



2026
EACON

3RD
Edition

THEME

Deepening Somalia's **EAC Integration**
Through **Treaty Domestication, Trade**
Competitiveness, and Human Capital
Development



Conference Date:
12th - 13th Oct 2026

CONCEPT
NOTE



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 **BACKGROUND
AND CONTEXT**

Somalia's accession to the East African Community marks a defining moment in the country's regional and economic trajectory. It creates an opportunity to move from political membership to practical regional advantage by strengthening competitive markets, mobilising bankable investments, developing human capital, and positioning Somalia within East African value chains.

Across Africa, regional integration is increasingly judged not by accession alone, but by its ability to deliver measurable economic outcomes. Trade agreements, common markets, and regional protocols become meaningful when they reduce barriers to commerce, attract investment, improve connectivity, expand skills, and create opportunities for firms and citizens. For Somalia, the EAC therefore represents more than a diplomatic milestone. It is a platform for competitiveness, structural transformation, and national delivery.

The East African Community is one of Africa's most advanced regional blocs, guided by the EAC Vision 2050, the Customs Union, the Common Market Protocol, and the Monetary Union agenda. These frameworks offer Somalia significant opportunities for trade expansion, labour mobility, investment flows, infrastructure connectivity, financial integration, and

policy coordination. However, the country's ability to benefit from these opportunities will depend on how effectively it domesticates EAC commitments and translates them into institutional reforms, market readiness, investable projects, and workforce competitiveness.

This is the central implementation imperative. Formal integration alone does not guarantee economic convergence. Somalia must now build the systems that allow goods, services, capital, people, and knowledge to move more efficiently across borders. This requires stronger trade systems, customs readiness, standards compliance, regulatory coordination, private sector preparedness, and a clear pipeline of bankable regional projects.

At the same time, Somalia must use EAC membership to accelerate structural transformation. The country needs to shift capital, labour, and enterprise activity toward higher productivity and more competitive sectors. This requires addressing the binding constraints that limit trade and investment, strengthening productive capabilities, and using the EAC Common Market to support skills transfer, technology adoption, enterprise growth, and regional market access.



Somalia also enters the EAC with distinct strategic advantages. Its maritime geography, long coastline, port potential, livestock economy, blue economy assets, renewable energy opportunities, digital finance ecosystem, and entrepreneurial private sector can position the country as a strategic bridge between the Horn of Africa and the wider East African market. These advantages will only become an EAC advantage if they are organised into competitive markets, bankable projects, skilled human capital, and connected regional value chains.

This agenda is closely aligned with Somalia's national transformation priorities, including Vision 2060, the National Transformation Plan 2025–2029, public sector reform, infrastructure development, digital transformation, human capital investment, and economic competitiveness. EACON 2026 therefore provides a timely platform to examine how regional integration can support Somalia's national delivery agenda while strengthening its contribution to the wider EAC.

Under the theme ***“Deepening Somalia's EAC Integration through Treaty Domestication, Trade Competitiveness and Human Capital Development”*** EACON 2026 will move beyond general dialogue on regional integration and focus on the practical conditions required to turn Somalia's EAC membership into measurable economic and institutional outcomes. The conference will examine how Somalia can strengthen competitive markets, mobilise bankable regional investments, develop future-ready human capital, and unlock its blue economy and port-to-market value chains as core drivers of regional

competitiveness.

Recognising these opportunities and implementation challenges, EACON 2026 will bring together policymakers, EAC institutions, development partners, private sector leaders, investors, academia, youth representatives, and civil society organisations to discuss practical pathways for delivering Somalia's EAC advantage. Through this focus, the conference will support institutional coordination, private sector engagement, policy dialogue, and actionable recommendations for strengthening Somalia's regional competitiveness and national development outcomes.





WHY NOW?

