

The US-EAC Cooperation Agreement and Expanded Opportunities in Africa



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The United States and the [East African Community](#) (EAC), a [regional trade bloc](#), recently signed the [U.S.-EAC Cooperation Agreement](#), which seeks to improve trade through customs facilitation between the United States and the five member countries of the EAC: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. This agreement represents the commitment of both the United States and the EAC to deepen their ties through trade along three objectives:

- Implement the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement
- Enhance food safety, and plant and animal health
- Improve technical regulations, standards, testing, and certification

This development, and others like it, aims to provide continued development of U.S.-Africa relations in traditional sectors of goods and services. Indeed a correlation, at the very least, appears to exist between such increased engagement and trade flows. [U.S. exports to the EAC increased more than twofold](#) between 2012 and 2014.

Beyond the EAC, similar regional blocs also continue working towards greater

economic opportunities and prosperity for their constituents and investors. Within this context, doing business in trade, agriculture, or energy should naturally become easier as governments remove impediments in customs processes or overly burdensome regulations. These improvements, however, can also open doors to other business activities for other adventurous investors. In South Africa, for example, [festivals](#) of all kinds (and the associated revenues from tourism services) are becoming substantial job creators and business opportunities for music, wine, arts lovers on a local and even international scale.

In West Africa, [reforestation](#) projects are creating economic opportunities in the Sahel region that borders the Sahara desert for towns and villages. The positive environmental impact of these new forests is improving local food security and improving fisheries. Similar to the types of investments this blog has previously highlighted, and even to the local festivals that are gaining momentum in South Africa, the investment climate established in part by the regional bloc in West Africa (the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)) can contribute to the opportunity presented here. A burgeoning sustainable commercial fishing sector in these areas will most certainly rely on the easing of trade burdens to bring these fish to market.

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