the REC took a significant step towards economic integration with the establishment of the Free Trade Area (FTA) in 2008. To date, 14 of the 16 Member States have ratified this agreement, facilitating the movement of goods and services within the region. However, the establishment of a customs union, which would involve the adoption of a common external tariff, remains a long-term objective. Diverging trade policies and the international commitments of the Member States, notably the Economic Partnership Agreements with the European Union, do not facilitate the achievement of this objective. Within this group of countries, the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) stands out as a functional nucleus within the SADC, made up of Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa, facilitating intra-regional trade through the elimination of customs duties between its members and the application of a common external tariff for imports from third countries.



Intra-regional trade facilitation sub-dimension (0.75)

The facilitation of intra-regional trade is a key component of SADC's economic integration agenda. To this end, the organisation has put in place a regional programme to reduce non-tariff barriers (NTBs), ratified by the majority of member states and fully implemented in 15 countries, including Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, South Africa and Tanzania. The programme aims to remove technical and administrative obstacles to the movement of goods. An important tool in this context is the online Non-Tariff Barriers Monitoring Mechanism (NTB Monitoring Mechanism), which enables economic operators to report trade barriers, with follow-up coordinated by the states concerned.

Dimension V Business Development, Industry and Mining (0.55)

This dimension comprises five sub-dimensions assessing policies in the areas of competition, investment, industry, tourism and mining resources. SADC's performance is heterogeneous, with significant differences between sub-sectors and also between countries. The relatively low overall score (0.37) reflects a need to strengthen certain economic and industrial integration policies.

Sub-dimension: Investment policies and agreements (Score: 0.606)

SADC's score of 0.606 for the sub-dimension "Investment policies and agreements" reflects significant but incomplete progress in the regional integration process. SADC has a regional framework for regulating investment, notably through the SADC Protocol on Finance and Investment (FIP), adopted in 2006 and revised in 2016, which aims to harmonise investment regimes and promote a business-friendly environment in the region. To date, 14 to 15 member states have internalised the protocol, demonstrating a collective desire for convergence. However, the absence of an operational regional investment promotion agency limits institutional synergies and

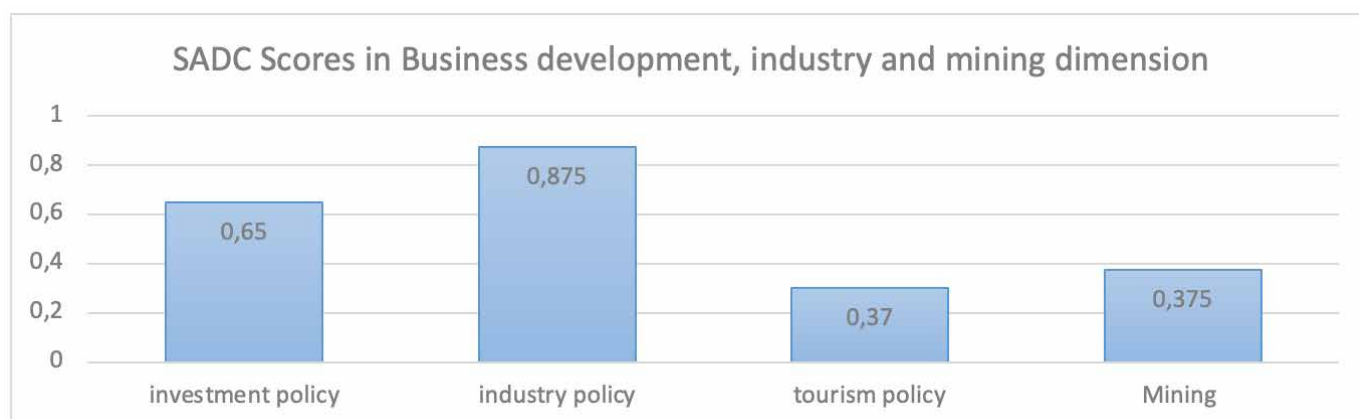
the effective implementation of commitments. In addition, no common investment code has yet been adopted or implemented at regional level, which fragments incentive regimes and reduces visibility for foreign investors. These institutional shortcomings, although partially offset by bilateral cooperation and the presence of intra-SADC investment agreements, justify an average score, signalling a promising but still unfinished base for integration in this area.

Sub-dimension: Industrial policy (Score: 0.875)

SADC's high score of 0.875 for the Industrial Policy sub-dimension reflects an advanced level of integration in this area, making it the highest-rated sub-dimension in the dimension. The performance is underpinned by the existence of a Regional Industrialisation and Value Chain Development Strategy (RISDS), adopted in 2015, which aims to structurally transform the economies of member states through the upscaling of manufacturing sectors and the exploitation of natural resources. This strategy is supported by concrete regional value chain programmes, such as the development of the copper industry between the DRC and Zambia or joint agribusiness projects between Botswana and Namibia. In addition, several Member States have implemented local processing and production integration initiatives in line with this regional strategy, encouraging the emergence of regional industrial clusters. This dynamic of sectoral cooperation, backed by common policy instruments and the effective involvement of Member States, fully justifies a high score close to optimum integration.

Sub-dimension: Tourism policy (Score: 0.3)

The low score assigned to this sub-dimension in SADC's regional integration assessment reflects a persistent gap in terms of operationalisation, despite recent formal progress. Between 2023 and 2025, SADC did introduce some innovations, notably the revision of its guidelines on tourism quality standards and the proposal of a regional framework for the harmonisation of hotel and tourism services standards, which were adopted by 15 member



states. However, these efforts have remained at the normative level and have not been accompanied by the effective implementation of a regional accreditation programme or a joint monitoring body. No consolidated regional strategy has yet been launched at regional level, and tourism initiatives remain largely driven by individual countries or in bilateral formats.

Sub-dimension: Mining policy (Score: 0.375)

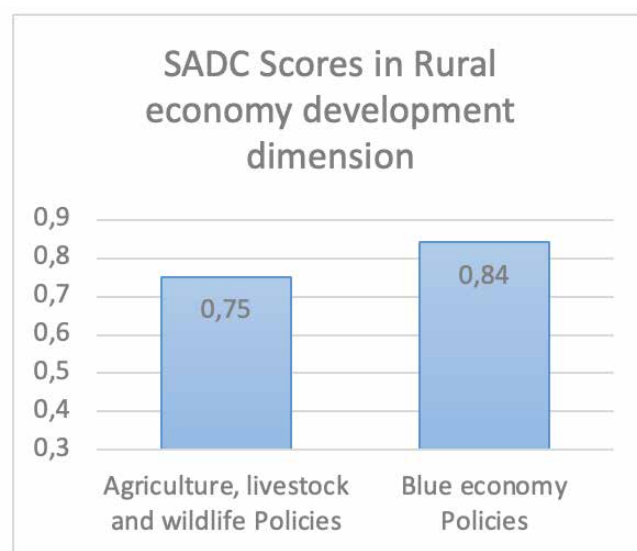
SADC's score of 0.375 in the Mining Policy sub-dimension reflects significant but still insufficient efforts towards regional integration of the extractive sector. Several member countries - notably Angola, Botswana, DRC, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe - have taken concrete steps to align their national policies with the African Mining Vision (AMV) and have integrated continental frameworks such as the African Mineral Resources Classification and Management Framework (AMREC) and the Pan-African Resource Code (PARC). However, these positive dynamics remain concentrated in a small core of countries, while a large number of SADC Member States have not yet harmonised their mining frameworks or engaged in significant cross-border cooperation in this area. In addition, SADC does not yet have a consolidated regional policy on extractive resources, nor an operational coordination or monitoring mechanism at community level. This limits regional synergies and the optimal exploitation of mining value chains, which are crucial for regional industrialisation.

Dimension VI Rural Economy Development (0.79)

SADC's "Development of the rural economy" dimension performed strongly, with high scores in its two sub-dimensions: 0.75 for agricultural, livestock and wildlife policies, and 0.8437 for blue economy policies. These results reflect a strong regional desire to structure common policies, although challenges remain in terms of operationalisation and exclusivity.

Sub-dimension Agricultural, livestock and wildlife policies (Score: 0.75)

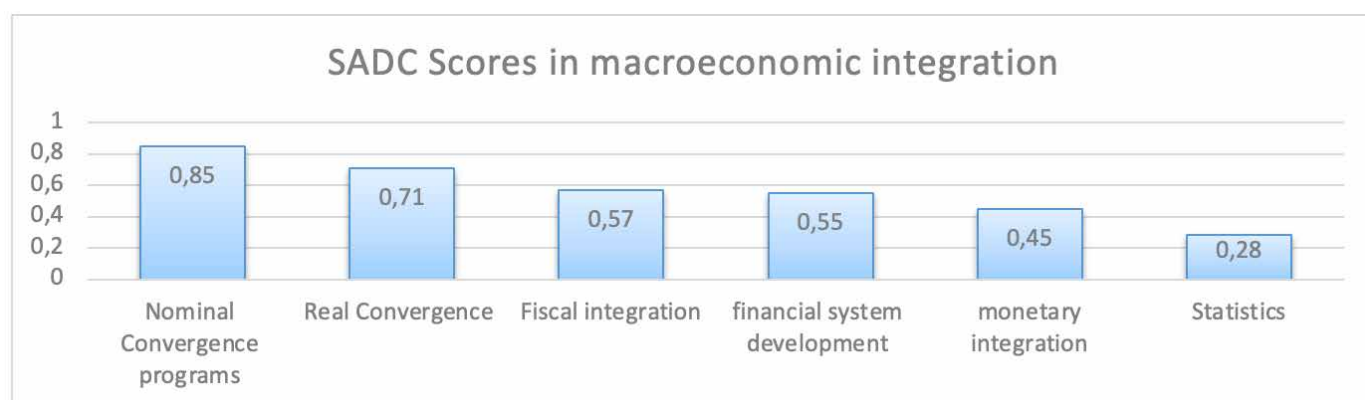
SADC has put in place a Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP), approved in 2013, which provides a strategic framework for harmonising the agricultural policies of member states. The Regional Agricultural Investment Plan (RAIP), aligned with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), which aims to enhance food security and sustainable economic growth in the region, supports this policy. In the livestock sector, SADC has established a Livestock Technical Committee (LTC), made up of the heads of national veterinary services, which meets annually



to discuss regional cooperation and integration in the livestock sector. Initiatives such as the Regional Livestock Information Management System (LIMS) have been developed to improve the collection and analysis of animal health and production data. With regard to wildlife, SADC has developed a strategic framework for a wildlife-based economy, aimed at integrating resilient economic development, environmental sustainability and poverty eradication. Therefore, in order to strengthen regional integration in this sub-dimension, SADC should accelerate the operational implementation of existing policies, in particular by establishing effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and by strengthening coordination between Member States for the sustainable management of agricultural, livestock and wildlife resources.

Sub-dimension: Blue economy policies (Score: 0.84)

Between 2023 and 2025, SADC strengthened its commitment to the blue economy through a series of innovative initiatives at regional and national levels. One of the flagship projects of this period is the PROFISHBLUE initiative, supported by the African Development Bank, which has significantly improved fisheries governance and launched blue trade corridors, notably between Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa, in order to boost trade in fish products. The programme includes institutional training, the harmonisation of marine resource management policies and the facilitation of intra-regional trade, with tangible results visible in several coastal countries. At the same time, national blue economy strategies have been developed or strengthened in countries such as Namibia, Madagascar, Mauritius and the Seychelles, in line with the African Union's continental strategy. These plans include the sustainable development of fishing, aquaculture, maritime transport and marine renewable energies. Finally, the AquaTrans



programme, deployed in training establishments in Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique, has played a key role in professionalising the fish processing, aquaculture and value-adding industries, in line with the needs of the regional market.

Dimension VII: Macroeconomic Integration (0.56)

SADC has a moderate level of macroeconomic integration, with an average score of 0.78, revealing a clear desire for economic convergence, but also significant disparities between the sub-dimensions. Some progress has been made in the areas of nominal convergence and regional taxation, but there are still delays in statistical integration, which is essential if coherent macroeconomic governance based on harmonised data is to be established. This configuration indicates a macroeconomic architecture under construction, supported by technical instruments and mechanisms partially aligned with continental standards.