THE STRATEGIC CASE FOR ACTION

- A. Somalia Has Entered a New Phase of Regional Integration:** With accession completed, Somalia must now focus on implementation. This requires legal harmonization, institutional strengthening, policy alignment, stakeholder engagement, and public awareness to ensure EAC commitments translate into tangible outcomes.
- B. Regional Integration Must Now Deliver Economic Value:** The East African Community represents a market of more than 300 million people and a combined economy exceeding USD 300 billion. However, access to this market will not automatically benefit Somalia. Somali institutions, firms, ports, standards systems, and workforce must be prepared to compete, connect, and deliver within the regional economy.
- C. AfCFTA Is Expanding Regional Economic Opportunities:** The intersection of EAC protocols with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) unlocks deep regional value chains. Somalia must position itself early to attract industrial investments looking for strategic maritime access points.
- D. Bankable Regional Projects Are Needed to Unlock Investment:** EAC membership creates an opportunity to mobilise investment into sectors where Somalia has clear regional potential. The challenge is to move from general investment promotion to bankable projects, credible PPP pipelines, risk-sharing mechanisms, diaspora capital mobilisation, and regional value-chain financing.
- E. Human Capital Will Determine Future Competitiveness:** East Africa is home to one of the youngest populations globally. Harnessing this demographic dividend requires investments in education, technical skills, innovation, entrepreneurship, research, and workforce readiness.
- F. Somalia's Maritime Geography Creates a Distinct EAC Advantage:** Somalia's coastal frontier is a vital regional public good. In an integrated EAC, optimizing Somalia's ports and maritime logistics reduces the geographic penalty for landlocked neighbors, transforming the Horn of Africa into a highly integrated logistics hub.

Somalia's EAC integration also intersects with its WTO accession process, making policy coordination, trade facilitation, standards reform and regulatory alignment even more urgent.



 GOAL

To strengthen national readiness, stakeholder engagement, institutional coordination and capability accumulation for the effective domestication of EAC protocols, while leveraging regional opportunities to advance competitive markets, bankable regional projects, human capital development, and Somalia's participation in regional value chains.

 OBJECTIVES

-  **Review Progress:** Assess Somalia's progress in implementing EAC commitments and identify priority areas requiring action.
-  **Strengthen Awareness:** Enhance understanding of EAC opportunities, obligations, and implications among stakeholders.
-  **Promote Policy Dialogue:** Facilitate discussions on legal, institutional, regulatory, and economic reforms required to support effective domestication.
-  **Explore Strategic Opportunities:** Examine how regional integration can support Somalia's ambitions in competitive markets, bankable regional projects, human capital development, blue economy value chains, and long-term regional competitiveness.
-  **Foster Partnerships:** Strengthen collaboration among government institutions, development partners, academia, private sector actors, and civil society.
-  **Develop Actionable Recommendations:** Generate practical recommendations and priority actions to support Somalia's EAC integration agenda.



ALIGNMENT WITH NATIONAL, REGIONAL THE STRATEGIC CASE FOR ACTION

FRAMEWORK	RELEVANCE
EAC Vision 2050	Supports competitiveness, integration, industrialization, innovation and human capital development
7th EAC Development Strategy (2026/27–2030/31)	Defines the EAC's current implementation priorities, resource mobilisation agenda and regional development cycle.
EAC Common Market Protocol	Promotes mobility, trade, services, labour and capital
AfCFTA	Supports trade expansion, regional value chains and competitiveness
AU Agenda 2063	Advances regional integration, economic transformation and sustainable development
Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030)	Supports digital economy and innovation ecosystems
Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA)	Supports skills development and human capital
Somalia Vision 2060	Establishes the sovereign mandate for long-term economic complexity and global integration.
National Transformation Plan (2025–2029)	Dictates the immediate operational priorities for institutional governance and human capital.



 **STRATEGIC
PILLARS**

Pillar I: Domesticating EAC Integration and Strengthening Institutional Readiness: The successful domestication of EAC integration requires more than formal membership. It demands the alignment of national laws, policies, institutions, and governance systems with regional commitments and obligations. This pillar will examine Somalia's progress in implementing EAC protocols, identify institutional and regulatory gaps, and explore practical approaches for strengthening coordination, compliance, and stakeholder engagement. Discussions will focus on creating the enabling environment necessary for Somalia to fully participate in and benefit from regional integration while drawing lessons from the experiences of other EAC Partner States.



