

## Upcoming Events

**Launch of the EAGC-ERRA Project:  
Strengthening Competitiveness in  
Export-Oriented Staple Food  
Value Chains in East Africa**  
April 05, 2024  
Kampala, Uganda.

**Launch of the EAGC-ERRA Project:  
Strengthening Competitiveness in  
Export-Oriented Staple Food  
Value Chains in East Africa**  
April 08, 2024  
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

**Capacity Building Program for  
Small-Scale Cross Border Traders  
(CBTs)**  
April 08-09, 2024  
Busia - Busia (Uganda - Kenya  
Border).

**Capacity Building Program for  
Small-Scale CBTs**  
April 10-11, 2024  
Lwakhakha - Lwakhakha (Uganda -  
Kenya Border).

**Capacity Building Program for  
Small-Scale CBTs**  
April 08-09, 2024  
Suam - Suam (Uganda - Kenya  
Border).

**Smart Freight Week Conference**  
April 23-25, 2024  
Amsterdam, Netherlands.



Photo Credit: TMA

From L-R: USAID-ERRA Chief of Party, Mark Priestley, State Minister for Transport, Mr. Bareo Hassan, and Smartwatch Solutions CEO, Mr. Nicholas Ogoma at the contract signing ceremony.

## USAID Launches Fleet Management System Worth \$550,000 to Boost Ethiopia-Djibouti Trade

USAID-ERRA has committed US\$550,000 towards the development and implementation of an integrated Fleet Management System (iFMS) along the Ethio-Djibouti corridor. Spearheaded by Smartwatch Solutions Ltd and supervised by the Ethiopian Ministry of Transport and Logistics, this project will optimize fleet operations along this critical corridor, through which 95% of all trade flows.

This new system ensures that each truck shares its location data with the Ministry of Transport and Logistics so that they can have an overall view of the transport corridor and target bottlenecks accordingly. By increasing the transparency of truck movements, the iFMS aims not only to decrease truck turnaround times—from 12 days to 6 days—but also to improve road safety and lower CO2 emissions through improved regulation of truck driving speeds and fuel consumption.

Present at the signing event to commence this project, Amber Lily Kenny, Director, Office of Economic Growth and Resilience, USAID Ethiopia, highlighted the transformative potential of the iFMS, emphasizing its role in promoting food security. "USAID is proud to support this innovative tool. After it is launched later this year, we expect that both the public and private sectors will quickly see the value in utilizing this platform to increase the availability of food, fertilizer, and related goods across Ethiopia." [Read more.](#)

## Ethiopia and Kenya Forge Ahead with a Strategic Framework to Enhance the LAPSSET Corridor



Ethiopia and Kenya are moving forward with a strategic framework to enhance the Lamu sections of the Lamu Port, South Sudan, Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor following the adoption of the pre-feasibility study on the Ethiopia-Mombasa and Ethiopia sections in September 2023. Led by the LAPSSET Joint Technical Committee and funded by USAID-ERRA, these crucial discussions have yielded an actionable framework outlining 14 pivotal recommendations derived from the LAPSSET Corridor Prefeasibility Diagnostic study to improve the corridor's efficiency.

Underscoring Ethiopia's commitment to utilizing the Port of Lamu, plans are already underway for a pilot fertilizer shipment by the end of May 2024. The committee further delineated a series of actions within the framework's recommendations to ensure smooth transportation, including infrastructure enhancements, tackling Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) and insecurity, and conducting corridor user sensitization workshops. Moreover, efforts to harmonize custom protocols and tariffs with the COMESA protocol are in motion. Given the recent attacks on ships in the Red Sea, the LAPSSET corridor is gaining strategic significance as an alternative trade route for Ethiopia.

Simultaneously, a Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) meeting between Ethiopia and Kenya has resolved to expedite the implementation of the Simplified Trade Regime (STR) to facilitate formalized, inclusive, and profitable trade for small-scale cross-border traders. With a targeted completion date of May 20, 2024, the resolution includes finalizing discussions on the capital threshold, defining a list of commonly traded goods, and establishing travel frequency guidelines.

## Bridging Borders: Facilitating DRC's Integration into the EAC Customs Union

In a move to foster regional integration, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) joined the East African Community (EAC) in 2022, becoming the seventh member of the bloc. This pivotal move prompted collaborative efforts to align the DRC with the EAC's trade infrastructure and systems, laying the groundwork for seamless integration and mutual prosperity.

These efforts recently resulted in a five-day training workshop from March 18-22, 2024, organized by the EAC with support from USAID-ERRA. The workshop, attended by Senior officials from various DRC ministries, including Trade, EAC Affairs, Agriculture, Bureau of Standards, and Immigration and Customs Administration, aimed to integrate the DRC into the EAC Customs Union. Additionally, the workshop provided participants with practical insights and experiences of critical trade facilitation projects, including the operationalization of One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs), highlighted by a visit to the Mutukula OSBP on the Uganda-Tanzania border.

Central to these discussions was the Customs Union Protocol, which fosters intra-EAC trade by mandating zero duties on intra-EAC trade while enforcing Common External Tariffs (CET) on imports originating outside the bloc.



This critical protocol not only promotes a level playing field for goods and services within the bloc but also strengthens the region's resilience against external economic pressures, safeguarding the interests of Partner States.

Strengthening the capacity of government bodies to implement the regional integration agenda is a critical objective of USAID-ERRA.



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