Sub-dimension: Nominal convergence programmes (0.75)

During the period 2023-2025, SADC intensified the application of its macroeconomic convergence criteria, in conjunction with the work of the AACB and the monitoring of the Regional Currency Action Plan. Almost all Member States have continued to submit regular data to the SADC Macroeconomic Convergence Monitoring Framework. Several countries, including Botswana, Namibia and Mauritius, have maintained inflation and deficit levels in line with the common objectives. In the medium term, therefore, it would seem appropriate to set up a strengthened regional surveillance mechanism with the publication of comparative reports to increase accountability and effective convergence.

Sub-dimension: Real convergence (0.667)

This score reflects heterogeneous levels of development (particularly in terms of GDP per

capita) between Member States, despite a shared growth dynamic in some countries. SADC does not yet have compensatory corrective mechanisms (such as convergence or cohesion funds) to smooth out imbalances. However, increased monetary cooperation and the participation of a core group of countries in monetary unions, such as the Common Monetary Area of Southern Africa (CMA) comprising South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia and Eswatini, are conducive to a degree of stability.

Globally in other areas, SADC shows varied performance across the macroeconomic integration sub-dimensions. Fiscal integration (0.57) and financial system development (0.55) reveal ongoing challenges related to budgetary coordination and deepening financial markets. Monetary integration scores relatively low at 0.45, highlighting limited progress towards a unified monetary policy and common currency framework. The lowest score of 0.28 in statistics points to significant gaps in data collection, harmonization, and availability, which impede informed policy-making and integration monitoring.

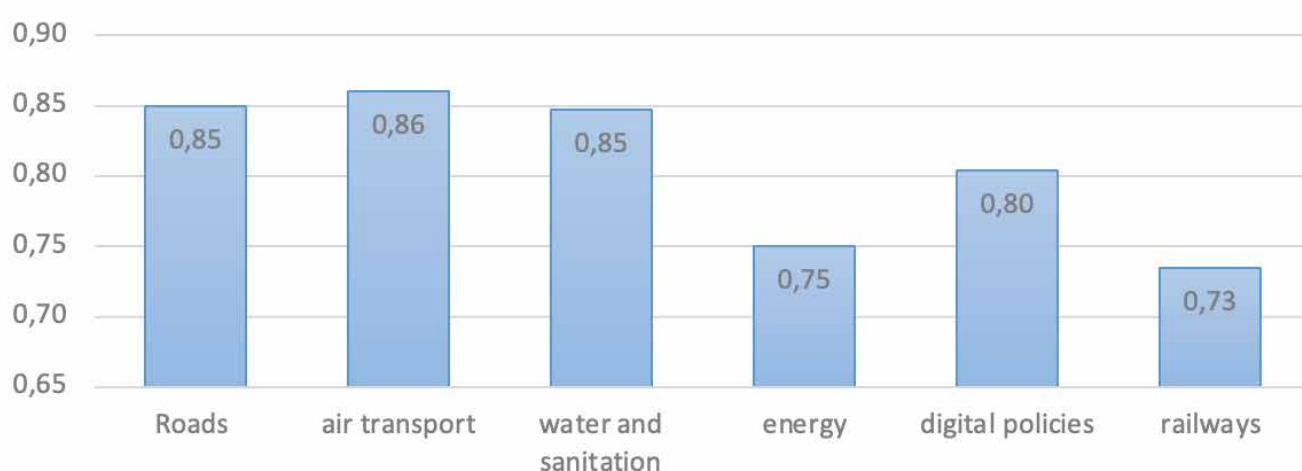
Dimension VIII: Infrastructure Integration (0.801)

Between 2023 and 2025, SADC saw a sharp acceleration in regional integration in the field of infrastructure, reaching a remarkable average score of 0.801. This performance illustrates a coherent strategy based on the implementation of PIDA PAP 2 projects, the consolidation of cross-border corridors, and the increasing harmonisation of sectoral policies. The region stands out for its excellent results in road and air transport, as well as sustained progress in energy, digital technology and access to water, making this dimension one of the most integrated on the continental scale.

Sub-dimension: Road infrastructure (0.94)

SADC achieved an almost perfect score, justified by the full operability of regional road corridors such as the North-South Corridor, the Trans-Kalahari

SADC Scores in Infrastructure integration dimension



Corridor and the Trans-Caprivi Corridor, which link South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia. Harmonised maintenance programmes have been deployed on certain strategic sections, and one-stop border posts (OSBPs) have been commissioned between 2023 and 2025, facilitating free movement. However, to go further, it could extend these one-stop shops to all major crossing points and adopt a regional road safety code.

Sub-dimension: Rail networks (Score: 0.734)

Major progress has been made in interconnecting the railways, with the rehabilitation of the Beira-Machipanda-Harare line and discussions on modernising the Lobito network (DRC-Angola-Zambia). The SADC Railway Association (SARA) has strengthened technical coordination between operators. However, there are still problems with the standardisation of track gauges and ageing rolling stock. It is therefore important to launch a plan to modernise railway equipment and a regional track standardisation programme by 2027.

Sub-dimension: Air transport (Score: 0.95)

All member countries have aligned their legislation with the Yamoussoukro Declaration and are participating in the African Union's SAATM initiative for a single air transport market. Bilateral and multilateral open skies agreements have been signed, facilitating regional air links. SADC airlines such as Air Botswana, Airlink and TAAG Angola Airlines have increased their frequency on regional routes. These achievements justify the optimum rating for this sub-dimension of ASRII. However, to go further, SADC could create a regional aviation regulatory authority to ensure safety, fair competition and harmonisation of charges.

Sub-dimension: Energy (Score: 0.860)

SADC has strengthened the Regional Power Exchange System (SAPP), integrating the markets of South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Namibia, with a significant improvement in generation and transmission capacity. Cross-border renewable energy projects, such as the Namaacha solar power plant (Mozambique) and the ZESCO-ESCOM interconnector (Zambia-Malawi), have been implemented over the period 2023-2025. Increase joint investment in renewable energy and create a regional energy resilience fund.

Sub-dimension: Water and sanitation (Score: 0.938)

SADC has maintained a high level of integration around shared river basins, notably the Orange-Senqu River, the Zambezi and the Limpopo, with operational basin committees. Community-based sustainable management projects have been developed in cross-border areas, with the active participation of Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe. The regional WASH programme, supported by the EU, has increased access to drinking water. For greater cooperation in this area, the Member States should agree to institutionalise a regional water observatory to harmonise data and strengthen the prevention of conflicts linked to water resources.

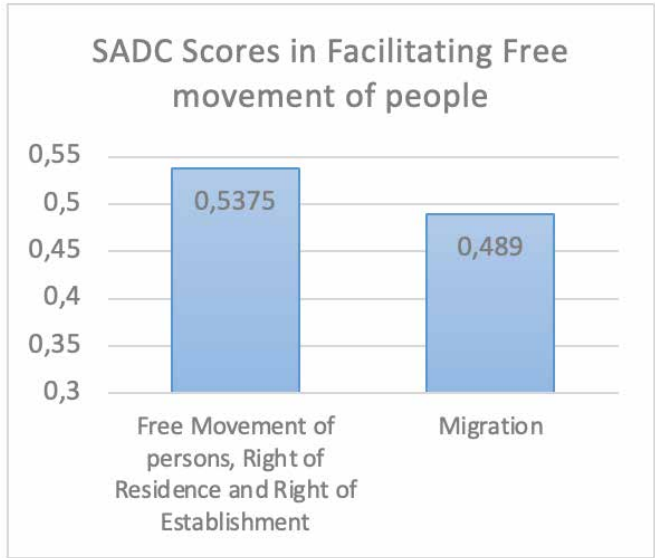
Sub-dimension: Digital policies and programmes (Score: 0.917)

SADC's high score in digital policies and programmes is justified by the ramping up of the SADC Digital 2030 programme, with the strengthening of cross-border fibre optic infrastructure, the promotion of interoperability of digital services and the adoption of harmonised regulatory frameworks on cybersecurity.

and data protection. Countries such as Rwanda (observer country), Mauritius, South Africa and Malawi have piloted innovations in e-government and digital identity. SADC could set up a regional digital agency to steer the interconnection of public platforms and promote regional tech start-ups.

Dimension Ix: Facilitating the Free Movement of People (0.514)

SADC has an average level of integration in the “Facilitation of free movement” dimension, with an overall score of 0.514, reflecting limited and uneven progress between the sub-dimensions. Although some instruments exist at a legal or declaratory level, the region lags behind other African communities that are more integrated in these areas, such as ECOWAS and the EAC.



Sub-dimension: Free movement of persons, right of residence and establishment (0.53)

Since the Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons (adopted in 2005), SADC has recognised the principles of free movement, residence and establishment. However, this protocol has still not entered into force due to a lack of ratifications (only a few states have ratified it, such as Mozambique and Botswana), revealing a significant gap between declared intentions and legal realities. Between 2023 and 2025, some states took unilateral or bilateral initiatives: for example, South Africa and Zimbabwe simplified certain visa regimes, while Zambia launched a regional e-visa programme. But there is still no common SADC visa, and no integrated system for recognising the right of establishment for nationals of member states.

Sub-dimension: Migration (0.4896)

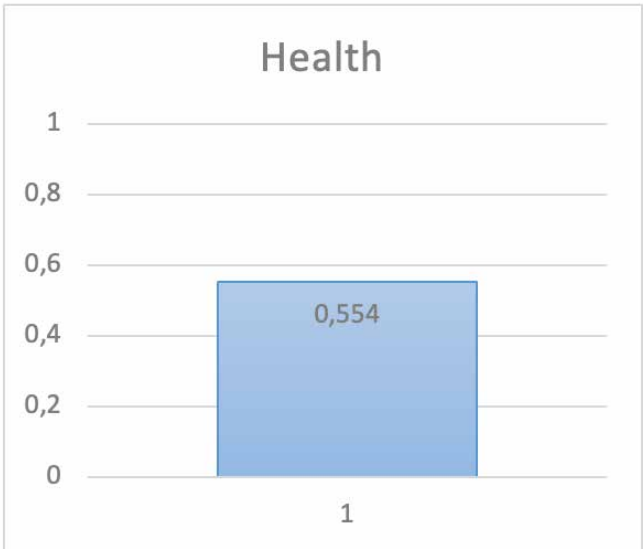
SADC has adopted a security and partly humanitarian approach to migration, without a comprehensive institutional framework for concerted management. The policy framework on labour migration, updated between 2023 and 2025, remains largely non-binding, even though several states (e.g. Namibia, Malawi, Eswatini) have strengthened their capacity to identify and protect migrants. The mobility of skilled workers remains limited by the lack of pooling of professional skills, recognition of qualifications and restrictive quotas. On the other hand, the responses to the questionnaire on this sub-dimension highlight the widespread application of the principles of coordinated management, which is only partially verifiable in practice. Few countries have interconnected migration databases, and migration policies are often managed in a sovereign manner, with no regional alert or information-sharing mechanisms. Some progress has been made in the protection of refugees and cross-border cooperation on the flow of displaced persons as a result of climate change or crisis, notably through projects supported by the IOM or GIZ, but these initiatives remain ad hoc.

Dimension X: Social Integration (0.554)

Due to the unavailability of data, result of this dimension only relies on the health sub dimension with a score of 0.554.

Sub-dimension: Health (0.554)

SADC recorded an average score of 0.554 in the sub-dimension “Health,” reflecting functional but still fragmented integration in the field of regional health cooperation. Between 2023 and 2025, a number of advances were noted, particularly in terms of epidemiological coordination, but persistent disparities in access to healthcare, health coverage and mutual recognition of qualifications



continue to hinder full social integration. During this period, SADC strengthened the implementation of its Regional Health Strategic Plan (2020-2030), with increased focus on post-COVID-19 resilience, reproductive health and pandemic preparedness. Regional health surveillance and alert mechanisms have been consolidated, in conjunction with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the African Medical Agency. Countries such as Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi have implemented coordinated cross-border vaccination campaigns against measles and polio. However, SADC does not yet have a legally binding health instrument, a regional health coverage scheme or an inter-State mutual health insurance scheme, which limits the effectiveness of the right to health for mobile citizens. Furthermore, the responses to the questionnaire suggest that cooperation is widespread, whereas in reality healthcare systems remain highly national, with little pooling of services or mobility of medical staff between Member States. Regulatory obstacles still hamper the recognition of diplomas and the mobility of healthcare professionals within the region. The recommendation here is to speed up the creation of a regional framework for the mobility of healthcare professionals, encourage mutual recognition agreements for medical qualifications, and initiate a health solidarity fund to strengthen equity of access to healthcare in border areas and the most vulnerable states.