Pillar II: Competitive Markets, Trade and Regional Connectivity:

Regional integration ultimately succeeds when businesses, producers, and consumers can access larger markets and compete effectively across borders. This pillar will explore how Somalia can strengthen its trade systems, improve market competitiveness, and enhance connectivity with regional and continental markets. Particular attention will be given to customs modernization, standards compliance, non-tariff barriers, trade facilitation, logistics, ports, transport corridors, and enterprise readiness. The discussions will focus on positioning Somali businesses to take advantage of opportunities within the EAC Common Market and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).



Pillar III: Strategic Investments, Bankable Projects and Economic Transformation: To translate integration into tangible development outcomes, Somalia must develop a pipeline of strategic and investment-ready projects capable of attracting both domestic and international capital. This pillar will focus on identifying opportunities for investment, strengthening public-private partnerships, mobilizing diaspora finance, and integrating Somalia into regional value chains. Discussions will examine priority sectors including infrastructure, renewable energy, livestock, agriculture, manufacturing, logistics, and the blue economy. The objective is to explore how Somalia can leverage EAC membership to unlock investment, accelerate economic transformation, and strengthen its contribution to regional growth.

**Pillar IV: Human Capital, Innovation and Future Workforce Development:**

Human capital remains the most important driver of long-term competitiveness and sustainable development. As East Africa's economies become increasingly integrated and technology-driven, Somalia must invest in a workforce that is skilled, innovative, adaptable, and regionally competitive. This pillar will explore strategies for strengthening education systems, technical and vocational training, research collaboration, professional accreditation, labour mobility, entrepreneurship, and innovation ecosystems. It will also examine the implications of digital transformation and artificial intelligence for future jobs and workforce readiness, ensuring that Somalia's young population is equipped to succeed in an increasingly competitive regional economy.





PARTICIPANTS

The Dialogue will convene approximately 200-250 participants including:



**Federal Government
Institutions**



EAC Secretariat



Parliamentarians



**Federal
Member States**



**Development
Partners**



**Institutional
Investors**



**Private Sector
Representatives**



**Chambers
of Commerce**



**Development
Finance Institutions**



**Universities
and Research
Institutions**



**EAC Member
States**



**Blue Economy
and Maritime
Stakeholders**



**Youth and Women's
Organizations**



**Civil Society
Organizations**



**Innovation
Hubs**





CONFERENCE METHODOLOGY

EACON 2026 adopts a results-oriented, multi-stakeholder conference methodology designed to move beyond dialogue and support practical implementation of Somalia's East African Community (EAC) integration agenda. The conference combines high-level policy engagement, evidence-based discussions, investment facilitation, and strategic partnerships to generate actionable recommendations, strengthen institutional collaboration, and accelerate regional competitiveness.

Guided by the conference theme, ***"Deepening Somalia's EAC Integration through Treaty Domestication, Trade Competitiveness, and Human Capital Development"*** the

programme is structured around four interconnected strategic pillars: **Domesticating EAC Integration and Institutional Readiness; Competitive Markets, Trade and Regional Connectivity; Strategic Investments and Economic Transformation; and Human Capital, Innovation and Future Workforce Development.** Each session is designed to contribute directly to these pillars while promoting policy coherence, implementation, and long-term regional collaboration.

To maximise participation and impact, EACON 2026 will employ the following engagement formats:

Official Opening Ceremony



The conference will commence with a high-level opening ceremony featuring senior government officials, representatives of the East African Community Secretariat, development partners, private sector leaders, and distinguished guests. The opening session will establish the strategic vision for the conference, reaffirm Somalia's commitment to regional integration, and set the tone for three days of policy dialogue, collaboration, and action.

Keynote Addresses



Keynote addresses will be delivered by eminent regional and international leaders, policymakers, economists, innovators, and development practitioners. These presentations will provide strategic insights into emerging regional trends, the future of regional integration, economic competitiveness, artificial intelligence, energy transition, infrastructure development, and Africa's evolving role in the global economy.