Dimension XI: Human Development, Science and Technology (0.72)

With an average score of 0.72, SADC stands out for a good level of integration in this dimension, due in particular to ambitious policies and coordination mechanisms implemented between 2023 and 2025 in the fields of education, youth, gender, culture and innovation. This progress has been facilitated by alignment with the objectives of Agenda 2063, synergies with African Union agencies (CIEFFA, STISA-2024, PAUSTI) and the internal efforts of several Member States to harmonise their social and technological policies.

Sub-dimension: Education (Score: 0.75)

Between 2023 and 2025, SADC continued to implement its Protocol on Education and Training, with progress on the harmonisation of curricula, the development of regional qualification systems (SADCQF) and academic mobility. Countries such as South Africa, Namibia and Mauritius have strengthened their cooperation through regional universities and exchange programmes. However, there are still obstacles to the recognition of technical and professional diplomas, as well as inequality of access to higher education between countries.

Sub-dimension: Gender (Score: 0.775)

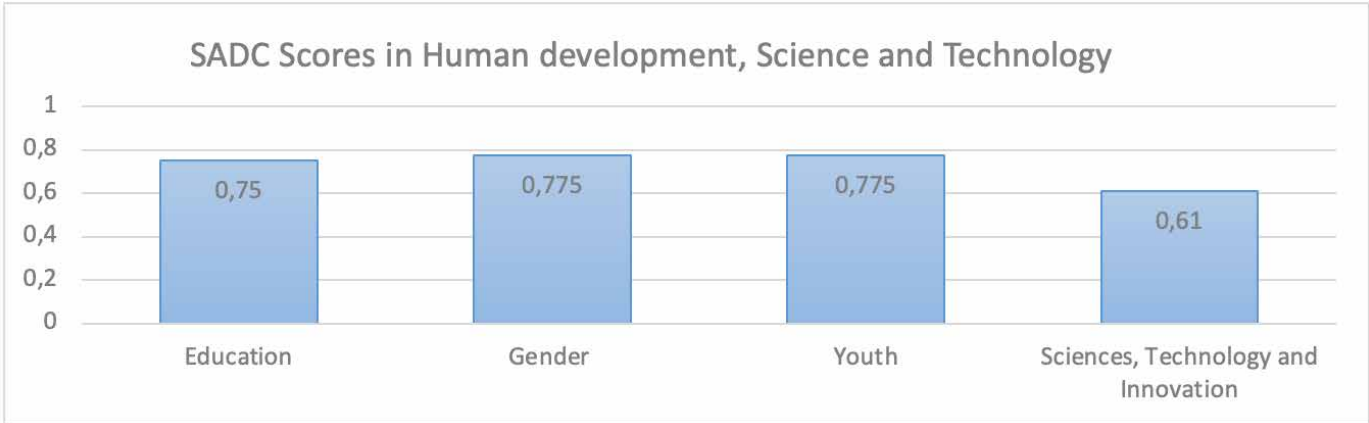
SADC is one of the most advanced regional blocs in terms of promoting gender equality, with an update in 2023 of the Protocol on Gender and Development, which reinforces the objectives of parity and women’s empowerment. Significant progress has been made in terms of women’s political representation (particularly in Zimbabwe and Mozambique), access to financial services, and the fight against gender-based violence.

Sub-dimension: Youth and empowerment (0.775)

Between 2023 and 2025, SADC launched several programmes targeting young people, including the Youth Entrepreneurship Empowerment Programme (YEEP) and the Youth Innovation Fund, with the active participation of countries such as Zambia, Eswatini and Malawi. Policies in favour of employment, technical training and access to finance have been strengthened. Governments have also included young people in the planning of climate and digital policies.

Sub-dimension: Culture (0.564)

SADC has strengthened its cultural cooperation around the Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport, with joint initiatives in heritage preservation,



the circulation of cultural works and the organisation of regional festivals (e.g. the SADC Cultural Festival held in Namibia in 2024). However, the absence of a regional fund for culture and the persistence of customs and tax barriers on cultural products still limit the integration of this sector.

Sub-dimension: Science, technology and innovation (0.61)

Between 2023 and 2025, the region strengthened its regional STI policy framework, supported by the SADC Innovation and Technology Hub, hosted in South Africa. Cooperation programmes in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, biotechnology and data science have been launched, with strong participation from countries such as Botswana, Mauritius and Tanzania. Partnerships have also been signed with the AU, UNESCO and the European Union.

Recommendations

Based on the comprehensive assessment of SADC's integration performance, key recommendations can be made to accelerate progress and address structural imbalances within the community.

Firstly, **SADC should prioritise the full operationalisation of its institutional and legal architecture.** To this end, it would be important to;

- Accelerate the operationalisation of the SADC Parliament and Tribunal in order to strengthen the community's democratic legitimacy and decision-making capacity, and make these institutions levers of governance, dispute resolution and monitoring of regional commitments.
- Implementing a regional levy mechanism to ensure stable and autonomous funding: In order to overcome the limits of current voluntary contributions, and strengthen the financial sustainability of its programmes.

Secondly, **economic integration should be deepened by filling critical gaps in investment promotion, competition policy and sectoral coordination.** To this end, SADC could:

- further harmonise investment regimes and introduce a common regional investment code.
- Establish a regional competition authority with binding powers to effectively combat anti-competitive practices.
- Set up a convergence fund to help reduce development gaps between members and strengthen regional economic cohesion.



BRIEF ON THE COMESA-EAC-SADC TRIPARTITE FREE TRADE AREA

A. Background

On 22nd October 2008, the Tripartite Summit of Heads of State and Government held in Uganda, decided that “the three RECs should enhance economic development and integration of their markets for their mutual benefit and the benefit of their Member States through harmonisation of their policies with the objective of attainment of continental integration as envisaged under the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Treaty Establishing of the African Economic Community”.

The Summit agreed on areas of cooperation including among others: Trade liberalisation and customs cooperation; establishment of a Free Trade Area and any other deeper cooperation as agreed by the Member States; development of programmes to enhance movement of business persons, labour and services across the region; development of joint infrastructure programmes, financing and implementation; joint programmes for agriculture development and food security and any other areas of mutual interest.

The Tripartite policy organs of the the 26 COMESA, EAC and SADC Member/Partner states immediately embarked on work to expeditiously establish the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) and overall trade liberalisation, infrastructure and industrial development programmes at the same time negotiating the agreement on movement of businesspersons on a parallel track. The Tripartite region now comprises 29 Member/Partner states of which 14 are members of the TFTA. To date, 22 of the 29 Tripartite Member States have signed the TFTA Agreement and 7 countries (Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Tunisia, Somali) are outstanding.

The TFTA came into force on 25th July 2024 at the attainment of the required ratifications by 14 Member/ Partner States. (Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Egypt, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

Work is underway to operationalise the TFTA including launch of the FTA, setting up the institutional arrangements and administrative requirements.

29 – Member/Partner States of the TFTA

1. Angola	16. Mauritius
2. Botswana	17. Mozambique
3. Burundi	18. Namibia
4. Comoros	19. Rwanda
5. DRC	20. Seychelles
6. Djibouti	21. Somalia
7. Egypt	22. South Africa
8. Ethiopia	23. South Sudan
9. Eritrea	24. Sudan
10. Eswatini	25. Tanzania
11. Kenya	26. Tunisia
12. Lesotho	27. Uganda
13. Libya	28. Zambia
14. Madagascar	29. Zimbabwe
15. Malawi	

- TFTA Members comprise 53% of the AfCFTA



The Tripartite Task Force is processing offers by some Member/Partner states to host the TFTA secretariat for consideration by Council.

The 29 countries represent 53 percent of the African Union membership, more than 60 percent of continental GDP (\$1.88 Trillion; 2019) and a combined population of 800 million.

The Tripartite is based on a developmental integration approach of the complementarity between trade liberalization, competitive industrial production and infrastructure development and is built on 3 pillars:

- **Market Integration:** Trade liberalization resulting in the Free Trade Area
- **Infrastructure Development:** Development and enhancement infrastructure connectivity and reduced costs of doing business
- **Industrial Development:** Creating an enabling environment (addressing the regulatory and legal framework); value addition; diversification; enhancing productivity and competitiveness; and the development of programmes which will result in structural changes.

B. Organs of the TFTA

Work is underway to operationalise the TFTA including its launch, setting up the institutional arrangements and administrative requirements. Constitution of the following organs for the implementation of the TFTA commenced in January 2025 with the first meeting of the Tripartite Committee of Experts (TCE):

- Tripartite Summit;
- Tripartite Council of Ministers;
- Tripartite Sectoral Ministerial Committee on Trade, Finance, Customs and Economic Matters and the Sectoral Ministerial Committee on Legal Affairs which shall be responsible for policy direction and implementation in their respective areas;
- The Tripartite Task Force of the Secretariats of the Three RECs to coordinate implementation of the agreement;
- Tripartite Committee of Senior Officials; and
- Tripartite Committee of Experts which shall carry out the technical work.
- Rules of procedure for the various Tripartite Organs are being developed for adoption by Council.

C. Scope of Negotiations of the Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement

Tripartite negotiations are conducted in Two Phases. Phase I Negotiations cover implementation of priority programmes under the broad pillars on Market Integration, Industrial development, and Infrastructure development pillars while Phase II Negotiations covered Trade in Services, Competition Policy, Investment and Intellectual Property Rights. However, negotiations on Competition Policy, Trade in Services and aspects of trade related infrastructure commended in parallel track with Phase I negotiations on Market Integration leading to attainment of significant traction towards the realization of the Tripartite integration agenda.

(i) Status of Negotiations

- Negotiations began in 2011 and the Agreement establishing the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) was signed and launched by the 3rd Tripartite Summit of Heads of State and Government in June 2015.

Negotiations are ongoing on outstanding issues relating to tariff schedules and rules of origin, under Phase I negotiations. Under the market integration pillar, negotiations have largely been concluded on trade tariff liberalisation, rules of origin and trade remedies save for two areas under the rules of origin covering a few products of the textiles and textile products and automotive sectors, which are still outstanding. Concluded areas under tariff liberalization include customs procedures

and simplification of customs documents, transit procedures, elimination of non-tariff barriers, technical barriers to trade (TBT) and sanitary and Phyto-sanitary (SPS) measures

D. Market Integration Pillar

Progress on Negotiations and Implementation Status on Phase I issues

- All the ten (10) Annexes to the Tripartite FTA agreement have been concluded, legally scrubbed and adopted and are ready for implementation. Implementation instruments for the various Annexes have been developed and adopted by Council of Ministers. These include:
- Manual on Application of Tripartite FTA Rules of Origin, for implementation of Annex IV;
- Tripartite General Guidelines on Customs Cooperation for implementation of Annex V,
- Tripartite General Guidelines on Trade Facilitation for implementation of Annex VI;
- Tripartite General Guidelines on Transit Facilitation for implementation of Annex VII;

Tariff Offers

- EAC and SACU finalised their bilateral tariff offer negotiations on products that are subject to immediate liberalization. Several Tripartite/ Member Partner States have submitted tariff offers based on the Acqui while some are still in the process of preparing the offers.
- 93.37% (5030 of the 5387 tariff lines, HS 2017 version) of the list rules of origin have been agreed and are ready for use. Negotiations are continuing on the remaining 6.76% of the list rules of origin and these negotiations are taking place within the provisions of the transitional arrangements and their outcomes shall therefore automatically be part of the already agreed Annex IV on Rules of Origin.
- Focus is now on implementation of the Agreement The Tripartite Committee of Experts commenced its work in January 2025 and concluded negotiations on the Rules of procedure for the Committee for consideration by the Tripartite Committee of Senior Officials .

The online NTBs reporting and elimination mechanism is currently being implemented by twenty-seven (27) Tripartite Member/Partner States.

The SMS reporting system is operational in four Member/Partner States namely, Comoros, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Burundi and DR Congo have commenced preparations to install the SMS tool while Kenya has expressed interest to adopt the tool.

Status of Agreement on Movement of Business Persons

The Agreement was adopted by the 5th meeting Council of Ministers, and shall be submitted for signature and ratification by Member/Partner States.

The Agreement requires 14 ratifications to enter into force.

Status of Negotiations on Phase II issues

- Negotiations on the draft Protocol on Trade in Services have been deferred pending the outcomes of negotiations process under the AfCFTA forum which have reached advanced stages to allow for synchronisation and avoid duplication or Member/Partner States offering different of commitments at the Tripartite and Continental levels; and
- The draft Protocol on Competition Policy was adopted by the 8th Tripartite Sectoral Committee of Ministers (TSMC) and awaiting legal scrubbing and thereafter adoption by the 6th meeting of Tripartite Council of Ministers .

E. Infrastructure Development Pillar

The following Legal instruments for Tripartite Road Transport and Transit Facilitation adopted by the 5th Meeting of Tripartite Council of Ministers are ready for implementation:

- i. COMESA-EAC-SADC Vehicle Load Management Agreement;
- ii. COMESA-EAC-SADC Multilateral Cross Border Road Transport Agreement;
- iii. COMESA-EAC-SADC Vehicle Load Management Model Law;
- iv. COMESA-EAC-SADC Cross Border Road Transport Model Law
- v. COMESA-EAC-SADC Road Traffic Model Law;
- vi. COMESA-EAC-SADC Road Traffic and Transport Transgressions Model Law; and
- vii. COMESA-EAS-SADC Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road Model Law

F. Industrial Development Pillar

The Tripartite Framework of Cooperation on industrial development and a Work Programme/Roadmap were adopted by the Tripartite Council of Ministers in October 2016

Following the development of policy briefs on agro-processing value chains and industrial statistics, as well as the Tripartite Council's directive for the establishment of a Tripartite Industrial Development Coordination Unit, the work programme under this has not been implemented due to lack of funds. This includes:

- Development of programs to promote linkages between the MSMEs and the large enterprises
- Development of modalities for training and capacity building on compilation of industrial data-series for the industrial statistics system to meet international standards
- Establishment of an Industrial Development Coordination Unit
- Identification of institutions to serve as Centres of Excellence for Tripartite Agro-Processing and Industrial Statistics.

G. Resource Mobilisation

The Tripartite Resource Mobilization Strategy was adopted by Council and is being implemented.

Tripartite COVID-19 guidelines:

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic COMESA, EAC and SADC developed the Tripartite Guidelines for Movement of Goods and Services Across the Region during COVID-19 Pandemic. These Guidelines were based on the existing COMESA, EAC and SADC Guidelines.

Electronic Surveillance Systems to Monitor Driver Health and Track the Movement of Drivers and Trucks were also developed to support the implementation of the Tripartite Guidelines for Movement of Goods and Services.

In addition, Tripartite Guidelines for Safe Cross Border Movement of Persons and Personal Goods during the COVID-19 Pandemic was developed and approved by a joint meeting of Tripartite Sectoral Ministerial Committee on Trade, Finance, Customs, Economic Matters and Home/Internal Affairs, and Tripartite Ministers responsible for Health, which was held on 3rd March 2021.

Relationship between the TFTA and AfCFTA:

The TFTA is a critical building block to the AfCFTA as it has committed to championing the and expediting the continental integration process under the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community and the Constitutive Act of the AU through regional initiatives. On the operational side, advanced negotiations on the TFTA and its instruments served as the basis for the establishment of the AfCFTA. The AfCFTA and qualifies as a regional trading arrangement covered by Article 19 of the AfCFTA Agreement: "State Parties that are members of other regional economic communities, regional trading arrangements and custom unions, which have attained among themselves higher levels of regional integration than under this Agreement, shall maintain such higher levels among themselves"

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The TFTA can exist alongside the AfCFTA and should promote its aims but this will depend on the unique trade liberalization profile which its Members will be able to agree.

Challenges:

- Overlapping membership in different RECs requires harmonising programmes across the three RECs;
- Institutional arrangements such as the TFTA Secretariat are yet to be established, however some member states have submitted offers to host the TFTA secretariat; and
- Funding challenges have delayed start of implementation of the TFTA Agreement.

Benefits

Collaboration of 3 RECs increases the opportunities for resource mobilization as development Partners

are adopting Member/Partner state and continental funding approach rather than RECs. Current funding models are targeting configurations of Member/Partner States from the three RECs at a time instead one REC There is renewed interest in the Tripartite. Development Partners have indicated interest while some have put in initial tranches of resources towards Tripartite Programmes (AfDB, EU, AGRA)

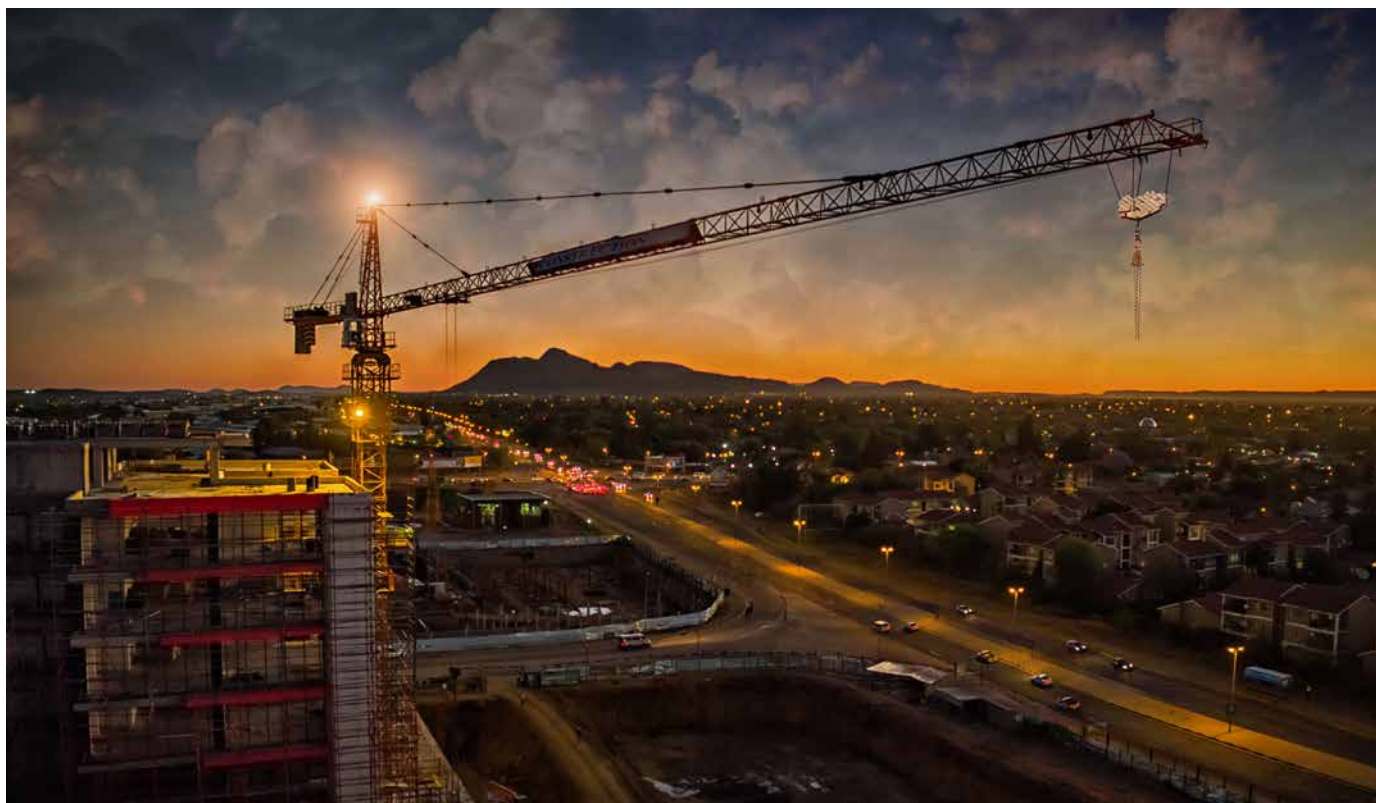
- Facilitates harmonizing of regulations -
- Significant amount of resources & momentum mobilized for infrastructure development along the North South Corridor

Way forward on the Tripartite Work Programme

- Adoption of the Tripartite Capacity Building Strategy for implementation of the Tripartite FTA Agreement
- Finalize the negotiations on the outstanding list rules of origin-mainly for textiles and automotive products
- Finalize negotiations on Trade in Services
- Finalize the Tripartite Simplified Trade Regime for small cross border traders
- Finalize negotiations and development of instruments to implement the Annexes to the TFTA Agreement
- Capacity building of stakeholders
- Mobilize additional resources to implement the Tripartite Work Programme

Conclusion

As a building block for the AfCFTA, the Tripartite Free Trade Area needs to be consolidated through implementation of the Agreement to harness the potential benefits and preserve the gains made as well as strengthen the participation of Tripartite Member/Partner States in the AfCFTA.



CHAPTER V:

INTRA AFRICAN TRADE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES

This section presents a detailed analysis of the Market Integration dimension results for Africa's Regional Economic Communities (RECs), focusing on their performance in two key sub-dimensions: Intra-African Trade Flows and Diversification and Sophistication of intra-African trade. The analysis draws on a comprehensive dataset of country-level and REC-level scores across various indicators. The aim is to identify the main drivers, barriers, and policy implications for advancing market integration in Africa.

The analysis is based on a set of normalised scores (ranging from 0 to 1) for each REC and its member countries across six indicators in each of the two sub-dimensions. The indicators are aggregated to produce sub-dimension scores, which are then compared to the overall African averages. The analysis also examines the performance of individual member countries to provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing REC-level results.

Overall Performances

The market integration landscape across Africa's Regional Economic Communities (RECs) reveals a complex picture of varying achievements in both trade flows and trade diversification. Based on the comprehensive dataset encompassing all major RECs, we can identify distinct patterns of regional integration across the continent that offer valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders.

The summary table below presents the scores achieved by each REC and the African Union on the two overarching dimensions:

Hierarchical Integration Patterns

A clear hierarchical pattern emerges when examining the overall market integration quantitative scores. SADC stands as the uncontested leader in African regional integration, achieving the highest scores on both intra-African trade flows (0.3579) and diversification/sophistication (0.4119). This dual excellence establishes SADC as Africa's most comprehensively integrated regional bloc, regarding market integration, with a combined integration score approximately 30% above the continental average. SADC's leadership position likely stems from several factors: *relatively developed transport infrastructure connecting member states; the institutional depth of the Southern African Customs Union at its core;*

South Africa's role as an anchor economy with diversified industrial capacity; and the community's long-standing commitment to integration dating back to the early post-apartheid period.

In the second tier, COMESA and ECOWAS demonstrate strong but more specialized integration profiles. COMESA excels particularly in trade flows (0.2791), ranking second continent-wide, while achieving near-average diversification (0.3967). ECOWAS shows the opposite pattern, with modest trade flows (0.2453) but relatively strong diversification (0.4035). These contrasting specializations reflect different integration priorities and structural characteristics: *COMESA has focused extensively on trade facilitation and market access, while ECOWAS benefits from Nigeria's relatively diversified industrial base despite more modest intra-regional exchange volumes.*

The middle tier comprises EAC and IGAD, both having near-continental-average scores on trade flows while falling slightly below average on diversification. These RECs face similar challenges relating to infrastructure gaps and limited industrialization, though both have made meaningful progress in specific integration dimensions.