Ministerial and High-Level Policy Dialogues



Dedicated ministerial dialogues will convene ministers, senior government officials, heads of regional institutions, and development partners to examine policy priorities, implementation progress, institutional reforms, and regulatory harmonisation required to accelerate Somalia's effective domestication of EAC commitments. These sessions will focus on practical solutions and shared regional experiences that can inform national implementation.

High-Level Panel Discussions



Interactive panel discussions will bring together policymakers, business executives, investors, academics, and development partners to examine cross-cutting issues affecting regional integration. Discussions will explore opportunities and challenges related to trade competitiveness, investment promotion, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, renewable energy, infrastructure development, the blue economy, regional value chains, and workforce competitiveness. The panels will encourage multidisciplinary dialogue and practical policy recommendations.

Research and Policy Dialogues



To strengthen evidence-informed policymaking, EACON 2026 will feature Research and Policy Dialogues rather than traditional academic paper presentations. Accepted papers will be grouped into thematic sessions where researchers engage directly with policymakers, practitioners, and private sector leaders through moderated discussions. This approach encourages critical debate, facilitates knowledge exchange, and translates research findings into practical policy options and implementation strategies.

Executive Roundtables



Executive Roundtables will provide closed-door, solution-oriented discussions among ministers, chief executive officers, development finance institutions, investors, chambers of commerce, university leaders, and regional organisations. Organised around each strategic pillar, these sessions will identify implementation challenges, explore investment opportunities, develop collaborative initiatives, and formulate concrete recommendations to inform government action and regional cooperation. The Roundtables will showcase strategic investment opportunities, bankable projects, public-private partnership initiatives, and regional value-chain opportunities, while creating space for business-to-business (B2B), business-to-government (B2G), and government-to-government (G2G) engagement.



Strategic Networking Sessions

Structured networking sessions will provide opportunities for participants to establish strategic partnerships, exchange experiences, and explore future collaboration. Dedicated networking platforms will facilitate engagement among policymakers, development partners, investors, academia, civil society, and the private sector, strengthening regional cooperation beyond the conference.

Conference Rapporteur and Synthesis Sessions

Professional rapporteurs will document discussions, capture key insights, and consolidate recommendations from each session. At the conclusion of the conference, rapporteurs will present a synthesis of the principal findings, emerging priorities, and proposed actions. These recommendations will inform the EACON 2026 Declaration, the conference communiqué, policy briefs, and the official EACON 2026 Conference Proceedings.

By integrating policy dialogue, research, investment promotion, innovation, and strategic partnerships, EACON 2026 is designed not merely as a conference, but as an implementation platform that connects ideas with action. The methodology reflects international best practices in convening multi-stakeholder forums and is intended to generate lasting institutional partnerships, evidence-based policy recommendations, and practical initiatives that strengthen Somalia's integration into the East African Community while advancing regional competitiveness and sustainable economic transformation.

Fireside Chats

EACON 2026 will feature a series of high-level Fireside Chats designed to facilitate candid, thought-provoking conversations with distinguished leaders, policymakers, innovators, investors, and development practitioners. Unlike traditional keynote presentations or panel discussions, Fireside Chats provide an interactive platform for in-depth dialogue, allowing speakers to share personal leadership experiences, strategic insights, emerging trends, and lessons learned in a conversational setting.

Moderated by respected regional journalists, policy experts, or industry leaders, these sessions will explore transformative issues shaping East Africa's future, including regional integration, economic competitiveness, leadership, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, energy transition, climate resilience, investment, entrepreneurship, and the future of work. Audience participation through moderated questions and live interaction will encourage deeper engagement and enrich the discussion.

The Fireside Chats are intended to inspire innovative thinking, foster cross-sector collaboration, and provide practical perspectives from leaders who are shaping policy, business, and development across the region. They will serve as one of the conference's signature features, offering participants unique access to influential decision-makers and helping bridge the gap between strategic vision and practical implementation.



CONFERENCE FACTS AND KEY STATISTICS

EACON 2026 is envisioned as East Africa's premier regional platform on regional integration, policy implementation, strategic investment, and economic competitiveness. The conference will convene a diverse community of policymakers, business leaders, investors, researchers, innovators, and development partners to accelerate Somalia's effective integration into the East African Community (EAC) while fostering regional partnerships and sustainable economic transformation.