At the lower end of the spectrum, AMU and ECCAS demonstrate significant integration deficits across both dimensions. AMU's particularly weak trade flows score (0.1621) reflects the community's limited implementation of integration frameworks amidst persistent political tensions. ECCAS has the weakest diversification score (0.3854) among all RECs, highlighting its continued dependence on raw material exports and limited value chain

development. Both communities face substantial structural and political barriers to deeper integration that will require concerted policy interventions to overcome.

CENSAD occupies a unique position with the second-lowest trade flows score (0.2004) but near-average diversification (0.4006), reflecting its immense geographic spread and institutional limitations as a large, loose regional framework rather than a tightly integrated economic space.

Regional Economic Community Analysis

AMU (Arab Maghreb Union)

Intra-African Trade Flows: The AMU posted the lowest trade flows score among RECs (0.1621), 34% below the continental average. This reflects consistently low performance in both goods and services trade, with intra-regional goods exports representing only 33% of the African average. Services trade is also weak, especially on the import side. Tunisia and Libya slightly outperform the REC average, while Morocco and Algeria show minimal regional trade engagement. Structural constraints include political tensions, non-tariff barriers, and a continued economic orientation toward European markets.

Trade Diversification and Sophistication: With a score of 0.4075, the AMU aligns with the continental average, but internal disparities remain. Morocco shows strong manufacturing exports (0.7422), while Algeria is highly reliant on raw materials (0.9680) with negligible industrial output. Libya and Tunisia display moderate diversification and integration into global

REC/Region	Intra-African Trade Flows	Rank	Diversification & Sophistication	Rank	Total Volume and sophistication of intra-African Trade	Rank
AMU	0.1621	8	0.4075	2	0.2848	8
CENSAD	0.2004	6	0.4006	4	0.3005	6
COMESA	0.2791	2	0.3967	5	0.3379	2
EAC	0.2525	3	0.392	6	0.32225	4
ECCAS	0.1907	7	0.3854	7	0.28805	7
ECOWAS	0.2453	4	0.4035	3	0.3244	3
IGAD	0.2186	5	0.3895	8	0.30405	5
SADC	0.3579	1	0.4119	1	0.3849	1
African Union	0.2448	-	0.4072	-	0.326	

Source: AUC compilation

value chains, though intra-regional intermediate goods trade remains low, indicating limited regional production networks.

Policy Recommendations: Priority should be given to eliminating trade barriers and harmonizing standards to boost intra-regional exchanges. Developing cross-border industrial zones between Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia could foster production complementarities. Strengthening services trade, especially in finance and logistics, and investing in regional infrastructure are also critical. Lastly, the AMU could leverage diaspora ties and EU proximity to establish competitive regional value chains in key sectors like agro-processing and automotive parts.

CENSAD (Community of Sahel-Saharan States)

Intra-African Trade Flows: CENSAD scored 0.2004 in intra-African trade flows, about 18% below the continental average. While intra-regional exports in goods (0.2282) and services (0.2313) show modest progress, import indicators are much weaker, with goods imports (0.1573) and services imports (0.1187) both lagging behind. Regional disparities are stark: West African countries like Senegal, Mali, and Togo outperform, aided by ECOWAS membership, whereas North African members (e.g. Egypt, Morocco) and fragile states like Somalia and Eritrea remain poorly integrated. Geographic fragmentation, lack of infrastructure, and political instability further constrain regional trade.

Trade Diversification and Sophistication: With a score of 0.4006, CENSAD is close to the continental average in diversification. However, the bloc shows a marked gap between manufacturing imports (0.5334) and exports (0.3498), reflecting weak industrial production. Raw materials dominate exports (0.6759), while intermediate goods trade is minimal. Performance varies widely among members: Nigeria (0.4424), Morocco (0.4410), and Kenya (0.3830) show stronger diversification, while Eritrea (0.0455), Egypt (0.1461), and Somalia (0.1491) perform poorly. These gaps suggest limited cross-border production networks and structural barriers to value addition.

Policy Recommendations: Improving regional integration requires investing in cross-border infrastructure, particularly to connect North Africa with the Sahel. CENSAD should capitalize on overlapping REC memberships to align trade frameworks and boost complementarities. Supporting regional value chains in agro-processing, textiles, and construction could close the manufacturing gap. Liberalizing services trade in finance and telecoms, and integrating low-performing countries through institutional support, are also key. Lastly, digital trade

tools could help overcome physical and geographic barriers, enhancing regional connectivity and market access.

COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa)

Intra-African Trade Flows: With a score of 0.2791, COMESA ranks second among RECs on intra-African trade flows, exceeding the continental average by 14%. The bloc shows strong integration in goods exports (0.3561) and imports (0.3431), alongside solid performance in services trade. Countries like Eswatini (0.9776), Zambia, Malawi, and Uganda lead the group, benefiting from landlocked status, overlapping REC memberships, and effective trade facilitation. However, disparities persist: Eritrea, Madagascar, Egypt, and Sudan underperform, often due to geographic isolation or limited implementation of trade instruments.

Trade Diversification and Sophistication: COMESA scored 0.3967 on trade diversification, slightly below the African average. A major issue is the imbalance between high manufacturing imports (0.6289) and lower exports (0.4134), showing weak regional value chains. Raw materials still dominate exports, while intermediate goods trade remains limited. Zambia (0.5788) stands out as the most diversified, followed by Zimbabwe and Kenya. Conversely, Eritrea (0.0455), Egypt (0.1461), and Mauritius (0.1803) show surprisingly low diversification, indicating a disconnect between economic potential and regional integration.

Policy Recommendations: To strengthen integration, COMESA should address performance gaps through knowledge-sharing and targeted support, especially for island and peripheral members. Developing regional value chains in agro-processing, pharmaceuticals, and construction materials is key to closing the manufacturing imbalance. Improving trade logistics, particularly for landlocked states, and continuing development of transport corridors will enhance connectivity. Overlapping REC memberships should be leveraged for harmonized integration. Finally, advancing services trade and digital facilitation can unlock new growth areas, building on the digital leadership of countries like Kenya.

EAC (East African Community)

Intra-African Trade Flows: With a score of 0.2525, the EAC slightly surpasses the continental average (0.2448), placing it in the mid-range among RECs. It shows strong export integration, particularly in goods (0.3733), but weaker import performance, especially in services (0.1107). Uganda (0.4644)

leads, followed by Burundi and Rwanda, reflecting the impact of landlocked geography and regional reliance. Somalia (0.0297) and the DRC (0.2022) show weaker integration due to conflict or recent accession. Overall, smaller and landlocked economies tend to be more regionally oriented than larger or coastal states.

Trade Diversification and Sophistication: EAC's diversification score (0.3920) remains slightly below the African average (0.4072). Trade is still dominated by raw materials (exports: ~0.68), while manufacturing exports (0.3420) lag behind imports (0.5986). Tanzania leads in diversification (0.4457), followed by Burundi and Kenya. In contrast, Uganda (0.2848), Rwanda (0.2241), and South Sudan (0.2116) score low, highlighting the gap between trade intensity and sophistication. Intermediate goods trade remains weak, and regional production networks are underdeveloped.

Policy Recommendations: The EAC should address its trade imbalance by promoting intra-regional sourcing and boosting manufacturing capacity. Regional value chains in agro-processing and light industry could help close the import-export gap. Enhancing transport corridors (e.g., Mombasa and Dar es Salaam routes) is vital for deeper integration. Fragile states like Somalia and South Sudan require tailored support, including infrastructure and security cooperation. Services trade should be accelerated through mutual recognition of qualifications and digital trade facilitation. Finally, industrial coordination focused on skills and innovation—building on Tanzania's strengths—could improve regional competitiveness.

ECCAS (Economic Community of Central African States)

Intra-African Trade Flows: ECCAS scored 0.1907 on intra-African trade flows, 22% below the continental average, marking it as one of the least integrated RECs. All trade indicators remain below African benchmarks, including goods exports (0.2308), services exports (0.2246), and services imports (0.1022). Rwanda and Burundi outperform significantly due to their EAC membership and landlocked geography, while Angola, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon lag due to global market orientation and resource dependence. Integration remains weak across both coastal and landlocked states, suggesting deeper systemic issues such as weak infrastructure, non-tariff barriers, and political fragmentation.

Trade Diversification and Sophistication: ECCAS scored 0.3854, the lowest among RECs, reflecting poor diversification and value addition. Manufacturing imports are high (0.6962), but manufacturing exports remain modest (0.46), highlighting consumption

over production. Intermediate goods trade is very limited. Congo (0.4485), Angola (0.4338), and Gabon (0.3991) perform relatively well, while Equatorial Guinea scores 0.0000 due to extreme oil dependence. The wide range—from 0.0000 to 0.4485—indicates fragmented industrial structures and minimal regional production coordination, despite the region's vast energy and resource potential.

Policy Recommendations: ECCAS should urgently remove remaining trade barriers and revive its free trade area. Infrastructure development, especially inter-state transport and corridors like the Congo River, must be prioritized. Closer coordination with EAC and SADC could help leverage overlapping memberships, particularly for Rwanda and Burundi. Regional value chains should be developed around agro-processing, forestry, and energy-intensive sectors. Political stability is essential to restore trade routes and investor confidence. Finally, cross-border industrial strategies are needed to initiate shared production networks and reduce dependence on external supply chains.

ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States)

Intra-African Trade Flows: With a score of 0.2453, ECOWAS closely aligns with the continental average, reflecting balanced but moderate regional integration. Strong intra-regional goods exports (0.3053) and especially imports (0.4568) indicate dynamic internal market sourcing. Services exports remain weak (0.28), but imports (0.18) are above average, suggesting growing internal demand. Senegal leads with 0.5214, followed by Togo and The Gambia, while Liberia (0.0000), Sierra Leone, and Cabo Verde underperform. Nigeria, the region's economic powerhouse, scores just 0.1549, limiting its regional impact. Overall, integration is uneven, with Sahelian coastal states performing better than Gulf or post-conflict states.

Trade Diversification and Sophistication: ECOWAS scored 0.4035, just below the African average. Trade remains highly commodity-driven, with raw materials making up 75% of intra-regional exports. Manufacturing exports (0.2649) are the lowest among RECs, while manufacturing imports (0.5254) are comparatively high, creating a stark imbalance. Intermediate goods trade is weak and skewed by Nigeria's petroleum exports. Nigeria leads in diversification (0.4424), followed by Liberia and Sierra Leone. Conversely, strong trade performers like Senegal and The Gambia score poorly on diversification, revealing a disconnect between trade intensity and sophistication. This negative correlation is a key concern for ECOWAS.

Policy Recommendations: ECOWAS must address integration disparities by supporting low-performing members and sharing best practices from leaders like Senegal. Nigeria's limited engagement should be addressed through policy reforms and infrastructure improvements, particularly at key trade corridors like the Nigeria–Benin border. The region must close the manufacturing exports gap by developing value chains in agro-processing, textiles, and consumer goods. Emphasis should shift from trade volume to trade quality, leveraging the ECOWAS Industrial Policy more effectively. Services liberalization under the ETLS must accelerate, with a focus on finance, telecom, and transport. Special support is needed for Cabo Verde and peripheral members through digital trade and simplified procedures.

IGAD (Inter-Governmental Authority on Development)

Intra-African Trade Flows: IGAD scored 0.2186 on intra-African trade flows, 11% below the continental average, reflecting moderate underperformance. The bloc shows strong intra-regional exports of goods (0.3113) and services (0.2632), both above or near African averages. However, intra-regional imports remain weak—goods imports (0.1574) and services imports (0.0972)—highlighting a major asymmetry. Uganda (0.4644), Ethiopia (0.4228), and Djibouti (0.3985) lead the region due to strong trade ties and overlapping REC memberships. Conversely, Somalia (0.0297) and Eritrea (0.0628) record very low scores due to conflict and institutional fragility. The disparity between coastal and landlocked states is shaped more by political and institutional stability than geography.

Trade Diversification and Sophistication: IGAD scored 0.3895 on diversification, slightly below the continental average. Intra-regional exports remain heavily raw material-based (72% share), and the bloc has the lowest manufacturing exports ratio (0.3003) among all RECs. While manufacturing imports are relatively high (0.5636), intermediate goods trade remains minimal—exports (0.0248) and imports (0.0593)—pointing to a near-absence of regional value chains. Kenya (0.3830) leads on diversification, followed by Ethiopia and Sudan. Uganda achieves only moderate diversification despite strong integration. Somalia and Eritrea score extremely low, with Eritrea's 0.0455 the weakest REC-wide. The lack of correlation between trade intensity and diversification reflects deeper structural weaknesses.

Policy Recommendations: IGAD should prioritize a dual strategy: supporting fragile states (e.g., Somalia, Eritrea) through peacebuilding, while leveraging best practices from Uganda, Ethiopia, and Kenya.

The export-import imbalance calls for stronger intra-regional sourcing, standard harmonization, and supplier development. Industrial policy must target sectors with latent cross-border complementarities (e.g., leather, textiles, agro-processing). IGAD's geographic position offers potential for enhanced corridor development linking Africa to the Middle East and Indian Ocean markets, with Djibouti as a model hub. The limited intermediate goods trade demands coordinated efforts to develop regional production networks. Finally, digital trade and services integration—building on Kenya's digital leadership—can help transcend infrastructural and political barriers.

SADC (Southern African Development Community)

Intra-African Trade Flows: SADC leads all RECs with a score of 0.3579 on intra-African trade flows, outperforming the continental average by 46%. It records strong performances across all trade indicators: goods exports (0.4072), goods imports (0.3765), services exports (0.3968), and services imports (0.3550), with the latter exceeding the African average by 169%. Lesotho (1.0000) and Eswatini (0.9776) top the rankings due to their deep integration within the SACU and proximity to South Africa. Namibia and Botswana also exceed 0.70. A second tier of well-integrated economies includes Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. South Africa scores 0.3785, modestly above average, reflecting its globally oriented trade. However, island states like Seychelles (0.1455), Madagascar (0.1195), and Comoros (0.1116), along with Angola (0.0622), show poor integration, underlining stark regional disparities. Geographically, trade integration is strongest in the SACU core and weakens toward the periphery, especially in isolated or underconnected economies.

Trade Diversification and Sophistication: SADC scored 0.4119, narrowly leading all RECs on diversification. Raw materials still dominate (58% of exports), but the region excels in manufacturing, with intra-regional exports (0.4524) and imports (0.6511) both ranking first. Intermediate goods imports (0.1884) are above average, suggesting some value chain development. South Africa achieves a maximum score of 1.0000, reflecting diversified exports across sectors. Zambia, Namibia, and Zimbabwe also perform strongly, supported by niche industries. Tanzania, Botswana, and Angola demonstrate moderate diversification, while Comoros (0.1749) and Mauritius (0.1803) score surprisingly low. Lesotho and Eswatini, despite high trade intensity, have only modest sophistication (around 0.32), underscoring a divergence between trade volume and trade quality.

The data reveal that diversification is more closely linked to industrial base and economic policy than trade flows alone.

Policy Recommendations: SADC should prioritize reducing disparities between highly integrated SACU members and underperforming states like Angola and island economies. Targeted support, infrastructure investment, and digital trade solutions can bridge these gaps. Second, the region's manufacturing strength offers a base for deepening regional value chains in automotive, agro-processing, and mining-linked industries, with emphasis on investment promotion and industrial coordination. Third, services trade—led by South Africa—should be expanded to smaller members through implementation of the Protocol on Trade in Services. Fourth, SACU's model (revenue sharing, harmonized policy, free movement) should be adapted or extended to other members to foster broader cohesion. Fifth, Angola's poor integration must be urgently addressed, with support for trade infrastructure, regional sourcing, and institutional reform. Finally, building multi-polar economic hubs—in DRC, Tanzania, Angola, and Mozambique—can reduce dependency on South Africa and enhance resilience across the community.

Conclusion: Key Drivers, Barriers, and Recommendations

The analysis reveals several key drivers and barriers influencing Market Integration performance across Africa's RECs. Geographic proximity and regional integration efforts emerge as important drivers of intra-regional trade, particularly in RECs like SADC and EAC. The presence of larger, more diversified economies, such as Egypt, Kenya, and South Africa, also tends to boost REC-level performance.

Services trade, especially in sectors like tourism and transport, is another key contributor to integration in some regions. However, most RECs face significant barriers related to their overreliance on raw material exports and limited value addition in manufacturing. Infrastructure gaps and trade barriers continue to limit intra-African trade flows, while political instability and economic fragility affect trade performance in some member countries.

To advance Market Integration in Africa, several continent-wide policy recommendations emerge from the analysis.

First, accelerating the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is crucial for reducing trade barriers and promoting intra-African trade. Second, investing in regional infrastructure, particularly in transport and energy, can help improve trade facilitation and reduce costs. Third, supporting industrialization and value addition, especially in manufacturing and agro-processing sectors, can help diversify exports and create new opportunities for regional trade. Fourth, promoting services trade and addressing barriers in key sectors like tourism, transport, and finance can unlock new growth opportunities and deepen integration. Fifth, providing targeted assistance to fragile and low-income member countries can help them build productive capacities and trade infrastructure, enabling them to participate more fully in regional markets. Sixth, harmonizing policies and regulations across member countries can create larger, more integrated regional markets and reduce trade costs. Finally, strengthening regional value chains and promoting cross-border investment and private sector engagement can help build a more resilient and inclusive trade architecture in Africa.



CHAPTER VI

LESSONS LEARNED AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

a) Strengthen Integration Governance through Structured and REC-Inclusive Monitoring

A recurring lesson from the continental assessment is that strong governance and systematic monitoring are fundamental to closing the persistent gap between integration commitments and real-world outcomes. To address the frequent disconnect between policy design and execution, it is critical to establish an integrated and transparent monitoring framework for the implementation of continental and regional instruments. Such a framework—aligned with the Africa Regional Integration Index (ARII) and inclusive of REC participation—will allow for harmonized and comparable evaluation of progress across all regions. This system should facilitate regular data collection, peer learning, and the timely identification of bottlenecks. By institutionalizing evidence-based monitoring and making evaluation central to governance, Member States and RECs will be better positioned to accelerate reforms, reinforce accountability, and ensure that integration moves beyond rhetoric to tangible results.

b) Consolidate Regional Institutions and Governance Mechanisms

Experience has shown that the effectiveness and legitimacy of regional integration depend on robust institutions and credible governance mechanisms. Many RECs still lack fully operational parliaments, courts of justice, or dispute resolution bodies, limiting their ability to enforce community law and protect regional interests. Strengthening regional governance therefore requires a renewed focus on the creation, reactivation, and effective functioning of these key institutions. It also calls for deeper ownership of continental protocols by Member States, supported by legal reforms and capacity-building. Only through resilient institutions—capable of both policy leadership and dispute resolution—can the region ensure consistent application of agreements, foster trust among stakeholders, and sustain momentum towards integration.

c) Enhance Economic Policy Convergence and Market Integration

Economic integration is the engine of Africa's regional transformation, but its potential remains underexploited due to slow or partial implementation of key frameworks. Accelerating the operationalization

of regional free trade areas and customs unions is vital—requiring Member States to expedite accession, ratification, and enforcement of the relevant treaties and protocols. Fast-tracking tariff harmonization and ensuring the effective implementation of customs regimes will help eliminate trade barriers, boost intra-African commerce, and increase competitiveness. Furthermore, macroeconomic convergence must be advanced through robust policy alignment and multilateral surveillance mechanisms, allowing RECs to manage economic shocks collectively, foster financial stability, and lay the foundations for greater monetary cooperation in the long term.

d) Develop Connected and Coherent Regional Infrastructure

The development of interconnected, high-quality infrastructure remains a cornerstone for achieving the goals of regional integration. Progress to date has been uneven, with many cross-border projects hampered by fragmented planning, inadequate funding, or misaligned priorities. To overcome these obstacles, RECs should build regional portfolios of priority projects in transport, energy, digital infrastructure, and water—fully aligned with continental strategies such as the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). Mobilizing financing for these projects will require the strengthening of regional development banks and the creation of transparent governance frameworks that encourage investment and public-private partnerships. Only with coordinated planning and pooled resources can Africa develop the infrastructure networks necessary for efficient regional value chains, innovation, and inclusive growth.

e) Promote Free Movement, Education, and Social Integration

Lasting integration must place people at its centre. Human and socio-cultural integration has often lagged behind economic and institutional progress, in part due to slow ratification and incomplete implementation of protocols on free movement, education, and social development. It is essential to accelerate the adoption and enforcement of legal frameworks enabling the free movement of persons, supported by mutual recognition of travel documents and qualifications. At the same time, RECs should promote the development of regional education, training, and academic mobility programmes that build skills for the future and foster a shared African identity. Strengthening joint initiatives in culture, youth engagement, sports, and social protection will further consolidate the social foundations of integration, ensuring that the benefits are widely shared and that integration is embraced at the grassroots level.



CONCLUSION

The 2025 African Integration Report demonstrates that, while Africa has made meaningful progress in building the legal, institutional, and strategic foundations of continental integration, the full realization of these ambitions remains hindered by persistent implementation gaps. Strong frameworks exist and key achievements have been recorded in areas like trade, infrastructure, and peace and security. However, integration is too often held back by slow or uneven policy execution, weak institutional capacity, and insufficient coordination among Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

This report's findings confirm that effective and inclusive monitoring is essential to ensure accountability, identify bottlenecks, and transform commitments into results. Without robust and REC-inclusive monitoring frameworks, integration risks remaining an aspiration rather than a lived reality. Strengthening the governance of integration by empowering regional institutions, such as parliaments and courts, is critical for ensuring the enforcement of community law and the protection of regional interests. Likewise, deepening economic integration depends not just on the creation of free trade areas and customs unions, but on their full and harmonized implementation—supported by accelerated tariff harmonization and macroeconomic convergence.

The pathway to a truly integrated Africa also demands collective investment in shared infrastructure. Only by aligning national, regional, and continental priorities—and mobilizing sustainable financing—can Africa overcome fragmentation and enable dynamic regional value chains, innovation, and inclusive growth. Placing people at the heart of integration, by advancing free movement, mutual recognition of qualifications, and regional educational and social initiatives, is equally vital for fostering a sense of shared identity and ownership across the continent.

Ultimately, the future of African integration hinges on the continent's ability to bridge the gap between ambition and action. Achieving the objectives of Agenda 2063 and unleashing the full benefits of integration will require sustained political will, institutional leadership, policy coherence, and a relentless focus on implementation at every level. By advancing these priorities, Africa can transform its integration agenda from a vision into a powerful driver of resilience, prosperity, and inclusive development for all its citizens.