Conference Profile

INDICATOR	TARGET
Conference Title	East African Community Conference (EACON 2026)
Theme	From Accession to Transformation: Deepening Somalia's EAC Domestication Through Competitive Markets, Strategic Investments and Human Capital Development
Dates	12 - 13 October 2026
Host City	Mogadishu, Somalia
Duration	Two (2) Days
Conference Format	Hybrid (Physical and Virtual Participation)
Expected Participants	250+ Delegates
Countries Represented	10+ Countries
EAC Partner States	All EAC Partner States
High-Level Delegates	15+ Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Institutions, Ambassadors, CEOs and Development Partners
International Speakers	50+ Regional and International Experts
Keynote Addresses	5–8 High-Level Keynote Speakers
Ministerial Dialogues	3 High-Level Ministerial Dialogues
Executive Fireside Chats	3–4 Executive Leadership Conversations
High-Level Panel Discussions	5 Multi-Stakeholder Panel Discussions
Executive Roundtables	2 Thematic Executive Roundtables
Development Partners	30+ Regional and International Organizations
Universities & Research Institutions	30+ Institutions
Private Sector Organizations	100+ Companies and Business Associations
Media Houses	10+ National, Regional and International Media Organizations
Accredited Journalists	30+ Journalists and Media Professionals
Official Conference Languages	English and Somali (Simultaneous Interpretation)



MEDIA AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PARTNERS

A comprehensive communications and media strategy will be implemented to position EACON 2026 as East Africa's premier regional platform on EAC integration, competitiveness, strategic investment, and economic transformation. The strategy aims to maximize regional and international visibility, facilitate knowledge dissemination, promote stakeholder engagement, and ensure that the conference outcomes influence policy dialogue beyond the event itself.

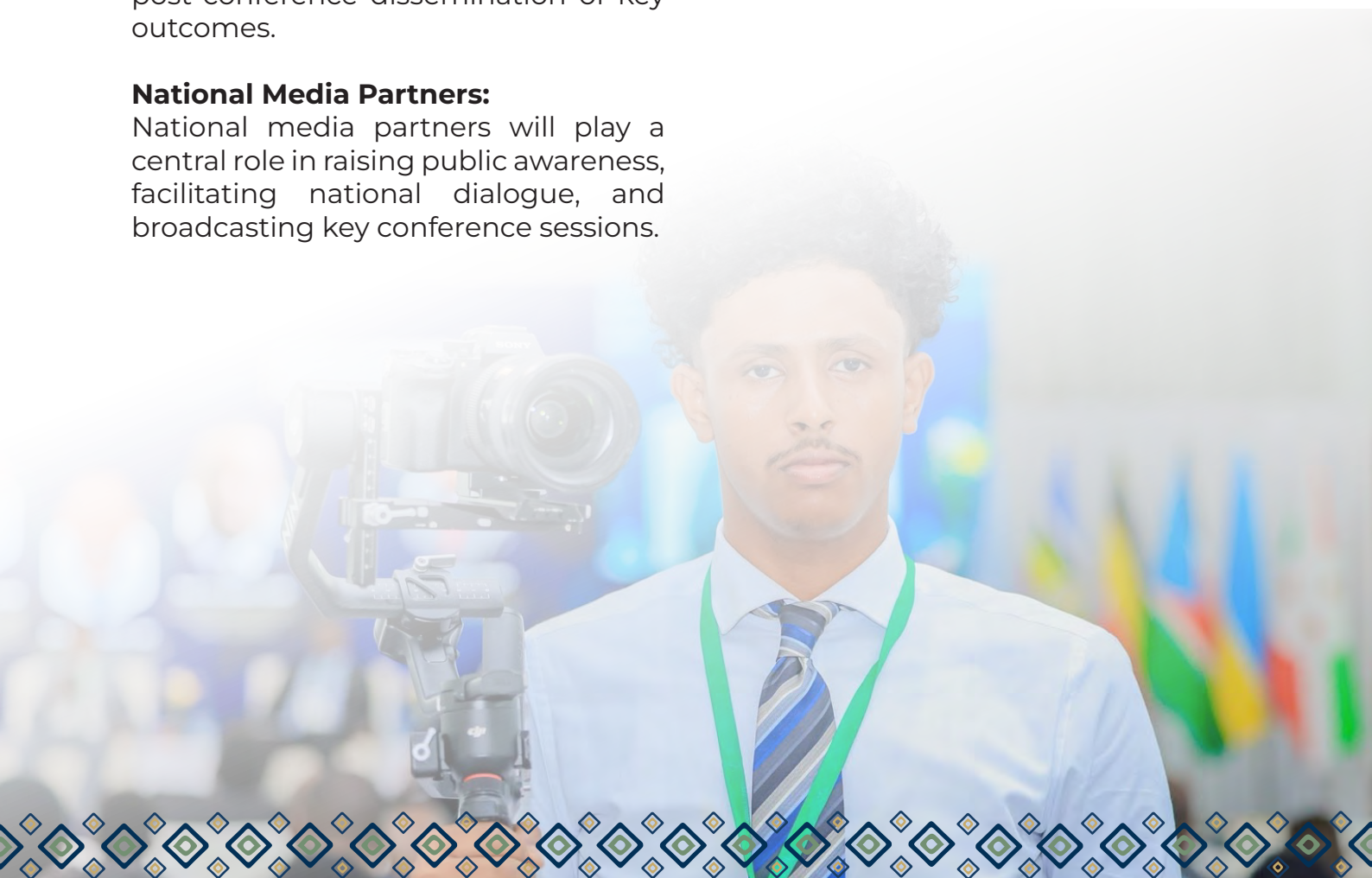
To achieve this, EACON 2026 will establish strategic partnerships with leading national, regional, continental, and international media organizations to provide extensive pre-conference promotion, live event coverage, and post-conference dissemination of key outcomes.