ANNEXES

ASRII SCORECARD OF REC

Dimension	Sub-dimension	AMU	CENSAD	COMESA	EAC	ECCAS	ECOWAS	IGAD	SADC
INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION	Legislation		0.46		0.93			0.6	
	Institutional Frameworks	0.875	0.47	0.66	0.97	0.76	0.8	0.5	0.58
	Funding	0.65	0.49	0.45	0.4	0.64	0.78	0.49	0.4
		0.7625	0.47	0.55	0.7667	0.70	0.79	0.53	0.49
GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY	Governance and the Rule of Law	0.18	0.426	0.92	0.85	0.61	0.7	0.7	0.84
	Democratic principles	0.203	0.535	0.67	0.87	0.58	0.66	0.6	0.79
		0.1915	0.48	0.795	0.86	0.60	0.68	0.65	0.815
PEACE AND SECURITY	Conflict prevention and peace promotion	0.125	0.306	0.64	0.87	0.82	0.75	0.8	0.83
	African Standby Force		0.103	0	0.49	0.05	0.7	0.65	0.79
	Regional Security arrangements and conflict management		0.238	0.66	0.89	0.75	0.65	0.7	0.92
	Post conflicts reconstruction and Development (PCRD)		0.375	1	0.21		0.72	0.7	
		0.125	0.23	0.575	0.615	0.54	0.705	0.7125	0.84667
MARKETS INTEGRATION	Intra-African Trade Agreements and regulation	0.35	0.435	0.62	0.85	0.85	0.75	0.5	0.75
	Intra regional Trade facilitation	0.33	0.48	0.77	0.61	0.43	0.7	0.65	0.83
	Intra-African Trade flows								
	Diversification and Sophistication of intra-African trade								
		0.34	0.457	0.698	0.73	0.64	0.725	0.575	0.79
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, INDUSTRY AND MINERALS	Competition Policy	0.264	0.368	1	0.79	0.14	0.65	0.7	
	Quality infrastructure and consumer protection	0.284	0.358	0.51	0.63	0.25	0.68	0.424	
	Investment Policies and Agreements	0.34	0.680	0.77	0.51	0.55	0.7	0.483	0.65
	Regional Investment Flows				0.66				
	Industrial Policy	0.494	0.485	0.8	0.69	0.69	0.72		0.875
	Tourism Policy	0.38	0.77	0.3	0.6		0.6	0.44	0.3
	Mining	0.36		0.03	0.49	0.23	0.36		0.375
	African Commodities								
		0.35367	0.532	0.56	0.6243	0.37	0.61833333	0.51175	0.55

Dimension	Sub-dimension	AMU	CENSAD	COMESA	EAC	ECCAS	ECOWAS	IGAD	SADC
RURAL ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT	Agriculture, livestock and wildlife Policies	0.56	0.352	0.43	0.63	0.58	0.72	0.48	0.75
	Blue economy Policies	0.875	0.120	0.7	0.67	0.56	0.55	0.42	0.84
	Environmental management integration	0.85	0.450	0.79		0.67	0.65	0.52	
		0.76167	0.308	0.653	0.65	0.61	0.64	0.47333	0.795
MACRO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION	Nominal Convergence programs	0.3	0.140	1	0.67	0.45	0.6		0.85
	Real Convergence								0.71
	Fiscal Policy integration	0.38	0.135	0	0.83	0.52	0.62		0.57
	Financial Systems Integration and development		0.135	0.97	0.76	0.57	0.68		0.55
	Monetary integration	0.25	0.50	0.79	0.38	0.55	0.7		0.45
	Statistical Integration	0.48	0.125	0.5	0.6	0.55	0.68		0.28
		0.3525	0.207	0.652	0.648	0.528	0.656		0.56833
INFRASTRUCTURES INTEGRATION	PIDA governance								
	Roads	0.875	0.50	0.95	0.89	0.38	0.78	0.56	0.85
	Railways	0.525	0.78	0.87	0.87	0.51	0.72	0.6	0.73
	Air transport	0.575	0.75	0.66	0.6	0.40	0.7	0.58	0.86
	Energy	0.94	0.195	0.54	0.97	0.70	0.85	0.54	0.75
	Water and sanitation	0.5	0.67	0.66	0.84		0.75	0.56	0.85
	Digital policies and programs	0.26	0.145	0.55	0.59	0.68			0.8
		0.6125	0.506	0.738	0.7933	0.53	0.76	0.568	0.80667
FREE MOVEMENT AND MIGRATIONS	Free Movement of persons. Right of Residence and Right of Establishment	0.4	0.63	0.44	0.75	0.44	0.9	0.58	0.54
	Migrations	0.31	0.20	0.33	0.49	0.50	0.75	0.53	0.49
		0.355	0.42	0.38	0.62	0.47	0.825	0.555	0.515
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	Health	0.55	0.103	0.35	0.51	0.24	0.7	0.64	0.55
	Social protection				0.32				
	Culture	0.56	0.187	0.65	0.69		0.66	0.62	
	Sport				0.63				
		0.555	0.14	0.5	0.5375	0.24	0.68	0.63	0.55
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY	Education	0.45	0.285	0.21	0.76		0.72	0.66	0.75
	Gender	0.2	0.185	0.89	0.79	0.69	0.7	0.67	0.78
	Youth and empowerment	0.45	0.585		0.49		0.78	0.68	0.78
	Sciences. Technology and Innovation	0.56	0.145	0.33	0.53			0.71	0.61
		0.415	0.26	0.476	0.6425	0.69	0.73333333	0.68	0.73

ASRII STRUCTURE AND TYPE OF INDICATORS

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Indicator	Type
INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION	Legislation	Ratification and implementation of REC treaties and protocols	Qualitative (Treaty/protocols/institutions)
		Ratification and implementation of African Union treaties and protocols	Qualitative (Treaty/protocols/institutions)
	Institutional Frameworks	Establishment of the Panafrican Parliament	Qualitative (Treaty/protocols/institutions)
		Establishment of the African Court of Justice	Qualitative (Treaty/protocols/institutions)
		Establishment of the African Central Bank (ACB)	Qualitative (Treaty/protocols/institutions)
		Establishment of the African Monetary fund (AMF)	Qualitative (Treaty/protocols/institutions)
		Establishment of the African monetary institute (AMI)	Qualitative (Treaty/protocols/institutions)
		Establishment of the African investment Bank (AIB)	Qualitative (Treaty/protocols/institutions)
		Establishment of the Pan-African Stock Exchange	Qualitative (Treaty/protocols/institutions)
		Existence of Regional Community institutions (Parliament)	Qualitative (Treaty/protocols/institutions)
		Existence of Regional Community institutions (Court of Justice)	Qualitative (Treaty/protocols/institutions)
		Existence of Regional Community institutions (Audit Chamber)	Qualitative (Treaty/protocols/institutions)
	Funding	Proportion of AU budget programs funded by internal resources (contribution of Members states or tax levy)	Quantitative
		Degree of respect of MSs contribution to AU Budget	Qualitative (Treaty/protocols/institutions)
		Number of Members States that are implementing AU 0.2% levy	Quantitative
		Existence of a tax levy for the REC	Qualitative (Treaty/protocols/institutions)
		Share of REC budget funded by internal resources	Quantitative
		Degree of respect of Members States' contribution to REC Budget	Qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY	Governance and the Rule of Law	Number of countries volunteering to undertake Structural Vulnerability Assessment and APRM reviews	Quantitative
		Percentage Change in Africa's Human and Peoples' Rights compliance	Quantitative
		Overall Governance Score on the Continent	Quantitative
		Progress in the development of the AU Advisory Board against corruption Index on the status of corruption in Africa	Quantitative
		Existence of a REC framework for combating corruption, fraud and smuggling	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
	Democratic principles	Number of country reports on African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance	Quantitative
		Existence of regional mechanisms for monitoring democratic governance and elections	Qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Peaceful Election in MS	
PEACE AND SECURITY	Conflict prevention and peace promotion	Existence and effectiveness of Regional mechanisms for conflicts prevention	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Number of National Infrastructures for peace functional and connected to the Regional Early warning systems	Quantitative
		Number of information shared between CEWS and EWS	Quantitative
		Degree of Information sharing between RECs and their national situation rooms	
		Number of conflict prevention interventions by the REC in preventive diplomacy	Quantitative
		% of recommendations acted on by the REC organs from early warning and conflict analysis reports	Quantitative
		% of conflicts/crises prevented from escalation	Quantitative

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Indicator	Type
PEACE AND SECURITY	Conflict prevention and peace promotion	% of conflicts/crises prevented from escalation – based response options of early warning and conflict analysis actions	Quantitative
		% of recommendations acted on by the PSC and AU organs from early warning and conflict analysis reports	Quantitative
		Number of countries implementing the AU Master Roadmap of practical steps to implement the AU silence the Guns	Quantitative
		Degree of Participation of countries to a Regional border Program and fight against terrorism and transnational organized crime	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Level of implementation by countries of continental agreement on the control of illicit SALW (Small Arms and Light Weapons)	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		% of contribution of AU Members states to peace fund	Quantitative
		Number of conflict prevention interventions by AU/RMs in preventive diplomacy	Quantitative
		Number of countries implementing the AU Master Roadmap of practical steps to implement the AU silence the Guns	Quantitative
		Crime rate in Members Countries	Quantitative
		Progress on the development of the AU Fragile States Index	Quantitative
	African Standby Force	Number of common AU and RECs/RMs and Member States monitoring missions	Quantitative
		Number of Peace Support Operations deployed by AU/RECs/RMs	Quantitative
		Readiness of the regional African Stand by Force (ASF) contingent to be deployed	
		Number of national troops in ASF regional contingent	Quantitative
		Number of simulation exercises conducted to maintain the full operational capability the regional forces and the operationalization of the ASF	Quantitative
	Regional Security arrangements and conflict management	Number of common AU and RECs/RMs and Member States monitoring missions	Quantitative
		AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) specific sessions dedicated to conflict situations in RECs/ RMs during the last year (as % of the existing conflicts in the Region)	Quantitative
		Number of deployment of the Panel of Wise / Friends of the Panel / PanWise / FemWise / WiseYouth to conflict situations in RECs/RMs during the last year (as % of the number of existing conflicts in the region)	Quantitative
		Number of Specific meetings devoted to conflict situations in RECs	Quantitative
		Existence and effectiveness of Regional mechanisms for conflicts mitigation. management and resolution	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Number of mediation interventions led by the AU/ RECs/RMs	Quantitative
		Number of Peace agreements reached compared to total conflicts existing	Quantitative
	Post conflicts reconstruction and Development (PCRD)	Existence of funding window for AUC to implement regional and cross-border PCRD interventions	
		Post-conflict reconstruction programs implemented as percentage of peace agreements reached	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
		Number of PCRD initiatives in post-conflict Member States that are based on continental or regional PCRD policies and/or strategies	Quantitative
		Existence of a regional PCRD	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Number of Member States/AUC/RECs/ RMs co-financing arrangements in support of PCRD efforts	Quantitative

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Indicator	Type
MARKETS INTEGRATION	Intra-African Trade Agreements and regulation	Level of implementation by countries of continental instrument on Non-Tariff barriers	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Level of implementation of a regional free trade area	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Level of implementation of a regional Custom union	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Average tariff on imports from Africa	Quantitative
		Average tariff on imports within the REC	Quantitative
		Average tariff on Agriculture Food Imports within the REC	Quantitative
	Intra regional Trade facilitation	Score of MS on the AU/NEPAD Initiative on Traffic Light System'	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Level of implementation by Member countries of Regional instrument on Non-Tariff barriers within the REC	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		For each MS. assess the number of neighbouring countries with whom they have at least one-stop border post	Quantitative
		Number of countries in the REC that have at least one marine or one dry port operational	Quantitative
		Average Time of processing at the Border Posts for countries in the REC	
		Average Increase of trade volume at border Post	Quantitative
		Existence and functioning of a Trade tribunal	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Existence and functioning of a Regional trade guarantee scheme	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
	Intra-African Trade flows	Share of intra-African goods exports to the total goods exports	Quantitative
		Share of intra-African goods imports to the total goods imports	Quantitative
		Share of intra-regional goods exports to the total goods exports	Quantitative
		Share of intra-regional goods imports to the total goods imports	Quantitative
		Share of intra-regional services exports to the total goods exports	Quantitative
		Share of intra-regional services imports to the total goods imports	Quantitative
	Diversification and Sophistication of intra-African trade	Share of intra-regional exports of raw material to intra-regional exports of goods	Quantitative
		Share of intra-regional imports of raw material to intra-regional imports of goods	Quantitative
		Share of intra-regional intermediate exports in the regional exports	Quantitative
		Share of intra-regional intermediate imports in the regional imports	Quantitative
		Share of intra-regional manufacturing exports in the regional exports	Quantitative
		Share of intra-regional manufacturing imports in the regional imports	Quantitative
		Intra-African trade partner diversity	Quantitative
		Intra-regional trade partner diversity	Quantitative
		Intra-African trade product diversity	Quantitative
		Intra-Regional trade product diversity	Quantitative
Business development. industry and minerals	Competition Policy	Ratification and implementation of the AfCFTA competition protocol	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
		Existence of a Regional Competition Commission	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Rate of cases solved out of number of cases submitted	Quantitative

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Indicator	Type
Business development. industry and minerals	Quality infrastructure and consumer protection	Alignment of National quality policies to the Africa Quality Policy	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Number of harmonized standards at Continental level	Quantitative
		Existence of a Regional Quality Policy	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Alignment of Regional quality policies to the Africa quality policy	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Number of harmonized standards at regional level	Quantitative
		Number of products rejected for non-compliance with standards at regional level	Quantitative
		Number of AU Member States with fully functional quality infrastructure institutions effectively supporting trade and industrial development	Quantitative
		Alignment of National quality policies to the Africa Quality Policy	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Alignment of Members States quality policies to the Regional Quality Policy	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Existence of a Regional Consumer Protection Program	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
	Investment Policies and Agreements	Ratification and implementation on AfCFTA Investment protocols	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
		Existence of a Regional Investment Policy	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Existence of a Regional instrument/Code for regulating investment	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Existence of a Regional Investment Promotion Agency	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Existence and functioning of a Regional business council	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
	Regional Investment Flows	Intra-African Direct Investment inflows (as % of total FDI inflows)	Quantitative
		Intra-regional Direct Investment outflows (as % of total of Africa outflows)	Quantitative
		Ratio of Regional Cross-Border Equity Liabilities To Total	Quantitative
		Ratio of Regional Cross-Border Bond Liabilities To Total	Quantitative
	Industrial Policy	Implementation of a regional industrialization strategy	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Existence of a regional value chain development program	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Number of cross-border regional processing and value addition plants established	Quantitative
		Degree of implementation by Member States of specific programs or initiatives to advance the objectives of the AU Commodity Strategy. such as promoting value addition, diversifying exports, and improving market access for African commodities.	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Score of MS for the Standard Assessment Guide for Accelerated Industrial Development for Africa (AIDA) and the AfCFTA	Quantitative
		Share of manufacturing value added (MVA) in the GDP	Quantitative
		Share of Medium to high technology production in the total of MVA	Quantitative
	Tourism Policy	Existence of and implementation of consistent regional standards for tourism services	
		Existence and implementation of a regional tourism accreditation program	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Degree of implementation of the Africa tourism strategic framework	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Degree of implementation by Members States of the Protocol on tourism, cooperation and development	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
		Share of tourism in the GDP	Quantitative
		Intra-African tourism flows	Quantitative

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Indicator	Type
RURAL ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT	Mining	Number of AU Member States that have developed and adopted a National Mining Vision aligned with the Africa Mining Vision (AMV)	Quantitative
		Number of AU Member States that have successfully integrated the AMREC and PARC frameworks into their national mining policies and regulations	Quantitative
		Number of AU Member States that have adopted and implemented the African Minerals Governance Framework (AMGF) Tools in their national mineral governance frameworks.	Quantitative
		Existence of a regional policy on extractive resources	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
		Progress made by Members States in improving the availability and accessibility of geological data through the implementation of the AU Geological and Mineral Information System (GMIS) Strategy	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Number of formal agreements or partnerships signed between AU Member States covering areas such as critical minerals exploration, mining, processing, value addition, and trade.	Quantitative
		Crude oil production in Member States	Quantitative
		Natural gas production in Member States	Quantitative
		Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows into the oil and gas sector in Member States	Quantitative
		Number of new renewable energy projects launched in Member States within the past two years	Quantitative
	African Commodities	Degree of implementation by MS of the tax and extractive industries governance frameworks	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
		Number of AU Member States that have implemented specific programs or initiatives to advance the objectives of the AU Commodity Strategy	Quantitative
	Agriculture, livestock and wildlife Policies	Level of Implementation of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program (CAADP)	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Degree of alignment of the regional agricultural program with the CAADP	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Existence and implementation of Regional Agriculture Value Chains	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Level of implementation of a regional Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS) instrument or specialised institution	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Level of implementation of the regional program of production and markets for agro-pastoral and fisheries products Protocol	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Existence and implementation of regional arrangements for cross-border transhumance	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Number of countries that have domesticated and operationalized each of the following AU strategies and frameworks:	Quantitative
		Number of countries that have committed at least 10% of their budget to agriculture (including agricultural research)	Quantitative
		Share of agriculture food import in the REC's Food consumption	Quantitative
		Fertilizer consumption (kilogram of nutrients) per hectare of cropland)	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Agriculture value added, in constant US dollar, per hectare of agricultural arable land	Quantitative
		Triple intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services by the year 2025	Quantitative
		Share of agricultural land under sustainable land management practices	Quantitative
	Blue economy Policies	Existence and level of implementation of the regional program on the conservation and sustainable management of aquatic resources	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Progress in developing an African fisheries transparency index	Quantitative

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Indicator	Type
RURAL ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT	Blue economy Policies	Level of implementation by Members Countries of the following: the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy Action Plan (2022 - 2032), the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Program of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework in Africa and its successor, the Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology (Weather and Climate services, Africa Adaptation Initiative, Santiago Network on Loss and Damage and Green Recovery Action Plan	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Existence and implementation of a regional strategy for the environment protection	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
	Nominal Convergence programs	Degree of compliance of Members in the REC to AACB convergence criteria	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
MACRO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION	Real Convergence	Existence and implementation of multilateral surveillance mechanism within the REC	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		GDP growth	Quantitative
		GDP per Head	Quantitative
		National poverty rate	Quantitative
	Fiscal Policy integration	Regional tax harmonization program	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Regional financial laws harmonization program	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Regional public accounting harmonization program	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Regional public procurement, harmonization program	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
	Financial Systems Integration and development	Level of implementation of a regional payment system	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Level of implementation of a regional clearing house	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Participation of Member countries to a Regional program for illicit financial flows fight	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Score of MS in the World Bank Global Financial Inclusion Index	Quantitative
		Degree of Regional convertibility of currencies	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
		Participation to a regional Exchange rate mechanism	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Participation to a regional monetary union and financial institutions related	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
		Existence of Regional Development Bank	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
	Statistical Integration	Progress on the Harmonization of national and Regional statistical frameworks at Continental level	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Progress on the setting-up Continental Statistical Database and Portal	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Existence of a Regional Program for the harmonization of national statistical frameworks	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Regional Statistical Database and Portal	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Scores of the Member States for the UNECA Statistical Development Indicators	Quantitative
INFRASTRUCTURES INTEGRATION	PIDA governance	Number of PIDA PAPII projects that reached the Feasibility Stage	Quantitative
		Number of PIDA projects that have reached the financial close step	Quantitative
		Number of multimodal transport corridors under operation	Quantitative
	Roads	AfDB Transport Composite Index	Quantitative
		World Bank Logistic Performance Index	Quantitative
		Average Unit Transport Cost	Quantitative
		Progress in the construction of the Transfricain Highway links	Quantitative
		Number of Kms (or %) of roads constructed under the Trans African Highway Network(TAH)	Quantitative
		Existence and implementation of a regional program of border roads	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Indicator	Type
INFRASTRUCTURES INTEGRATION	Railways	Number (or %) of pilot Railway links under the African Integrated Railway Network (AIRN) Master Plan implemented	Quantitative
		Number of Kms of Railway constructed under the African Integrated Railway Network (AIRN)	Quantitative
		Existence and implementation of a regional program of railways	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
	Transport	Number of African Member States that are fully implementing SAATM provisions	Quantitative
		Number of 5th freedom traffic rights routes to support Intra-Africa Air transport connectivity	Quantitative
		Percentage of intra-africa air transport connectivity	Quantitative
		Existence and implementation of a regional program of air transport	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
	Energy	Degree of implementation of the Continental Power Systems Master Plan (CMP)	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Degree of implementation Africa Single Electricity Market (AfSEM)	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Existence of a regional electricity regulation and interconnection agency	Qualitative (Treaty/protocols/institutions)
		Impact of the Regional Power pools: southern African power pool/Central African power pool/ East African power pool/West African power pool/COMELEC Maghreb	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
		Number of power pools with active trading	Quantitative
		Number of new renewable energy projects launched in AU Member States within the past year (e.g., solar PV, wind, geothermal, hydropower).	Quantitative
		AfDB Electricity Composite Index	Quantitative
		% of population with reliable and affordable access to electricity	Quantitative
		Share of renewable energy in the energy mix (%)	Quantitative
		Increase oil refinery capacity	Quantitative
		% increase in generation capacity	Quantitative
	Water and sanitation	Share of population with access to drinking water	Quantitative
		AfDB WSS composite index	Quantitative
		Cubic Meters of shared water	Quantitative
		Existence of River Basin organization (RBO) or Lake basin organisation (LBO)	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
	Digital policies and programs	Avancement in the implementation of the ICT PAP II PIDA projects	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
		Ratification and degree of implementation of the AU Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection by MS	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
		Existence and implementation of a regional program on Cybersecurity	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Existence and implementation of a Program of joint ICT infrastructures development within the REC	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Existence and implantation of a Common ICT network market	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Roaming cost	Quantitative

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Indicator	Type
INFRASTRUCTURES INTEGRATION	Digital policies and programs	Population with access to internet	Quantitative
		% of Population with basic, intermediate & advanced digital skills	Quantitative
		Number of regional IXPs/Data Centers Established	Quantitative
		Proportion of ICT goods imports/exports in intra-regional trade	Quantitative
		Average tariff on intra-African imports of ICT goods	Quantitative
		Average tariff on intra-Regional imports of ICT goods	Quantitative
		Digital Identity penetration within Member countries in the REC	Quantitative
		Regional digital trade integration index	Quantitative
		Digital services trade restrictiveness index	Quantitative
		Percentage of total trade conducted online / intra African e-commerce	Quantitative
FREE MOVEMENT AND MIGRATIONS	Free Movement of persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment	Ratification and implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (Kigali Protocol)	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
		Performance in the Africa Visa Openness index (AfDB)	Quantitative
		Regional Arrangement for the facilitation of the Movement of persons and Residence within the Region	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
	Migrations	Percentage of migrant population coming from the REC	Quantitative
		Existence and implementation of a Regional program for social protection of migrants	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Proportion of migrants population with social protection coverage	Quantitative
		Existence of a regional program facilitating the transfer of regional funds	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	Health	Average Cost of remittances in the REC	Quantitative
		Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa (PMPA)	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
		Progress of the continent on the Strategy 'Roll Back Malaria'	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Participation to the Regional diseases prevention and fighting institution or program	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
		Level of implementation of regional Policies/ institution on Child Health wellbeing	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Pourcentage of Member States allocating at least 15% of government funding to health system	Quantitative
	Social protection	Level of implementation of regional policies/ strategies targeting health	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		List of Members States that have domesticated the AU Disability, Ageing, Social Protection and Social Security Continental Strategies and programs	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Percentage of the population covered by social insurance	Quantitative
		MS Score in the Social Inclusion index	Quantitative
		National poverty rate	Quantitative
	Sport	List of Members States that have domesticated the AU Policy on Sustainable Development of Sports 2023-2033	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Level of implementation of a regional sport development policy	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Indicator	Type
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY	Education	Progress in the implementation of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA)	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Progress in the implementation of the Continental Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Progress in the implementation of the Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA)	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Existence of regional framework of diploma recognition within the REC	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Degree of Participation of Members States to the Regional Plans for The Harmonization Of Education Programs	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Degree of Participation of Members States to the Panafrican University Program with six campuses	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Degree of Participation of Members States to African Regional Centres of Excellence	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Degree of Implementation of Regional Skills Development Strategies and intervention programs	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
	Gender	Level of implementation of the regional policy on gender equality	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		MS Performance in the Africa gender Equality Index	Quantitative
		Scores of countries in the Continental gender scorecard (number of countries performing more than 35%)	Quantitative
	Youth and empowerment	Level of implementation of a comprehensive regional youth development policy	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
	Culture	Number of AU Member States that domesticated the AU policy on Culture	Quantitative
		Level of implementation of regional program on culture promotion	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Degree of integration of indigenous African culture, values and language in their Curriculum at elementary school	Quantitative
		Level of implementation of the Africa Museum Program	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Degree of involvement of Members States in the process of collecting and preserving oral sources	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
		Entry into force of the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance	qualitative (Treaty/Protocol/institution)
		Degree of Implementation by Members states of the Guidelines of the African frameworks for science, technology and innovation:	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)
	Sciences, Technology and Innovation	Existence and outcomes of a research platform within the REC	qualitative (Policy/Program/Strategy)