National Media Partners:

National media partners will play a central role in raising public awareness, facilitating national dialogue, and broadcasting key conference sessions.

Potential partners include:

- Somali National Television (SNTV)
- Radio Mogadishu
- SONNA – Somali National News Agency
- Universal Somali TV
- Dalsan Media Group
- Arlaadi Media
- Goobjoog Media Group
- Somali Public Broadcasting Services
- BBC Africa
- Astaaan
- Dawan TV
- TRT
- The East African

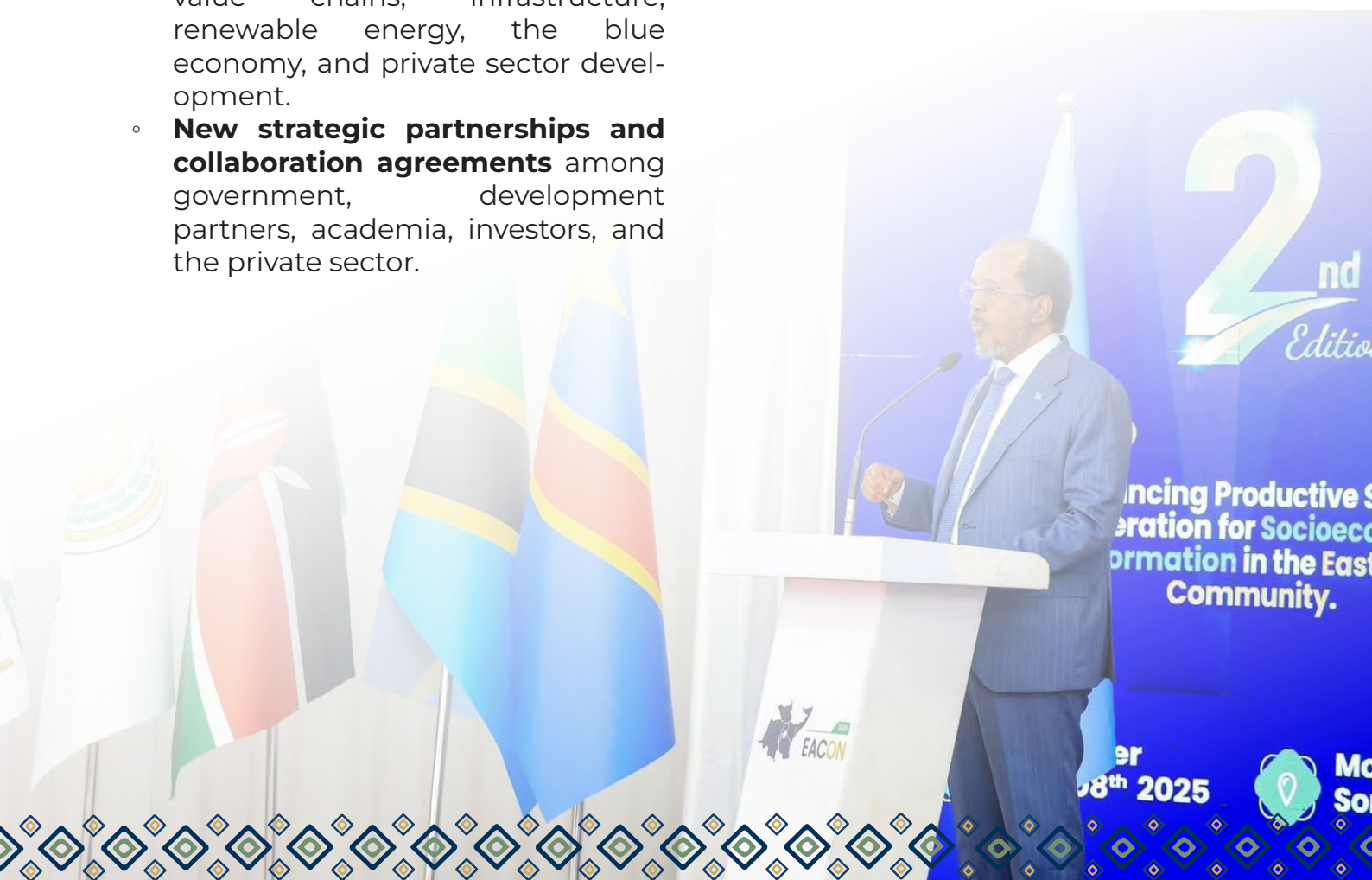




EXPECTED OUTCOMES

EACON 2026 is expected to deliver the following strategic outcomes:

- **The EACON Declaration** outlining priority commitments and recommendations for accelerating Somalia's EAC domestication and regional competitiveness.
- **Strengthened policy and institutional coordination** to support the implementation of EAC commitments and regional integration priorities.
- **Actionable policy recommendations** on trade, investment, human capital, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and energy transition.
- **Identification of priority bankable projects** and investment opportunities to promote regional value chains, infrastructure, renewable energy, the blue economy, and private sector development.
- **New strategic partnerships and collaboration agreements** among government, development partners, academia, investors, and the private sector.
- **Enhanced regional dialogue and knowledge exchange** through research, policy discussions, and evidence-based recommendations.
- **Publication of the EACON 2026 Conference Proceedings, Communiqué, and Policy Briefs** to support continued learning and policy implementation.
- **Positioning Somalia as an emerging regional hub** for EAC integration, strategic investment, innovation, and sustainable economic transformation.





EACON2026 CO-ORGANIZERS



Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Somalia:
spearheading Somalia's EAC engagement.



Ministry of Education, Culture, and Higher Education, Somalia:
shaping academic collaboration.



Ministry of Commerce and Industry Somalia
Building a productive competitive, and trusted Somali economy.



SIMAD University :
academic coordinator with strong research and innovation capacity.



Somali National University :
National Academic Representation and Regional Research Linkages

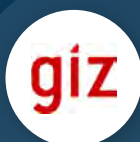




EACON2026 CO-ORGANIZERS



University of Bayreuth, Germany :
research and international cooperation partner.



GIZ (Germany) :
supporting technical cooperation and development.



Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA):
a regional academic collaboration platform.





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Mogadishu, Somalia

